

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form**

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**1. Name of Property**

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historic name Primera Iglesia Bautista de Caguas

other names/site number Centro Musical Criollo José Ignacio Quintón

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**2. Location**

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street & number Corner of Ruiz Belvis and Intendente Ramírez Street  not for publication

city or town Caguas  vicinity

state Puerto Rico code P. R. county Caguas code 025 zip code 00626

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**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

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As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Aida Belen Rivera Ruiz

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

Puerto Rico State Historic Preservation Office

State or Federal agency or Tribal government

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

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Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

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State or Federal agency and bureau

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register  
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register  
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*for Edson H. Beall* 9-24-08  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

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## 6. Function or Use

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### Historic Functions

RELIGION / religious facility

### Current Functions

RECREATION AND CULTURE / museum

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## 7. Description

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### Architectural Classification

Romanesque Revival

### Materials

foundation concrete

walls concrete

roof tin-mission tile

other wood roof structure

### Narrative Description

(See Continuation Sheets)

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## 8. Statement of Significance

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### Applicable National Register Criteria

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

Architecture  
Social History

**Period of Significance**

1909-1957

**Significant Dates**

1909

**Significant Person**

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Unknown

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (See Continuation Sheets)

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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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**Bibliography**

(See continuation sheets)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary Location of Additional Data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: Caguas Historic Archives

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## 10. Geographical Data

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**Acreage of Property**      Less than one acre (0.12)

### UTM References

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>19</u>	<u>813722</u>	<u>2018695</u>	3	_____	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____	_____

### Verbal Boundary Description

Register of Properties: Finca 1144, Folio 54, Tomo 1349

### Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the church as recorded in the Puerto Rico Register of Properties, Caguas First Section.

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## 11. Form Prepared By

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name/title Berenice Sueiro Architect, PRSHPO / Juan Llanes Santos Historian, PRSHPO  
First Draft nomination: Olga De la Rosa Andujar Architect PRSHPO/Irma Iranzo Historian, PRSHPO

organization Puerto Rico State Historic Preservation Office      date August 12, 2008

street & number PO Box 9066581      telephone 787-721-3737

city or town San Juan      state PR      zip code 00906-6581

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## Additional Documentation

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

### Continuation Sheets

### Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

### Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

### Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Primera Iglesia Bautista de Caguas  
Caguas, Puerto Rico

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**Property Owner**

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name Municipality of Caguas

street & number PO Box 907

telephone 787-744-8833

city or town Caguas state PR zip code 00726-0907

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Caguas, Puerto Rico

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more wood benches within the church and the original arches were demolished. <sup>3</sup> These were rehabilitated according to the original pictures from the 1930's - 1940's that served as historical evidence, and traces that remained in the building. (Fig. 2)

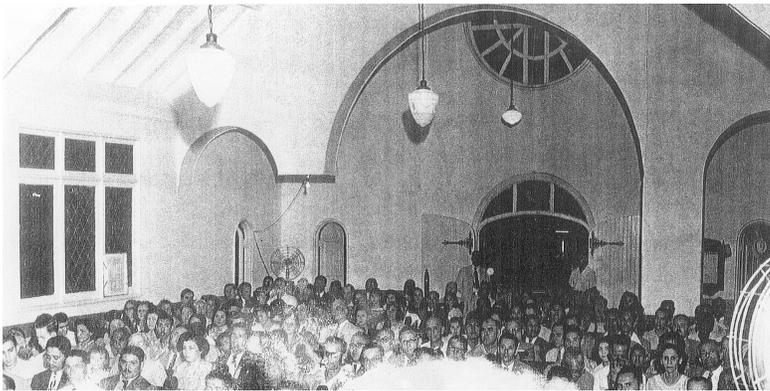


Fig. 2 Photograph from 1930's-1940's central arch.<sup>4</sup>



Fig. 3 Recent photograph central arch



Fig. 4 Tongue and groove wood plank bell tower ceiling



Fig. 5 Old altar and baptistery area

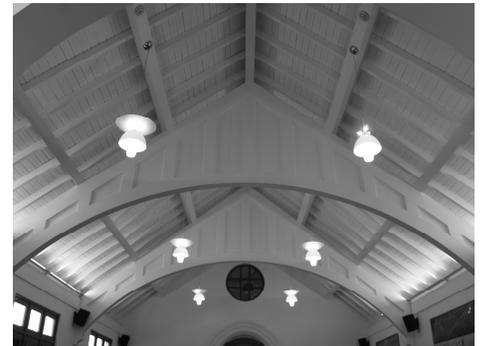


Fig.6 Two arched wood trusses

The bema design's is stress by a central arched opening flanked by semicircular pilasters and moldings. (Fig.5) During the rehabilitation, these were repaired, as well as, the stone moldings around the door openings at both sides of the arch (reconstructed according to historical evidence). A baptistery by immersion was located in front of this main arch. With the 1930's building expansion it was re-localized behind the main arch. The front area was covered and used as an altar. The baptistery has been adapted as a water fountain 18 inches deep.

