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**THE CHURCH'S PROBLEM IN RELATION
TO PUERTO RICAN MIGRATION
INTO NEW YORK CITY**

By

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

A. The Statement of the Problem

The topic of our concern here, The Church's Problem in Relation to Puerto Rican Migration into New York City, is better understood if we put alongside of it the appeal made by Jesus Christ almost 2,000 years ago when he spoke to his disciples saying:

"The harvest indeed is plenteous but the laborers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he send forth laborers into his harvest."¹

The Church of Christ because of its nature is sensitive to the demands of all human relations. It is regarded therefore as the organism with sufficient wisdom to understand the problems of the oppressed. As a member of the Church I have felt myself deeply concerned for the problems of the Puerto Ricans in this city and I am certain every sensitive Christian who is well acquainted with the facts shares with me this concern. However, I ought to state here that there are not too many within the constituency of the Church in New York City who are well acquainted with the problems of the Puerto Rican immigrants.

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1. Matthew 9:37-38

B. Purpose and Aim

During the last few years I have been approached by representatives of religious and civic organizations of the city interested in the problems of the Puerto Ricans. Some hold that there is little information on this matter. Others say that most of the information that can be obtained is one-sided and therefore not too satisfactory. For the last two years I have been asked by a cultural organization which devotes itself to take groups of students and professionals to places of interest in the city, to give little talks on the problems of the Puerto Ricans in New York City.¹

Ministers and members of English-speaking churches are also interested in securing right information. The New York City Mission Society took a good step along this line when in 1949 they invited the Puerto Rican ministers of New York City for an afternoon and evening conference on the Church's Problem Respecting the Puerto Ricans in the City.²

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1. Reconciliation Trips, Inc., 417 West 121 Street, New York City, Mr. P. Howard, Director.
2. Afternoon and Evening conference of Spanish-speaking ministers and lay leaders of their Churches with the executive leaders of Church Boards in New York City sponsored by New York City Mission Society and held Friday, April 29, 1949 at Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church.

By the year 1947 a good deal of information was given to the public through the newspapers. But many people resented some of that information. Mary Niklas and Henry Lee wrote:

"To us New Yorkers (say three years residence or more), this real-life road show of "The Man Who Came to Dinner" is dismaying. It has given the city its greatest dose of Latinism since the night clubs discovered the rumba, samba and Biosa Costello (a Puerto Rican). Today, every fourth Jose and Rosito among the island's population has become a New Yorker and every 13th New Yorker now is a Puerto Rican. It makes you think.

Healthwise, The "Puertorriqueños" have brought an undetermined amount of tuberculosis and syphilis with them, and also such common but incommunicable tropical diseases as malaria, a variety of intestinal worms and filariasis which may lead to elephantiasis. Two years ago a Puerto Rican leper was found here.²

This kind of information has not led to a good comprehension of the problem. The English-speaking churches of the city welcome information because they realize this is their problem also and they want to do something about it. The Pathfinding Service of the New York City Mission Society states:

The Puerto Rican in New York City has been receiving a great deal of attention recently from newspapers, magazines, social-work agencies, civic groups and others. The large-scale migration of this group from the crowded sugar plantations of the island to the crowded apartments of Spanish Harlem has made this Spanish-speaking citizen a familiar figure to every New Yorker.³

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1. Should be Rosita and not Rosito
2. Article in Sunday News October 12, 1947 entitled, They Flee Dark Future in Warm Sun to Become City's Problem Breed
3. The Pathfinding Service for the Churches, p.1

Our churches should know that the Puerto Rican immigrant represents the last considerable group fighting its way into the life of the city. Charles Grutzner speaks on this matter as follows:

"As early as 1837, Major Aaron Clark gave the City Council a dispirited report about New York's immigrants "clustering in our city, unacquainted with our climate, without employment, without friends, not speaking our language, certain of nothing but hardship and a grave." At that time 95 per cent of the immigrants were the Irish, German, English, Scotch, Welsh, Belgian, Dutch and Scandinavians who helped build up this city before still heavier waves of immigrants rolled overseas from Italy, Russia, Poland and Austria-Hungary.¹

I should state then that the main purpose of this work will be to add something more in the way of information to what has been already done by other civic and religious organizations of the city respecting the problem of the Puerto Ricans here. It also aims at reaching the English-speaking churches and members of churches who show interest in it.

C. Plan of Procedure

This work will consist of six chapters apart from the introduction. The first chapter will be devoted to a brief historical account of the Puerto Rican people. The second chapter has to do with the change of sovereignty in the island. In other words, the ceding of Puerto Rico to the United States of America by Spain. The third

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1. From an article which appeared in the New York Times, Tuesday, October 4, 1948, p. 30

chapter will deal with the migration of Puerto Ricans into New York City. The fourth chapter will lead to a psychological appreciation of the Puerto Rican living in New York City. The fifth chapter brings forth the responsibility of the Church respecting the problem of the Puerto Rican migrant. This chapter also gives a brief historical account of the development of the Spanish-speaking church in the city. Interesting to note is what the Pathfinding report says on this:

The Puerto Ricans who come to New York City, therefore, are mostly Roman Catholic in background, but some are Protestant, and all are acquainted with the Protestant church as an agency not only evangelistic in spirit, but with a practical and lively concern for human welfare. The Protestants among them are characterized by devotion, conviction, and evangelistic purpose.¹

A general summary will follow as chapter six and will be devoted to the clarification and perhaps simplification of the main points dealt with in the course of the work.

D. Sources

From the year 1947 to the present we have noticed some interest on the part of social and religious agencies on the problem of the Puerto Ricans in the city. Several surveys and studies have been made by such agencies. These studies will be used as one of the sources for this

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1. The Pathfinding Service for the Churches, p. 4

work.

There are also a good number of books written on Puerto Rico and its people which will be very valuable too.

Another significant source will be a good number of articles published in newspapers and magazines from 1947 on. Pamphlets put out by several government agencies will serve this purpose also.

Furthermore, I have sent questionnaires to local ministers who represent different phases of the work in the city. Personal interviews with other leaders of both civic and religious organizations have resulted in practical information.

The author will draw also upon his own experience as a minister in the city for the last twelve years; also from his seven year term as a pastor in Puerto Rico proper.

CHAPTER I

**THE BACKGROUND OF THE
PUERTO RICAN PEOPLE**

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THE BACKGROUND OF THE PUERTO RICAN PEOPLE

A. Introduction

A common topic in New York City and one which few people dismiss without some amount of consideration is that which has to do with the issues raised during the last few years respecting the Puerto Ricans in New York City.

But in order to understand the Puerto Ricans and their problems in whatever spot of the world they may live it is necessary to know something about their history. Puerto Ricans have a history of their own and unless there is an unfolding of their history it becomes impossible to understand them as a people and to understand their problems. In the report made by the Bureau of Applied Social Research of Columbia University on The Puerto Ricans in New York City we find this statement:

But Puerto Rico is not only a space with people on it; the people have a history. The key historical fact is that first it was Spanish and then in 1898, it became American. Up to the turn of the century Puerto Rican history is colonial history; since then its history has been profoundly ambiguous; not old-style colonial and yet not sovereign. Several races and two or three cultures have blended here on this island and a new kind of culture has resulted, which nobody understands too well.¹

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1. The Puerto Ricans of New York City, Bureau of Applied Social Research Columbia University. Ch.1, p.1

B. The Island of Puerto Rico

People in the United States know little about Puerto Rico. I have been asked several times if Puerto Rico is a part of Europe or another country in South America or if it is one of the Philippine Islands. Some even ignore that Puerto Rico belongs to the United States and that the Puerto Ricans are United States citizens.

1. Discovery

Puerto Rico was discovered by Columbus on November 19, 1493, on his second voyage to the New World. It is the smallest and easternmost of the four islands - Cuba, Jamaica, Hispaniola (Dominican Republic and Haiti) and Puerto Rico - which form the Greater Antilles.

2. Geographical Location

It is bounded on the north by the Atlantic Ocean, on the south by the Caribbean Sea, and on the west by the Mona passage, which separates the island from the Dominican Republic. The Virgin Islands are off to the east.

3. Size, Topography, and Climate

The island is rectangular in shape, about 100 miles long by 35 miles wide. For a bird's-eye view of the topographical features of the island, Puerto Rico Handbook gives us the following description:

Puerto Rico is, in fact, a mountain crest, volcanic in origin. The Atlantic Ocean reaches its greatest depth about 45 miles north of Puerto Rico, in the Milwaukee Deep, a chasm of 27,922 feet. The Brownson Deep, another of the greatest known fissures, is 100 miles off the north coast of the island. The Caribbean, too, has a depth of about 12,000 feet a short distance from Puerto Rico's shores. In other words, the submerged mountain chain, of which Puerto Rico is a part, would be the highest in the world, if it were above rather than below sea level.¹

Puerto Rico contains 3,500 square miles, or about 2,000,000 acres, almost three-fourths of which lie in the mountainous interior of the island. The highest peak is Cerro de Punta (4,398 feet above sea level). The best known mountain is El Yunque (3,448 feet) in the northeastern corner. The mountains slope down to a flat coastal plain which varies from eight to 13 miles in width in the north, and from two to eight miles in the south. Cynthia Pearl Maus, gives us an artist's portrayal of the island. When describing Puerto Rico she says:

Land of mountains, rugged and beautiful;
land of flowering trees and plants, brilliant
greens; land of almond trees and coconut palms,
with here and there the stately Australian pine
and royal palm to add dignity and grandeur to
the view-this is Puerto Rico.²

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1. Puerto Rico Handbook, 1947; A Publication of the Office of Information for Puerto Rico, 39 Broadway, New York 6, N.Y. p.5
2. Maus, Cynthia Pearl: Puerto Rico in Pictures and Poetry, pp. 20-21.

Important also about Puerto Rico is its climate. The island has both a tropical and a semi-tropical climate. It is the most mountainous island in the South Atlantic. In its mountains there are about a hundred varieties of orchids, several of which are found nowhere else in all the world. Puerto Rico Handbook describes the climate thus:

Puerto Rico is tropical. Palm trees are characteristic; bamboo grows in great clumps along the roads and streams; flamboyant and African tulip trees, bougainvillea (called, in Puerto Rico, "trinitaria") and hibiscus are splashes of vivid color against the prevailing green. In the Luquillo National Forest, giant tree ferns, brightly colored air plants, and trailing vines, cover the mountains. Cactus and other desert plants grow in some areas along the dry southern coast. At all times of the year, everywhere, flowers are in bloom.¹

Winter temperature is around 73.4 degrees Fahrenheit, and that for summer is around 78.9 degrees. On the coast, the breeze is from the sea during the day, but at night a cool land breeze usually blows from the mountains.

The island lies in the hurricane zone, and occasionally experiences severe hurricanes. Rainfall is heavy throughout the year, especially in the mountains and during the period between May and December. But in spite of this there are few days in Puerto Rico when the sun does not shine. The climate affords an ideal year-round growing season for tropical crops.

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1. Puerto Rico Handbook, p. 5

C. The Inhabitants of the Island

The actual racial heritage of the Puerto Ricans makes it difficult to classify them on the basis of race. When one studies that racial heritage many interesting features are to be taken into consideration.

1. The Aborigenes (the Indians)

Puerto Rico was colonized more than a hundred years before the Pilgrims landed in Massachusetts. The Aborigenes of the island were the Boriquén Indians, who called the island "Boriquén". The number of Indians at the time of occupation is not known, but it is quite generally agreed that there were comparatively few of them. The most reliable sources point to about 30,000.

2. The New Comers (the Spaniards)

The first Spaniards in Puerto Rico came from the province of Andalucia. Most of them were adventurers rather than colonizers. A man called Vicente Yañez Pinzón was the first one who obtained the rights from the Spanish crown to colonize the island. A second great colonizer was Juan Ponce de León. Miller's History of Puerto Rico says the following:

Juan Ponce de León made an exploration of Puerto Rico and in 1508, established the first town called Caparra. He returned in the year 1509. Ponce de León was the first explorer, the first populator and the first governor of the island.¹

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1. Translated from Spanish into English from Miller's Historia de Puerto Rico, pp. 62,63

3. Negroes Introduced as slaves

As more Spanish colonizers entered the island more need for laborers was felt. The Spaniards tried to subject the Indians to slavery but these instead rebelled against their masters. A revolution took place and many Indians lost their lives. By 1513 Spain had legalized the introduction of Negroes as slaves in the Antilles. Miller's statistics along this line are as follows:

By 1531, there existed, 1,523 Negro slaves in Puerto Rico, while there were only 369 white colonists and 473 free Indians. The census of 1765 shows a total population of 44,883, of which 39,846 were white and 5,037 Negroes.¹

4. Mixture of Races

During the revolts with the Indians many Spanish soldiers and sailors deserted and settled in the mountains. This is one of the factors which begins to account for the mixture of races. Senior has this to say:

Since the Spaniards settled the island in the beginning of the sixteenth century, the mixture of races has been characteristic. During the early days the Spaniards did not bring women along; they lived with or married Indian women. The same pattern continued when Negroes were introduced as slaves in 1529. Spanish women then became more numerous. More Spaniards appeared. The Number of Negroes increased. The Indians, as a pure race, were extinct by the end of the sixteenth century, but they left their physical stamp on part of the population. Negroes and whites have intermarried for several centuries; the result is a wide range of racial types.²

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1. Translated from Miller's Historia de Puerto Rico pp. 288 and 291.
2. Clarence Senior, The Puerto Ricans of N.Y.C. (New York: Employment & Migration Bureau, Puerto Rico Department of Labor, 1949), pp.7,8.

Another factor which may help in understanding the mixture in the island's population is the nineteenth century revolt against Spain which broke out in Latin America. At this time many loyalist refugees fled to Puerto Rico. This was particularly true of the Dominican Republic and Venezuela. From Haiti, during the revolt against France, came French settlers.

5. The Puerto Rican as Such

I have stated already that it is difficult to classify the Puerto Ricans on the basis of race because of their own racial heritage. Perhaps the best that could be said today respecting this is what the following paragraph tells us:

The people of Puerto Rico, American citizens since 1917, are descendents of the Spaniards who conquered and settled the island, of the Indians they found there, of the Negroes they imported, and to a minor extent of Portuguese, Syrians, Corsicans, French, Dutch, and other emigrant Europeans. More recently, marriage with continental Americans was greatly accelerated by the war.¹

I am certain that if these factors were taken into consideration, in dealing with Puerto Ricans and their problems, a better understanding could be reached.

D. The Political Background of Puerto Ricans

The only term that can be considered appropriate in describing the Puerto Rican system of government since

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1. Puerto Rico Handbook, p.11

its discovery in 1493 is "colonialism". Attempts are made in order to ease the tension on the implications of this term and a new term has been incorporated, namely "ambiguous political history". The report of the Bureau of Applied Social Research puts it this way:

The key to historical fact is that first it was Spanish and then in 1898, it became American. Up to the turn of the century Puerto Rican history is colonial history; since then its history has been profoundly ambiguous; not old-style colonial and yet not sovereign. The sociologist is interested in this fact of political ambiguity.¹

1. Early Colonizers

For 400 years Puerto Rico was a colony of Spain. In 1508, the Spanish King sent Juan Ponce de León, who had been with Columbus in 1493 as a foot soldier, to take possession of the island. Ponce de León met no great difficulty in occupying the island. The Boriqué Indians welcomed the Spaniards. Miller's Historia de Puerto Rico says:

There (in Puerto Rico) Ponce found Indians, the Boriquén, who indicated to him the route for the southern coast of the island. In spite of difficulties he arrived safely to the wanted land, disembarking August 12, 1508 in the Bay of Guayanilla near the village of the Indian Chief Aguaybana.²

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1. Bureau of Applied Social Research, Report on Puerto Ricans in New York City, p. 1
2. Paul G. Miller, Historia de Puerto Rico, p. 53

Ponce de León built the first villages in the island and brought more and more settlers in the course of the time. The first colonizers were primarily interested in gold. As the precious metal was exhausted cultivation of the land was started.

2. Puerto Rico a Colony of Spain

Puerto Rico as a colony of Spain soon became the object of concerted attacks by the enemies of Spain, as well as by roving bands of pirates and freebooters. In the year 1528 the French landed in the island and burned the town of San Germán. Ten years later the French made a new attack but in their third attempt in 1576 they were defeated.

Cynthia Pearl Maus gives the following account:

In 1595 Sir Francis Drake approached San Juan in quest of a rich deposit of gold and silver bullion, but was repulsed after three days of hard fighting. Three years later the British, with a large fleet, landed a thousand men at Santurce and fought their way into the city, forcing the surrender of El Morro, only to lose control later. The Dutch attacked the city in 1625 unsuccessfully. At other times, various pirates and freebooters, including Morgan, Cook, Grand, Captain Kidd, and others, attacked the city of San Juan or pounced upon galleons laden with Puerto Rico's treasures en route to Mexico or Spain. ¹

Very early then, Puerto Rico was considered by Spain as of tremendous strategic importance. It continued to be a defense outpost with which Spain tried to protect its New World Empire, and to ensure the safety of its

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1. Puerto Rico in Pictures and Poetry, p. 16

shipping. La Fortaleza, the first real fortress, was begun in 1533. It has been the residence of the governors of the island for nearly 400 years.

3. Colonial Set-up in the Island

Ponce de León became the first governor of the new colony of Spain. Juan Cerón succeeded him by orders of King Ferdinand. Juan Cerón then constituted the first municipal council at San Juan. Puerto Rico saw little progress in government under the Spanish colonial system. A book published by the United States Army Air Forces states this:

While other Spanish colonies in the Western hemisphere revolted and secured independence, Puerto Rico remained "the ever loyal isle," and continued to suffer abuse and privation. Slavery was only abolished-nine years after the emancipation in the United States- during a republic in Spain which was of short duration.

The first liberal concessions made to the island came a few days before the opening of the Spanish-American War.¹

During this long period of colonial history the only real sign of recognition by Spain that the island should have a voice in government was the granting of representation in the Spanish Cortes in 1869, but with the change of government this privilege was revoked five years later.

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1. Puerto Rico, United States Army Air Forces: Borinquen Field, Puerto Rico, p.1

The Encyclopedia Britannica has the following on the colonial set-up of the island:

From 1493, the date of the discovery of Puerto Rico by Columbus, to 1898, when the first military governor was appointed by the president of the United States, 142 governors ruled the island for Spain, the first being Ponce de León. Nearly all were army officers and most of them of inferior rank. By these officers Puerto Rico was governed practically on the same plan as other Spanish colonial possessions. The governor was supreme in military affairs, and practically so in civil. The executive, legislative and judicial functions were for most of the time vested in the captain general. Whatever offices, boards or tribunals existed were used merely for the transactions of routine business. The captain general's authority was not limited except in a general way by the laws of the Indies and by royal decrees. This condition existed until 1870, when under a liberal government Puerto Rico was made a province of Spain and given representation by deputies, elected by the people, in the Spanish Cortes. This lasted only four years when the provincial deputation was abolished and the island returned to its old status. In 1877 the deputation was re-established, and in 1897 Puerto Rico was given an autonomous government, but it never became operative because of the Spanish-American war and the consequent occupation of Puerto Rico by the American army in 1898.¹

It is difficult for many people in the United States to comprehend the state of frustration of many Puerto Ricans coming to this country. Historical facts are always illuminating. If continental Americans look at history and facts respecting the Puerto Ricans they

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1. From Encyclopedia Britannica: Article on Puerto Rico, Vol. 18, pp. 261, 262.

can understand this people much better. If the Church takes into consideration these facts of history she will come nearer to a position for closer cooperation.

