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Benjamin Rankin Davis

Candidate

History

Department

This thesis is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication:

Approved by the Thesis Committee:

Dr. L. Durwood Ball, Chairperson

Dr. David Prior

Dr. Samuel Truett

**EL PASTOR:
THE LIFE AND MINISTRY OF JOSÉ YNÉZ PEREA,
1837–1910**

by

BENJAMIN RANKIN DAVIS

B.A., HISTORY, PATRICK HENRY COLLEGE, 2016

THESIS

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EL PASTOR: THE LIFE AND MINISTRY OF JOSÉ YNÉZ PEREA, 1837–1910

by

Benjamin Rankin Davis**B.A., History, Patrick Henry College, 2016****M.A., History, University of New Mexico, 2020****ABSTRACT**

Although numerically few, Presbyterian Hispanos constitute a persistent presence in the predominately Catholic religious landscape of New Mexico. Despite their resilience, they have been largely invisible in historical scholarship. This study foregrounds the Protestant Hispano identity through the experience of the first Hispano ordained as a Presbyterian pastor, José Ynéz Perea. Using Perea's correspondence, U.S. government documents, contemporary newspapers, Presbyterian serials, and Catholic oppositional writings, this study locates Perea's experience in the wider context of the Gilded Age, both in New Mexico and in the United States. Perea's religious identity made tenuous his place in Hispano society. Although he found peace and meaning in the doctrines of Presbyterian Christianity, he struggled to prompt similar conversion in other Hispanos. Even so, Perea's work and example carved out a space for Hispano Presbyterianism that remained even as the modernizing Presbyterian Church abandoned missionary efforts in the region.

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Introduction

In September 1880, José Ynéz Perea became the first Hispano ordained as a pastor in the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (PCUSA). The scion of two distinguished Nuevomexicano families, he abandoned the Catholicism of his upbringing and heritage to embrace an alternative understanding of Christian faith. Perea's initial conversion to Protestantism risked alienation from his family and community; his decision to become a pastor cemented that separation. Over his ministerial career, Perea's endeavor to convert other Hispanos to Presbyterianism met with only limited, even minimal, success. The two churches he pastored did not survive long past his death. Despite his personal experience of societal isolation and ministerial struggles, however, Perea played a central role in establishing Hispano Presbyterianism in New Mexico, a religious community that persists into the twenty-first century.

Perea's experience offers the historian a unique lens through which to observe territorial New Mexico. His experience lies at the intersection of religious, social, and political history. Beginning in 1848, after New Mexico was annexed by the United States in the wake of the U.S.-Mexico War, the territory underwent a long process of assimilation and integration into the social, cultural, political, and economic fabric of the United States. Uncertainty and turbulence characterized the territorial period as the arrival of Anglo American capital and government strained or displaced existing power structures. This tenuous setting shaped Perea's life and ministry. He worked to minister to what he saw as the spiritual needs of his community in a rapidly changing world. For forty years, from 1870 to 1910, he sought to carve a space for his congregations, twice anomalous though they were. Protestant outliers in a Catholic society and Spanish

speaking in an overwhelmingly Anglo American denomination, Hispano Presbyterian churches found the room to grow in an environment fractured by new fault lines. In New Mexico, Protestant home missionary outreach, Catholic reform, Anglo American economic colonialism, Hispano resistance, and struggles over the meaning of ethnic and racial identity created the circumstances and constraints that enabled and limited Perea's ministry.

A well-established tradition in the scholarship of U.S. missionary activity laments the dearth of study in the field. In 1988 Ferenc Szasz notes in his introduction to *The Protestant Clergy in the Great Plains and Mountain West* that the "religious dimension of the American West has been slighted. In fact, it would be hard to find another aspect of Western life that has been similarly ignored."¹ Since Szasz wrote his history of the clergy, a handful of historians have labored to fill the gap, but the published work in the field remains sparse.

The historiography of missionary outreach in New Mexico is downstream of scholarship on U.S. missionary endeavors in general. The bulk of such works treats the explosion of U.S. foreign missions in the nineteenth century. Kenneth Latourette and R. Pierce Beaver laid the foundation that has guided subsequent scholars. Before coming to academia, both men had themselves been missionaries in China. Latourette, the D. Willis James professor of Missions and World Christianity at Yale, published extensively from the 1930s through 1960s on Christianity and Asian history. R. Pierce Beaver, based at the University of Chicago, overlapped with Latourette but published up to the 1980s.

¹ Ferenc Morton Szasz, *The Protestant Clergy in the Great Plains and Mountain West, 1865–1915* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988), 3.

Latourette and Beaver both advanced a narrative of missionary outreach in which theological modernization led to missional secularization. Both scholars had been participants in the processes they described, and their narratives, which underscore the ascendancy of modernist missiology in the mainline denominations, celebrate missionaries' shift from evangelism to social outreach. Latourette argues that modernity, with its relaxation of theological specificity, reinvigorated the Christian faith, freeing it from the webs of superstition. Further, contemporary technologies enabled the spread of Christianity with unprecedented rapidity.² For his part, Beaver highlights the humanitarian aspects of missionary work. Instead of evangelism, Beaver emphasizes "progress" as the chief aim of missionary outreach. Missionary outreach was valuable for the developments it inspired in the "social change, civilization, economic betterment, and moral improvement" of "formerly benighted lands."³

In the late 1980s, William Hutchinson intervened in the field, focusing on the experience of missionaries themselves, rather than the thematic and institutional focus of Latourette and Beaver. Hutchinson traces the shifts in U.S. missionary theology and ideology over the course of the long nineteenth century, dwelling on the ways that missionaries sought to find balance between "Christ and culture" in their vocation. The missionary project was closely tied to Anglo American imperialism, but Hutchinson argues that missionaries were not uncritical stooges of imperial colonialism. Instead, missionaries saw themselves as the tamers of the inevitable and inexorable force of

² Kenneth Latourette, *The Great Century: A.D. 1800–A.D. 1914, Europe and the United States of America*, vol. 4 of *A History of the Expansion of Christianity* (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1941), 6.

³ R. Pierce Beaver, "Missionary Motivation through Three Centuries," in *Reinterpretations in American Church History*, ed. Jerald Brauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 145.