<sup>3</sup> According to the information provide in a report prepared for the Puerto Rico State Historic Preservation Office. Pablo Quiñones Cordero. *Información para Evaluación y Endoso Oficina Estatal de Preservación Histórica Proyecto de la Rehabilitación de la Antigua Iglesia Bautista de Caguas.* 1996. p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

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Caguas, Puerto Rico

**Caguas' First Baptist Church** has a gabled, wood roof made of a plank and beam structure. It was covered with galvanized zinc. The rehabilitation project proposed galvanized steel instead of zinc supported by two arched wood trusses (Figs. 6 and 7). These wood trusses add character and proportion to the principal nave space. During the rehabilitation, the wood deteriorated components of the roof were substituted and painted as needed. To comply with seismic and hurricane codes additional steel members were installed, not altering the original geometry of the roof structure. The building's floor was made of polished concrete with joints imitating tiles. Due to severe deterioration, it was substituted by hydraulic cement tiles (similar in color and size).

The building's entrance, located at the main façade to the South, is defined by a portico, a double paneled door, a gabled roof that rests over short massive columns supported by hammer braces (Fig. 8). The roof structure of the portico is made out of wood planks. It had a tin roof covering the Spanish tiles. The proposed rehabilitation substituted only the deteriorated Spanish tiles.



Fig. 7 Roof detail

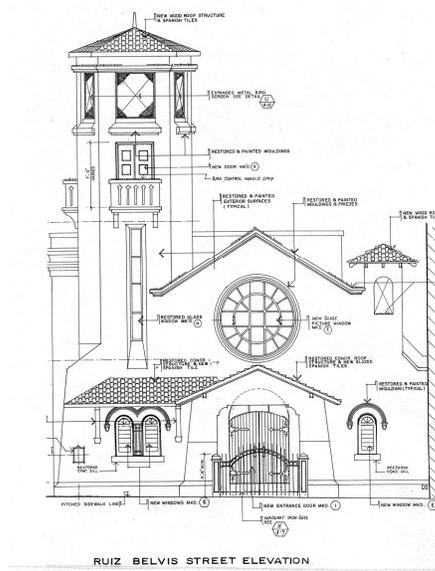


Fig. 8 Main façade <sup>5</sup>

At the Southwest corner, the main façade has a compound arch window and at the Southeast a single arch window. Both windows are top by a fanlight and a water table. The compound arch window is protected by a prominent eave that extends to the portico supported by hammer braces.

<sup>5</sup> Pablo Quiñones & Associates. Plans for the Reconstruction of the Church Structure & Annex Building. 1996. p. A-3.

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The gable that defines the building's main façade is embellished by a large rose window made out of stained glass. The stained glass pattern is geometric and polychromatic; restored by artist Claudio Solano. A similar rose window was present over the main arch that marked the bema. This element had been filled with concrete blocks. The rehabilitation proposed the reconstruction of this element. Two towers of different heights are the main façade's attractiveness. A main tower or bell tower shape is located at the Southwest corner of this façade (Fig. 9). Its plan shape is octagonal. It has a long rectangular recess fenestration with a stained glass window in it, which has been restored by artist Claudio Solano. The bells are no longer in the tower - the former owner of the building is still in possession of them - and the access to the interior of the tower has been closed. The tower has recessed door openings with balconies at the two elevations that face the street. It has an eight skirts roof covered with Spanish tiles stressed by a belt course.

A smaller tower rises at the Southeast corner of the main façade. It is a watchtower with a square shape and a Spanish tile covered roof. The main façade has a compound arch window to the Southwest, and a single arch window to the Southeast. Both windows are topped by a fanlight and a water table. The compound arch window is protected by a prominent eave that extends to the portico supported by hammer braces. Spanish tiles also cover the eave.



Fig. 9 Main tower



Fig. 10 Buttness on the West façade

Buttnesses on the East wall, have been blocked with the construction of the neighbor's property. The main roof extends over the buttnesses completely blocking them. Buttnesses characterized the lateral West façade (Fig. 10). The original concrete walls and buttnesses were consolidated, patched and repaired with epoxy wherever dowels were exposed.