4. Political Consciousness of Early Puerto Ricans

By the close of the 18th century Puerto Rico began to develop a life of its own. It did not rebel against Spain as other colonies in the New World did but it started to demand greater autonomy. Under the yoke of the colonial masters there was not much opportunity for the development of political consciousness by the Puerto Ricans. Here is a good picture of this:

There were outside conspiracies to incite revolt on the island during this period but they were ineffectual. Since the proclamation of the 1812 National Constitution, Puerto Rico had the status of a province with proportional representation in the Spanish Parliament. These privileges, however, were suspended frequently for long periods. During the century, there were a few unimportant military coups but they were simply echoes of parallel movements in Spain—evidences of a struggle for liberalism rather than against Spain. The revolt at Lares (1868), the only instance of rebellion, was quickly and easily put down. The prevalent feeling for autonomy and liberalism was strengthened by political organization. Luis Muñoz Rivera (the father of Luis Muñoz Marín, the head of the present majority party) was the leader instrumental in obtaining from Spain a charter of autonomy (1897) which granted to the people of Puerto Rico a much greater measure of self-government, including the right to negotiate special commercial treaties with any nation.¹

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1. Puerto Rico Handbook, p. 8

5. The People's part in early Government

It may seem strange that at present Puerto Rico does not have any such privilege. When a bill to amend the ^{Organic} Organic Act of Puerto Rico went for hearings before the corresponding committee on Congress in 1947, Miss Ruth Reynolds appeared before the committee and spoke thus: respecting that Act of Autonomy of 1897 granted to Puerto Rico by Spain:

I commend this autonomous constitution to your study, not because it establishes a perfect government, or even a highly desirable government, but because it gave Puerto Rico far greater control of her own destiny than she has ever enjoyed since, or than the framers of the bill, H. R. 3309, envisage giving her. I particularly call your attention to four provisions of this autonomous constitution. The first deals with the setting up of the insular parliament, which was bicameral. You will note, in title III and IV, that the chamber of representatives was wholly elective, while 7 of the 15 members of council of administration were appointed by the King. In this one respect the autonomous constitution would seem to be less liberal than the organic act by which Puerto Rico now elects her entire legislature. It was more liberal, however, than the Foraker Act of 1900, providing the first civil government of Puerto Rico under the American flag. Under this act, the legislative assembly comprised two houses—one, the house of delegates, entirely elective; and the other, the executive council of 11 members, entirely appointed by the president of the United States (Foraker Act, sec. 18)

I would next ask you to consider title VI, articles 37/38, of this autonomous constitution. Article 37 provides that all commercial treaties affecting Puerto Rico shall be made with the assistance of the plenipotentiaries authorized by the Puerto Rican government. Article 38

stipulates that all commercial treaties negotiated by Spain without the assistance of Puerto Rican representatives may be accepted or not by Puerto Rico, as she chooses. And article 39 provides the Puerto Rican parliament with full power to fix tariff duties on all merchandise imported into or exported from the island. Under American rule Puerto Rico has had no power to participate in negotiating any commercial treaties and no power to fix tariffs of any kind.

The third section of the autonomous constitution that I request you to examine specifically is that dealing with the veto power of the home government. It is found in title VII, article 43. You will note that this article provides the Governor General- the King's representative in the island- with no vote at all, but only with power to forward such legislation as he found objectionable to the Spanish Cortes, or parliament. In this Cortes sat more than a dozen Puerto Ricans with full voice and vote. And if the Cortes disapproved of the act in question, it could forward its objections and suggestions to the Puerto Rican parliament, which could accept them or reject them, as it saw fit. Final legislative power, then, rested with the Puerto Rican parliament, and the veto power was one of mere suggestion. Today, Puerto Rico's legislative power is one of mere suggestion, and the decisions of her masters are final.

Most important of all for our deliveries is article 2 of the additional articles included at the end of the autonomous constitution. This article states unequivocally:

When the present constitution shall be once approved by the Cortes of the kingdom for the islands of Cuba and Puerto Rico, it shall not be amended except by virtue of a special law and upon petition of the insular parliament.

Now it is quite obvious - the insular parliament having been dissolved by the invading armies 5 months earlier - that the Treaty of Paris ceding Puerto Rico to the United States was negotiated without the special petition of the defunct body. The Treaty of Paris is therefore in violation of the legal relationship between Spain and Puerto Rico at the time it was drawn up. We therefore hold Puerto Rico today solely as a result of conquest and without any legal title to it at all, and our administration of Puerto Rico today is worse than that from which she was happy to escape 50 years ago.¹

Regardless of how much credit one gives to these legal opinions one would admit that there is some truth in regarding the Puerto Ricans as a politically frustrated people. The sociologist is right when he claims that he sees Puerto Ricans as people in various postures and activities, each with a history and motivation and frustrations.

E. The Cultural and Religious Background

Puerto Rico has been called the Two-Cultured Island. It is more than that. The blending of cultures in this Caribbean Island touches on many angles. In a report of the Employment and Migration Bureau, Puerto Rico Department of Labor we find this:

Puerto Ricans proud of the island's connection with Spain point to that

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1. Hearings before the Subcommittee on Territorial and Insular Possessions of the Committee on Public Lands, House of Representatives on H. R. 3309 Eightieth Congress, May 19, 1947, Government Printing Office, Washington, pp. 42-43

country's rich past: to the paintings of El Greco and Goya; to the literature of Cervantes and Lope de Vega, to the history made by the conquistadores and recorded by Las Casas and Díaz del Castillo. Argentine and Mexican movies bring the customs and costumes, the characters and clichés of the Spanish stream to the Puerto Rican screen. The recreation center of the Spanish-oriented section of the upper class of the island displays wrought-iron gates and fences and mudejar tiles, contributed to the Iberian Peninsula by the Moors during the seven centuries they helped build the glory that was Spain. The Puerto Rican woman is proud of her skill with a needle, whether she sews for the pleasure of it, works at home, or is in a factory. That skill is often viewed by its possessor as part of the Spanish cultural heritage.¹

No matter how true this is there is much more to be said on the culture of the Puerto Ricans. They have also inherited from the Indians and from other groups coming to their island the cultural trends which have made them what they are as a people "the Puerto Ricans".

1. The Indians

For a view on the culture and religion of the Indians found in Puerto Rico I have translated from the Spanish the following paragraphs:

The name which the Indians gave to Puerto Rico was Boriquén and not Borinquén. The Indians of Boriquén were good-looking, barely used any clothing, painted their faces and body and were of no significant mental capacity. They lived in tribes.

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1. Employment and Migration Bureau, Puerto Rico Department of Labor, The Puerto Ricans of N.Y.C. p.3

Each tribe had its chief, its priest-doctor, subordinate chiefs, and commoners.

They lived in villages and their huts were covered with straw. Their main entertainments consisted of ball-games, dances and songs called "areytos" which they practiced in the "bateyes" (a small court in front of the hut). They bathed regularly and were very frugal in their eating habits. They had a primitive religion, worshipping idols called "cemies" and believed to be sent by a supernatural power.

They devoted themselves to agriculture, fishing, and hunting, being quite advanced in agriculture. They cultivated yucca (a variety of tapioca), corn, peanuts, and sweet potatoes and made use of wild fruits. They polished stones which were converted into their tools. They also engaged in pottery.¹

2. The Colonizers

The newcomers were the colonizers who came from Spain and were of European culture and religion. These brought with them the customs and the traditions of the Old World.

3. Influence of the Roman Catholic Church

When Columbus took possession of the island he did so in the name of the Catholic Kings of Spain and called the island St. John the Baptist. Since the colonizers came from Catholic Spain and since the Roman Catholic Church was at the top of life in Spain, every

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¹ Miller, op. cit., pp. 48/49

thing done within and without had to be under the authority of the Church. Together with the colonizers there came the priests. Among the first to come was Bartolomé de las Casas who condemned the treatment that the Spaniards gave to the native Indians and was recognized as the protector of the Indians. The first bishop of the island was Alonso Manso who came in 1513 and who became later on the Inquisitor general of the Indies.

Tragic, we should say, is the fact that as Roman Catholics they tried to impose their religion upon the Indians but made no effort in getting the Indians to resign their beliefs so long as they were willing to accept the new religion. The result was a kind of syncretism.

Education as in Europe was also in the hands of the Roman Catholic Church. For this reason during the first 400 years of Spanish colonialism education in the island was at a very low ebb. Educational opportunities were limited to those who had wealth and could attend European Universities.

4. Blending of Cultures

When the Spaniards came to Puerto Rico they married Indian women. But when the Indians began to disappear, the Spaniards brought negro slaves to Puerto Rico and the mixing of races continued.

The mixing of Spanish with Indian and Negro bloods began very early in the history

of Puerto Rico. The census of 1776 shows the rapid dilution of the Indian race with other races and the progressive mixture of Negroes and Whites. The Indian has had greater influence in the cultural formation of the Puerto Rican than has the Negro; nevertheless, the physical characteristics of the former disappeared rapidly, while those of the Negro endured for a long time. The reason for this is to be found in the numerical disparity of the two races.¹

No one can understand well the Puerto Ricans unless these facts are taken into consideration. They are not the result of a certain cultural influence for they have been influenced by many different cultural trends. Speaking of the cultural of Puerto Rico someone has said:

The culture of Puerto Rico is Spanish, with Spanish language, literature, music, art, and manners, but with elements of the Indian culture woven in, with an increasing influence on it from the continental United States, and with a definite Puerto Rican patriotism binding it together. It is a culture based on the family with strong family ties.²

F. Summary and Conclusion

Native talent and initiative have been characteristic of Puerto Ricans along cultural, educational, and other phases of development as a people. They have never enjoyed much opportunity but they have always used their limited resources to the best of their

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1. Ramon A. Mellado, Culture and Education in Puerto Rico (Rio Piedras: Bureau of Publications, 1948), p.2
2. The Pathfinding Service for the Churches, p.2

ability. Puerto Ricans during the 400 years of subjugation by Spain made their way into every European institution of learning and built up a history of their own. Yet it still holds true that Puerto Ricans have always been frustrated in their desire for progress and education. Only the few have enjoyed the blessings of the times. This is history and ought not be overlooked, especially today when we hear so much talk about the brotherhood of nations, and in our churches, about ecumenicity.

CHAPTER II

THE PERIOD OF TRANSITION

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A. Introduction

For 400 years Puerto Rico remained as a colony of Spain. Eventually the island became restless under that rule and began to demand autonomy. By the early part of the 19th century Spanish colonies in the New World were breaking away from the mother country. Venezuela revolted in 1810, and soon Mexico and other Central and South American colonies. Puerto Rico did not rebel but caught the spirit of the times and demanded more autonomy. With the proclamation of the National Constitution of 1812, Puerto Rico won the status of a province with proportional representation in the Spanish parliament. Respecting this Miss Reynolds said:

The third section of the autonomous constitution that I request you to examine specifically is that dealing with the veto power of the home government. It is found in title VII, article 43. You will note that this article provides the Governor General—the King's representative in the island—with no vote at all, but only with power to forward such legislation as he found objectionable to the Spanish Cortes or parliament. In this Cortes sat more than a dozen Puerto Ricans with full voice and vote.¹

Political organization in the island brought about new results, most important among these, the

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1. Hearings on a bill to amend the Organic Act of Puerto Rico, May 19, 1947, p. 42

Charter of Autonomy of 1897. This period then, was a period of transition all over the new world.

B. The Spanish-American War

The Spanish-American War has been regarded by the historians as a great movement of expansion on the part of the United States. Spain had been weakened by the liberation uprisings of the Latin-American colonies. Cuba was now at war with Spain for independence and Puerto Rico was on Cuba's side. Meanwhile, the United States was at work. Nichols and Nichols, the historians, give us a good picture of the situation:

Hearst published in the New York Journal, 9th of February, a stolen letter written by the Spanish minister, Enrique Deputy de Lome to a Cuban friend: "McKinley is weak and a bidder for the admiration of the crowd, besides being a would-be politician who tries to leave a door open behind himself while keeping in good terms with the jingoes of his party." This was not likely to stiffen the presidential spine against a Spanish war. Six days later the United States battleship Maine, which had been stationed at Havana harbor for reasons never made clear, was blown up, killing 260 men. Regrets of the Spanish government over this disaster, for which it apparently had no responsibility, could scarce be heard against the hysterical American cry, "Remember the Maine."

The Madrid Government, desiring peace, belatedly revoked the reconcentration orders, granted suspension of hostilities and urged the Pope to save their prestige by pleading for peace. They promised Washington to go in this direction "as far and as fast" as their public opinion permitted. But Cubans wanted no peace, and the missionary-minded American public unlike Wall Street, the

Republican high command and investors in Cuba was eager for a war of liberation. McKinley, fearful for his party leadership reported the Spanish capitulation to Congress very sketchily, and left the decision to the popular body. It passed the war resolutions of April 19, 1898, the Senate by a vote of 42-35, the House by 311-6. Thus did the leading democracy of the new world go to war against Spain as the symbol of Old World autocracy.¹

1. Puerto Rico Becomes a Possession of the United States of America

When the United States declared war against Spain the latter was already weak. Her fleet which represented her great weapon for the defense of her colonial empire had suffered severely. Therefore, the United States navy went into action and within a very short period mastered the situation. The war was of short duration. These were the results according to Nichols:

Upon the well-intentioned McKinley the imperialists concentrated their arguments, stressing civilization, morality and trade—although the Spanish government was both civilized and Christian. On these grounds he painfully reconciled himself to instructing the delegates to demand all of the Philippine Islands. Consequently, when the Treaty of Paris finally was signed, December 10th, 1898, Spain ceded all of these. With them she gave up to the United States the island of Guam near Hawaii, and the expected Caribbean areas—Puerto Rico and the few other Spanish West Indies except Cuba, over which she simply renounced sovereignty.²

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1. Nichols and Nichols, The Republic of the United States, Volume 2, p.232
2. Ibid., p. 236

Thus Puerto Rico became a possession of the United States. On July 25th, 1898 General Nelson A. Miles landed on the south coast of the island. His proclamation has become an important document. But on occasion, island leaders have quoted the proclamation to underline the contrast between American promises and American practices. The document reads as follows:

We have not come to make war upon the people of a country that for centuries has been oppressed, but on the contrary, to bring you protection, not only to yourselves, but to your property, to promote your prosperity and to bestow upon you the immunities and blessing of our liberal government.

This is not a war of devastation, but one to give to all within control of its military and naval forces the advantages and blessings of enlightened civilizations.¹

The Treaty of Paris ceding Puerto Rico to the United States was signed December 10, 1898.

2. Organization of American Rule over the Island

Rexford Guy Tugwell, an ex-Puerto Rican governor, has written an interesting book entitled, *The Stricken Land*. In fact, Dr. Tugwell's administration was one of the best the island has had since it was occupied by the United States. On the organization of American rule over the island he says:

After the occupation of Puerto Rico in 1898, military governments had been instituted for some reason or other—there had been a satisfactory local government recently formed, and there was no resistance of any account to

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1. *Puerto Rico's Unsolved Problem*, p. 37

the change in sovereignty-and, after the change to civil government under the Foraker Act of 1900, the home management of Puerto Rican affairs had simply been left in-of all places - the War Department. There it had stayed until 1934.

The leaving of colonial affairs to the War Department for thirty-four years while Puerto Ricans writhed and protested almost unnoticed, certainly without public sympathy, was not evidence of ill will, except among the lobbyists for those interests which will be furthered by neglect of Puerto Rico. It was more an evidence of a larger apathy and confusion. Foreigners did not interest us. It was true that Puerto Ricans had been made citizens in 1917 on the only occasion when serious revision of the Organic Act was undertaken after 1900, but it was done in sudden realization of strategic possibilities, not as part of a policy, and, significantly enough, in time of war when Puerto Rican loyalty was important. Americans generally had not come to think of Puerto Ricans as real citizens-rather, when they thought of them at all, as citizens of a sort of second class.¹

Dr. Tugwell has made a great admission here. He has tried to give the American public a clear picture of the poor governmental set-up that has been existing in the island since it came into the possession of the United States.

Puerto Ricans have suffered a great deal under this kind of government. Dr. C. Manly Morton, a missionary in the island for more than twenty years, writes:

The political leaders we have sent to Puerto Rico to represent us have in most cases

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1. The Stricken Land, p. 70

been inexperienced, inept, and bungling. Our policy of paying political debts with such appointive positions as that of governor of Puerto Rico has failed to secure the highest type of men for the position. Even when a good man was appointed, that system usually removed him before he had been on the island long enough to understand its problems thoroughly and work out a practical program for their wisest and best solution.¹

Dr. Morton holds then that if one wants to get a good understanding of the problems of Puerto Rico one must be well acquainted with the facts and that takes time and experience. What should we say then respecting those reporters who visit the island on tourist trips, spend three days in Puerto Rico, and come back writing series of articles for public consumption, pretending to know all the facts and even suggesting answers to the great questions on the problems of the Puerto Ricans? Dr. Morton offers a good word of advice when he says:

Certainly our government can and must do much more. The fact that we took the island and brought it under our flag without even a "with your permission" to the Puerto Rican people definitely places upon us a serious obligation which we cannot throw off just because the island has more serious problems than we anticipated and because it is a drain on our national treasury.²

An article on the problem of the Puerto Ricans was entitled, They Flee Dark Future in Warm Sun to Become

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1. Kingdom Building in Puerto Rico, p. 103
2. Ibid., p. 104

City's Problem Brood,¹

Another article reads:

Many of the Puerto Ricans now pouring into New York City are illiterate. Many speak no English. All of them are desperately poor. Almost, without exception these new comers squeeze into East Harlem, complicating already critical housing and relief situation.²

3. Puerto Ricans in the New Government

The Foraker Act, known as the First Organic Act of Puerto Rico was passed by Congress in 1900. This Act replaced the military government established at the time of occupation by a civil government. Under this Act Puerto Ricans did not become citizens of the United States.

The governor, other key officials, and the members of the upper house of the Legislature were appointed by the President of the United States. In 1917, Congress passed the Jones Act which is the present Organic Act of Puerto Rico. By this Act Puerto Ricans became citizens of the United States and were given the right to elect the members of both houses of the Insular Legislature. Under this Act the appointment of Governor, Attorney General, Auditor, Commissioner of Education, and Judges of the Supreme Court was made by the President of the United States.

How much participation did the Puerto Ricans

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1. Sunday News, October 12, 1947 by Mary Niklas and Henry Lee
2. From an article which appeared in Life Magazine August 25th, 1947, p. 25

have in the new government? Puerto Rico Handbook states this:

The Governor-the chief executive-holds office at the pleasure of the President. The Governor may veto legislation passed by the Insular Legislature. If, however, a bill is passed over his veto by a two thirds majority of both houses, it goes to the President of the United States for final action. Congress may annul any act of the Insular Legislature-a right it has not yet exercised.

Puerto Ricans living in Puerto Rico do not vote in national elections, but Puerto Ricans who have established residence in a state vote under the laws of that state.

Puerto Rico elects no Senators or Representatives to the Federal Congress. It is represented in Washington by a Resident Commissioner, with the status and duties of a Congressman, but without the right to vote.

Senators and Representatives in the Insular Legislature are elected every four years- the date of their election corresponding to that of the general (Presidential) election on the Continent. The island is divided into seven Senatorial Districts, each having two Senators, and 35 Legislative Districts, each of which elects one Representative. There are, in addition, five Senators at large, making a total of 19, and four Representatives at large, making a total of 39.

The Insular Government is organized into seven Departments- Justice, Health, Interior, Education, Treasury, Agriculture and Commerce, and Labor. With the exception of the Commissioner of Education and the Attorney General, who is head of the Department of Justice, the Commissioners of these Departments are appointed by the Governor with the consent of the Insular Senate.¹

There has been a new amendment to the Organic Act by which the Governor is elected by the people, the

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1. Puerto Rico Handbook, pp. 18, 19.

first elected Governor being Don Luis Muñoz Marín, elected 1948.