Western expansion. Hutchinson illustrates the intense disapproval missionaries levied on aspects of their home culture and their clashes with the commercial, military, and diplomatic extensions of U.S. power.⁴

The most recent landmark entry into the field is David Hollinger's *Protestants Abroad*. Building on Hutchinson's analysis of the missionary experience and of missionaries' relationships with their sending nation, Hollinger charts the cultural and practical impact missionaries and their children had on the United States. He argues that missionaries and their children were at the forefront of U.S. diplomacy and foreign policy up to the 1950s and that they were essential figures in the development of multicultural thought in the United States. Hollinger writes, "The Protestant foreign missionary project expected to make the world look more like the United States. Instead, it made the United States look more like the world."⁵

Like Szasz, Hollinger complains in *Protestants Abroad* that the story of U.S. missionary outreach has attracted too little scholarly interest. Even so, foreign missions have enjoyed more frequent scholarly treatment than home missions. The primary overview of the subject is still Colin Goodykoontz's *Home Missions on the American Frontier*, published in 1939. A student of Frederick Jackson Turner, he analyzes Protestant home missions through the lens of Turner's frontier thesis. In Goodykoontz's analysis, Protestant home missionary efforts were an attempt by eastern society to maintain religious and educational control as the frontier line advanced westward.⁶

⁴ William Hutchinson, *Errand to the World: American Protestant Thought and Foreign Missions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 9–11, 93.

⁵ Hollinger, 1.

⁶ Colin Goodykoontz, *Home Missions on the American Frontier: With Particular Reference to the American Home Missionary Society* (1939; reprint, New York: Octagon Books, 1971), 422–424.

Ferenc Morton Szasz updates Goodykoontz's analysis. In *The Protestant Clergy in the Great Plains and Mountain West*, he discusses the social role mainline pastors played in their communities. In the immediate aftermath of the Civil War, they "raced west to found new churches so that they might 'capture' the settlers as soon as they arrived." They sought to eliminate the obvious vices in their new communities, crusading against alcohol and prostitution. Szasz observes that by the 1880s, most "vice districts had been segregated and the clergy usually ignored them." In these towns, segregated between "proper" and "improper" pursuits, pastors became "proper" community leaders and "the prime conveyors of the best of Victorian life."⁷

Szasz's work covers the entire western United States; as such, he discusses pastors and churches in New Mexico (including Perea, briefly), but only as part of a larger narrative. The two primary overviews of the Protestant missionary endeavor in New Mexico specifically are Randi Walker's *Protestantism in the Sangre de Cristos* and Mark Banker's *Presbyterian Missions and Cultural Interaction in the Far Southwest*. Walker focuses on Protestant activity in the Hispano heartland of the Rio Arriba. She notes that Protestant missionaries were frustrated in their efforts and did not achieve the number of conversions they expected. At the same time, she also points out that Protestants did plant lasting churches in northern New Mexico, an environment where Catholicism was so entrenched as to make any Protestant success unlikely. In explanation of the Protestant failure, she identifies Protestant missionaries' sense of cultural superiority, which frequently prevented them from adapting to the Hispano culture in which they worked. Further, perhaps more fundamentally, New Mexico Hispanos, with

⁷ Szasz, 8.

their deep, rich, and long history, were profoundly resistant to the Americanization which Protestantism entailed and sought to introduce. The frustration of Protestant missionaries in the Southwest was an indication that Anglo America could not in fact blithely assume its cultural superiority and the assimilation of all people with which it came in contact.⁸

Banker narrates the Presbyterian outreach to the three primary southwestern groups that differed from mainstream Anglo American society: Native Americans, New Mexicans (the Hispanic people of New Mexico), and Mormons. Instead of focusing simply on the impact of the missionaries on the peoples to whom they ministered, Banks seeks to demonstrate the impact that the people and cultures of the Southwest had on the missionaries and, through them, the mission perspective of the larger Presbyterian Church. Banks observes Presbyterian missionaries frequently came to the Southwest with an Anglo American sense of superiority and sought to instill their Anglo values in the populations within which they worked. He argues, however, that prolonged exposure to the multi-cultural milieu and experience with the strength of those cultures often “humbled” missionaries and led them to see value in cultures they had previously denigrated.⁹

In addition to Walker’s and Banker’s overviews, other historians have added depth to the narrative by looking at the missionary experience through the lens of gender and from the perspective of the missionized. Sarah Deutsch dedicates a chapter to women who came to New Mexico as Presbyterian missionaries in her *No Separate Refuge*.

⁸ Randi Jones Walker, *Protestantism in the Sangre de Cristos, 1850–1920* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1991), 118–20.

⁹ Mark T. Banker, *Presbyterian Missions and Cultural Interaction in the Far Southwest, 1850–1910* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), x–xii.

Deutsch examines the complex role these women, who usually came as schoolteachers, played in Hispano communities. She emphasizes the cultural and social aspects of their educational work, highlighting the ambiguities inherent in their task: “The very act of conveying it [Anglo American culture] required transgressing the roles it relayed.” For their part, Hispanas “proved selective in the lessons they learned from the Americanizers in their midst,” accepting English-language skills and new technologies, but largely ignoring the cultural changes Presbyterian schoolteachers sought to inspire.¹⁰

Susan Yohn examines another facet of missionary women’s experience in *A Contest of Faiths*, emphasizing the impact of the mission field on the missionary. She argues that over the course of their missionary work and contact with Hispano culture, Presbyterian women missionaries came to reassess the ethnocentric national identity that posited Protestantism as fundamental to Americanism. However, while they began to demand a more accepting and understanding society, they stopped short of demanding full equity, remaining largely within the dominant race and class structure of their society. In Yohn’s view, these women exemplify the cultural debates and societal shifts of their period, as broader conceptions of American identity led to an expanded state and toward social liberalism and social welfare.¹¹

Juan Martínez relates the frequently overlooked story of Hispanos who became Protestants in the territorial period in his *Sea la Luz*, published by the University of North Texas Press in 2006. He explores the motivations of Protestant missionaries and the

¹⁰ Sarah Deutsch, *No Separate Refuge: Culture, Class, and Gender on an Anglo-Hispanic Frontier in the American Southwest, 1880–1940* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 86.

¹¹ Susan Yohn, *A Contest of Faiths: Missionary Women and Pluralism in the American Southwest* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1995), 8.

dynamics that brought them to New Mexico, arguing their impulses were essentially mixed. They came both as good Christians and as good citizens—both to save souls and to spread American civilization. He then discusses the response of Hispanos to Protestant missionary outreach and the complex position occupied by those who accepted the new doctrines. Accepting Protestant faith stranded the Hispano convert between two worlds. On the one hand, by accepting the faith of the Anglo, the convert cut himself off from his fellow Hispanos. On the other, in the racialized world of the nineteenth-century United States, he was also cut off from his Anglo Protestant fellows. Caught between two worlds, these Hispanic Protestants had to begin the process of creating their own distinct identity; one that laid the foundation of present-day Latino Protestant identity.¹²

José Ynez Perea appears as an incidental character in several of the studies of Presbyterian missionary activity in New Mexico, receiving a paragraph or a page in the histories by Szasz, Banker, Yohn, and Martínez. Only one relatively short article, written by Mark T. Banker and included in the collection *Religion and Society in the American West*, deals with Perea specifically. Banker's article does an excellent job of tracing the broad contours of Perea's narrative but does not have the space to engage deeply with his experience.¹³

For the most part, existing work on Protestant missions in New Mexico focuses primarily on Anglo American missionaries and the East Coast-based superstructure of Protestant denominations. The basic narrative that emerges is one in which the Anglo

¹² Juan Francisco Martínez, *Sea la Luz: The Making of Mexican Protestantism in the American Southwest, 1829–1900* (Denton: University of North Texas Press, 2006), 2–5.