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Before rehabilitation, when the building became a commercial facility, the original historic openings were sealed with concrete blocks. Photographic evidence shows three bays lattice wood windows, with transom over them, on the lateral façades of the church. These features were recovered as part of the rehabilitation using photographic evidence. The windows at the Intendente Ramirez Street were reconstructed and those at the opposite side remain close with a gesture that denotes their prior existence. In 2008, due to deterioration, all wood windows were replaced with metal windows. The new metal windows resembled the old wooden windows.

In 1930's Annex included the construction of two levels made of concrete. A lateral entrance, to the West, provides access to the facilities and interior communication with the original church. The second floor lost its wooden roof and floor. This level was very deteriorated and had partially collapsed. The new roof was constructed in a lightweight concrete metal deck. To the east, there is an exterior lateral patio, which provides access to the second floor thru an exterior concrete stair.

This section of building was partitioned in various offices, meeting and rehearsal rooms. The floor of the first level is raised 3 feet, partially covered with patterned hydraulic cement tiles locally known as *losa nativa* and polished concrete with joints imitating tiles. Floor deterioration was beyond repairs. It was necessary selective substitution of the *losa nativa* and replacement of the hydraulic cement tiles (similar in color and size). The floor of the second level was made of wood and it was reconstructed with Mahogany - flooring board over plywood using steel joists to support it.

The rehabilitation project proposed several measurements to guarantee structural stability. New mechanical and electrical systems were placed over concrete pads, with no visual impact over the Church building.

The building is in excellent conditions and retains its integrity. **Caguas' First Baptist Church** is a beautiful example of Romanesque Revival architecture. The character defining features of this building are the main entrance portico, the two towers of different heights, the gabled, wood roof, two arched wood trusses and the narthex central main and smaller arches. The 1996 rehabilitation project permitted the conservation of all these features. Stabilization, repairs, detailed on site recycling and replacement of parts were the main focus of the project. In fact, the project was submitted for review and comments by the Puerto Rico State Historic Preservation Office; it complied with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

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Primera Iglesia Bautista de Caguas  
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NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The *Primera Iglesia Bautista de Caguas* (**Caguas' First Baptist Church**), built by 1909, is locally significant under Criterion C in the area of architecture as the property represents the only example of early Twentieth Century Romanesque Revival style in the Municipality of Caguas. As one of the first (if not the first) buildings constructed with reinforced concrete in the city, instead of the traditional wood, brick and mortar, the **First Baptist Church** represents the introduction of new construction methods. The **First Baptist Church** is also locally significant under Criterion A in the area of social history as the property embodies the establishment, during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, of the Protestants ideals, concepts and values within the local social network. The **First Baptist Church** was the site of the first Baptist congregation in the island established directly by a Puerto Rican minister, as such, the property represents the early development of a local leadership within the new religious trend. It also represents the religious openness promoted by the change of regime in the island after the Spanish American War of 1898 and the establishment of the separation of State and Church initiated by the Foraker Act of 1900.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

The **First Baptist Church** is located at the intersection of *Ruiz Belvis* and *Intendente Ramirez* streets in the city of Caguas. Officially founded in 1775<sup>6</sup>, Caguas remained a small town during its first five decades. In 1782, when Fray Iñigo Abbad y Lasierra made his historic visits through out the island, he found only five houses around one simple church in today's Caguas urban core.<sup>7</sup> By 1820, the town had only few identifiable buildings: the City Hall, the Church, a building for cock-fights, a slaughter house, a grocery store and a few wooden houses. Most of the population was spread throughout the countryside surviving in a subsistence farming system.

But the fertile land in the Turabo Valley, where the city is located, facilitated the eventual development of the small village. By mid nineteenth century, sugar cane and tobacco became the main exporting crops. The new economy promoted the population's increase not only in the municipality as a whole, but especially in the city's traditional center. By 1878, Caguas had a population of 16,099 inhabitants. An interesting fact about Caguas' increased population was that it

<sup>6</sup> Oscar L. Bunker. *Historia de Caguas*. Barcelona, España, 1975. p. 134-135.

<sup>7</sup> Fray Iñigo Abbad y Lasierra. *Historia Geográfica, Civil y Natural de la Isla de San Juan Bautista de Puerto Rico*. Madrid, 1788. Anotada en la parte histórica y continuada en la estadística y económica por José Julián Acosta, 1866. Ediciones Doce Calles e Historiador Oficial de Puerto Rico, 2002.