4. Economic Position of Puerto Ricans

It is generally admitted that the great problem of Puerto Rico is the economic. Dr. Morton in his book says:

Economically, Puerto Rico has before it a seemingly impossible task. In order to maintain even the minimum American standards of living, an agricultural people must have seven acres of arable land per person. In Puerto Rico there is only four-tenths of an acre per person.¹

Puerto Rico Handbook gives the following information:

One Insular and two Federal Government Agencies have estimated the annual cost per family for minimum living standards. The highest estimate was \$1,000 and the lowest \$675. In contrast, all available data indicate that the average annual family income for 85 per cent of Puerto Rican families is considerably less than \$400 a year.²

Respecting the problem of population Puerto Rico Handbook states:

Puerto Rico is one of the most densely populated agrarian economies in the world. In 1940, the population was nearly 2,000,000 or 546.1 persons per square mile, as compared with 278.5 in 1899, when the first United States census was taken. At the present rate of net population increase, which is between 50,000 and 60,000 a year, Puerto Rico will have 3,000,000 people to support by 1965. The birth rate is very high (42.3 per thousand), and the death rate, although still high, is constantly falling (from an average of 19.8 per thousand for the period 1935-39 to about 14.1 per thousand for 1945).³

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1. Kingdom Building in Puerto Rico, p. 104
2. Puerto Rico Handbook, p. 23
3. Ibid, p. 23

Newspapers and magazines have been very busy with the economic problem of the Puerto Ricans since 1947. An article published in 1947 said this:

Puerto Ricans are leaving their Caribbean Island for a single compelling reason. If they stay there, they face unemployment, disease and semi-starvation. Generations of ruthless exploitation of the land for the sake of one crop, sugar, have reduced Puerto Rican economy to beggary.¹

The New York World-Telegram published another series of three articles by John Bell in which the question Why Puerto Ricans come to New York? was being discussed. Why did they come? the writer said:

Puerto Rico is owned by a few corporations. Where can you go? What can you find to do? With degrees from the university I had to shine shoes. Sugar and rum. That's all.²

When Mr. Millard E. Tydings of Maryland, chairman of the Territories and Possessions Committee of the Senate of the United States, asked for information on the Economy of the island, the faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Puerto Rico made a study which was submitted for consideration. The opening paragraph of the section entitled Actual Basis of the Puerto Rican Economy, reads as follows:

What Puerto Rico needs most in the

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1. Puerto Rican Migrants Jam New York. Article in Life Magazine, August 25, 1947
2. New York Times, May 1, 1947

economic order is to secure means to ensure to the mass of the population a higher standard of living. In spite of the improvement made in the island along this line since the American Occupation, the majority of the inhabitants still lack means to feed and clothe themselves, to provide themselves with decent living quarters, to provide an elemental education for their children and a minimum security for old age.¹

We find then that Puerto Rico has a serious economic problem. The agricultural economy of the island has become a one-crop economy. The population increased at a ratio of 50,000 to 60,000 per year. A few American corporations are in control of the economy of the island. The sugar industry in the island operates on a quota basis. The allotment set for Puerto Rico in 1935 was 845,000 tons per year, or about 200,000 tons less than the island was producing at that time. Federal laws imposed upon the island also deprive Puerto Rico of considerable income for jobs for the unemployed. Here is one example of this.

In the Federal courts Puerto Rico is challenging the constitutionality of the clause in the 1948 Sugar Act which permits the island to sell only 126,000 tons of refined sugar in continental United States. The remaining 784,000 tons allowed under the quota must be sold as raw sugar to be refined on the mainland. Economists have

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1. Translated Spanish into English from *La Economía de Puerto Rico*; A study made by the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Puerto Rico, Washington, March 1946, pp. 2,3.

estimated that refining the entire quota on the island would add from \$20,000,000 to \$30,000,000 to the annual income of Puerto Rico, and that it would give direct and indirect employment to some 4,000 Puerto Ricans whose earnings would support at least 17,000 dependents.¹

C. Changes with the New Order

With the change of masters Puerto Rico experienced changes in many directions also.

1. New Blending of Cultures

Writing on this subject Amy Oakley, in a book entitled Behold the West Indies, says:

Old Spain, modern American meet on the incomparable island of Puerto Rico. Is it not in part owing to this union of opposites that there begins to emerge the as yet diaphanous and shadowy vision of an eagerly awaited heir- a Pan-American- in whose hands may rest the future well-being of our battered world? Geographically, politically, intellectually, there seems no adequate reason to contradict the ardent plea put forth by the advocates of the University of Puerto Rico that theirs is a unique opportunity for the reconciliation of varying view points, for the fostering of human advancement, through the cradling of both cultures common to dwellers of our Western Hemisphere.²

A missionary writes on the same subject and says:

For forty years the lifeblood of the United States has been flowing in the veins of Puerto Rico, and its ideology and ways of life have been penetrating island society. The constant travel between the two countries, the

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1. Kingdom Building in Puerto Rico, pp. 106, 107
2. Behold the West Indies; Incomparable Puerto Rico, Chapter VI, p. 189

presence of a Puerto Rican colony of approximately 180,000 people in New York City. (this figure applies to 1942 when this book was written), the education of Puerto Rican youth in United States colleges, stimulate the cultural fusion of the two countries. The island administrative system, the courts, banking, commerce, and industry are organized on the continental pattern. The shops, motion pictures, radio, sports, transportation, and the countless small gadgets and commodities imported from the United States which find their way into the homes and into the daily life of the island are changing the standards and enlarging the wants of Puerto Rico.¹

It is also held that the University of Puerto Rico has played a great part in this new blending of cultures.

Puerto Rico Handbook states:

An institution of the Continental type, situated in a Spanish-speaking community, the University of Puerto Rico presents a unique stage for the meeting of the Continental and Latin-American cultures. Each year lecturers, professors and students come from various countries in North, South and Central America, while representatives of the University regularly go abroad to study and teach.²

Another factor which accounts to a great extent for this new cultural trend is the intermarriage situation. Continental Americans have been marrying Puerto Rican women in no small numbers. They are raising their families in the island where trends of both cultures are assimilated by the new generation. Until two years ago all subjects from the sixth grade on were taught in English in accordance

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1. The Church in Puerto Rico's Dilemma, p. 3
2. Puerto Rico Handbook, p. 17

with the regulations of the new school system. There are several other factors which have bearing on this condition and which the reader will discover in the development of this work.

2. New Institutions

With the coming of the Continental Americans into the island there came also their institutions. These came to replace the old institutions patterned after the traditional Spanish institutions.

In politics the party system grew up rapidly following the pattern of the political parties in the United States.

In the field of education a system of public schools was gradually developed. Garver and Fincher speak on the public school system as follows:

A bureau of education was established by the military governor, and school laws were promulgated. These provided for some measure of local autonomy, and stipulated that free education was to be provided for all children between the ages of six and eighteen. Many teachers, most of them women, came from the mainland to serve in the Puerto Rican schools. Few if any of them knew Spanish.¹

Institutions of higher learning came also into active life. The University of Puerto Rico which now has more than 7,500 students ranks in first place. The Institute of Tropical Agriculture and the Federal

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1. Puerto Rico Unsolved Problem, p. 82

Agricultural Experimental Station, both at Mayaguez are also important institutions for research work in the field of tropical agriculture. Private colleges such as the Polytechnic Institute of Puerto Rico at San Germán and the Colegio del Sagrado Corazón, (the College of the Sacred Heart) at Santurce, have been great assets to the island as Liberal Arts colleges. Vocational schools have also been established and there is a great emphasis on further development of this type of institution.

Along governmental lines some Insular agencies have come into existence. Most significant among these are: the Aqueduct and Sewer Service, The Communications Authority, the General Supplies Administration, the Land Authority, the Minimum Wage Board, The Public Service Commission, the Civil Service Commission, the Puerto Rico Agricultural Company, The Puerto Rico Development Bank, the Puerto Rico Industrial Development Company, the Transportation Authority, and the Water Resources Authority. (For further information on the functions of these agencies see Puerto Rico Handbook, 1947 pp. 19-20).

Health Institutions have been organized also with significant results. At the top among these I would say is the School of Tropical Medicine under Columbia University. There are also District hospitals created under both Insular and Federal laws which render a great service to the poor in particular. A school of medicine

will open its doors by September 1950.

3. Beginning of Protestant Work in the Island

Protestant work in the island did not have its beginning with the coming of the Americans to Puerto Rico. In an article entitled, *The First Evangelical Witness in Puerto* we read this:

It was not with the coming of the Americans to Puerto Rico, as many think and have been made to believe, that the Evangelical work had its beginning in Puerto Rico. It is the city of Aguadilla the cradle of Protestantism in Puerto Rico. The great leader was Don Antonio Badillo Hernández. His first contact with the Protestant faith came as a result of his travels to the Virgin Islands. There he met an Englishman by the name of Hellinger who became Mr. Badillo's friend. He accompanied Mr. Badillo back to Puerto Rico where he bought a farm still called "Hacienda del Inglés". He gave a Bible to Mr. Badillo and by 1865 they both were preaching the Gospel in the island with great persecution. When the Americans came to Puerto Rico, they found groups of believers already established there through the work of Mr. Badillo.¹

4. American Missions Start Work

As soon as the Americans set foot on the new Caribbean possession of the United States, representatives of different American organizations began to make preparations for new adventure in a new land. Among these organizations we find American Missions which lost no

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1. Information condensed from an article which appeared in *Ebenezer*, a paper put out by the Disciples of Christ in N.Y.C. The article is entitled, *The First Evangelical Witness in Puerto Rico*, June 1948. Similar information appeared in *Puerto Rico Evangélico* March, 1949. The N.Y. Bible Society Bulletin of February 1950 also refers to this historical fact.

time and went into the island as a new mission field with significant possibilities for the evangelization of Latin-America.

5. First Denominations Working in the Island

In reference to the first denominations that took part in this new enterprise Dr. C. Manly Morton writes:

The Treaty of Paris was signed on December 10, 1898. By April, Lutherans, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, Congregationalists, United Brethern, and Disciples of Christ were permanently on the field. Some of these bodies were actually at work before the signing of the formal treaty and almost all had sent explorers to study the field before that event.¹

6. The Institutional Work

Protestant organizations went to Puerto Rico as pioneering institutions. Soon after they had studied the new field they discovered the great needs there. They began by organizing orphanages, homes for girls, dispensaries, and farm projects. As the work developed some of these institutions developed into newer and more advanced centers. Others completed their tasks and were supplanted by something else. Some of the most important ones are the following:

August 1, 1900 an orphanage opened under the

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1. Kingdom Building in Puerto Rico, p. 13

Disciples of Christ at Bayamón. This was an institution for girls. Another such institution for boys came into existence by 1906. A most interesting and successful work was done by medical doctors who established dispensaries for the poor.

7. Other Fields of Action

The institutional work was extended to other fields of action. A good example of this is the Polytechnic Institute of Puerto Rico. J. Merly Davis refers to the Polytechnic Institute and says:

This outstanding institution of college grade in Puerto Rico is notable not only for the quality of its academic work and for its emphasis upon practical preparation for citizenship. This preparation includes instruction in a vocational interests, industrial and agricultural skills, and the cultivation of democratic social attitudes.¹

Interesting also is the needlework industry organized by the Episcopalian Mission of Mayaguez in 1932. This gives needy women of the community an opportunity to work six hours a day and earn from \$4.00 to \$6.00 a week.

The Presbyterian Board of National Missions opened another interesting institution about 33 years ago as a church social settlement called Marina Neighborhood House. The Ryder Memorial Hospital Farm Project under the United Evangelical Church is also a great asset to

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1. The Church in Puerto Rico's Dilemma, p. 47

the general work of the church. Several other institutions of this nature have been organized in the island.¹

D. Progress of Mission Work in the Island

If there is a place of which we can speak about progress in Mission work it is Puerto Rico. Mr. Alberto Rembao gives us a good picture of this in one of his most recent books. He writes:

Only yesterday (March 13, 1949) 50,000 evangelicals congregated themselves- well, well counted- in an athletic park of the city of San Juan, Puerto Rico, to celebrate the first 50th anniversary of the arrival of the Gospel to the island.

There were 50,000 delegates from the bordering zones. Most of them were adults. This is to indicate that the children of the Sunday Schools were not there; and that these are always, in each local church, more than the number of adults. It is to be calculated that a larger number, by far larger than 50,000 stayed in their towns and villages on account of transportation; and should be above that figure. This way a very modest number is given of 150,000 evangelicals of "Bible", hymnal and collection. Fifty years ago there were no Evangelicals in the island; they have emerged at the proportion of 3,000 per year. One would say that the "heresy" has been very well received there. The bordering population is not counted, of the friends, sympathizers and adherents, who are evangelical in potency, candidates to the conversion. The evangelical community of Puerto Rico- the total of the people exposed to the influence of the Bible- can be calculated at 400,000, in a population which totals 2,000,000, in other words, a 20 per cent. This way perhaps it is true that Borinquen be the country in hispanic-America with the largest evangelical population, i.e., in proportion to its population. ²

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1. For further information on this see Davis' The Church in Puerto Rico's Dilemma, pp. 47-56
2. A literal translation from Spanish into English from Discurso a La Nación Evangélica; p.74

1. Evangelistic Work

The missionaries who first set foot on Puerto Rico were characterized by their evangelistic fervor and passion. The results were very significant. Davis gives the following statistical report as of the year 1942.

The following table indicates the comparative strength and nature of nine denominational Churches of Puerto Rico: 1

	Organized Churches	Communi- cant Member- Ship	Constit tuency	Candidates for Baptism
Baptist	47	5,046	15,000	507
Disciples	28	4,000	8,500	
Episcopal	21	3,500	7,300	
Lutheran	14	1,030	5,000	223
Methodist	26	3,120	12,000	1,420
Presbyterian ..	40	4,734	13,443	259
United Evangelical ...	32	4,646	10,000	413
Seventh-day Adventist	25	1,400	3,000	250
Pentecostal ...	86	4,646	7,611	1,982
Totals	<u>319</u>	<u>32,122</u>	<u>81,854</u>	<u>5,054</u>

The figures given in this report cover until the year 1942. Since then considerable progress has been noticed. These figures could easily be doubled and still would come short of the actual position of the

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1. The Church in Puerto Rico's Dilemma, p. 14

evangelical church in the island.

2. Educational Work

As we have stated before, denominational bodies working in the island took upon themselves great responsibilities along educational lines. Several elementary schools were established in order to help some of the children who could not attend public schools. For the training of ministers the most important step was taken in 1919 when the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico opened its doors to ministerial students. Cooperating in its founding and in its support were the Baptist, Disciples of Christ, Congregational, Methodist, Presbyterian, and United Brethren Churches. This seminary is a member of the Association of Theological Seminaries in the United States, and its work is accepted at par by such highly accredited institutions as Union Seminary, Drew Seminary, the Divinity School of Chicago University. This seminary trains ministers for all over Latin America.

3. Social Work

Although the church in Puerto Rico has exercised influence in every sphere of life it should be said that the social work of the church has been very poor up to the present. The first missionaries who went there were primarily interested in the evangelistic phase of the work. Today as churches begin to expand and as the demands for social activities increase the church needs to plan for

this too. Honest efforts are being made and I am sure something practical is going to materialize toward this end.

E. SUMMARY

Puerto Rico has gone through a period of transition which is very significant. With the new comers there came their institutions also. There has been a blending of cultures and consequently the results are apparent. Most important of all has been the organization of the Evangelical Church which has gathered wonderful results. The church has been influential in every phase of life and represents a great asset for Puerto Rico and for all the Latin American countries.

CHAPTER III

**PUERTO RICANS BEGIN TO LOOK
AT THE UNITED STATES
AS A LAND OF PROMISE**

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PUERTO RICANS BEGIN TO LOOK AT THE UNITED STATES AS A LAND OF PROMISE

A. Introduction

Psychologically Puerto Ricans are no different from the other peoples of the earth. Since the days of colonization this country has been looked upon as a land of promise. From every corner of the world people have come to this land. They have come and helped build up this nation. Puerto Ricans have come to this country too. This chapter will aim at answering a very popular question at present. Why Puerto Ricans migrate to the United States?

B. Direct Contact With Continental United States

The first governor of Puerto Rico under the Spanish rule, Juan Ponce de León, was the discoverer of Florida. Since early colonization time then, there was contact with the Continental United States.

1. First to come

Prior to the United States' acquisition of Puerto Rico, few Puerto Ricans came to this country. Their main connections were with Spain and with the nations surrounding Spain in the Old World. Those Puerto Ricans who longed for higher education went to European Universities.

When the United States took over, a shift of interest became apparent. Puerto Ricans began to look at the United States as a land of promise. But it was not until 1917, when Puerto Ricans were granted citizenship by the United States that they started to come to New York City in considerable numbers. The Pathfinding report gives this account:

When Puerto Ricans were granted citizenship in 1917, a few took advantage of their new status by coming to New York City and settling near the docks, in the Red Hook section of Brooklyn.¹

2. World-War I

The Selective Service Act of the United States in World-War I applied to Puerto Rico too. Thousands of Puerto Ricans were enlisted in the armed forces of the nation. Many served abroad and became acquainted with American soldiers and with their customs. This seems to have opened a door for Puerto Ricans to emigrate to the United States. A good number of Puerto Ricans came also to work in factories and for agricultural tasks during this period.

3. Puerto Ricans Find New York City a City of Refuge

New York City has been a city of refuge for people from all parts of the world. It has become the true melting pot in the New World. One can hardly hear

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1. The Pathfinding Service for the Churches, p.4

of any spoken language that is not heard in New York. The Report of the Bureau of Applied Social Research of Columbia University states:

The New York into which the Puerto Ricans come is a city built by migrations. Time and again its streets and slums have been flooded by people with strange customs from foreign lands.¹

When Puerto Ricans arrive in New York they find their relatives and friends who have preceded them and have settled in the city. These speak their own language, preserve the customs of the native land and are willing to cooperate with the newcomers. Commercial enterprises, religious and secular organizations under the leadership of Puerto Ricans also stimulate migration.

In a report of June 24, 1947 the Pathfinding report gives this account:

There is a Twentieth-century air-borne migration under way. For \$30 a Puerto Rican can fly from the world's most crowded agricultural community to the world's most crowded metropolis. Some 35,000 (estimates vary) did so last year. East Harlem with 40-50,000 is their major area of settlement, although there are several other large concentrations in the city. The Puerto Rican comes here as an American citizen by birth. But he speaks, reads and writes in Spanish; his English is usually poor, his skills are agricultural, and his constitution is accustomed to the semi-tropics. In East Harlem he crowds into an apartment with friends or relatives.²

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1. The Puerto Ricans of New York City, p. 40
2. Adventures in East Harlem; A Report by the Pathfinding Service, June 24, 1947, p.2

4. Concentration in the city

Puerto Ricans generally concentrate in New York City. This is their city of refuge, they think. Efforts have been made to encourage migration to areas of the United States where chances of employment are better than in the city. So far it has been futile because the new arrivals wish to join early migrants in communities predominantly Puerto Ricans. The following table gives us a clearer view on this:

The extent of concentration in New York City may be seen dramatically by comparing those in New York with those in all other cities listed in table. The country's largest city contained 54 per cent of the Puerto Ricans in all twenty cities in 1910, 79 per cent in 1920 and 95 per cent in 1940.