¹³ Mark T. Banker, “Missionary to his own people: José Ynez Perea and Hispanic Presbyterianism in New Mexico,” in *Religion and Society in the American West: Historical Essays*, ed. Carl Guarneri and David Alvarez (New York: University Press of America, 1987), 79–104.

American missionary comes to New Mexico as an extension of American empire, runs up against the established cultures of New Mexico, and either learns to appreciate multiculturalism or else ends his or her career in failure. These narratives participate in a larger narrative of Gilded Age and Progressive Era missionary endeavors in which the lack of conversions and the onset of theological modernization led to an increased emphasis on social work.

Through Perea's experience, this thesis seeks to highlight the agency of the missionized in the story of missionary activity. Although he first encountered Protestantism in the Anglo American world, as a minister Perea determinedly emphasized his Hispano identity, writing and preaching in Spanish to Nuevomexicano audiences until his death. Further, although most other narratives of New Mexico Protestant missionaries emphasize the social work of schoolteachers and medical missionaries, this thesis foregrounds the perspective of a missionary who worked primarily as a pastor. In doing so, it seeks to give voice to missionaries who challenged the secularizing trends of theological modernism in the late nineteenth century and retained an emphasis on evangelism in their daily pastoral work.

This thesis draws primarily from Perea's papers housed at the Menaul Historical Library (MHL). The MHL holds correspondence between Perea and his missionary supervisor, Sheldon Jackson, as well as autobiographical letters he wrote to other pastors in the New Mexico field. The research also draws on U.S. government archives with which Perea's life intersected. Central to locating Perea within the Presbyterian missionary effort are contemporary Presbyterian serials such as *The Church at Home and Abroad*, the *Assembly Herald*, and the *Monthly Presbyterian*. These publications printed

reports from Perea, as well as assessments of the New Mexico field by a variety of Presbyterian authors. Finally, the Jesuit-published newspaper *La Revista Catolica* offers an oppositional perspective on Perea's activities in New Mexico. Quotations included in the text have been lightly modernized for readability but left mostly as originally written. All translations are the author's own, with the original text included in the notes for reference.

Chapter 1 explores Perea's conversion experience, examining his family background and educational experience, his break with Catholicism and subsequent efforts to reintegrate into New Mexico society as a lay Protestant. Chapter 2 opens with Perea's contact with the PCUSA in New Mexico and discusses the impact that the meeting had for the denomination and for Perea personally. His meeting with John Annin, a home missionary dispatched by the PCUSA Board of Home Missions, started Perea down the path to full-time ministry and prompted the Presbyterians to begin outreach efforts among the Hispanos of New Mexico. Chapter 3 examines Perea's pastoral career, emphasizing the sacrifices his new career demanded. Chapter 4 concludes the thesis by examining Perea's retirement years and illustrating his complex legacy in territorial New Mexico. On the one hand, his alienation from the bulk of Hispano society is illustrated by the paths of his wife and children, who left the territory to live the rest of their lives in the Anglo American mainstream of the United States. On the other, Perea's example and mentorship inspired other Hispano evangelists, some of whom planted enduring churches in the Rio Arriba region of New Mexico.

Chapter 1

El Converso

José Ynéz Perea's background made him an unlikely convert. Born into a wealthy, Catholic Hispano family, his childhood education and training all took place within the contours of Catholic institutions and thought. His elite family's political and commercial relationships, however, opened doors into Anglo American society, where Perea discovered Protestant approaches to Christian faith. Beginning in his adolescence, he rebelled against the Catholicism of his upbringing. His rejection of Catholicism initially alienated him from his family, the separation driving him far from New Mexico. While away from his family and home, Perea embraced Presbyterian Christianity, finding meaning and peace in its doctrines. By the time he reconciled with his family and returned home, Presbyterianism was a force actively molding Perea's identity.

Perea's family was one of the most prominent in New Mexican society. José was born to don Juan Perea and doña Josefa Chaves de Perea in Bernalillo on 21 April 1837. The Pereas' and Chaveses' presence in the region spanned centuries. The Chaveses traced their ancestry in New Mexico back to the early seventeenth century, before the Pueblo Revolt of 1680. The Pereas' first ancestor in New Mexico entered with the Spanish Reconquest led by don Diego de Vargas in 1693. Perea's maternal grandfather, Xavier Chaves, was the second provincial governor of New Mexico under the Mexican administration following Independence from Spain in 1821. On the paternal side, José

Ynez's father, a brother, an uncle, and a cousin would all become important Hispano political leaders in New Mexico Territory under the United States.¹⁴

Even before the United States annexed New Mexico after the U.S.-Mexico War, Perea's family cultivated business relationships in the United States through participation in the Santa Fe trade. As early as 1842, José Ynez's father, Juan, brought seventy *bultos* (bundles) back to New Mexico from the United States. His cargo consisted primarily of over thirty thousand yards of cloth, for which he paid nearly five thousand pesos in import duties.¹⁵ The following year, Juan and his brother, José Leandro, went on another trading venture to the United States, this time traveling all the way to New York. Juan took one of his sons, Francisco, with him on the journey, and enrolled him at a Jesuit college in St. Louis.¹⁶ Juan would be a significant merchant in the Santa Fe trade through the 1840s and 1850s.

Through the trade, Juan Perea forged relationships with businessmen in New York, Boston, and St. Louis. At the same time, Perea and his fellow Hispano elites consolidated their own position in New Mexico by actively shaping the emergence of a new economy. Historian Susan Calafate Boyle explains in *Los Capitalistas*: "During the late 1830s, the 1840s, and 1850s the New Mexican elite developed a form of mercantile capitalism that took advantage of the conditions in the territory. . . . They supplied the people in the countryside with the manufactured goods they needed. In exchange they

¹⁴ Fray Angélico Chavez, *Origins of New Mexico Families: A Genealogy of the Spanish Colonial Period* (Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico Press, 1992), 19, 86.

¹⁵ Susan Calafate Boyle, *Los Capitalistas: Hispano Merchants and the Santa Fe Trade* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997), 63.

¹⁶ "Francisco Perea Delegate to 38th Congress, Dies at Home Here," *Albuquerque (N.Mex.) Morning Journal*, 22 May 1913.

obtained sheep, grains, and commodities as well as promissory notes.”¹⁷ Their engagement with the Santa Fe trade gave the Perea a stable and dominant position in the politics and economy of Hispano society.