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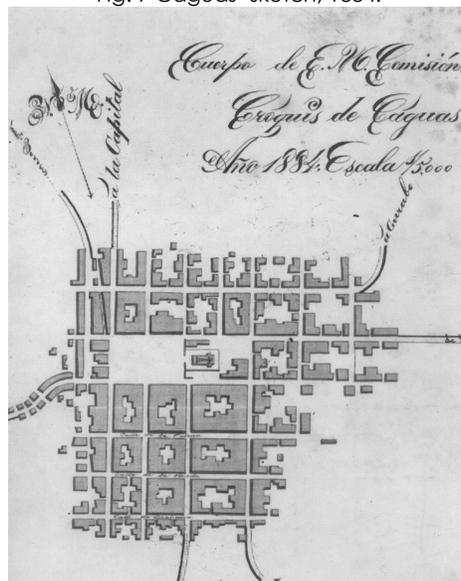
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consisted mostly of Creole families. This gave the city a strong native and local atmosphere.<sup>8</sup> Still mostly a rural town by 1878, the urban center had by then three hundred and eighty-eight houses and seven hundred and sixty-one families arranged around twelve well organized streets.<sup>9</sup> A Caguas' diagram sketched by the Spanish Military Command Geographic Service in 1884 shows a well developed urban center with the traditional figures of the Catholic Church and the town square as the main focus points (Fig. 9).<sup>10</sup> The town's acquisition of the title of "City" in 1894 was a reflection of its increasing importance.<sup>11</sup>

Fig. 9 Caguas' sketch, 1884.



Just when Caguas was increasing in social and economic importance, the history of Puerto Rico took an unsuspected turn. The Spanish American War of 1898 transformed the island from a Spanish colony into a United States' territory. Boat loads of land speculators, adventurers, social researchers,

<sup>8</sup> This fact is associated with Caguas' population being known as "los Criollos" (the Creoles).

<sup>9</sup> Manuel Ubeda y Delgado. *Isla de Puerto Rico: estudio histórico, geográfico y estadístico de la misma*. Puerto Rico: Establecimiento tip. del Bolefín, 1878.

<sup>10</sup> Reproduced from, Aníbal Sepúlveda Rivera. *Puerto Rico Urbano. Atlas Histórico de la Ciudad Puertorriqueña*. Volumen 3. Carimar, 2004, p. 123.

<sup>11</sup> Oscar L. Bunker. *Caguas: Notas para su Historia*. San Juan, 1983, p. 28.

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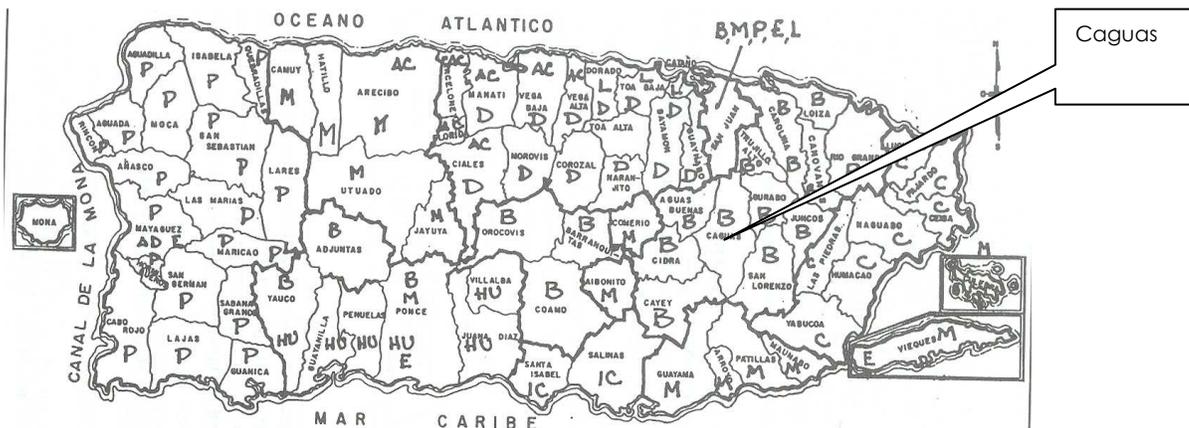
Primera Iglesia Bautista de Caguas  
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photographers with their new Kodak cameras and teachers came to the new acquisition in the Caribbean.