Puerto Ricans (born in Puerto Rico) in United States Cities of over 100,000-1910, 1920 and 1940

	<u>1910</u>	<u>1920</u>	<u>1940</u>
New York, N. Y.	554	7,264	61,463
San Francisco, California	213	474	603
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	64	319	440
Washington, D. C.	48	148	327
Chicago, Illinois	15	110	240
Baltimore, Maryland	44	91	231
Los Angeles, California	10	101	212
Oakland, California	10	101	194
New Orleans, Louisiana	15	177	153
Detroit, Michigan	4	59	153
Newark, New Jersey	5	2	146
Boston, Massachusetts	10	67	91
Buffalo, N. Y.	12	56	62
Cleveland, Ohio	3	26	61
Yonkers, N. Y.	1	13	55
San Antonio, Texas	6	6	53
Houston, Texas	0	3	50
St. Louis, Missouri	6	59	50
Tampa, Florida	0	94	123
Jersey City, New Jersey	3	56	106

Compiled from reports of the 13th, 14th and 16th Censuses of the United States.¹

5. Settling in Different Sections of the City

Puerto Ricans in New York City have not concentrated in one single area. The report of the Welfare Council informs that Puerto Ricans in the City have settled in five different sections. This is their report:

Neighborhoods in which the population is predominantly Puerto Rican. (1) East Harlem (2) the South Bronx (3) The Red Hook-Gowanus and Greenpoint-Williamsburg districts of Brooklyn (4) the Upper West Side districts, and (5) the Riverside district of Manhattan.²

As to the number of Puerto Ricans in each one of these sections we do not have exact figures. However, the school enrollment in different localities could give us a good indication. The Pathfinding report gives the following data:

Public School enrollment may be taken as indicative of the total distribution of the city's larger Puerto Rican population, their residence by boroughs would be some what as shown in this table.³

Public School Enrollment of Children whose fathers were born in Puerto Rico, and Estimated Distribution of Puerto Rican Population of New York City, by Boroughs, 1947

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1. The Puerto Ricans of New York City, p. 78
2. The Report of the Welfare Council of the City of New York on Puerto Ricans in N.Y.C., p. 16
3. Pathfinding Report, p. 5

<u>Borough</u>	<u>Number of Schools</u>	<u>Number of Schools with Puerto Ricans Enrolled</u>	<u>Puerto Rican Enrollment</u>	<u>Per-Cent of Total</u>	<u>Estimated Puerto Rican Population</u>	
					<u>Low Estimate</u>	<u>High Estimate</u>
Brooklyn	234	167	4,703	18.9	43,500	64,200
Manhattan	125	121	12,082	48.3	112,000	164,000
Bronx	116	93	7,680	30.8	71,000	105,000
Queens	152	102	452	1.8	4,000	6,100
Richmond	39	19	62	0.2	500	700
Total	666	502	24,989	100.0	231,000	340,000

We must take into consideration that these figures represent up to 1947 only.

6. World-War II and Effects upon Puerto Ricans

The years that followed World-War II climaxed the movement of Puerto Ricans into New York City. About 75,000 Puerto Ricans served in the armed forces of the United States. Those who returned to the island sought for jobs but could not find them. The only solution to the problems of many was this; let us go to New York.

Airplane companies operating from New York to Puerto Rico and vice-versa, charged as low as \$35 one way. Passengers who could not afford to pay this amount in advance could arrange for payments on installment basis after they reached the United States. Unemployment in the island reached such a proportion that people found no other alternative but to fly to the United States. Describing this mass migration into the city, Allan Keller of the World-Telegram wrote:

By plane and by ship thousands of Puerto Ricans are migrating to this city. This great mass movement of people seeking a better life multiplies the serious troubles of a metropolis fighting disease, overcrowding, joblessness and crime.¹

Unemployment then is the main reason for this great migration. As citizens of the United States there were no restrictions on their entering the country. For the Puerto Ricans, this was not so with other countries.

7. Steady Migration on the Increase

Records of the Immigration and Naturalization Services of the United States Department of Justice show the following figures on net immigration from Puerto Rico to the United States in the first six months of 1947:²

January	2,779
February	2,696
March	3,702
April	3,800
May	4,251
June	4,553

The actual high estimate of Puerto Ricans in the city as regarded by social agencies of the city reaches 350,000. But the New York Times gave the following picture in January 12, 1947:

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1. First article from a series of eight published by the New York World-Telegram October, 1947 by Alan Keller. Migrants Find Even More Misery in City. New York no Heaven for Refugees from Want.
2. Pathfinding Report, p. 4

1,500 a Week From Island are Arriving in City and Social Agencies Map Action. An estimated 350,000 Americans of Puerto Rican birth now live here.¹

There seem to be contradictions as to figures for the New York Times comes back in 1949 with this:

It is the Puerto Ricans of whom we speak. There are an estimated 350,000 of them in New York now and they continue to come in at the rate of 500 a week.²

In the Crusader, The Northern Baptist Magazine we read this:

The Puerto Rican population of the New York area is estimated at up to 350,000-with hundreds more coming each week. To the already overcrowded tenement districts they add a further load and their new lot is a doubtful improvement.³

Although most figures point to 350,000 we must realize that the same figures were given in 1947. The migratory movement has been on the increase. At the rate of 500 per month, the 26 months from 1947 to the present will increase the number by 13,000 which gives a total of 363,000. The figure of 500 per month is very modest when we compare it to the figures given by the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization Service of the United States Department of Justice which gives an

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1. New York Times, January 12, 1947
2. Ibid., October 4, 1949
3. Article in the Crusader, the Northern Baptist Magazine, Volume 4, No. 7, December 1949, p.8

average of 3,630.17 per month. If we consider this figure as a steady number that will increase the number by 94,384, bringing the total to 444,384. Allowing that 25% of the total number that came after 1947 have gone back to the island, we still have 420,588 Puerto Ricans in New York City. Some have put the number as high as 600,000. We must take into consideration that there are in New York City a good number of Spanish-speaking people who are not Puerto Ricans. These may add up to 50,000. If this holds true we could be not far from the truth if we estimate the total population of Spanish-speaking people in New York City at close to the half-million mark.

C. Why Puerto Ricans Migrate

Newspapers and magazines have been giving a great deal of attention to this question. But some of this information has been misleading and has done real harm to the cause of social relations in the present situation. Puerto Ricans have good reasons for migrating to the United States.

1. The Economic Factor

Dr. Rexford G. Tugwell writes a book which he entitles, "The Stricken Land". This title is suggestive of a condition of real poverty. The World-Telegram referring to this poverty-stricken country wrote:

The most incredible thing about Puerto Rico to the mainland visitor is that the American flag flies over it. Most of the things that banner stands for, most of the victories and social advances won under its proud colors are unknown to the two and a quarter million citizens living on the island. No continental American can feel proud that this disease-ridden, poverty-stricken territory exists in the shadow of the familiar Stars and Stripes.¹

Another article from the New York Times entitled, Officials Worried by Migrant Influx, gave this account:

The Puerto Rican Government Information Bureau here, 2 Park Avenue, explained many Puerto Ricans came here because life in Puerto Rico is not much above starvation level. About 85 per cent of the island's 400,000 families have an income of only a few hundred dollars a year.²

Puerto Rico, an agricultural country has become a one-crop economy, sugar. This change has not been a blessing to the country. In the report of the Bureau of Applied Social Research we read this:

The preamble to the Land Law of 1941 summarizes the case against the dominant crop in the following words:

The sugar latifundia has spread its tentacles within the vast area of its dominions, to the operation of commercial and industrial establishments, and of grocery and general stores; has limited the circulation of money, has caused the

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1. Fifth of a series of eight articles in the New York World-Telegram, October 1947 by Allan Keller
2. New York Times, August 2, 1947

annihilation of communal life in many of the urban centers; has made it impossible for thousands of human beings to be the owners of even the lot where their homes are situated, all to the consequent unbalancing of the economic structure of the Island and to the grave endangering of the peace, and tranquility, the dignity, and the economic and social freedom of the people of Puerto Rico.¹

Puerto Ricans then could be considered as a frustrated people economically. If they stay in the island they are condemned to starve with their families.

2. Standard of Living in the Island

Available data indicates that the average annual family income for 85 percent of Puerto Rican families is considerably less than \$400 a year. The report of the Bureau of Applied Social Research offers some information along this line:

Weekly earnings in Puerto Rican agriculture averaged \$5.00, and in manufacturing, \$12.00, in March, 1945. Weekly earnings in manufacturing in the United States at the same time were \$47.50. Prices on the island are approximately the same as they are in New York City. Obviously, the "average" Puerto Rican has great difficulty in making ends meet.²

When people look at facts without prejudice it becomes easier for them to understand others' problems. The case of the Puerto Ricans is not simple.

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1. Puerto Ricans in New York City, pp., 9, 10
2. Ibid., p. 9

3. Political Unrest

Politically Puerto Rico seems to be the unlucky spot in the Latin-American world. Its life has been lived under the shadow of that cloudy system known as "colonialism." The machinery which has ruled over the island has been that machinery which has fitted the wishes and purposes of the masters. This has created political unrest in the island and more than that, division in the family with all its consequences. It has also lowered the morale and the patriotic sentiment of the people. Colonialism becomes a sort of anesthetic which makes people dormant and ends by crippling their optimism and creating the consequent fatalistic state of society. According to the report of the Bureau of Applied Social Research of Columbia University the political condition of Puerto Rico is as follows:

Puerto Rico, since 1898, has presumably been governed "for" the people, but in important spheres of life not "of" or "by" the people. For instance, the crucial post of commissioner of education has been vacant since 1945 and there is no likelihood that it will be filled during 1948. The commissioner is one of the insular officials appointed by the president of the United States "with the advice and consent of the Senate." Two presidential nominees have been unable to get over the hurdle of senatorial confirmation.

A measure of autonomy within the Spanish Empire had been granted in 1897. The American occupation came before it had

been put into effect. Civil government under United States control was installed in 1900 and broadened in 1917 when Puerto Ricans were made citizens of the United States, but without the privilege of voting for the president. Local self-government was extended somewhat. The president of the United States appointed the governor, the auditor, the attorney-general, the commissioner of education, and the justices of the insular supreme court. Jurisdiction over the island continued under the War Department until 1934 when it was transferred to the Department of Interior. An elected resident commissioner "sits" in Congress with a voice, but no vote. Laws passed by the legislature may be vetoed by the governor, the president (if a gubernatorial veto has been overridden by the legislature) or reversed by congressional action.

The island's affairs are subject to the discussions of a number of federal employees more than a thousand miles across the ocean. Few of them are acquainted with the problems at first hand, and only a handful spend their full time on insular affairs. Government agencies dealing with problems involving 140 million peoples on the continent have difficulty adjusting their thoughts to the different needs of two million islanders. The congressional committees which handle Puerto Rican affairs are composed of men whose first responsibility is to their own constituents--who can vote. Our governmental machinery has not lent itself to the successful governing of a colony. The United States has no apparent Puerto Rican policy.¹

Looking at facts as they are, who would deny that a condition as this frustrates people politically?

But more sad than this is the internal unrest which springs out in a colonial set-up. On the one hand you find the professional politician interested only in

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1. The Puerto Ricans of New York City, pp. 11, 12.

his own personal interests and consequently in the defense of his master's interests, for it is only thus that his interests are guaranteed. On the other hand you find the masses of the people at the mercy of this type of politician who entertains them with utopic stories that never have any realization. You find then the society of the exploiter and his victims. The result is hatred and maladjustment in every sphere of life.

4. Religious Disappointment

Another characteristic of the Puerto Ricans whom we meet in New York City right after their arrival here is religious dissatisfaction. If you ask any one what is his or her religion the answer will be, I am Catholic. But if you ask a second question, when did you visit church last? in most cases you will get this answer; I do not remember. They have been nominal Catholics by the rite of infant baptism but they have no conscience of religion. In fact they ignore what the word "Catholic" means.

The Rt. Rev. Canon Luis Alberto Tapia made a survey of conditions of Puerto Ricans in Brooklyn and explains the religious condition of Puerto Ricans in the city as follows:

Although Catholicism is deeply rooted among the people, the vast majority, for want of proper instruction, are little more than nominal Catholics. Possessed of a long and honorable Catholic history which they are

anxious to preserve at all costs, too many Puerto Ricans are Catholic by tradition and not by conviction.¹

In proof of what Rev. Tapia affirms here he gives an interesting account of the study that was made in order to reach this conclusion. He states:

During the course of the visitation the following statistics were gleaned: Although 95% of the Spanish-speaking people are Catholic, 80% do not practice their religion. The usual reasons given for non-attendance at church were: language difficulty, care of children and no connection with their parish church. When asked if they would like to see a Spanish priest or social worker 85% responded in the affirmative with enthusiasm. All of the families visited listen to Catholic radio programs, and are anxious for religious programs and services in Spanish.

Without comment we give the following results:

Religious Status of Spanish-speaking Families in Epiphany Parish.

	# Adults	## Children
Not Baptized	7	32
No First Communion	51	35
Catholic Marriage	80	-
Civil Marriage	246	-
No Marriage	64	-

Adults interviewed number 390

Children's ages range from 10 to 18 years.²

What Roman Catholic priests find here in New York City seems to be a reflection of what they themselves

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1. Report made under Catholic Charities, p.1
2. Ibid., p. 2

have sowed in the island. Dr. C. Manly Morton, speaking on the religious needs of the Puerto Ricans and the approach that Protestantism must follow in the island in order to be successful, gives us a good insight when he says:

Unless Protestantism has something to offer to the Puerto Rican which is different from, and practically superior to, that which the Roman Catholic church has offered it has little hope of gaining more than a very nominal acceptance among the people.¹

Catholicism in Puerto Rico and all over Latin-America is different from Catholicism in the United States. The church there is not too interested in ministering to the people. On the other hand she puts the emphasis on administration. The church is very rich while the people are extremely poor. The Church has become the refuge of the high class rather than the sanctuary for the humble soul. The theory that the ends justify the means still holds true for her.

In matters of doctrine and morals the Catholic church cares little in those places. In fact she sanctions gambling such as public lotteries and gives very little attention to ethical living. The sacraments of the church will do for everything. Her approach is dogmatic rather

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1. Kingdom Building in Puerto Rico, pp. 108, 109

than doctrinal. There is no effort to make the people renounce their false beliefs and superstitions. This explains why we find in New York so many Puerto Ricans who claim to be Roman Catholic while at the same time they are Spiritualists. The religious condition pictured here shows reason for disappointment if not frustration.

The Pathfinding report points to some of these religious deficiencies when it states:

The religious culture is typical of the Latin-American countries; it is that version of Roman Catholicism which is characterized by authoritarianism, ritualism, and a strong mixture of Indian superstition. Priests have for centuries been supplied from Spain and more recently from Latin-American countries, but there is almost no native priesthood. Only recently, under the pressure of competition from Protestant missions, has the Catholic Church shown signs of an awakening social conscience.

United States Protestant missions in 1949 will celebrate their 50th year of work in Puerto Rico. A survey in 1938-9 showed nearly 94% of the population identifying itself as Catholic, 4% Protestant, and 2% Spiritualist. But 81.3% of the Protestants said they attend church, as compared with only 62% of the Catholics. Roman Catholicism here, as elsewhere in Latin-America, represents on the whole a traditional rather than a voluntary affiliation.¹

The Protestant Church has come up against these religious problems in the island but the effort has not

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1. The Pathfinding Report, p. 3

been in vain. The Protestant Church is growing rapidly in Puerto Rico. As an example, let me give the following:

Respecting the development of the work, it suffices to say what follows: The "Disciples" in Puerto Rico, have more than 35 organized churches, with a membership which goes beyond the 5,000 mark. ¹

Perhaps this could be said about all other denominations in the island. People are longing for something that they realize they lack.

D. Why Puerto Ricans Stay in New York City

People tend to think that New York City has special attraction for the Puerto Ricans. The majority of the newcomers stay in the city, this is true. But we must never overlook the reasons for it.

1. The Language Problem

Puerto Ricans who migrate to this country to not represent the educated or the intellectual type. In the main they are the disinherited group who have found it impossible to live in the island. English has been taught in the public schools there. But this group has not been blessed with the opportunities offered by organized education. They probably can be counted among those who have not reached the fifth grade in elementary school. How many children of school age cannot attend

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1. This is translated from Spanish from Year Book of Disciples of Christ in Puerto Rico, 1949, p.24

school in the island is shown by the following comment:

Governor Tugwell in 1942 described the problems yet unsolved when he said that the chronic inadequacy of the public educational plant remained one of the anxieties of insular society, despite the impressive progress made in the extension of educational opportunities. To emphasize the crying need for the expansion of the island's educational facilities, he pointed out that of an estimated population of over 700,000 children of school age, only 293,263 were enrolled in public day schools during the year.¹

Those who come to New York do not speak English in the majority but they speak Spanish. Conscious of this problem they stay in that place where they feel they will feel more at home under their own limitations.

2. Relatives and Friends Already Living Here

When Puerto Ricans leave their island they are certain of finding their relatives and friends who are already established in New York. Puerto Ricans cling to the European and far eastern cultural patterns respecting family life. This family pattern is more or less of the patriarchal type by which the family is a unit cooperating with one another throughout life. The idea that "my family is my wife and my children" does not hold true with Puerto Ricans. No Puerto Rican home closes its doors to a newcomer. The Pathfinding Report says this:

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1. Puerto Rico Unsolved Problem, pp. 87, 88

In East Harlem he crowds into an apartment with friends or relatives. There is a pioneer spirit among the Puerto Ricans here; they have come to seek opportunity, and they cheerfully help others engaged in the same adventure.¹

3. Loyalty to Family Ties

Puerto Ricans want to be faithful to the old tradition of loyalty to family ties. The report of the Bureau of Applied Social Research of Columbia University explains this in the following manner:

The island family includes not only the father, mother and children, but also aunts and uncles, cousins and grandparents, nieces and nephews. It even includes the couple who as sponsors of a child at baptism, are called "compadre" (literally co-father and co-mother). The godparent is the second parent, so to speak. When a child is deprived of the care of the parents because of abandonment, death or illness, a relative usually takes over. A mother trusts the care of her child to one of these relatives without misgivings. Relatives help each other as a duty entailed by the fact that they all are "of the same blood." The family unit is thus a large one.²

This description appears to be a faithful one. Puerto Ricans in New York City are exactly the same. Relatives do not hesitate to come to other relatives' homes. They know these will welcome them.

4. The Hospitality of the Puerto Rican

Perhaps there is no better place to acquire a

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1. The Pathfinding Report, p.2
2. The Puerto Ricans of New York City, p. 23

clear notion on this than in New York City with its large Puerto Rican population. Dr. C. Manly Morton speaks of the hospitality of the Puerto Ricans thus:

The Puerto Rican people are charming because of their generosity, their friendliness, their warmth. Never so tiny the house nor large the family that a kinsman, a friend, or even a passing stranger is turned away. And never so scanty the food nor numerous the hungry mouths that a place at the table is for a passer-by.¹

Another comment which explains this great characteristic of the Puerto Ricans is presented in these lines:

Sometimes nine families use one apartment, sleeping in shifts. The father may live with friends in Washington Heights; the mother and children with relatives in East Harlem. Or part of the family may be in Puerto Rico and part in New York.²

5. Lack of Racial Discrimination

Puerto Ricans would find it difficult to live in other parts of the United States where racial discrimination is more widely pronounced than in New York. Puerto Rico Handbook gives this view along this line:

Of particular interest is the lack of tension surrounding racial problems in Puerto Rico. There is comparatively little discrimination against the Negro because of color of

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1. Kingdom Building in Puerto Rico, p. 6
2. The Pathfinding Report, p. 2

race. Negroes are in every kind of position in the island- in the University, as both students and professors; in the Insular Legislature; in government, industry, and commerce. Aside from marriage, such discriminations as exists racially, is chiefly on a basis of class or economic standing.¹

Interesting to note is what the report of the Welfare Council suggests on this. In a section entitled *Tolerance v. Discrimination*, this is what we find:

Countryman or city dweller will be puzzled, irritated, frustrated or repelled by another contrast. Puerto Ricans scarcely ever judge a person's ability by the color of his skin. They move from an environment in which Spaniards and Negroes have lived together for several hundred years without race conflict of consequence, into an area surcharged with the feeling that a white skin means innate superiority.

The Puerto Rican in New York becomes sharply conscious of the fact that there is a definite color line. People are either Negro or White. If he has too dark a skin, too kinky hair or broad features, he will be typed as a Negro and discriminated against as is the case with the American Negro. His whole security as a person may suddenly be threatened. Fear of discrimination may influence him in retaining his own language and customs as a basis of differentiating himself from the born underdogs. He will remain attached to the Puerto Rican community, thus isolating himself from the discriminatory racial patterns.²

It is obvious then that Puerto Ricans will find themselves better off in New York City than in any other

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1. Puerto Rico Handbook, 1947, p.11
2. The Puerto Ricans of N.Y.C. p. 34

part of the United States. Here they live in communities and are more confident of protection from within their own group than from without.