The earliest biographies of José Ynez Perea, published in the first decade of the twentieth century, emphasize his privileged background. Interest in Perea’s wealthy heritage stemmed in part from the religious impulses of his biographers, who were fellow Presbyterians. The first account of Perea’s life appeared in *Our Mexicans*, which was written by the Presbyterian synodical missionary to New Mexico, Robert Craig, and published by the Presbyterian Board of Home Missions in 1904. Perea’s death in 1910 then prompted a flurry of eulogies in the Presbyterian newspaper *La Aurora*, published in Las Vegas, New Mexico. Both Craig’s biographical sketch and the eulogies in *La Aurora* used Perea’s wealthy background to construct his memory in religious terms, but did so in different ways.¹⁸

In *La Aurora*, Perea’s eulogists used his privileged upbringing to highlight his humility and sacrificial service. The eulogies structured Perea’s narrative in terms of Christian archetypes, primarily that of Jesus. Gabino Rendón, another Hispano Presbyterian pastor who Perea helped to inspire, compared Perea’s ministry to Jesus’ humble washing of the disciple’s feet at the Last Supper. Rendón wrote, “Born and raised, as he [Perea] was, in the midst of wealth and abundance, his character and life might well have been the victim of pride.” Instead, “in Don Ynes there was no ambition

¹⁷ Boyle, 67–68.

¹⁸ Robert Craig, *Our Mexicans* (New York: Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A, 1904), 89–92; and “Memorial Sketch of the Reverend Jose Ynes Perea,” “Don Ynes Perea,” and “Recuerdos de el Reverendo Jose Ynes Perea,” *La Aurora* (Las Vegas, N.Mex.), 15 November 1910.

for lordship, or for superiority over his brothers, but he rejoiced in serving for the love of his master.”¹⁹

To Rendón, Perea’s relationship to his upbringing demonstrated his Christlikeness, the ultimate goal of the Christian. Implicit in Rendón’s assessment of Perea is a key passage from the book of Philippians: “Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”²⁰ Like Jesus, Perea left behind power and privilege to embrace sacrifice.

The prominence of Perea’s family heightened the sacrifice his new faith exacted. Because his family was, according to Rendón, “the richest in New Mexico,” Perea faced “a stronger opposition on the part of his family than in other cases.”²¹ Rendón noted, “If the conversion of a humble Mexican was looked at with spite, and as something so degrading, how would they see the conversion of the son of the first family in the territory of New Mexico?”²² As a result, “Many other means were put to use than the usual to push him back from what to them appeared the greatest error.”²³ In his struggles

¹⁹ “Don Ynes Perea,” *La Aurora* (Las Vegas, N.Mex.), 15 November 1910.

²⁰ Philippians 2:6–8, English Standard Version.

²¹ Habiéndose convertido al protestantismo desde muy joven, y siendo como era de ese entonces, la familia más rica de Nuevo México, ese mero hecho lo hacía una oposición de parte de su familia mas fuerte que en otros casos. “Don Ynes Perea,” *La Aurora* (Las Vegas, N.Mex.), 15 November 1910.

²² Si la conversión de un humilde mexicano se veía con ojeriza, y como cosa tan degradante, ¿Cómo no se vería la conversión de un hijo de la primer familia del territorio de Nuevo México? Ibid.

²³ Muchos otros medios se pusieron en usa que los usuales para hacerlo retroceder de lo que a ellos les parecía el más grande error. Ibid.

with his family and in his later ministerial career, Perea contrasted evocatively with another Biblical archetype, the rich young ruler of Mark 10. Whereas the young ruler heard Jesus' call to follow but turned away because he did not want to lose his possessions, "because of the obstinate opposition, the young man [Perea] lost his home."²⁴

Whereas Rendón emphasized Perea's wealthy background to highlight his humility and sacrifice, Robert Craig highlighted Perea's privileged upbringing as a sign of God's favor on the Perea family and as an indicator of His plans for Perea's future. This attitude toward wealth stemmed in part from Presbyterian theology. Reformed theology, of which Presbyterianism is one heir, came out of the Reformation through John Calvin. In its classic manifestations, Reformed theology emphasized double predestination, the idea that God in His sovereign and inscrutable will ordains who will be damned as well as who will be saved. For the Reformed Christian, eternal salvation was received by grace alone (*sola gratia*) through faith alone (*sola fide*), and not won through good works. Sociologist Max Weber notes, however, that the doctrine of double predestination meant that the individual Christian was frequently uncertain about whether he or she was one of the elect, chosen for salvation, or one of the reprobate, chosen for damnation.²⁵

Faced with the anguish their parishioners suffered on account of doubts regarding the state of their souls, Reformed pastors recommended "intense worldly activity."

²⁴ A causa de la obstinada oposición, el joven perdió su hogar. "Don Ynes Perea," *La Aurora* (Las Vegas, N.Mex.), 15 November 1910.

²⁵ Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Talcott Parsons (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958), 112.

Disciplined and virtuous activity in the world “disperses religious doubts and gives the certainty of grace.”²⁶ As a result, despite Reformed theology’s emphasis on *sola gratia* and *sola fide*, good works played a vital role in the Reformed Christian’s internal experience of Christian faith. Good works became “the technical means, not of purchasing salvation, but of getting rid of the fear of damnation.” As Weber concludes, “In practice this means that God helps those who help themselves. Thus the Calvinist . . . creates his own salvation, or, as would be more correct, the conviction of it.”²⁷

The arena for good works was in the fulfillment of one’s vocation, which in Reformed theology was a calling from God. Disciplined activity in one’s vocation, and the financial success that disciplined labor brought, served to assure Reformed Christians of their salvation. As a result, Reformed theology “looked upon the pursuit of wealth as an end in itself as highly reprehensible; but the attainment of [wealth] as a fruit of labour in a calling was a sign of God’s blessing.”²⁸

By the time Robert Craig wrote his biographical sketch of Perea, Calvin’s harsh doctrine of double predestination had been out of fashion in the United States since at least the 1830s. The Second Great Awakening, with its fervent revivals and emphasis on God’s benevolence and mankind’s agency, deeply impacted American theology, even in traditionally Reformed denominations like the Presbyterians.²⁹ The positive assessment of worldly prosperity, however, remained and was augmented by late-nineteenth-century

²⁶ Weber, 112.

²⁷ Ibid., 115.

²⁸ Ibid., 172.

²⁹ Martin Marty, *Righteous Empire: The Protestant Experience in America* (New York: The Dial Press, 1970), 85–88; and Kathryn Teresa Long, *The Revival of 1857–58: Interpreting an American Religious Awakening* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 12.

beliefs in success as proof of superiority. As a result, Craig saw the wealth of Perea's family as a measure of their virtue, both religiously and culturally.