One other social group whose arrival into the island was extremely significant was the religious representatives. The Protestants missionaries followed the footprints on the United States soldiers, right after the Treaty of Paris was ratified and Puerto Rico was ceded to the American government. This arrival was not accidental. Just prior to the military occupation of Puerto Rico the Protestants factions had divided the island among themselves. Anticipating the United States' victory over Spain, on June 20, 1898, the Foreign Missions Board of the Presbyterian Church called for a meeting among the main Protestants sections to unify the efforts and to properly divide the work load in the new territories of Cuba, Philippines and Puerto Rico.<sup>12</sup>

By March 1899, eight months after the occupation, executives from the Baptists, Methodists, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Congregationals, Disciples of Christ, among others, got together in New York to establish the procedures, boundaries and rules in the "Protestant colonization" of Puerto Rico. (Fig.10)

Fig.10 Final arrangement of the evangelic division.<sup>13</sup>



<sup>12</sup> The Missionary Review of the World, XII (January, 1899): 53; XII: pp. 377-78. "Plans for Cuba and Puerto Rico".  
<sup>13</sup> Samuel Silva Gotay. *Protestantismo y política en Puerto Rico, 1898 – 1930. Hacia una historia del protestantismo evangélico en Puerto Rico*. Río Piedras: Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1997. pp. 113. The letters mean: B = Baptists; M = Methodists; P = Presbyterian; E = Episcopal; C = Congregational; L = Lutheran, etc.

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Showing their numerical and organizational strength, the Baptists and Methodists claimed the major urban centers. Their position became even stronger when the Civil Government was established. The 1900 Foraker Act created a local civil administration, controlled by the US Congress and the President, with the three republican branches (although not too clearly separated).<sup>14</sup> Very significant to the Protestant factions was that the Foraker Act also established the total separation of State and Church, quickly eroding the Catholic Church's four hundred years of absolutist power.

The Foraker Act created a political and cultural door for the openly establishment of Masonic leagues, Allan Kardec's Spiritist Centers, Freethinkers and almost every other Protestant designation present in the United States at the time. The missionaries came with the bible in one hand and the United States flag in the other. Religious proselytism and Americanization became a unified project throughout the island,<sup>15</sup> an expansionist ideological project already in practice in other locations and with other ethnics.<sup>16</sup>

During the Spanish colonial period, the Catholic Church influence was mostly circumscribed to the urban cores of the cities and towns. The Catholic Temple became an architectural icon directly associated with the social and public space around the town square. With most of the people amply spread-out in the countryside, it meant that the population's contact with religious officials was limited to their unusual trips into town. Adding to the separation between the regular folks and the Church officials was the absence of a native-composed priesthood. This fact created a perception that the local Catholic clergy was always made-out of "Peninsulares".<sup>17</sup>

Drastically different to the Catholic practice, the new Protestant missionaries conducted a fierce and well organized proselytism. Protestants meeting-houses sprout-up, not only within the main cities urban cores, but deep into the countryside.<sup>18</sup> These meeting houses, used to promote the new religious ideals and the American values, became the seeds for the official Protestants chapels. The Protestants temples built within the first few decades of the twentieth century adopted diverse

<sup>14</sup> María Dolores Luque de Sánchez. *La ocupación norteamericana y la ley Foraker, 1898-1904*. Río Piedras: Editorial Universitaria, 1980.

<sup>15</sup> Emilio Pantojas. "La Iglesia Protestante y la americanización de Puerto Rico, 1898-1917". *Revista de Ciencias Sociales*, Vol. XVIII, Num. 1-2, marzo-junio, 1974, p. 100-119.

<sup>16</sup> Emily S. Rosenberg. *Spreading the American Dream: Economic and Cultural Expansion 1890-1945*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1982.

<sup>17</sup> The term *Peninsulares* referred to the Spanish-born people living in the island.

<sup>18</sup> By 1900 there were only two organized Protestant's churches with 85 members. But by 1905 there were 299 meeting-houses; 91 organized churches; 19 temples built and 4 under construction; 12 chapels and a weekly assistance of 17,160 members. See: *Register of American Protestant Missionaries Laboring in Puerto Rico., Together with statistics of the Protestant Work. Conference of the Evangelical Churches which Convened in Ponce, May 24, 1905.*

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architectural styles. This stylish diversity became a perfect tool to disassociate themselves from the Catholic architectural language.

Another significant difference between the Catholic official practice and the evangelization crusade of the new missionaries was that the Protestants quickly created a cadre of young Puerto Ricans' males ordained as ministers.<sup>19</sup> This was more than just a way to deal with the language barrier, as the early American missionaries came with previous work experience in Latin America. The action of using locals as ministers was used to reflect the democratic values announced by the new Establishment. This practice helped to create a Puerto Rican leadership early within the Protestant movement. The strategy was valuable to penetrate areas with a strong native-spirit, as it was the city of Caguas. The **First Baptist Church** represents this complex context.