6. Traditional Background of Puerto Rican Society

Puerto Rican history is a history of contrasts. Several races and several cultures have met in the island all of them exercising particular influence upon the gradual development of the Puerto Rican society. The traditions of the past still have their grip upon the group. Puerto Ricans reflect many characteristics which are puzzling to those who ignore their history. In matters of religion some one describes the religion of the people as Pagan and Catholic. Garver and Fincher explain this thus:

For more than 400 years Puerto Rico has been a Catholic country. During the Spanish regime there was no separation of church and state, and the inhabitant came to look upon the crown and the church as one. What schools existed were controlled by the church, and its influence reached into every sphere of activity, including the economic.

Yet Catholicism has only a superficial hold on countless people. At heart, many islanders are pagans, and while they may not worship idols, their belief in spiritism is strong. In rural areas the medium is sometimes a more powerful figure than the priest or minister. Through the centuries, the primitive religious concepts of the Indians and the dark superstitions of the early

Spanish colonists have persisted.¹

Respecting the family what follows is interesting:

The male is the unquestioned chief of the Puerto Rican household. He is responsible for providing for the family; the wife, for attending to the house and children.²

Important also is the rural pattern of the Puerto Ricans. An idea on this may be obtained by considering the statements that follow:

Seventy per cent of the Puerto Ricans live in the country or in villages of less than 2,500 persons. Scattered farms are the basis pattern.³

Puerto Rican society represents a complex picture. Sociologists are greatly interested in all phases of development of the Puerto Ricans as a people. The conflicts and contrasts which are encountered by those who deal with the Puerto Ricans in this city will have no explanation outside of a careful consideration of these conditions.

7. Quest for progress by the Puerto Rican

The fact that Puerto Ricans migrate gives in itself evidence of the desire for progress of the people. They never give up hope. When they realize it is impossible to make a living in the island they take a difficult step. They migrate to another country where they think

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1. Puerto Rico Unsolved Problem, pp. 18, 19
2. The Puerto Ricans of N.Y.C. p. 22
3. Ibid., p. 32

progress is possible. They want to better their living conditions. They want education for their children. The University of Puerto Rico and the Polytechnic Institute both have an enrollment of between 7,000 and 8,000 students. There is a large number who cannot attend either the University or the Polytechnic Institute on account of financial problems. They come to the United States, get part-time jobs and attend college. One may find Puerto Ricans in nearly every institution of learning in the country. Most of the professionals who work with Puerto Ricans in New York City have worked their way through with great difficulty but they have done so because they long for progress and are willing to pay the price.

8. Educational facilities

The educational facilities that Puerto Ricans find in New York City are by far greater than what they find in their own country. The problem of whether English or Spanish should be the basic language taught in the public schools of the island has caused a considerable set-back in the whole educational system of the island. Miss Reynolds gives her view about the situation in these words:

I travelled one day high up into the mountains past Cayey, and leaving the highway, proceeded on foot several miles down a narrow path to the farm of a friend in the

valley. My hostess is also the teacher of the nearby three-grade school. She teaches 50 pupils; the first grade in the morning, the second and third in the afternoon. These children live in the coffee region, and are needed by their parents from the time they can walk to earn a few cents a day picking coffee berries. Of the 50 children, not more than half a dozen will go further than the compulsory third grade. They had never seen an English-speaking person before, and I was quite the curiosity. These children can spend the years of their lives hardly seeing another. Their formal education is confined to 3 hours each day for 3 short years. Yet of each day's three precious hours these children are compelled by law to use 45 minutes in trying to read, write, and speak English, a language they will never use unless the United States Congress decides to draft them in future wars to fight for freedom for lands beyond the sea while their own nation remains in bondage. ¹

There is compulsory legislation for education in Puerto Rico but 250,000 out of 700,000 children of school age cannot attend school for lack of equipment and teachers.

New York City then seems to be the answer to those who have no opportunity in the island. In a series of articles published by the New York World-Telegram by John Bell we find information leading to a fair comprehension of this matter. He writes:

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1. Hearings before the Subcommittee on Territorial and Insular Possessions, 1947, p.41

Dr. Clare Baldwin, assistant superintendent for districts 10 and 11, which include the bulk of the recent Puerto Rican influx, says that 816 children were enrolled "practically all without English facility," none being added since school opened in September. There are ten elementary schools and six Junior High Schools in both districts.

Largest concentration fell to P.S. 57 at 176 East 115th Street, with 231. Since Dr. Baldwin's survey, however, P.S. 57, according to David Cluck, principal, has picked up some 70 or more. Arrivals from Puerto Rico filter in every few days. In a total enrollment of 1,300 three-fourths are Puerto Ricans. Parochial schools, too, have large Puerto Rican enrollment.

Practically all without English facility, the very young children go right into the regular grades. They adjust readily and usually learn English quickly. But in upper grades there's too much verbalism. To give the children a sense of security and success we put them in classes, ungraded classes where they get individual instruction in English, but we haven't enough.

Puerto Ricans have a quest for progress. They want to take advantage of the educational facilities wherever they may exist. New York City has attraction for them in this respect. What else could they do?

9. Opportunity for Work

Puerto Ricans are the victims of the greatest disease of our modern world, namely, unemployment. The one-crop economy of the island, sugar has made a few very rich while the masses live on an almost starvation basis.

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1. The New York World-Telegram, Saturday, May 3, 1947.
From a series of three articles on Puerto Rican influx into New York City.

For the effect let us look at some official information:

The gainfully employed increased 64% in the 38 years from 1910 to 1947, 51% of this rise occurring in the last 7 years. During the war and immediate post-war period, the income of the Puerto Rican people reached its historical peak. It achieved far from a satisfactory figure, however. The per capita net income rose from \$121 in 1939-40 to \$239 in 1943-44. Preliminary estimates indicate that the 1945-47 per capita reached \$262. The 1944 average may with profit be compared with those of the poorest 5 states of the continent in the same year. Puerto Rico had \$239; Mississippi, \$541; Arkansas, \$617; Alabama, \$677; South Carolina, \$642; and Kentucky, \$701.¹

We ought to take into consideration that Puerto Rico's only market is the United States, the highest in the world. Prices in the island are as high and even higher than in New York City. The season for the sugar industry extends from 3 to 4 months a year. Wages for those in the sugar industry range from \$12 to \$15 a week. This mass of working men remain unemployed for the rest of the year.

From a potential force of 900,000 working-men 350,000 are unemployed all the year round. New industries seem to be the answer. But Puerto Rico has few raw materials. The new industries that are being established in the island by American corporations are established on

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1. The Puerto Ricans of New York City, pp. 10,11

the basis of a period of grace from taxation to the insular government which extends for twelve years. These modern factories are equipped with modern machinery and employ very few workers. The profits made by these corporations are not spent in the island but in the United States.

Puerto Ricans then see themselves doomed to misery. What can they do in circumstances like this? The only alternative is this, migrate to New York City. Why to New York City? There they have relatives and friends who speak their own language and will introduce them to the same type of jobs that they have been able to find for themselves. They like to work. The accusations of certain newspapers and magazines that Puerto Ricans come to New York City just to get on home-relief assistance is false and unfounded. The Welfare Department has expressed differently when it states:

Welfare agency officials pictured the Puerto Rican-American as a valuable citizen who would rather work than take relief. His industriousness, they said, is seasoned with artistic ability of commercial use and a laudable moral and religious view-point.¹

New York City with its numerous hotels and restaurants, with its numerous factories and other means of employment represents an open door for Puerto Ricans

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1. Article in the New York Times, January 12, 1947

willing to work.

It should be remembered also that many Puerto Ricans are going into business here in the city and they are enjoying a good number of their fellowmen. Commerce and industry have a great attraction for the Puerto Ricans and they are stepping into it little by little. There is no other place in the continent which will offer such opportunities for the unskilled worker coming from the island. In New York City they feel at home living and working with fellowmen who are always willing to cooperate with the newcomer.

E. Summary

In this chapter the author has tried to make an attempt in answering that common question: Why do Puerto Ricans come to the United States? The reader will discover that there are basic questions to ask oneself in order to understand the reasons. Puerto Ricans have no other place to go. They are American citizens and they feel the United States is responsible for many of their difficulties. They are active people who will not starve for lack of initiative. They themselves are trying to make the Puerto Rican community in New York City a potential avenue of escape from the miseries and misfortunes of their own island.

CHAPTER IV

**THE FRAME OF MIND OF THE
PUERTO RICAN MIGRANT
IN NEW YORK CITY**

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THE FRAME OF MIND OF THE PUERTO RICAN MIGRANT IN NEW YORK CITY

A. Introduction

The Puerto Rican who walks along the streets of our big city, rides in the subway-train, works in a factory, waits in a restaurant or hotel, sits in the waiting room of an employment office, waits for his turn to obtain an application for home relief, listens to Catholic Mass or attends Sunday School and listens to sermons on Sundays, sits in the class room of the public school, listens to lectures in the university, and the like is not in the majority of cases, the individual who can get home after his day's task, sit with his family and listen to a good radio program with the state of mind the average United States citizen does. Both mind and heart are burdened with problems which torture his life.

This chapter will aim at a description of the state of mind of this new neighbor. Should there be an understanding of the principles upon which the supreme law of this nation, the constitution, was framed, there would not be much difficulty in sympathizing with the plight of the Puerto Rican migrant.

B. The Puerto Rican as an Adventurer

Puerto Ricans have been forced to become adventurers. Overpopulation, landlessness, unemployment and several other factors oblige them to migrate. Dr. Morton refers to this when he states:

The problems created by the present congestion of 620 persons to the square mile would still exist. Some dreamer has advocated the migration of 1,000,000 to less congested areas of South America and the United States.¹

According to this view 1,000,000 persons must emigrate if the rest are to be able to obtain a decent living from the limited resources of the island. As an adventurer, the Puerto Rican faces the same problems and hardships of those who have preceded him in coming to America. He too is fighting giants in the earth.

1. Leaves Land, Home and Parents for a Venture

When Puerto Ricans leave their island, they leave behind, things which are dear to them. The land, that piece of ground which is so loved; Mr. Donald O'Connor expresses what this would mean when he says:

Your Puerto Rican neighbor whom you might discover in your neighborhood stores shopping for a winter coat, comes from a place where people never have need of one. For tropical Puerto Rico has one of the best climates that can be found anywhere on this

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1. Kingdom Building in Puerto Rico, p. 105

planet- a climate which approaches perpetual Spring. Small wonder that Winter in New York, let's say, find our Puerto Rican friend unprepared.

The friendly sun which day in and day out warms Puerto Rico, the gentle trade winds that breathe over it, enhance an island which almost overwhelms you with its beauty.

The low mountains crouch like a lion stretched east to west. They tumble down to lose themselves in beautiful valleys, then rise again to stretch stony fingers across the coastal plains to the seas. These mountains seem to float in an unending sea of green- acres upon acres of sugar cane. To get the feel of the land, embellish this picture with the palm trees, great ferns, lacy bamboo... splashes of color from myriad flowers. Add cities hugging the coast, with buildings of blue and pink... country towns with coffee beans drying in the sun... streets with overwhelming balconies... sprawling market places... street vendors hawking exotic fruits... windows open all year round.

And through it all, picture yourself moving with the population-dressed lightly and informally in cottons, seersucker, voile, linen. Don't hurry- just stroll along, casually, pleasantly, full of laughter and gesticulations, letting your voice rise with theirs, not in the loud cacophony we know, but rather like the drone of the honey bee. Reason enough, is it not, for any man to grow homesick on occasion?¹

And what should we say respecting that old home?

Seventy per cent of the Puerto Ricans live in the country or in villages of less than 2,500 persons. Puerto Ricans

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1. Know Your Fellow American Citizen from Puerto Rico, pp. 12-13

are not accustomed to the large apartment house of the city of New York. They miss the small one-family house even the small poor hut with its front "batey" where the entire family gathers during the evening hours for the old grandpa to tell his traditional fairy stories to the children and then these, in response, answer to the old patriarch with the classic anthem "La Borinqueña".

Esther Turner Wellman has well interpreted this sentiment in poetry.

A SPANISH HOME

I love a Spanish home
Where lonely fountains cry,
And where the inner patio
Looks up to greet the sky.
Where scarlet roses blossom
To decorate the hair
Of every sefiorita
Who makes her dwelling there!
I love the Moorish bars
Through which I drop a rose;
Where a soft guitar
Tells a lover's woes.

I love a Spanish home
With ivy-covered stairs
That lead up to the roof,
Where I may breathe old prayers,
And sleep... and dream old dreams,
While moonlight combs her hair
And drops a silver mist
On those who worship there,
For nowhere else does moonlight
Dare make such bold advance,
As on old Spanish walls
Vined in deep romance. 1

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1. Poem by Esther Turner Wellman which appears in Puerto Rico in Pictures and Poetry by Cynthia Pearl Maus, p. 43

Puerto Ricans in New York also miss the neighborly spirit of their land. There they all know each other by name. They do not live under the constant fear that somebody is going to break up the door and steal the little they have. The lock and key terminology has no place in their common pattern of communication. As neighbors they all are friends to share together both the fortunes and the misfortunes of life. They love their traditions also. Some one puts it this way:

While he is thrilled by the ways of the American mainland, our neighbor misses the gay Puerto Rican fiestas, the holydays, customs and manners that are like a breath of Old Spain. While we dream of a white Christmas, his thoughts go back to January 6 in Puerto Rico- Three Kings Day! He remembers how on its eve the children on the island go out to gather grass and flowers for the camels of the Three Kings who come- as they did to Him-bringing gifts.

Our Easter reminds him of Holy Week in Puerto Rico. He recalls the pageantlike processions, when the Virgin, the Holy Cross and Sepulchre are carried through the streets. He remembers, too, the plaza, and the respectful greetings and partings of everyday life. All this he misses, and more, as he steels himself and plunges hopefully into the hectic maelstrom of our cities, determined to carve a niche for himself.¹

Parents he also leaves behind. Those loved ones whom he remembers day and night. Nothing can break up that sense of family unity, that heritage that is his. But he

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1. Know Your Fellow American Citizen from Puerto Rico,
p. 10

has left land, home and parents for a venture. He is leaving behind that which he loves but he realizes he must not starve to death and see his loved ones starve too just for the sake of his own natural romanticism. He is going to break the ice in a country where he will be looked upon as a stranger. But it is his duty to do it because he loves. A visit to the Post Office buildings on Saturdays and Mondays in the Spanish-speaking sections of New York City will suffice to convince the observer of the concern of the Puerto Ricans for those whom they left behind. What do you think they do in the Post Office? They buy money orders for relatives and friends. They share the sweat of their labors. They will not sit at the table without bringing to remembrance their loved ones across the Atlantic. This is the Puerto Rican whom you meet in the streets of our city. Before judging him, better offer a new prayer for this new adventurer in our midst.

2. Arrives without Much Preparation for the New Venture

John Dewey has said "speech is the tool of tools." Many Puerto Ricans come to New York City without the most important tool for their life struggle here- English. In the study made by the Bureau of Applied Social Research of Columbia University we read:

The Puerto Rican who knows little or no English find upon arriving that the whole

is shut to his understanding, unless he sticks to the people with whom he can exchange ideas in the language he knows. If he can speak a little English he finds that he cannot manage as well as would be required for him to participate fully in community life. Many times a day, he feels he is misunderstood. Wherever he goes people will carry on private conversations and, as far as he knows, they may be even referring to him. He is told, patiently or not, to move to the rear on subways or buses, to pay another penny for a tax he did not know about, to fall in line when waiting for some service. The pressure brought upon him makes him many times fearful of even using the little English he can speak.¹

The same report mentions the difficulties which Puerto Ricans encounter when they seek employment in the city. Again language plays an important role. Many get jobs but cannot advance to better ones because of language handicap. The report adds:

"Inadequate or inappropriate vocational training is a close second," according to the United States Employment Service, which also lists as other barriers "lack of New York City licenses, tools and local references. Unfamiliarity with New York's streets and transportation facilities limits the employment of many to the immediate neighborhood in which they live."²

Respecting education it has been stated that the Puerto Ricans who emigrate to the United States do not represent to a large extent the educated type. In a report of the Spanish American Youth Bureau Inc., we find this information:

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1. The Puerto Ricans of New York City, p. 58
2. Ibid., p. 59

The average education of the bulk of Puerto Ricans coming to the states, from the Urban districts of the island, is equivalent to no more than Junior High School Graduation and those from the rural districts to no more than sixth grade elementary schools.

Both academically and vocationally speaking, the average Spanish family which emigrates to the States, rates below the minimum level, in education when measured against other European and native nationality groups (except possibly some elements of the native Negro population), in the City. ¹

Healthwise Puerto Ricans also come without much preparation. The poor class has very little to eat in the island. Living in the slum areas therein they do not have the benefits of modern sanitation and hygiene. They are menaced and attacked by tropical diseases. Mortality rate among the poor class in the island is very high. Speaking on Puerto Ricans in New York City one of our latest reports states:

It is a truism that slum dwellers are sick more often than people who have the advantage of a better physical environment. In so far as Puerto Ricans inhabit the slums, this applies to them also.²

It is obvious therefore that Puerto Ricans in New York City have to face difficult situations. To some of them this seems to be too much and they return back to the island.

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1. Report of the Spanish American Youth Bureau Inc., 810 Riverside Drive, N.Y. Prepared by Mr. Ruperto Ruiz and Mr. Harris L. Present, pp. 2, 3
2. The Puerto Ricans of New York City, p. 66

3. Needs New Adjustment for Life in the New Country

If the Puerto Ricans are to live in the city they must go through a new process of adjustment. They need the help of the psychiatrist, the sociologist, the teacher, the priest, the minister. Their problems multiply when they do not get the necessary advice. Some one commenting on the health condition of the Puerto Ricans in the city has added:

To the above causes is added the ever prevalent timidity, inferiority complex and the natural reluctance the Spanish people have in making use of the community resources offered by the local Public Health and/or Clinical Centers of the City. The proportion of Puerto Ricans who, due to these reasons and to low incomes, receive no care from a family physician in case of disease and who lack nursing and hospital care is alarmingly high to let alone their not taking preventive steps to ward off illness or disease.¹

School teachers have discovered that children suffer from emotional instability. An article in one of the city's newspapers explains it thus:

School teachers agree that broken up homes, due in part to housing conditions, in part to families being divided between here and Puerto Rico, contribute to the children's emotional instability.

Employment is another factor. Frequently both mother and father work. The children are left under the care of the eldest. Too often, as a result, they wander into school late or drift out in the middle of the day. But teachers, priests and pastors, welfare and settlement

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1. Report of the Spanish American Youth Bureau, p.3

workers generally agree that the behavior of the new arrivals is remarkably good.¹

Puerto Ricans have to adjust also to a new climate, to the factory system, to time and schedules, and even to a new eating habit. This is not easy and requires due consideration on the part of those who are well-adjusted to the life of the city. Tolerance is perhaps the best weapon we can use in helping a people under these circumstances.

C. The Psychological Problems in the Mind of the Puerto Ricans of New York City

There are psychological problems in the mind of every Puerto Rican whom we meet in our city. One report on this states:

The Puerto Rican is American, by thin legal enactment, but the contrast of his island and this metropolis makes him in psychological reality a foreigner.²

This contrast of being a citizen and at the same time a foreigner works deep in the mind of the Puerto Rican. Sometimes he complains and is misunderstood. Perhaps he just wants to know where he stands.

1. When Puerto Ricans Leave the Island They Are Frustrated in Many Ways.

Politically they have always been under that abominable system called "Colonialism." They have always served their masters but with a question in their minds.

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1. New York World-Telegram, Saturday, May 3, 1947
2. The Puerto Ricans of New York City, p. 40

Will this be our eternal destiny? Of course not, says the representative of the master. But they wait and wait and continue under political subjugation. Is not this enough to create instability and confusion?