Craig cast Perea's family as almost-Protestants, declaring, "The family were endowed with American feelings and were advanced for the times in which they lived." He claimed that Perea's father himself actually "embraced the Protestant religion" while he underwent medical treatment in New York (no other source corroborates his assertion). He noted, however, that the cultural and familial bonds of Catholicism proved too strong and "on the entreaties and tears of his wife he returned to the Romish fold."³⁰

Presbyterian biographers' emphasis on Perea's family background also stemmed from New Mexico's racial politics on the eve of statehood. As Charles Montgomery notes in *The Spanish Redemption*, at the outset of the twentieth century New Mexico experienced a "racial stalemate." At the time, the idea of race was central to Anglo American expansion. In the Southwest, the incorporation of territory taken from Mexico "went hand in hand with the creation of a racial antagonist, that is, the construction of ethnic Mexicans as benighted subordinates." In New Mexico, however, Hispanos retained the demographic advantage and therefore electoral power.³¹

The continued relevance of Hispano political and economic power, even as Anglo immigration and commercial control increased, resulted in "a standoff, a balance of power tilting gradually in the Anglos' favor." In this standoff, Anglos had to partner with and work alongside Hispanos. Because Anglos granted "true equality . . . only to those recognized as white, propertied, and civilized," Hispanos and Anglos alike emphasized

³⁰ Craig, 89.

³¹ Charles Montgomery, *The Spanish Redemption: Heritage, Power, and Loss on New Mexico's Upper Rio Grande* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 10.

the Spanish heritage of Nuevomexicanos. The emphasis on Spanish identity enabled Hispanos and Anglos to “depict northern New Mexico’s large Spanish-speaking population as white and civilized and thereby to claim that the old line of racial division between ‘Americans’ and ‘Mexicans’ had been redrawn into a circle of inclusion.” Craig’s emphasis on Perea’s wealthy background affirmed Perea’s status as a member of the “white” elite.³²

The economic activities of Perea’s family are well attested to in the archive. Sources specifically describing Perea’s early childhood, however, are limited and come entirely from Presbyterian authors. Only two narratives of Perea as a child have entered the archive. The first, concerning Perea’s baptism, comes from Robert Craig’s biographical sketch. The second, an incident involving young Perea and an image of the Virgin Mary, appears in the memoirs of Alice Blake, a Presbyterian missionary, and in correspondence between Perea’s son, Clifford, and J. A. Schufle, an early historian of the Presbyterian church in Las Vegas, New Mexico.

Craig invested José Ynez’s baptism with foreshadowing and symbolism. When Perea was born, Craig claimed, the nearest priest ministered at Isleta, the Puebloan community lying across the Rio Grande from Perea’s family home in Bernalillo. On the day of Perea’s baptism, his aunt and uncle were tasked with taking him to the priest. Concerned for their safety in crossing the river, the aunt and uncle invoked Holy Mary and St. Joseph before fording. Despite their prayers, the wagon overturned part way across and they “found themselves, babe and all, indulging a bath in the Rio Grande.”³³

³² Montgomery, 11, 19.

³³ Craig, 90.

Although all escaped the incident unscathed, the excitement caused the aunt and uncle to forget the name that Josefa had given her son. The priest turned “in wrath” to an almanac of saints’ days. According to Craig, Perea was born on April 23 (an error on Craig’s part), the day of “Yñes del Monte Pulciano.” Despite the aunt and uncle’s protestations that the child’s parents “would not like the name ‘Yñes,’ that being a woman’s name,” the priest insisted. According to Craig, “This was very distasteful to the mother as she had wished her son to be called ‘Ignacio.’”³⁴

Craig’s narrative highlighted what he portrayed as a judgement of God upon the invocation of saints. To Presbyterians, pleas for intercession from Mary and the saints amounted to idolatry. Craig also assumed the imperious attitude of the Catholic clergy toward the laity, with the priest angrily discounting the desires of Perea’s family. Craig foreshadowed Perea’s future ministry by locating a source of grievance against the Catholic Church in Perea’s very identity. In Craig’s telling, the church imposed its will on Perea at the sacrament of Holy Baptism by forcing on him a name contrary to his family’s wishes and Perea’s masculinity.³⁵

In her memoirs, Presbyterian missionary Alice Blake similarly invested an incident from Perea’s childhood with symbolic weight. According to Perea’s son, Clifford, the actual incident took place when Perea was a young child. Perea had “wanted to try out his new bow and arrow” and chose as his target “the picture of the saint in the

³⁴ Craig, 90.

³⁵ Craig was apparently unfamiliar with New Mexican naming practices. The use of a female saint’s name as masculine name went against his Anglo norms. In New Mexico, however, Ynez was a frequent component of men’s name, and a quick survey of territorial newspapers turns up several other men named José Ynez.

parlor.” His action was “a boyish prank,” not a theological statement.³⁶ In her memoirs, however, Blake set the incident in Perea’s late adolescence, after his return from school in the East. She wrote: “After finishing school and returning to his ancestral home, he was led, one day, to protest to his mother that the wooden image of the Virgin, that she venerated so highly, had no more virtue than any other picture or statue.” To prove his point, “he persisted that he could put a bullet through the statue and she would not do anything to him. No sooner said than done. The Virgin did not do anything, but the mother did. The son was ordered from the home, never to return.” In Blake’s telling, the incident was emblematic of Perea’s break with his family over religion.³⁷

Despite the significance contemporary Presbyterian biographers imputed to the incidents of Perea’s childhood, his early experiences gave him a solid foundation in the principles and practices of Catholicism. Whatever Craig’s claims concerning the semi-Protestantism of Perea’s father, the reality was that Perea’s family observed all the forms of Catholic worship, even to the point that the 1860 census shows that his sixteen-year-old sister Lucia was already a nun or novice with the Sisters of Loretto.³⁸

The Catholicism Perea experienced in New Mexico differed in significant ways from the Catholicism found closer to the centers of Spanish and Mexican power, and

³⁶ Clifford Perea to J. A. Schufle, n.d., Jose Ynez Perea Information File, Menaul Historical Library, Albuquerque, New Mexico [hereafter JYP, MHL].

³⁷ Alice Blake, “The Las Vegas Field: Jose Inez Perea, 1837–1910,” JYP, MHL.