La Primera Iglesia Bautista de Caguas

The **Caguas' First Baptist Church** is a reinforced concrete building of Romanesque Revival style. It is located in a rectangular corner lot at the intersection of *Segundo Ruiz Belvis* and *Intendente Ramirez* streets, two blocks from *Plaza Federico Degetau*, the town's public square. The church was built in 1909, but the arrival of the Baptists missionaries to the town was from an earlier period.

Just as previously agreed among the Protestant factions, the Baptist had the evangelization monopoly of the city. By 1899, the once small village, was the twelfth largest town in the island, with a population of 19,857.<sup>20</sup> By 1910, Caguas was the tenth largest city, but with 10,354, it had the fourth largest amount of people concentrated in the urban core.<sup>21</sup> Because of these numbers, a quick foothold in Caguas' urban center became a significant priority for the Baptist missionaries.

As part of that priority, the first Baptist congregation in Caguas was quickly organized in August 3, 1900. The American Baptist's leadership decided to use a member of the newly formed cadre of Puerto Rican preachers as spear-head in the initial ideological penetration of the town, in respond to the strong regionalist orientation that already characterized the city. The person selected was Reverend Manuel Lebrón, as such, the Baptist congregation in Caguas became the first one in the island to be directly established by a Puerto Rican minister.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. By 1905, there were 52 US Protestant missionaries in the island and 86 native preachers. By 1908, there were 203 Puerto Ricans preachers.

<sup>20</sup> Aníbal Sepúlveda Rivera. *Puerto Rico Urbano. Atlas Histórico de la Ciudad Puertorriqueña*. Volumen 4. Carimar, 2004, p. 64.

<sup>21</sup> Census of Population. United States. Government Printing Office, Washington D.C. 1910.

<sup>22</sup> Through its entire history, the First Baptist Church was always lead by Puerto Ricans ministers.

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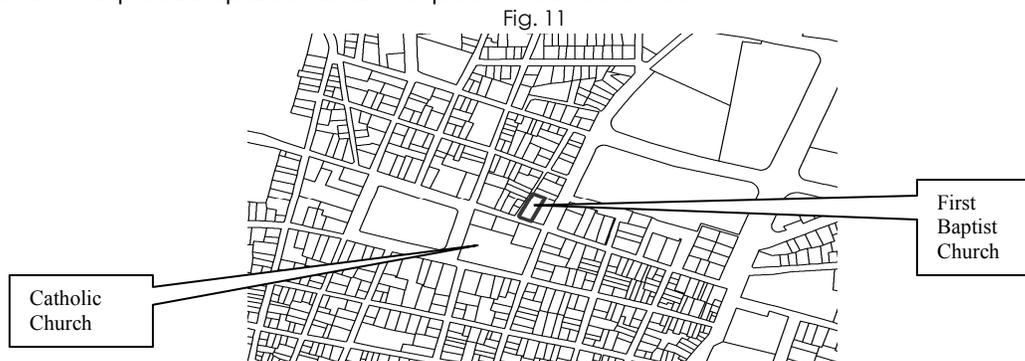
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The original meeting-house, no longer existent, was a rental property in Vizcarrondo Street. By 1906, \$1,100 was assigned by the American Baptist Home Mission Society, located in New York City, to acquire the corner lot for the church. In September 1907, the Mission Society donated \$7,500 for the temple's construction. Money was allocated through the next two years to pay for the architect fees (unknown until present time), furniture and equipment. The building was finally inaugurated on January 3, 1909.<sup>23</sup>

The architectural style of the church, the Romanesque Revival, gave the building, from the very start, a unique design and personality that made it stand out within its immediate surroundings. The style served also the purpose of breaking with the architectural pattern associated with Catholic churches, creating a new image for a new ideological discourse. The interior spatial arrangement, a small rectangular nave with a low and simple apse, served to create a more intimate, accessible and democratic relationship between the official clergy and the congregation, reflecting the new Establishment values and in contrast with the highly divided and hierarchal space within the Catholic temples. The building's low level, its humble architectural lines and the lack of grandiose ornamentation (inside and out), served also to accentuate the Baptist's project in reaching-out to the simple local-folks.

The site selected for the church was also a significant statement (Fig. 11). The **First Baptist Church** occupy a privilege location, facing the *Segundo Ruiz Belvis Street*, giving the property an immediate exposure to all the frequent users of the busy road. Two blocks away from the nineteenth century Catholic Church in the town square, its location represented a direct challenge to the old-status-quo for the control of the public space and the public conscience.



<sup>23</sup> First Baptist Church Inauguration Brochure. January 1909.