Economically there is not much hope that the conditions of the island will improve. Population increases, the mortality rate decreases, the land produces less and less every year, and the demands of modern life become greater every day. When they leave the island they do so because there is no other alternative. They have been working hard but their efforts have been futile. In a colonial system the economic blessings belong to the few. But what about the outcasts, that great mass who have to struggle through life with only a will to live?

Religiously they are also frustrated. When a Catholic priest admits that although 95% of the Spanish-speaking people are Catholic, but 80% do not practice their religion, as Rev. Canon Luis Alberto Tapia, making a study of conditions of Puerto Ricans in Brooklyn admits, something must be wrong in religion too. People under exploitation get to a state where they mistrust everything. Puerto Ricans come to New York City in a total state of frustration.

2. They find Themselves in Search of a New Philosophy of Life.

Most Puerto Ricans make their decision to come to the United States and struggle for a new way of life. They are conscious of the situation in the island and recognize they ought not to increase the burden. This explains why they try their best to adapt themselves to the new environment. They know that if they are to overcome their misfortunes of the past they must work anew, they must build up, they must engage in something constructive. They are searching for a new philosophy of life. Their efforts in the new land show it. One report pictures this as follows:

The new group begins to adapt itself to its new environment. English words and phrases begin to replace the mother tongue. The newcomers go to night school and learn new customs, new skills and the new language. Their birth rate, originally high because of their ignorance and poverty, begins its decline. From 1924-1929, the birth rate of native white women declined 20 per cent, but that of foreign-born white women dropped 32 per cent. They begin to climb the occupational ladder. They establish businesses, churches, mutual aid associations, newspapers. They become citizens. The politicians then find that they are not a "menace to America" at all, but actually are bringing elements of new life and strength to the nation, just as their predecessors did.¹

3. They Find Themselves open to New Ideologies

When Puerto Ricans arrive in New York they are

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1. Puerto Ricans of New York City, p. 46

open-minded to new ideologies. They need the services of those who are willing to sacrifice time and effort for their cause. Newspapers tend to blame Puerto Ricans for giving their votes to Congressman Vito Marcantonio. One article reads:

Crammed together on their tight-knit little island at the ratio of 600 to the square mile- one of the densest populations in the world- Puerto Ricans in recent years have been taking advantage of their American citizenship to flow unchecked into the United States. Their goal is Manhattan's teeming upper East Side, where the astute pro-Communist Rep. Vito Marcantonio exploits them outrageously for his own political advantage.¹

Information of this sort does not help much. Representatives of newspapers and leaders of other agencies in the city could have won the following of the Puerto Ricans too if they would have done for the Puerto Ricans what Rep. Marcantonio has done in the past and is doing at present. In 1947, Life Magazine published several non-constructive articles respecting the Puerto Ricans in New York City. They published pictures where Marcantonio appeared in his office in New York from 8:00 A.M. to 8:00 P.M. taking care of cases of Puerto Ricans and other minority groups of this city. Those who criticize but never do anything to help those in need should be more careful.

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1. Sunday Mirror Magazine, December 12, 1948

Regardless of the political affiliation of Rep. Vito Marcantonio, most Puerto Ricans have found in him a friend, one who fights for their rights and is always willing to listen to them and help their cause. Do not blame the Puerto Ricans if they go communist wither. Those who claim to be defenders of democracy shut their doors for them. Puerto Ricans are looking for a new ideology. In matters of politics, of religion, of government, they will follow those who come to their rescue. One of the author's points of view in this work is this: this is the golden age for the evangelical church in New York City to win the Puerto Ricans for Christ. If the church does not act accordingly some one else is going to win them for other causes. When people are open for new ideologies it is wise to listen to their plight. Why not accept the challenge?

4. They Think of Americans as Their Protectors.

Puerto Ricans are still depending on the promises of General Miles in 1898, when he declared that the Americans were carrying the blessings of their great nation to the Puerto Ricans. It was on that faith that the Puerto Ricans compromised their loyalty. They look at the Americans as their protectors. When they come to New York they expect to find real friends, fellow citizens with the best disposition to cooperate with them and to understand their problems.

D. Summary

This chapter aims at a brief presentation of something which is of particular importance to those who want to obtain a clear picture of the situation of the Puerto Ricans in our community. The frame of mind of the Puerto Rican migrant in New York City seems to be a matter of real significance in understanding them as a people and as our close neighbors.

The Puerto Ricans of New York City are adventurers as were those who came in the Mayflower and set up the basis for the organization and development of the greatest nation in the world. Adventurers vary in their motives. Some belong to the class that seeks after the glamour of adventure. Others are adventurers because of pressures in the home land. Puerto Ricans belong to the latter. Political, social, economic, and religious pressures have forced them to leave the land which they love so much. They have been under an undesirable colonial system for 450 years. When American troops marched through Puerto Rico, one Gutierrez del Arroyo, suffering imprisonment for resisting Spanish authority, exclaimed, "We have not been liberated; we have merely changed masters."

CHAPTER V

THE PUERTO RICAN AND HIS CONDITION
IN NEW YORK CITY A CHALLENGE
TO THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH

CHAPTER V

THE PUERTO RICAN AND HIS CONDITION IN NEW YORK CITY A CHALLENGE TO THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH

A. Introduction

The church of Christ has never denied the fact of her direct responsibility in matters of human relations. Wherever men suffer, the church feels she must act. The recent influx of Puerto Ricans into New York City represents a new challenge to the church and she needs to recognize it. Perhaps the English-speaking church has not been well informed respecting the new condition and this may account for the slow action taken by the church so far in facing the new challenge. However, there seems to be a new interest in the situation and initial steps are being taken by some church organizations of the City.

The present chapter deals with the Puerto Rican and his condition as representing a challenge to our Evangelical churches. This chapter will present a view of the Spanish-speaking church as it exists in New York today. It will also deal with its development, actual demands of the work and the need for a more constructive program for reaching the Puerto Ricans.

B. The Puerto Rican Population Represents a New Mission Field in the City.

Mr. Allan Keller of the New York World-Telegram wrote a series of articles in 1947. In one of these articles he remarked:

The exodus of hundreds of Puerto Ricans from their island home and their migration here has pyramided inexorably into the most pathetic human problem of its kind to plague this country since the Okies fled from the dust bowl to seek a promised land in California.

Like the immutable flow of lava from an erupting volcano, thousands of these migrants descend on this city each month, seeking a richer life, but finding themselves too often doomed to disappointment, misery and economic misfortune.¹

No one who reads these remarks will escape the tone of prejudice with which they were released to the public. But, are they not a challenge to the church? Are not these the situations after which the church must go?

Chapter three of this work gives the reader a good picture respecting the actual population of Puerto Ricans in the city. This comes close to 500,000. Few out of this number have been reached with the Gospel. The Protestant Church has a great opportunity here and with added interest and effort could certainly bring about great results.

1. First Organizations to Recognize this Challenge

In a report made by Rt. Rev. Canon Luis Alberto

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1. From an article of the New York World-Telegram, October, 1947 (First on a series of three articles).

Tapia on a Survey of Conditions of Puerto Ricans in Brooklyn we find these remarks:

One of the major problems presently facing the Church and Catholic Charities in the Diocese of Brooklyn, as well as in the Archdiocese of New York, is that created by the tremendous influx of Puerto Ricans, the vast majority of whom are, at least nominally, Catholic. For each one of us, laity and clergy alike, this situation constitutes a challenge and a test- a challenge to all that we, as Christians, profess to believe and practice; a test of our zeal.¹

Along this same line the New York City Mission Society has expressed itself thus:

We are of the conviction that, historically, the message and mission of the Protestant Church has had much to do with the building up of our democratic institutions and our American way of life. We believe, further, that the Protestant Church has a distinctive message and mission today and that upon the effectiveness of its program will depend, in a large measure, the preservation and furtherance in our society of the principles of freedom of the individual and the brotherhood of all men which are of the essence of our American democracy.²

The statements that precede show that the Church, both Catholic and Protestant, recognize their challenge respecting the Puerto Ricans and that something ought to be done on behalf of the newcomers.

2. Initial Steps taken by Protestant Organizations

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1. Report of Catholic Charities, Brooklyn, p. 1
2. Pathfinding Report, June 24, 1947, Introduction, p.1

The Spanish-speaking Church of New York City has a very humble beginning. In a report of the First Spanish Evangelical Church of New York City we read this:

The Spanish-speaking people have been increasing here in New York City for nearly forty years. In 1919 a committee of the New York City Mission Society consisting of Dr. William Pierson Merrill, Dr. P. Fagg, and Dr. William Raymond Jelliffe began to study the problem with the result that the Society took over the work begun by Rev. Samuel F. Gordiano in Calvary Baptist Church. ¹

The action taken by the New York City Mission Society was inspired by the efforts and work of a group of Spanish-speaking layment who started to hold services in the apartments of friends by the year 1910. In their desire to organize a Spanish-speaking church they started to hold services at Calvary Baptist Church, across the then Madison Square Garden. First leaders in this new Christian enterprise were the Revs. Samuel F. Gordiano and Francisco Diaz. It was not until the year 1912 that they found that the New York City Mission Society existed. ²

3. First Spanish Congregations Organized in the City

As a result of the initiative mentioned above the formal opening of the new work took place on Sunday, January 14, 1912. In December of that year the congregation was organized as the First Spanish Evangelical Church, the

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1. Thirty-fifth Anniversary Program, Primera Iglesia Evangélica Española, 52 E. 102nd St. N.Y.C.
2. The writer is indebted to Rev. E.A. Rodríguez, Pastor of First Spanish Evangelical Church, 52 East 102nd St. N.Y.C., for most information in this section

first Spanish-speaking Church in the City. The following ministers have served this congregation as pastors: Mr. Samuel F. Gordiano, Rev. Francisco Diaz, Rev. A.B. Carrero, Dr. Juan O. Gonzalez, Rev. Manuel Figueroa, and Rev. E. N. Rodriguez.

However, the work of the Episcopal Church among the Spanish-speaking people ranks first as to the earliest organization to start work in the city. For a clearer view on this I have translated from the Spanish the following information:

In the year 1883, in cooperation with Mr. Manuel Moreno, a student of theology at the General Seminary of the Episcopal Church, Mrs. Kelton, with great enthusiasm, directed her activities in propagandizing the Gospel news with result that the first Spanish Evangelical Church of the city, known as the Iglesia de Santiago, was established. But later on this church disappeared for not being able to secure a permanent pastor.¹

Another early effort was that undertaken by Methodist folks. This work is traced back to the year 1906 when Mrs. Kelton in cooperation with a Puerto Rican young man who was studying for the ministry at Nyack, N.Y., started a Sunday School class for Spanish-speaking people at Trinity Episcopal Church in Brooklyn. This work was developed in such a way that it was

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1. Article in Puerto Rico Evangélico by Rev. H. Cotto Reyes, September 25, 1942
2. For information on the beginning of the Methodist work among the Spanish-speaking people in Brooklyn, the writer is indebted to Rev. H. Cotto Reyes, Pastor of the First Spanish Baptist Church of the city.

necessary to transfer it to the Methodist Church at Sands and Henry Streets, where the congregation was organized under the leadership of Rev. Alberto B. Baez, present Methodist minister in Brooklyn.

The influx of Puerto Ricans into the city did not become significant until after Puerto Ricans were made United States Citizens in 1917. Most of the churches working in the city at present were organized after the year 1920.

4. Initial Methods Used in Reaching Spanish Groups

House to house visitation and canvassing of Spanish-speaking groups in the city appear to be the earliest methods employed. Another method used was the organization of Sunday-School classes as Mrs. Kelton did in starting the work among the Episcopalians and Methodists. This method has been effectively used in the mission fields. The Sunday School seems to have been the most effective method in the mission field. Everybody attends Sunday School. In fact, in the mission field, it is very hard to differentiate between Sunday School and Church service. Sunday school is Church service there. Perhaps this is the reason why the same method has been used in reaching the Spanish-speaking groups in New York City.

A third method was that of holding services in the apartment of believers and friends. Most churches have started this way. Rev. Antonio Caquias, first

Pentecostal minister who started work among the Spanish in New York City says:

We started with prayer meetings held at the homes of Christian friends.¹

Rev. José Franco, first to start work for the Christian Missionary Alliance in the City says: When we felt we needed to be organized in some way we started to hold services in the homes of some Christian friends and in my own home which became the center of activity.²

A fourth method was the Evangelistic campaigns. It was first used here by a Mexican minister who came to the City in 1932 and held revival meetings in the form of Evangelistic campaigns with a new feature in it, i.e., the stress upon divine healing. He used to rent large auditoriums, hold preaching services every evening plus prayer meetings.

Of all these methods, house to house visitation or direct personal contact has proved to be the most effective one in reaching the Puerto Ricans and other Spanish-speaking people.

5. First Denominational Bodies Interested in this Work

The Episcopal and Methodist Boards seem to have been the first denominational bodies to have shown interest in the development of a Spanish-speaking church in New York City.

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1. Personal letter to the writer dated February 2, 1950
(Answer to author's request)
2. Personal letter to the writer, January 6, 1950,
Centerville, California

The New York City Mission Society appointed a committee in 1911 to study the problem. As a result of this initial step several churches have been organized in the city.

The Baptists as early as 1921 were interested in the work. Miss Albertina D. Bishoff was sent to cooperate with Mr. Toro, a layman who organized the first Baptist Mission among the Spanish in New York. Then Rev. A. D. Wood, a former missionary in Latin America became first pastor of the new church. The Lutherans also had some vision respecting the new field. Their present pastor writes:

Twenty-five years ago, thanks to the vision and missionary spirit of Dr. Zenan M. Corbé, ex-secretary of the American Board of Missions, the consecrated missionary Dr. Ostrom, started to visit Lutheran families already established in New York City. Dr. Ostrom came to gather a list of 25 members who were invited to attend the service to be held at the Church of the Transfiguration, August 7, 1924. Nevertheless it was necessary to wait until the following Sunday in order to gather some brethren and be able to organize the work.

6. Interest Shown by Other Organizations

As the problems respecting the migration of Puerto Ricans into New York City increased, more reli-

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1. Translated Spanish into English, historical sketch by Rev. Jaime Soler, Pastor of the Spanish Lutheran Church, 763 Prospect Avenue, Bronx, Oct. 2, 1949. (Twenty-fifth Anniversary of Church)

gious organizations decided to come into the new mission field and share responsibilities. The New York Bible Society seems to have sensed this in rendering a great service in the way of distribution of Bibles, tracts, and portions of Scripture in Spanish. In the year 1930 the Society invited Mr. Miguel Bonilla to work in the distribution of the Word of God by house-to-house visitation. This work has become a great blessing to the field in general. At present, under the able leadership of Dr. David J. Fant, General Secretary of the Society, the work among the Spanish-speaking people has been expanded. The Society has full-time representatives and one part-time working in the Spanish communities. Mr. Melvin Wistner works in Manhattan, Mr. Miguel Bonilla in the Bronx, and Mr. A. B. Carrero in Brooklyn. Through this plan the Society is reaching the Puerto Ricans and other Spanish-speaking people in their homes with excellent results.

The New York City Mission Society has made outstanding contributions to the work during the last few years. They have organized several new Spanish congregations. The study and research under the Pathfinding Service for the Churches represents the first real effort

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For the information in this section respecting The New York Bible Society the author has used the Quarterly Review of the New York Bible Society, The Bible in New York, February 1950

of any church organization in the city to obtain concrete facts respecting the new field and its need.

Significant also was the initiative taken by the New York City Mission Society for the organization of a planning committee for the first conference on Protestant work among Puerto Ricans in New York City. The Planning Committee met Tuesday, January 18, 1949, 4:00 P.M., at the offices of the New York City Mission Society. Present at this meeting were: T. F. Savage, H. Cotto Reyes, F. Cotto Ortiz, H. L. Perez, E. N. Rodriguez, E. M. Rodriguez, A. C. Alvira, C. R. Wellman, C. V. Herron, J. Torok, F. B. Newell, S. B. Hazzard, and D. W. Barry. The conference was held April 29, 1949 at Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church. It was a significant event for church unification.

In the January issue of a News Bulletin prepared by the New York City Mission Society we read the following:

The coming of 250,000 Puerto Ricans to New York presents to the Protestant churches an unusual challenge and opportunity. For these newcomers from the island respond quickly to the evangelical approach. A sensitivity to their human needs, and the will and intelligence to meet them produce astounding results.¹

Another fine contribution to the Spanish work

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Information on this planning committee taken from minutes of Meeting of Planning Committee

1. A News Bulletin prepared by New York City Mission Society, January 1950, p.1

in the city has been made by the American Tract Society. Their monthly publication, "Manzanas de Oro," edited by Alberto B. Baez, is adapted to all departments of Sunday School. It follows the International Lessons, is published in Spanish and meets the needs of most churches in their Sunday School Departments.

The East Harlem Association of Churches and Pastors under the Protestant Council of New York City is also interested. The association has been a great asset in the unification of the work. Joint services, youth rallies and the like, have helped create a fine spirit of fellowship among churches and pastors.

The newest group entering the field of the Puerto Ricans is the East Harlem Protestant Parish. How the East Harlem Protestant Parish came into existence is told in the account that follows:

The East Harlem Protestant Parish grew out of talks between four divinity students at Union Theological Seminary. Mr. Hargraves (Baptist) and Mr. Benedict (Congregational-Christian) joined the future Rev. Cornelius Berry, a Negro Presbyterian, and George W. Webber, a white Congregational Christian future minister, in planning a ministry to Harlem which would make them their black brothers' physical as well as spiritual keepers.

In the summer of 1948 the four got their churches' approval to start on the sidewalk with their card table and register

children for a vacation Bible School. Then the ministers rented a vacant butchershop. From the cellar they shoveled two truckloads of offal and foul smelling sauerkraut, slapped on cheery red and blue paint, moved in an altar, and on October 24 were ready to hold services as well as serve the needy.¹

The work of the East Harlem Protestant Parish is highly commendable. These ministers try to reach the needy regardless of racial differences. They have provided constructive social activities for children and young people. They have helped fight police brutality against Negroes and Puerto Ricans. They have organized teams which have recently conducted a door-to-door campaign and got 2,000 people to sign up for chest X-rays as a TB preventive. They have done valuable service in many ways. Four men and three assistants are doing this job with a budget of \$9,500.

Lastly there is an Association of Spanish Pastors and laymen which meet once a month. Rev. H. Cotto Reyes is president of this association. It is interdenominational in nature and fosters the cause of fellowship among ministers and lay leaders. It deals with problems of churches and pastors, plans for new projects, and encourages fellowship among churches of all denominations.

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1. Article in Newsweek, October 31, 1949

7. Development of the Spanish-speaking Church in the City

This section will consist of a brief historical sketch of each Spanish church organization working in the city.