³⁸ Lucia Perea, Santa Fe, New Mexico Territory, p. 563, r. 714, microfilm, (Washington, D.C.: National Archives Records Administration, n.d.) *1860 United States Federal Census*, M653D, National Archive Microfilm Publications, Records of the Bureau of the Census, Record Group 29, National Archives and Records Administration. At the invitation of Bishop Jean-Baptiste Lamy in Santa Fe, the Sisters of Loretto came to New Mexico and opened a school for girls in 1853. See Paul Horgan, *Lamy of Santa Fe*, special ed. (New York: Farr, Straus, and Giroux, 1975; Gallup, N.Mex.: Southwest Indian Foundation, 2012), 152.

from Catholicism in Europe. Although the story of Catholicism in New Mexico stretched back to the earliest days of Spanish colonialism, Franciscan missions had not established unproblematic theological orthodoxy in New Mexico. The various Pueblo groups negotiated and modified the appearance of Catholicism over time. In addition to everyday adaptations exercised at an individual basis, the abrupt violence of the Pueblo Revolt in 1680 gave the Pueblos an advantage in shaping the Catholicism brought by the Franciscans. The Pueblo Revolt, caused in part by Franciscan attempts to regulate Pueblo religious observances, led Spanish civil authorities to hold in check even the limited attempts of Catholic clergy to police indigenous religious observance. The result in the indigenous communities of New Mexico was a heavily syncretic religious system.³⁹

Even among solidly Catholic Hispano settlers, the circumstances of New Mexico posed difficulties for the Catholic Church. The Franciscan order faced a chronic shortage of friars with whom to staff its missions. Especially in the Rio Arriba region, settlements were small and widely scattered.⁴⁰ Franciscan friars also clashed periodically with both the officers of the civil government and the oversight of the bishop. In 1767 the bishop

³⁹ David J. Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1992), 141.

⁴⁰ The Rio Arriba is the mountainous north central region of New Mexico, bounded by the Jemez and Sangre de Cristo mountain ranges. Communities in the Rio Arriba tended to revolve around large family clans and small-scale agriculture. The Perea's interests lay primarily in the Rio Abajo region, along the Rio Grande south of Santa Fe. The Rio Abajo displayed a different geography and social arrangement from the Rio Arriba. Ranches and farms along the river tended to be larger and more profitable than those in the Rio Arriba, supporting a landed class of *patrones*, the Perea's among them. According to historian Howard Lamar in *The Far Southwest*: "In the Rio Abajo life was easier, wealth was more apparent, and the don or patron with his large herds was virtually the patriarchal dictator of his village." Howard Lamar, *The Far Southwest, 1846–1912: A Territorial History*, rev. ed. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000), 23.

began secularizing the New Mexico parishes, although the process would not be complete until 1834.⁴¹

Secularization, however, only exacerbated the problem of understaffing. New Mexico, located in the far north of New Spain, then Mexico, was relatively poor and subject to Native raids. Posts in New Mexico were not plum positions in the civil government or in the Catholic Church. In 1821, when Mexico won its independence from Spain, New Mexico had a mere five secular clergymen for the entire territory. By 1846, on the eve of war between Mexico and the United States, the number had grown only to eleven. Historian David J. Weber notes in *The Mexican Frontier*, “Few as they were, the frontier clerics found themselves perpetually short of cash, unable to make ends meet.” Catholic priests in New Mexico struggled to fulfill their vocations with few resources and little institutional support.⁴²

Ecclesiastical neglect had a profound impact on Nuevomexicanos’ relationship with the Catholic Church. Pedro Pino, New Mexico’s first deputy to the Spanish Cortes (legislative assembly) in 1812 declared in his report on conditions in New Mexico: “For more than fifty years no one has known that there was a bishop, nor has a bishop been seen in the province during this time. . . . The evils that these inhabitants suffer due to this very serious lack of their primary shepherd are endless.” The basic social functions of the church suffered: “Persons who have been born during these 50 years have not been confirmed; and the poor who desire to contract marriage with their relatives by means of

⁴¹ Secular clergy are ordained ministers who are not members of a religious order such as the Franciscans; their sole authority is episcopal. Randi Jones Walker, *Protestantism in the Sangre de Cristos, 1850–1920* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1991), 7.

⁴² David J. Weber, *The Mexican Frontier, 1821–1846: The American Southwest under Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1982), 74.

a dispensation are not able to verify the marriage because of the great costs in the long journey of more than 400 leagues to Durango.” The lack of clergy necessarily led to heterodox living arrangements, with Pino declaring, “From here it comes that many people, compelled by love, live and have families in adultery, the zeal of the ministers of the church being unable to prevent this scandal, and others which are suffered due to the aforesaid lack.” These problems and challenges persisted into Perea’s youth and early adulthood.⁴³

The consistent dearth of official clergy unsurprisingly led to a variety of idiosyncratic religious practices in the Rio Arriba. Local clergy were accustomed to a high level of autonomy, and Catholic lay brotherhoods could not be monitored and policed from a bishopric located a thousand miles away. Indeed, after the annexation of New Mexico by the United States in 1848 and the subsequent reorganization and redelegation of Catholic institutional structures in the territory, bishops still found it difficult to control parish clergy and lay brotherhoods from even a hundred miles away in Santa Fe.

Perea’s earliest education took place in the context of this decentralized New Mexican Catholicism. Perea described first attending a school under Father Becerra in La Peralta at age five in 1842.⁴⁴ His family soon sent him to Mexico, where the institutions

⁴³ Hace mas de 50 años que no se sabe si hay obispo, ni se ha visto ninguno en aquella provincia en todo este tiempo; por consiguiente, se hallan sin cumplir las soberanas disposiciones y lo prevenido en la diciplina eclesiástica. Son infinitos los males que sufren aquellos habitantes por esta falta tan grave de su primado pastor. Se hallan sin confirmar todos los nacidos en dichos 50 años; y los pobres que quieren contraer matrimonio con sus parientas por medio de dispensa, no lo pueden verificar por los crecidos costos en el dilatado viaje de mas de 400 leguas que hay á Durango: de aquí proviene que muchos, estrechados del amor, viven amancebados y con familia, sin que el celo de aquellos ministros de la Iglesia pueda evitar este escándalo, y otros que se sufren por la falta referida. Pedro Bautista Pino, *Noticias Históricas y Estadísticas de la Antigua Provincia del Nuevo-México* (Mexico City: Imprenta de Lara, 1849), 31.