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The Baptist congregation grew-up quickly through the first decades. In the 1930s, an expansion was added, along the northwest axis of the church, without conflicting alterations to the original building. The annex was used as a Bible Parish School and Library Store.<sup>24</sup> In 1957, the congregation determined that the old building was no longer suitable to their purpose. They acquired a new lot, and the Baptist Home Mission Society sold the **First Baptist Church** building to Erasmo Velazquez y Olmedo for \$40,000, who used the property as a furniture warehouse. During the 1970s, until the late 1980s, it was rented-out to the Defenders of the Faith (a Pentecostal faction). From 1988 until the mid 1990s, the building was used as an office by a private commerce (New Vision Optics).

In 1993, the property was finally acquired by the City of Caguas.<sup>25</sup> After a successful rehabilitation process, the property was converted into a museum.<sup>26</sup> Through all the changes in functionality after 1957, the property has kept its integrity of materials, location, volume and feeling (Fig. 12).

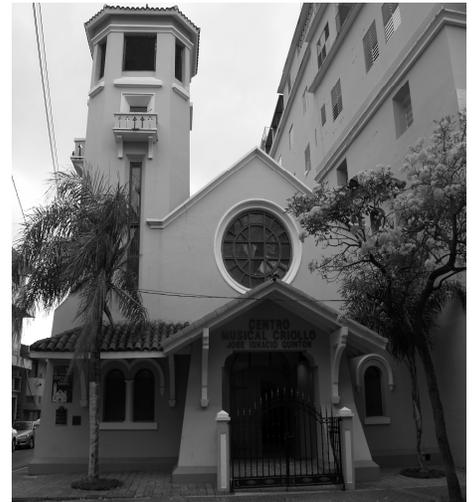
Fig. 12 The First Baptist Church through the years.



1940



1981



2008

<sup>24</sup> Memorandum from Reverend Angel Luis Rodríguez to Reverend José Norat Rodríguez titled: History of the Old Temple of Caguas First Baptist Church. December 14, 1990.

<sup>25</sup> Registro de la Propiedad. Sección Primera de Caguas. Finca 1144, Folio 54, Tomo 1349.

<sup>26</sup> The building is officially known today as *Centro Musical Criollo José Ignacio Quintón*, but the local people still refer to it as the First Baptist Church.

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The **First Baptist Church** represents the early and successful establishment of the Protestants factions in Puerto Rico and the new social conditions created during that process, immediately after the Spanish American War. The property is a great example of the new religious architectural language brought into the island. In the large scheme, the **First Baptist Church** embodies the new socio-political relations created by the 1900 Foraker Act and its policy of State-Church separation.

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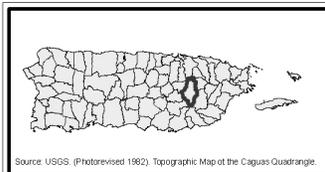
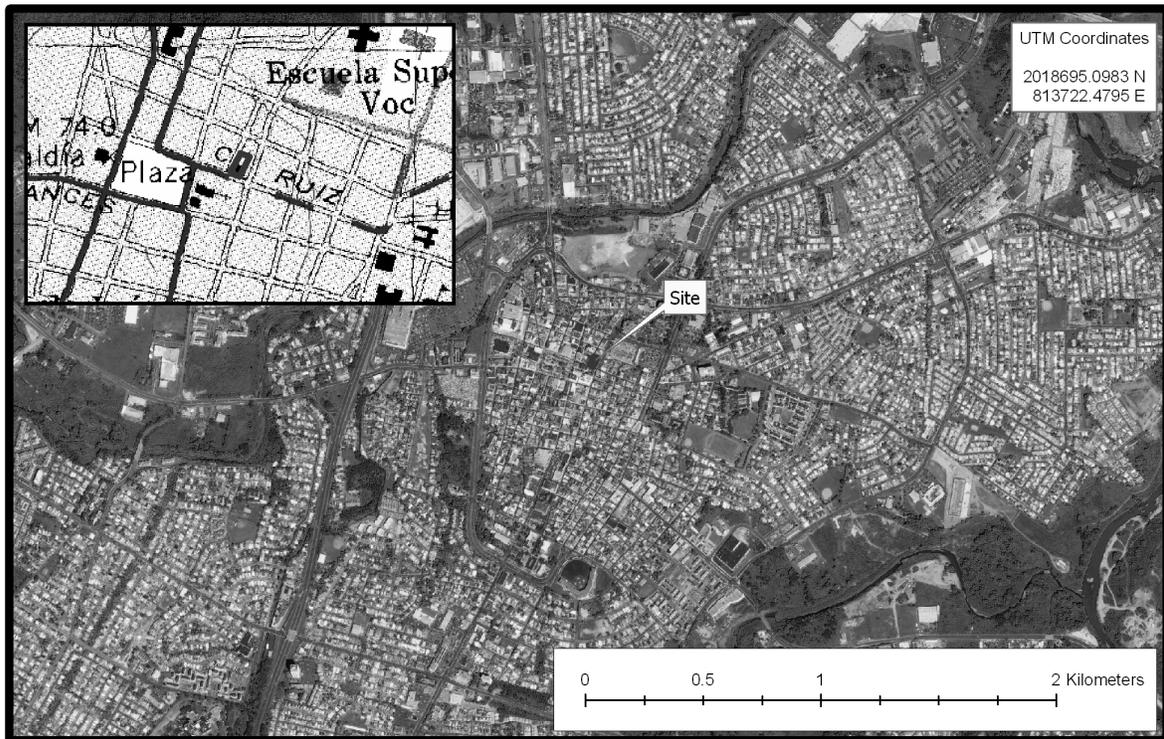
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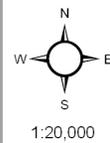
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Geographical Data