Credit ought to be given first to the Episcopalians and Methodists who as early as 1883, gave thought to the problem of reaching with the Gospel the few scattered Spanish-speaking members of the community. They are credited with the organization of the first Spanish evangelical church in the City by the year 1906. The work of this church had to be discontinued later on because they could not secure a permanent pastor.¹

The New York Mission Society is next. In 1911 a committee was appointed to study the field. Rev. Samuel F. Gordiano had started the work at Calvary Baptist Church. Formal opening of the new work took place on Sunday, January 14, 1912. In December of that year, the congregation was organized as the First Spanish Evangelical Church of the city. A Second Spanish Church was organized, Rev. Victor M. Buenahora becoming its first pastor in 1932. The First Spanish Church occupies today the former People's Tabernacle at 52 East 102nd Street. The Second Church is located at 395 Broome Street, Rev. José C. Martinez being

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1. Information drawn from article in Puerto Rico Evangélico by Rev. H. Cotto Reyes, September 25, 1942

its pastor. The Bronx Spanish Church at 800 East 156th Street was organized in 1941. Rev. Agustin C. Alvira is the present pastor. Two younger churches have just been organized, The Spanish Presbyterian Church of Manhattan, Audubon Avenue and 172nd Street, and the Spanish congregation of Grace Methodist Church, 131 West 104th Street. Another projection of this work is the Spanish Independent Church at 612 East 141st Street, Bronx. In Brooklyn the New York City Mission Society has a Spanish-American Presbyterian Church also.¹

The Baptists started in Brooklyn. In 1920, under the leadership of Mr. José Toro Santiago, the first Spanish Baptist Mission was organized. In March 24, 1921, the first Spanish Baptist Church of Manhattan was organized with 20 members. This has become a flourishing church with over 400 members now located at 216 East 116th Street. In 1942 the pastor of this Church Rev. H. Cotto Reyes wrote:

From the work started in the small Mission of Brooklyn, twenty-one years ago, there are actually in New York and Brooklyn eight churches and missions, with more than 600 members and an average Sunday-school attendance of 800.²

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1. Information on New York City Mission Society, from Rev. E. N. Rodriguez
2. Puerto Rico Evangélico, September 25, 1942, p.11

The Methodists started very early in Brooklyn. Actually they have a Spanish-speaking church in Brooklyn under the leadership of Rev. Alberto B. Baez. In Manhattan they started May 13, 1923 at Park Methodist Church, 86th Street and Park Avenue. This church has been very successful and is actually located at the Church of the Saviour, 111th Street and Lexington Avenue. The pastor is Rev. Diego Flores.

The Christian Missionary Alliance is also in the field. Mr. José Franco, a layman, started the work on April 5, 1929. He organized the Church and was ordained by the congregation. His work was recognized by the Christian Missionary Alliance and a strong church in Manhattan plus a new mission church in the Bronx has been the outcome.¹

The Lutherans started in 1924. Today they have a beautiful church in the Bronx with a congregation of over 400 members where Rev. Jaime Soler is the pastor. They have also started two new missions in Manhattan.

The Disciples of Christ came into the field in 1944 when La Hermosa Church, organized in 1938 as an inde-

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1. For information on the work of the Christian Missionary Alliance the author is indebted to Rev. José Franco, pastor of the church until 1947
2. For information on the work of the Lutherans the author is indebted to Rev. Jaime Soler, present pastor of the Bronx church.

pendent church under the leadership of Rev. Pablo Cotto Ortiz, applied for admission into the fellowship of the Disciples and was so admitted. A new congregation has developed in the Bronx and has joined the English-speaking congregation there.

The Pathfinding Service for the churches reported there were 62 Spanish-speaking churches in New York City by 1947. Of this total the Pentecostals have the largest number. The organization and development of the Pentecostal church in New York City can be traced back to two sources: The Assemblies of God and The Latin-American Council of Christian Churches.

The Assemblies of God started their work among the Spanish-speaking people of New York, July 22, 1928 when their first meeting was held at the Italian Pentecostal Church, 100th Street, New York City, under the leadership of Mr. Antonio Caquias. Later on a second place of worship was opened at 127 Greenpoint Avenue, Brooklyn. It was started as an independent work and in all the course of time was recognized by the Assemblies of God.¹

The Latin-American Council of Christian Churches was an evangelistic movement under the leadership of Rev.

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1. For information on The Assemblies of God the author is indebted to Rev. Antonio Caquias, first Puerto Rican pastor to start work for the Pentecostals in the city and still pastor at church, 118 Ellery St. Brooklyn.

Francisco Olazabal, a former Methodist preacher who came to New York in 1932 and held campaigns with emphasis on divine healing. He rented large auditoriums where thousands congregated to listen to his preaching and to ask prayer for divine healing. From this movement several churches came into existence. These two groups, both Pentecostal in their approach, have extended in the city with the result that there are close to 75 groups at present. The Churches of the Latin-American Council of Christian Churches are known at present as the Assembly of Christian Churches. There are many groups which claim to be independent but all can be traced to either one of these two main groups.

Seventh-Day Adventist are also working with the Spanish-speaking people. Actually they have two churches in the city. The table that follows shows some of the results of the new field.¹

Statistics on Protestant Spanish Speaking Churches in New York City, by Denominations (up to 1947)

<u>Denomination</u>	<u>Number of churches</u>	<u>Members</u>	<u>Sunday School Members</u>
Pentecostal	26	2,708	2,303
N.Y.C.M.S.	6	1,414	1,374
Baptist	7	884	1,248
Methodist	3	480	359
Lutheran	1	415	180
7th Day Adventist	2	266	425
Disciples of Christ	1	215	197
Presbyterian	2	200	400
Episcopal	1	200	175
Christian Miss. Alliance	1	125	150
Independent	12	971	834
Totals	62	7,856	7,645

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1. Pathfinding Service, p. 8

The number of churches and members has increased since 1947. In many cases it has doubled.

How the Spanish Protestant churches are serving the community is shown by the list of churches that follows:

PROTESTANT CHURCHES SERVING THE COMMUNITY

Manhattan Churches

<u>Name of Church</u>		<u>Address</u>
Latin-Amn. Pent. Church Of God	1	65 E. 109th St.
Bethel Christian Temple	1	7 We 110th St.
Bethel Christian Church	1	469 W. 148th St.
First Spanish Baptist	3	216 E. 116th St.
Iglesia de Dios Pentecostal	1	330 E. 102nd St.
Iglesia de Cristo	1	134 E. 104th St.
Iglesia de Dios	1	63 E. 103rd St.
Spanish Pentecostal	1	1650 Lex. Avenue
Iglesia de Dios	1	104th St.
Second Spanish	3	112 E. 104th St.
Asamblea de Dios Hispana	1	201 E. 103rd St.
Gethsemani	1	77 E. 106th St.
Christian Miss. Alliance	7	77 E. 114th St.
West Side Mission	2	131 W. 104th St.
La Iglesia de Dios	1	75 E. 107th St.
Iglesia Cristiana	1	114 E. 108th St.
Iglesia El Salvador	1	75 E. 109th St.
La Hermosa	6	66 E. 110th St.
First Pentecostal	1	51 E. 112th St.
Spanish Christian	1	1644 Park Avenue
Sp. American Rescue Mission	1	58 E. 110th St.
Christian Apostolic	1	1533 Madison Ave.
Mision Cristiana Rehoboth	1	1910 Lex. Avenue
Iglesia Pentecostal de Dios	1	80 E. 110th St.
First Spanish Methodist	4	111th St. & Lex. Ave.
Iglesia El Salvador	1	227 E. 119th St.
Chambers Memorial	3	219 E. 123rd St.
Spanish Gospel Chapel	8	1736 Lex. Avenue
Holy Ghost Christian	1	331 E. 100th St.
Eden Church	1	1533 Mad. Avenue
Iglesia Alianza Cristiana	1	1429 Amsterdam Ave.
La Voz En El Desierto	1	135th St. & Amst. Ave.
Iglesia de Jesucristo	1	117 E. 109th St.
Lutheran Mission	5	119th St. & Mad. Ave.
Iglesia del Valle	1	479 Second Avenue
Iglesia Canaan	1	999 Columbus Ave.
Lirios de los Valles	1	63 E. 103rd St.
First Spanish Evangelical	2	52 E. 102nd St.

<u>Name of Church</u>		<u>Address</u>
Washington Hts. Span. Evag.	2	W. 172nd St. & Audubon Ave.
De Witt Memorial	2	280 Rivington St.
Second Sp. Evangelical	2	395 Broome St.
Sp. Manh. Seventh-Day	#	237 E. 123rd St.
Pike St. Pentecostal Church	X	36 Pike St.
Pieles Discipulos	1	220 Madison Ave.
Monroe St. Pentecostal	1	111 Monroe St.
Cristiana Misionera	1	27 Hester St.
Iglesia Damasco	1	51 Sheriff St.
Iglesia Bautista del Calvario	3	117 Pitt St.
Monte de Hermón	1	197 E. 2nd St.
Pieles Discipulos	X	737 E. 6th St.
Iglesia de Jesueristo	1	439 E. 12th St.
Jerusalem Church	1	235 W. 19th St.
Spanish Mission	X	290 8th Avenue
Spanish Pentecostal Mission	1	303 W. 25th St.
Spanish Mission	1	432 Third Ave.
Pentecostal Mission	1	335 W. 51st St.
Iglesia del Calvario	1	454 W. 53rd St.
Protestant Parish	9	111th St. & Lex. Ave.
Protestant Parish	9	102nd St. & Park Ave.

BRONX CHURCHES

Elim Christian	1	909 E. 163rd St.
Ind. Spanish Evangelical	X	612 E. 141st St.
Roca de Salvación	1	799 Prospect Ave.
Bethel	1	758 E. 158th St.
John 3:16	1	Prospect Avenue
Thessalonica Church	1	198th St. & St. Ann's Ave.
Third Spanish	3	322 Alexander Ave.
Spanish Mission	3	860 E. 156th St.
Spanish Mission	7	860 E. 156th St.
Second Disciples	6	595 E. 169th St.
Spanish Pentecostal	1	671 E. 156th St.
Samarita Christian	1	200 Brook Avenue
Church of the Valley	1	722 Tinton Ave.
Spanish Transfiguration	5	763 Prospect Ave.
Spanish Evangelical	2	800 E. 156th St.
Bronx Spanish	#	1038 Prospect Ave.
Pentecostal Mission	1	168th St. & 3rd Ave.

BROOKLYN CHURCHES

Spanish Pentecostal	1	101 Atlantic Ave.
Spanish Church of God	1	118 Ellery St.
Light of the World	1	336 Bedford Ave.
Spanish Pentecostal	1	4403 3rd Avenue
Church of God Followers	1	328 Bushwick Ave.
Bethesda Christian	1	682 Flushing Ave.

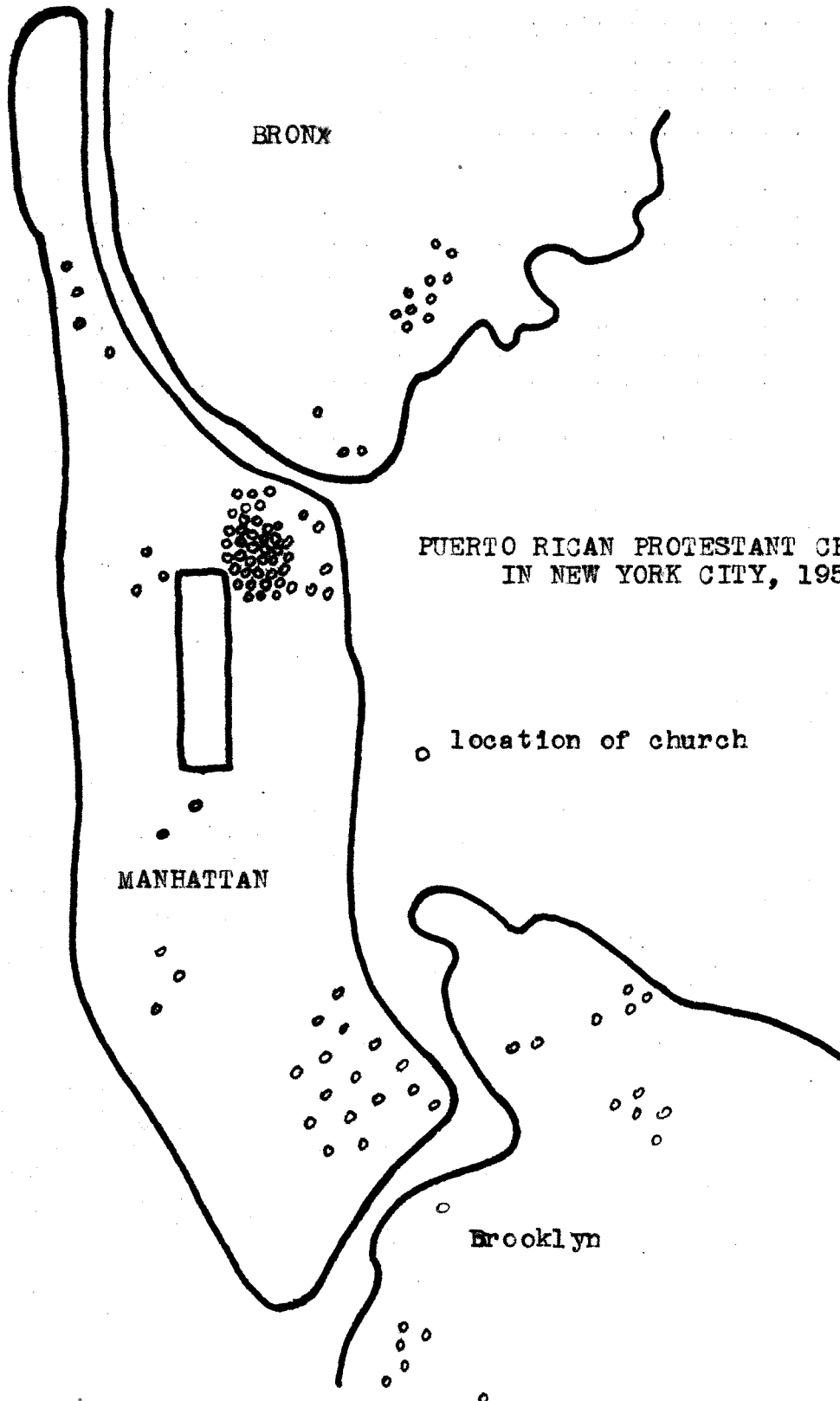
<u>Name of Church</u>		<u>Address</u>
First Spanish	3	301 Pacific St.
Central Baptist	3	706 Park Avenue
Spanish Mission	3	125 Ellery St.
Spanish Gospel Hall	8	1005 Flushing Ave.
Iglesia Cristiana	1	90-92 Summit St.
Flame of the Ministry	1	647 March Ave.
First Methodist Spanish	4	236 President St.
Spanish Mission	4	411 S. 3rd St.
Christ Church	##	Clinton & Kane Sts.
Spanish American	£	S. 3rd St. & Driggs
Spanish Presbyterian	£	155 Moore St.
Bay Shore Spanish	#	Fifth Avenue

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Additional Data:

1. Pentecostal Churches
2. Churches under New York City Mission Society
3. Baptist Churches
4. Methodist Churches
5. Lutheran Churches
6. Disciples of Christ Churches
7. Christian Alliance Churches
8. Plymouth Brethren Churches
9. East Harlem Protestant Parish
- #. Seventh-Day Adventist
- ##. Episcopal Churches
- £. Presbyterian Churches
- X. Independent non-Pentecostal Churches

For this list of churches the author is indebted to the Pathfinding Service and to Mr. Melvin Wistner of the New York Bible Society.



PUERTO RICAN PROTESTANT CHURCHES
IN NEW YORK CITY, 1950

According to the author there are 94 Spanish-speaking churches serving the Puerto Ricans in New York City at present. These churches are distributed as follows:

	<u>Manhattan</u>	<u>Bronx</u>	<u>Brooklyn</u>	<u>Totals</u>
Pentecostals	39	9	8	56
N.Y.C. Mission Soc.	4	2		6
Baptist	4	2	3	9
Methodist	1		2	3
Lutheran	1	1		2
Disciples of Christ	1	1		2
Christian Alliance	1	1		2
Plymouth Brethren	1		1	2
Protestant Parish	2			2
Seventh-Day Adventist	1	1	1	3
Episcopal			1	1
Presbyterian			2	2
Independent Non-Pentec.	3	1		4
	<u>58</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>94</u>

Additional Data

1. All churches listed under 1 as Pentecostal do not belong to a single Pentecostal organization. Almost every one of these churches is Pentecostal in practice but independent in government and organization.

2. Three of the churches listed under 3 as Baptist are Independent Baptist Churches without any connection with the Baptist Missionary Society.

3. Of the three Methodist churches listed under 4 the two in Brooklyn belong to one Methodist Organization while the one in Manhattan belongs to another.

4. The two Presbyterian Churches listed under 5, both located in Brooklyn could be considered under 2, under the New York City Mission Society.

5. There are 12 different denominational bodies working with the Spanish-speaking people of the city. Most of the churches, however, are independent.

6. There are probably from 6-10 more Pentecostal groups which have not been listed here because of lack of information.

C. The Church's Responsibility Toward This Work

The church has a great responsibility toward the work among the Puerto Ricans in New York City. The picture shown in the previous section shows twelve different denominational bodies at work in the city. But the majority of the churches are independent. The degree of fellowship that exists among these churches is not too encouraging. It seems as if the church did not realize the significance of this field in the beginning and did not assume the necessary responsibility in developing a unified Spanish-Protestant Church in the city.

1. The Puerto Rican Church in New York City is a Projection of the Church in Puerto Rico

Among the many Puerto Ricans who migrate to this city, there are to be found many Protestants. The work done by missionaries in the island and by the churches organized since 1900 has produced results which reflect themselves outside Puerto Rico. In 1949 the Evangelical Churches of the island celebrated their golden jubilee. One of the reports about this celebration says:

The seed of the Gospel sowed in both urban and rural localities has been growing. Today, in 1949, we already have 500 churches properly organized, with a constituent body which fluctuates between 200,000 and 250,000 communicant members and as many non-organized

congregations with attendance which surpasses the capacity of their church-buildings, chapels and other places of worship.¹

Dr. Alberto Rembao who was one of the speakers at this celebration has suggested that there are no less than 400,000 people who are familiar with the evangelical message in the island. The report of the Bureau of Applied Social Research of Columbia University states how the church in Puerto Rico projects itself into New York City thus:

The Puerto Rican Protestant Church is a growing institution in New York City. "Protestants coming from Puerto Rico have brought their Protestantism with them, and with it a strong evangelistic spirit. They have come into the existing Protestant churches; rather they have organized (often with the help of local mission agencies) new churches in the language and tradition of their island culture," according to a report of the Protestant Council of the City of New York.¹

2. Puerto Ricans are Open-minded to the Evangelical Message

The growth of the Protestant Church in the city shows Puerto Ricans welcome the evangelical message. The New York Bible Society has appointed three representatives for the distribution of Bibles, tracts, and portions of Scripture in the Spanish communities of the city. The

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1. Translated from Puerto Rico Evangélico, April 25, 1949,

p. 8

2. The Puerto Ricans of New York City, p. 50

reports of these men are very encouraging. Mr. Melvin Wistner works in Manhattan and he holds people are anxious for the Scriptures and like to listen to the message. His activity centers in house-to-house visitation and he has the opportunity to give them the message. Dr. Fant himself, general secretary of the Society, occasionally sets apart time to accompany Mr. Wistner in this house-to-house visitation. He has told the author about the fine spirit he discovers in the Puerto Ricans in welcoming them into their homes and listening to the message. Mr. Carrero in Brooklyn and Mr. Bonilla in the Bronx have the same experience.

Two years ago the East Harlem Association of churches and pastors planned for some canvassing in the Weldon Johnson Housing Project. The author with other ministers and lay members of the church went into this activity. We were amazed at the results. Puerto Rican families welcomed us into their homes, gave us the information we desired, and manifested they wanted to hear about religion.

3. Puerto Ricans are Industrious and Like to Share in New Responsibilities.

It is difficult for many people in this country to see in the Puerto Ricans other than what the public press gives them. And it should be realized that some of the information released by the public press is misleading

and does not give a true picture of the situation. One example will perhaps clarify this point. The fourth of a series of articles published by the New York World-Telegram in 1947 stated:

Everything that New York stands for in the way of progress, culture and communal leadership is forgotten in the areas where the Puerto Ricans have moved in.¹

It seems obvious that any one ignoring the real situation of the Puerto Ricans can look at them with sympathy after reading information of this nature.