⁴⁴ José Ynéz Perea to Rev. Norman Skinner, 19 January 1897, JYP, MHL.

of the Catholic Church were much stronger. In 1844 Perea's father enrolled him in a school run by Guadalupe Miranda in the state of Chihuahua (probably in El Paso del Norte, now Ciudad Juárez).⁴⁵ Perea notes that Miranda "had become somewhat renowned [*sic*] as an educator." Miranda had indeed developed a distinguished reputation. He moved to Santa Fe in 1829 at age nineteen to establish a school. In 1832 the territorial *diputación* (assembly) appointed him as instructor for the early Santa Fe public school. The same year, Antonio Barreiro reported on Miranda's educational efforts in Santa Fe in his *Ojeada sobre Nuevo Mexico*. He commended "the young Guadalupe Miranda" for his "constancy and dedication," and said Miranda deserved "just praise." At his school in Santa Fe, Miranda taught "the elements of Spanish grammar, Latin, and some of the rudiments of philosophy."⁴⁶

At school in Chihuahua, Perea remembered that he studied "reading and writing, ancient and sacred history which took the place of the Bible, geography and arithmetic, drawing and Ripalda's catechism."⁴⁷ Father Becerra, Perea's first teacher, undoubtedly began the young Perea's religious instruction, but Ripalda's *Catecismo* is the only

⁴⁵ One of Perea's biographers, Mark Banker, assumes that Perea attended school in Chihuahua City. Guadalupe Miranda, however, had few ties to Chihuahua City and it is likely that the school Perea attended was in El Paso del Norte. Miranda was in El Paso del Norte in 1845 and it is quite likely that he ran a school at that time. See Mark Banker, "Missionary to His Own People: José Ynes Perea and Hispanic Presbyterianism in New Mexico," in *Religion and Society in the American West: Historical Essays*, ed. Carl Guarneri and David Alvarez (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1987), 82. For Miranda, see Denise Damico, "Guadalupe Miranda," Office of the State Historian, Santa Fe, New Mexico, <https://www.newmexicohistory.org/people/guadalupe-miranda>.

⁴⁶ En la casa del señor vicario general don Juan Rafael Rascon, el joven Guadalupe Miranda, presta á este territorio el muy singular beneficio de enseñar á varios jóvenes los elementos de gramática castellana, la latina, y algunos rudimentos de filosofía; la constancia y dedicación del ciudadano Miranda merecen un justo elogio, y no lo merecen menos los aprovechamientos de la juventud, pues ella lucha con grandes inconvenientes, como son la falta de libros &c. Antonio Barreiro, *Ojeada sobre Nuevo México* (Puebla, Mex.: J. M. Campos, 1832), 28.

⁴⁷ José Ynez Perea to Rev. Norman Skinner, 19 January 1897, JYP, MHL.

specific Catholic text that Perea mentions in his education. Ripalda's work was a classic written by the Jesuit priest Gerónimo de Ripalda, who lived in Spain from approximately 1536–1618. Ripalda wrote in the context of the Counter-Reformation and his catechism clearly delineates the points of contention between Catholic and Protestant doctrine. Ripalda's catechism occupied a prominent role in the religious life of the Spanish colonies. He originally wrote and published in Spanish, but Catholic missionaries in Latin America translated his work into several indigenous languages through South and Central America.⁴⁸

From Ripalda's catechism, Perea was taught that the authority of the church was a first principle of Catholic faith. He learned Mary's role as intercessor and Queen of Heaven. Regarding the state of his soul, he was taught that fulfilling the commands of God and of the church merited salvation; Jesus would come at the final judgement "to give them [the righteous] glory because they kept his holy commandments."⁴⁹ Ripalda also laid out in detail the hierarchy of sins, the commands of the church, and the ways sin could be expiated by ceremonies through the church.⁵⁰ Later in life, Perea preached earnestly against all these doctrines that he first learned in Ripalda's *Catecismo*.

At the time, however, Perea apparently learned his catechism—in 1846, while still attending Miranda's school, the young pupil underwent confirmation and took his first communion in the Catholic Church. That same year also saw the outbreak of hostilities

⁴⁸ Gerónimo Ripalda, S. J., *Catecismo y Exposición Breve de la Doctrina Cristiana* (Barcelona: Estivill, 1838).

⁴⁹ El séptimo, creer que vendrá á juzgar á los vivos y á los muertos; conviene á saber, á los buenos para darles gloria, porque guardaron sus santos mandamientos; y á los malos, pena perdurable, porque no los guardaron. *Ibid.*, 13. For church authority, see *ibid.*, 4–5. For Mary, see *ibid.*, 6–8, 12.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 10, 13–14, 19–20.

between the United States and Mexico. The war between the two nations would decisively alter the rest of Perea's life. His family had anticipated the coming changes. While José Ynéz spent the war years in Mexico, his older brother Francisco, seven years his senior, was already attending school in St. Louis. It is possible that the Perea parents were hedging their bets in a volatile international situation, with one son attending school in each possible ruling nation.⁵¹

During the U.S.-Mexico War, Perea's family firmly supported the United States. Perea's father had backed the Mexican government of New Mexico against rebels in the Chimayó Rebellion of 1837, but it appears that when conflict erupted at an international level, most of the extended Perea family believed their lot would be better under the U.S. government. José Ynéz's brother, Francisco, recounted to W. H. H. Allison years later that when U.S. troops entered Santa Fe, "I felt perfectly satisfied with the present conditions, and had no tears to shed over the matter; for I knew it would ultimately result in making our people freer and more independent than they could be under their former government."⁵² The Pereas, with their deep involvement in the Santa Fe trade, exemplified historian Howard Lamar's observation in *The Far Southwest* that "a chance for self-rule, the escape from periodic fleecings by corrupt appointees from Chihuahua, and the vision of an increased American trade," led some Hispano elites to "accept the idea of a new order."⁵³

⁵¹ W. H. H. Allison, "Santa Fe in 1846," *Old Santa Fe* 2, no. 4 (April 1915): 392.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 394.

⁵³ Lamar, 54.

After New Mexico became a U.S. territory, Perea's educational milieu changed drastically. His father sent him to a school in New York run by two French brothers, Louis and Hyacinthe Peugnet. Before this move, Perea's education had been oriented toward Mexico. For the next eleven years, his most significant experiences would take place in the Anglo American world. Although geographically disjunctive, Perea's first experience of education on the East Coast would be consonant religiously with his previous schooling.

The Peugnet brothers were patriotic Frenchmen of the Napoleonic era. They had lived eventful lives prior to their arrival in New York. Both graduated from military school in France in 1813 and then served in the Imperial Army until Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo. After that historically decisive battle, they returned to their family home in Vraucourt, where they soon clashed with the English garrison stationed there. A pamphlet published in Paris in 1835 celebrated the brothers' valor and patriotism, declaring that their resistance to the English "erased . . . with brilliance, the stain of the foreign invasion."⁵⁴ They refused to disguise themselves in English uniforms to escape the wrath of the mob of English soldiers, declaring that they would "never strip the French uniform to put on a foreign uniform. . . . We prefer to bury ourselves in this place where we received life."⁵⁵

The Peugnet brothers were briefly imprisoned for their rebellious behavior but were released when the Duke of Wellington decided that there was no case against them.

⁵⁴ L'acte d'héroïsme, dont ce hameau fut le théâtre y a effacé, avec éclat, la souillure de l'invasion étrangère. Charles Ledru, *Les Frères Peugnet* (Paris: J. DeGeorge, 1835), 2.

⁵⁵ J'amaï nous ne dépouillerons l'uniforme français pour revêtir l'uniforme étranger. A ce prix, nous préférons nous ensevelir en ces lieux où nous avons reçu la vie. *Ibid.*, 3.