Site Map  
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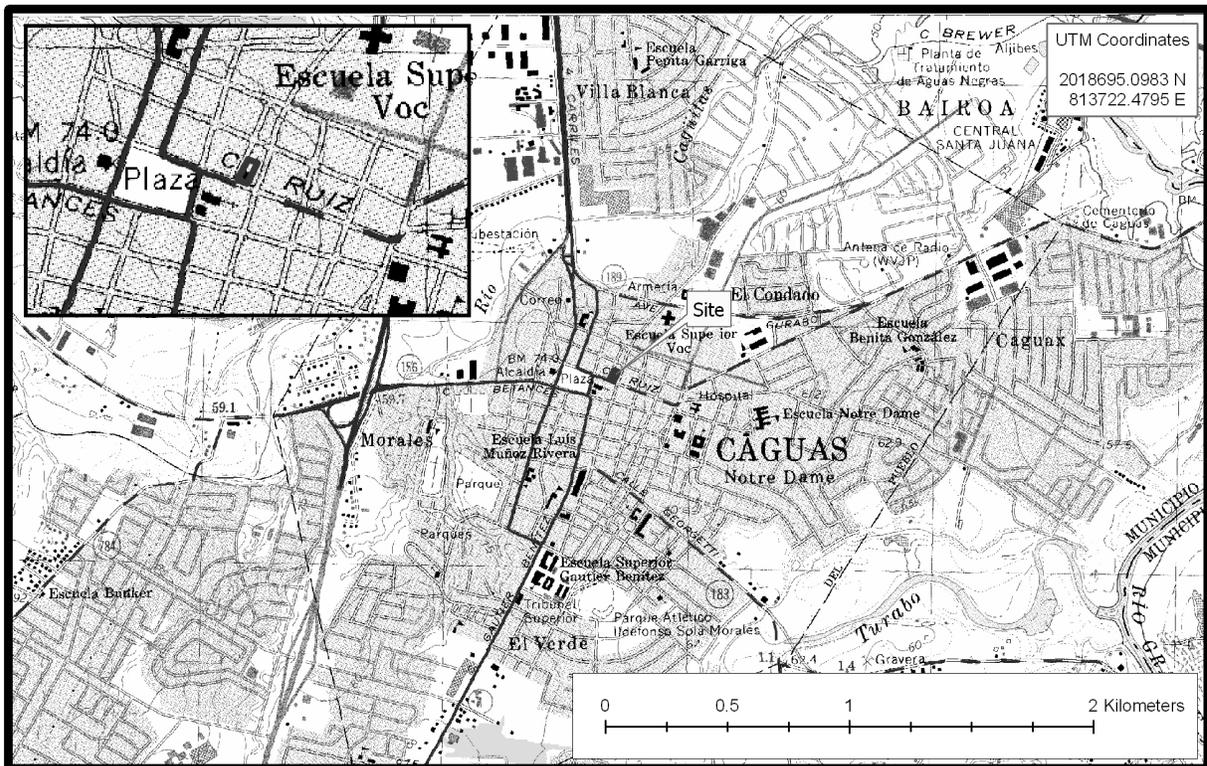


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<p>Source: USGS (Photorevised 1982), Topographic Map of the Caguas Quadrangle</p>	<p>Site Map <b>Primera Iglesia Bautista de Caguas</b> Caguas, Puerto Rico</p>	  1:20,000
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