Contrary to this, one booklet published recently has this to say:

Reluctantly they leave their island to seek work their homeland cannot provide. They bring with them young people with quick perception and ability to learn skills. They bring with them their talent for fine craftsmanship. They bring with them their own music. They bring with them their tradition of warm family life. They also bring with them their need to adjust to a new and complicated way of life in a strange and overwhelming country.²

But more important for the interest of the Protestant church is what the Puerto Ricans themselves have demonstrated in their church activity in the city. The report that follows is significant along this line:

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1. New York World-Telegram, October, 1947
2. Know Your Fellow American Citizen From Puerto Rico. Selected from pp. 43-58

Perhaps the most significant fact about the Spanish Protestant churches of New York city is the extent to which they are what sociologists would call "indigenous institutions". Many of the previous attempts of Protestant mission agencies to provide churches for foreign-language groups in the city have been criticised for being "superimposed" by native Protestant groups unfamiliar with the customs and needs of the immigrant families. Quite the reverse is true with the Protestant Puerto Rican churches in the city. These have mostly been organized by native Puerto Ricans, the ministry and leadership is native to Puerto Rico, all but 16 are self-supporting, and 33 own buildings with funds raised largely by the members.¹

Respecting church activities the Pathfinding service has given these facts:

Conventional programs in all these churches tend to involve much greater participation and attendance than is true in most other Protestant churches; many members come to church several times per week and many non-members are brought into worship services and other groups. The table that follows gives the average total monthly attendance reported by all the churches at all types of activities.

Total Average Monthly Attendance at all Activities of 60 Spanish Protestant Churches

<u>Type of Activity</u>	<u>Meetings Per Week</u>	<u>Meetings Per Month</u>	<u>Average No. Attendance</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
Sunday Worship	92	368	41,496	35.7
Sunday School	61	244	25,216	21.7
Weekday Worship	102	394	14,697	12.7
Adult Groups	134	529	22,058	19.0
Children's and Young People's Groups	86	339	12,651	10.9
Total	475	1,874	116,118	100.0

Very few of New York's English-speaking churches could match this record of activity and participation. For the Spanish Protestants, the church is a very important center of family and personal life, and the laity are willing

workers in the cause of Christ. For example, seven of the Spanish churches in East Harlem, with a total membership of 1,800, report having made 9,500 calls last year, of which over 7,500 were made by laymen or committees of laymen. Church members frequently conduct week-night cottage meetings, often in the homes of non-members.¹

The Protestant church in New York City has a great opportunity with this new migration. On the one hand there are multitudes anxious to receive the message of salvation. For Puerto Ricans are religious by nature and want to be taught in things spiritual. On the other hand there is a Puerto Rican church in the city which is actively at work with people who are dynamic and who want to share in the responsibilities of God's Kingdom.

4. Puerto Ricans in New York City Find themselves under Fire by Unscrupulous Agents of Schism

The church has a sacred duty to look over those who live under pressure and oppression. The Puerto Ricans are a new minority group in New York City and run the same risks that previous minority groups have encountered. Agents of schism, those who always find a satisfaction to their own interests in dividing the family, have no scruples in criticising the Puerto Ricans. One newspaper writer says:

These people (referring to the Puerto Ricans) for the most part knew little about shelter in their homeland and considered a

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1. The Pathfinding Service, p. 12

straw-covered canopy stretched over poles a home. Thus it is that they can look upon a dark, dank New York cellar as pretty good protection. Thus it is that a family of six can live in a room nine feet square and not consider itself cramped beyond endurance.¹

Another paper puts it this way:

Suffering acutely themselves, they disrupt the economy and customs of their newly adopted home city and find themselves victims of a vicious cycle of discrimination, class hatred, and oppression.²

Life magazine published information about the Puerto Ricans in which these were pictured as ignorant unskilled and seekers of home relief. We read:

Many of Puerto Ricans now pouring into New York City are illiterate. Many speak no English. All of them are desperately poor. Almost without exception these newcomers squeeze into East Harlem, complicating already critical housing and relief situation.³

There are elements of truth in this information but the tone with which it has been presented does not show much regard for a people who have been the victims of a system they have not created. The result of this type of information has been explained by the report of the Bureau of Applied Social Research in these lines:

The barrage of anti-Puerto Rican newspaper propaganda last year resulted in unhappy incidents for some of the children. One case was reported in which a group of Puerto Rican children playing in the street was harrassed by a neighbor:

"Get out of the street, you filthy Puerto Rican niggers. Your family came here just to get on relief and your father brought syphilis to this country".⁴

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1. The New York Sun, Thursday, October 13, 1949, p
2. New York World-Telegram, First of series of 8 articles, Oct. 1947
3. Life Magazine, August 25, 1947, p. 25
4. The Puerto Ricans of New York City, p. 70

I will ask the question now,; is not this a challenge to the church? The Christian church has always stood for the rights of man regardless of class, race or any other condition.

Religiously there are other groups foreign to Christianity which may do harm to the newcomers too. Spiritualists, Jehovah Witnesses, Christian Science, Unity Groups, and many other schismatic groups are finding a fertile soil with the Puerto Ricans.

5. Puerto Ricans in New York City Look for a New Ideology in Life

Puerto Ricans who arrive in New York City look for something new. They join clubs, political parties, associations and the like. The church itself notices an increasing need for more facilities due to the number of people who solicit her services. It is evident then that Puerto Ricans are looking for new orientation, a new ideology in life.

6. Puerto Ricans are Going to Stay Here

Puerto Ricans as all other former immigrants are assimilating the American way of life. They are forming their own organizations, going into business and entering every phase of the professional world. The children born in the new land learn English and while their parents speak Spanish at home they tend to forget their native language. Adults also begin to take advantage of opportunities for improving their living conditions.

They attend evening schools as well as trade schools in order to prepare themselves for the new environment.

The number of Puerto Ricans who go back to the island is comparatively few when we compare it to the number that arrives day by day. Everything points to an increase in the number of Puerto Ricans in the city.

7. The English-speaking Church is Moving Away from Areas settled by Puerto Ricans.

One of the problems which the English-speaking church of the Metropolitan area finds today is the problem of membership moving to other districts away from the city. A great number have to drive along distances to attend church on Sunday mornings. Churches which used to have 1,500 in church service now have a small attendance. New people have become the neighbors of the church and this does not have an adequate program for the newcomers. The people are there but the program was made just for a certain type of people.

8. The Puerto Rican Church Offers a Brilliant Future for the Evangelical Church as a Whole in the Metropolitan Area.

As English-speaking congregations and Jewish congregations move away from districts settled by Puerto Ricans, the latter take over the facilities they can have and build up flourishing congregations. A few examples of this are The Latin-American Pentecostal Church, 65 E. 109th Street, a former Jewish synagogue, now a Puerto Rican Protestant Church with a membership of over 500.

The First Spanish Baptist Church, 216 E. 116th Street, a former Episcopal church, not being used five years ago because members had moved away. This church was bought by the Spanish Baptist church and today has a membership which surpasses the 400 mark. There are many examples of this. In the Pathfinding report of 1947 it was stated that out of the 62 Spanish-speaking churches in the city 33 owned buildings. Most of these buildings were former English-speaking Protestant churches or Jewish synagogues. Since 1947 several other churches have purchased property and several others are looking for more adequate places of worship.

If Puerto Ricans were given the necessary assistance in helping them carry on their church activities there would have to be no fear as to the weakening of the Protestant church in New York City. It is true that the Roman Catholic Church is strong in the city. But Puerto Ricans have had enough of that and are looking for something different.

9. Puerto Ricans Leadership Does Exist and Can Be Developed to a Greater Extent and Efficiency.

In the Pathfinding report of 1947 we read:

Forty of the churches report having full time ministers. As in a number of these cases the churches are obviously too small to pay the salary of a full-time pastor, what this really means is that in forty churches the minister has no other job. In the remaining churches, the minister is part-time. Almost all of the ministers, so far as could be determined, are natives of

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Puerto Rico. We may contrast this with the fact that the Roman Catholic churches of this city are reported to have no native Puerto Rican priests.¹

Interesting too is the good number of High school and college students who are members of the Puerto Rican churches. The young people are alert and like to take part in the work of the church. They serve as Sunday School teachers, youth leaders and in many other activities of the church. Of the forty full-time ministers in the Spanish-speaking churches at least 30 of them have college degrees, most of them both, college and seminary degrees. The Pentecostal church which has not fostered the cause of education for their ministry in the past is beginning to realize that if they want to keep up the work they must take steps in the education of their ministry. They begin to organize their own institutes which are in no way comparable to the educational standards set by other denominations for their ministry but at least it shows some interest on their part. This beginning will doubtless develop significantly in the future.

10. Puerto Ricans Can Become Missionaries to the Latin American World

With the opportunities for the Evangelical church in Latin America, it seems obvious that more missionaries will be needed for the great task. Many Puerto Ricans could go to the mission field in Latin America. Some

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1. The Pathfinding Service, p. 10

denominations are beginning to realize the feasibility of this. The Northern Baptist Convention in 1947, appointed Rev. and Mrs. Oscar Rodriguez as missionaries to Cuba. They have been in the field since and are doing a fine piece of work. The Latin American Christian Mission appointed Rev. and Mrs. Rogelio Archilla missionaries to Costa Rica, Central America. They have been in the field for 17 years and their work is commendable. Rev. Archilla is the dean of their seminary in San José, Costa Rica. If Puerto Ricans are given the same opportunities given to American missionaries in Latin America they can do a significant work. They have the advantage that they know the language and understand the psychology of the Latin American people.

11. Puerto Ricans will Determine Many Aspects in the Life of the City in No Remote Future.

Newspapers and magazines hold the view that Puerto Ricans have made possible Vito Marcantonio's re-election to Congress term after term. There is truth in this. Puerto Ricans are American citizens. They can vote after a year's residence in the United States. They have been trained in the American way of the popular suffrage as the great weapon of the people for the election of their representatives in government. They go to the polls using their rights as citizens and elect the representatives whom they consider friendly to their cause. In no remote future Puerto Ricans will be electing representatives to

congress, to the State Legislature, and more so to the City Government. They are occupying districts which are becoming solid Spanish settlements. They increase in numbers. They will arrive at the same place other migrant groups have arrived in the City.

D. Actual Needs and Demands of the Work

The Puerto Rican Church in New York City is a growing concern. The needs and demands of a work of this nature become more apparent day by day.

1. Stronger Moral, Spiritual, and Financial Support by City-Church-Organizations

A news bulletin of the New York City Mission Society indicates that the coming of great numbers of Puerto Ricans into New York City represents to the Protestant Churches an unusual challenge and opportunity. It further adds:

Puerto Ricans are to be found in all sections of the city. Do not be misled by sensational newspaper articles. Puerto Ricans make the very best of Christians when provided with sympathetic and able leadership.¹

Most of the information given by newspapers and magazines has been misleading information when dealing with the cause of the Puerto Ricans. The Protestant Church has a moral right to get the true facts about the Puerto Ricans and make them known to our people.

The most significant effort made by any church

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1. Religion at Work in New York, January 1950, News bulletin of the N.Y.C.M.S., p. 2

organization in the city on behalf of the Puerto Ricans has been the work done by the New York City Mission Society. The Protestant Council says this:

The New York City Mission Society, with six centers of Puerto Rican work, has considerably more members than any denomination other than the Pentecostal. The reasons for this seem to be two-fold: (a) the New York City Mission Society has given much more substantial support to its Spanish work, in both finances and staff, than has any denomination in New York City, and (b) with a background of excellent inter-denominational relations in Puerto Rico, the newcomers seem to respond rapidly to a non-denominational approach.¹

The author's view is that other denominations ought to take advantage of the opportunity and come into the field more openly.

2. Due Recognition to Spanish-speaking Leadership

In a conference of Spanish churches and ministers held April 1949, Rev. Herminio Perez, pastor of one of the churches of the New York City Mission Society, lectured on the need of recognition of Spanish leadership in order to produce the necessary Spanish literature for the Spanish churches.

Up to the present the churches have been depending mostly on translations from English into Spanish for their literature. Rev. Perez held that there were trained leaders within the Puerto Rican ministers who could produce an Evangelical literature that would fit better the need

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1. Pathfinding Service, p. 8

of the church if they were encouraged to do so. Most denominational bodies are recognizing the fact that something ought to be done along this line. Conferences and inter-fellowship activities are being encouraged and this may be the beginning for a new and better approach to the problem.

3. Encouragement for More and Better Trained Leadership.

The ministers who are working with the Spanish-speaking church in New York City have come from Puerto Rico or from other Latin American countries. Most of them have attended college and seminary while taking care of their own churches. There has been little or no effort on the part of the church organizations of the city to encourage young people for the ministry. There are young people who want to go into the ministry but who cannot afford to pay for their expenses while at college or seminary. Is not this a challenge to the church? Who will be the future ministers, religious education leaders of this new growing church?

The Protestant Council begins to look after this matter and in their Schools for training in Christian Leadership, a good number of Puerto Ricans is being helped. But something more is needed. Church organizations of the city ought to provide scholarships to poor students who want to go into the ministry.

4. Adequate quarters and facilities for more extensive

work of the church, for expansion, and for the development of new projects in religious education to reach children and youth.

Sixty per cent of the Spanish-speaking churches in the city are store-front churches. Some are trying to get re-located in adequate quarters. But the economic condition of the Puerto Rican in New York City does not help much to advance this. It takes a long time for any church to acquire property in the city. Meanwhile, denominational church organizations do not encourage the building of new churches. Construction materials and labor are too expensive.

The author believes the church must re-think this position. The Roman Catholic church is acquiring new properties and developing new projects. The independent Pentecostal churches are remodeling old buildings and even building new churches regardless of high cost of construction materials. The Protestant church is not doomed in New York City yet. The Puerto Rican Church has demonstrated it. But she cannot expand. She cannot undertake projects for religious education to reach the youth and the children properly for lack of adequate quarters. Social institutions are offering some advantages to youth and children of these communities. But the church has always maintained that she can offer to the people that which no other institution can offer.

One of the great problems which the Puerto Ricans

face in New York is the problem of children when both father and mother work. Parochial schools are helping a great deal along this line. But the parochial schools which take care of Puerto Rican children are Roman Catholic. The report of the Welfare Council gives some figures on this:

In East Harlem there are two parochial schools which enroll large numbers of Puerto Rican students. There are St. Cecilia's at 220 East 106th Street, and Commander Shea School at 132 East 111th Street. St. Cecilia's School has 1,400 students of whom 900 are Puerto Ricans. This includes those children born in Puerto Rico and those whose parents were born in Puerto Rico. Commander Shea school has 900 students, all Puerto Ricans. St. Paul's Parochial School, at 114 East 118th Street, has 215 Puerto Rican children.¹

The report states also that there are other parochial schools with 100 or less Puerto Rican students. About 3,000 Puerto Rican students attend Roman Catholic Parochial schools at present. The protestant church has not undertaken anything like this yet. Puerto Ricans see the need but they cannot afford to go into it on their own.

5. Adequate Equipment.

If suitable quarters are a great need, adequate equipment is no less a need. Some of these churches have only an assembly room where they conduct all types of

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1. Puerto Ricans in New York City, p. 38

services. They lack the rooms as well as the facilities for making those rooms what they should be in order to help those who come to Sunday School classes and worship services. Social activities under the direction of the churches are very limited too due to the same reasons. The author has seen a Sunday School class with seventy-five or more children meeting in a room 20' by 18' with four teachers taking care of the children. The equipment is very poor too.

6. Emphasis and Publication of Appropriate and Sound Evangelical Literature to Fit the Needs of All Ages

The Spanish-speaking churches need help along the line of Christian education. Teacher training classes as well as leadership training for other departments of the churches are a great need.

The church-school department is not yet adequately equipped with the materials for all ages. The churches have been depending mostly on translation materials which are not always fitting to the particular needs of the scholars.

There is also need of a more uniform hymnology in the church. The churches get whatever they can obtain. You may visit ten churches and find ten different hymn books used. Church music has not developed as it should for the same reasons.

7. Stress upon the Unification of the Evangelical Forces of the City, or a Real Tactful Ecumenical Approach.

The author has mentioned the fact that there are twelve different denominational bodies working among the Spanish churches in the city. Apart from this most every Pentecostal church is an independent group in itself. The strength of the church is thus greatly limited. There is need for a unified plan of work that would reach if possible all the churches, and thus create the sense of unity that is necessary in every field of Christian endeavor. The approach for unity ought to be intelligent. The Spanish church in New York City can become a powerful institution provided it is nurtured in the principles of Christian unity.

E. Summary

This chapter gives us a picture of the Spanish work as it exists at present. It has also presented a brief historical development of the growing church. There are many gaps in the process of development in this new field. Perhaps the necessary steps have never been taken in order to assist the work properly. The church is beginning to realize that this new field is a real challenge. What exists today has come through great difficulties. Most has been accomplished by the people themselves. There is still a great opportunity.

CHAPTER VI
GENERAL SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

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A. Re-statement of the Problem

The City of New York is confronted with one of the great experiences of past years, the influx of a new migration into the city totaling almost a half million newcomers with a tendency to increase. The circumstances which surround this new migration make for implications of a new nature. While these newcomers are foreigners in that they come from a different land with a different racial and cultural background yet they belong to the family of United States citizens. The responsibility of our nation is therefore much greater. Every phase of life in the city is touched by the new situation. No organization is exempt from responsibility. The Church of Christ as the great organism on earth for the safeguarding and proclamation of the principles of love, justice, liberty and freedom, finds herself with hands full under the present situation. Citizens, social and civic groups, begin to point at the Church's responsibility respecting the Puerto Rican Migration into New York City.

B. General Summary

If the Protestant church is going to do her part in this contemporary situation she must get well acquainted with the background of her new neighbors, the Puerto Ricans.

The Puerto Ricans have history of their own. To understand them the church as any other institution must take into consideration their racial, cultural and religious background.

Another important phase in the history of the Puerto Ricans is their political development. They have lived under a colonial system since the island's discovery in 1493. For 400 years Puerto Rico was a colony of Spain. In 1898 it became a colony of the United States of America.

The colonial system of government together with several other factors have made the island a poverty stricken land. Overpopulation, landlessness, and unemployment have forced the people to migrate. The only country to which they can migrate unchecked is the United States. New York City with Puerto Ricans living in the city for several years represent the most attractive spot in the country for the newcomers.

Puerto Ricans leave their island to come to a new country as adventurers. Those who come do not represent the well-to-do class, least of all the educated type. They belong to the masses who have had little or no opportunity in life. They have been exploited and left with only two alternatives: (1) They ought to migrate if they want to build up for a new life for themselves and for their children or (2) they ought to stay in the island and live in insecurity and under a permanent condition of starvation.

When Puerto Ricans come to New York City they represent a people with many social, religious and psychological problems. They are frustrated in many respects. As adventurers they are open-minded for new ideologies. They realize they must build up a new philosophy of life. Here is an opportunity to lead a people anew. Who will accept the challenge?

Puerto Ricans in New York City represent therefore a new mission field. There are close to 500,000 Spanish-speaking people in the city. The English-speaking church has not yet responded to her total responsibility in the new situation. Ministers and laymembers of the Protestant church in Puerto Rico have come to the city and worked among their own people. With the meager resources at their command they have been able to accomplish something but this is far from what it should have been. It is tragic that the Spanish-speaking church is so divided in the city. Twelve denominational agencies plus a large number of independent groups carry on the responsibilities of the Protestant church in the city. Should this be considered the ideal set-up in a situation of this kind?

C. Conclusion

The first four chapters of this thesis contain historical information respecting the Puerto Ricans and their background. The author holds it is necessary to be

well informed about the history of the people in order to understand them and their problems. The material in this section will give the reader some acquaintance with the main things which are essential in understanding their new neighbors.

Chapter five contains a historical sketch of the development of the Spanish-speaking church in the city as it stands at present. Something significant has been accomplished. However, there is a great deal that ought to be done. Puerto Ricans are receptive to the message of Christ. They realize they need something greater than what they have ever had in the way of religion. They represent a people looking for new horizons. The church must not overlook the fact that there are other forces which are not Christian and which may attract people who find themselves in the psychological frame of mind in which the Puerto Ricans in New York City find themselves. The Protestant church will have nothing to say if the Puerto Ricans go Communist or otherwise if she does not assume her responsibility. The time is ripe for action. The author's greatest desire is that those who read this book may feel moved to pray for this new mission field. Shall the church accept the challenge which is hers?

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