They soon incurred the wrath of the authorities again, however, this time for plotting against the Bourbon king Louis XVIII, who was supported by the conservative occupation enforced by England and Prussia. In 1819 Louis Peugnet went out to rally his coconspirators but was accosted by a loyalist officer. In the fracas, Louis was “able to push aside two bayonets already crossed on his chest and escape through one of the city gates.”⁵⁶ He then went into hiding, eventually escaping to Belgium. Tried in absentia, he was sentenced to death, and executed in effigy.

In the meantime, Hyacinthe had been arrested for his part in the plot against the crown. Apparently, however, there was no direct evidence linking Hyacinthe to the plot, only the testimony of a single informant. Hyacinthe was kept in solitary confinement and deprived of food in an attempt to induce a confession. Ultimately, by consistent denial, Hyacinthe prevailed, depriving the prosecution of any testimony beyond that of the apparently dubitable informant. When released, Hyacinthe joined his brother in Belgium. Given that Louis faced a death penalty if he returned to France, the two brothers embarked for Canada, planning to start a farm.⁵⁷

Despite initial success in farming, Louis fell ill and both brothers moved to New York. There, they became friends with a prestigious array of French expatriates and embarked on a new career. They started a school in New York City that attracted the children of elite parents who, despite their wealth, were outside the mainstream of U.S. society because of their Catholicism. Future Confederate general P. G. T. Beauregard,

⁵⁶ Louis avait pu écarter deux baionnettes déjà croisées sur sa poitrine et s'échapper par une des portes de la ville. Ledru, 5.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 9.

born into a prominent French Creole family in Louisiana, attended the school two decades before Perea.⁵⁸

While at school under Louis and Hyacinthe, Perea encountered, apparently for the first time, personal reading of the Bible, possibly as part of a larger movement among his fellow students. In his profile of Perea, Craig cast the narrative as one of the Bible breaking through the bounds of Catholic restriction: “The Bible was not allowed in the school. One day during recess as José was passing a class-room he noticed a number of boys hiding something. On promising not to tell, they showed him the book, and together they continued reading. It was a Bible, and from the reading of that book José Yñes Perea dates his conversion.”⁵⁹ In this, at least, Perea’s son Clifford corroborated Craig’s account: “While there he met some students who were secretly reading the Bible and he joined the group and became a very enthusiastic member of the group.”⁶⁰ For his own part, Perea remembered, “It was there [the Peugnet School] I made my second and last confession, after which I took up the Bible as my guide in the way of life, refusing positively the confessional though threatened with many hardships.”⁶¹ It is significant that, although confirmed in 1846, Perea claimed later in life to have only taken communion in the Catholic Church once more at the Peugnet school. Properly he should have taken communion at least once a year after his first communion. Whether his various travels prevented him from making confession and taking the Eucharist, or

⁵⁸ T. Harry Williams, *P. G. T. Beauregard: Napoleon in Gray* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1955), 5.

⁵⁹ Craig, 90–91.

⁶⁰ Clifford Perea to J. A. Shufle, n.d., JYP, MHL.

⁶¹ José Ynez Perea to Rev. Norman Skinner, 19 January 1897, JYP, MHL.

whether his family was laxer in Catholic observance than would otherwise seem is uncertain from the historical record.

The Peugnet brothers seem to have taken seriously their role as instructors of Catholic youth and worked to prevent their charges from developing unacceptably Protestant ideas. Their policing undoubtedly inspired the “secrecy” surrounding Perea’s and the other students’ reading of the Bible. Perea’s rebellion against Catholicism must have at some point become more public than reading the Bible on the sly. Presumably students at the school were expected to attend confession on a regular basis, which Perea refused to do. But he is vague on the details of his new religious understanding. As far as the record shows, he was not connected with any specific Protestant body. Even so, although the Peugnet school was not a religious academy, Perea apparently felt that his new perspective on Christian faith had incurred the wrath of his instructors. He leapt at the opportunity for a change of scene. Perea remembered that in the time around his conversion, “my father had written to me whether I would like to go to West Point Military Academy. I took advantage of this offer to flee from my Catholic teachers who seemed turned against me.”⁶²

To gain admission into the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, New York, Perea needed to qualify before the Academic Board in reading, writing, orthography, and arithmetic, in addition to obtaining a recommendation.⁶³ The records of the Adjutant General’s Office show that Perea’s father must have put José’s name forward twice, with

⁶² José Ynéz Perea to Rev. Norman Skinner, 19 January 1897, JYP, MHL.

⁶³ W. C. Brown and William Ward, eds., *List of Cadets Admitted into the United States Military Academy, West Point, N. Y., from its Origin Till September 1, 1886* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1887), 8.

both Richard Weightman, the first territorial delegate to the U.S. House of Representatives, and José Manuel Gallegos, the second territorial delegate, supporting Perea's nomination.⁶⁴ To prepare for the West Point entrance examinations, Perea attended a preparatory academy run by Dr. John Pingry. Perea's enrollment at Pingry's school was a striking departure from his previous educational experiences. All Perea's education to this point had been conducted at least loosely under the auspices of the Catholic Church and had been outside the mainstream of Anglo American society. Pingry's school, in contrast, was an example of quintessentially Yankee education. Pingry was born in Newbury Port, Massachusetts, in 1818. He graduated from Dartmouth in 1836 and Union Theological Seminary in 1841, and was ordained a Presbyterian minister in 1842. Pingry's ministerial background likely imparted a Protestant and denominational bent to Perea's education. Pingry maintained contact with his former pupil; in 1880, upon Perea's ordination, Pingry gave the new pastor a copy of *El Nuevo Diccionario de la Lengua Castellana* and inscribed: "To The Rev José Ynés Perea. With sincere regards of his loving friend, John Pingry."⁶⁵

As the culmination of his eastern education, Perea secured admission to the U.S. Military Academy in 1853, at age sixteen. He was the first student from New Mexico to attend. After the dramatic build-up to his enrollment, however, Perea's time at the academy was anti-climactic and short-lived. Probably chafing under the severe hazing—

⁶⁴ Jose Ynes Perea, New Mexico, no. 25 (1852–1853), frame 70, r. 3, microfilm, (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1996) *Register of Cadet Applicants, 1819–1867*, M2037, National Archives Microfilm Publications, Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780s–1917, Record Group 94, National Archives, Washington, D.C.; and Jose Ynes Perea, New Mexico, no. 26 (1853–1854), frame 70, r. 3, microfilm, *ibid.*

⁶⁵ *Nuevo Diccionario de la Lengua Castellana*, Box 21.22.02, Perea, Jose Inez, Rev., Religious Books, MHL.

harsh and physical—that upperclassmen inflicted on all incoming plebes, Perea quickly “became so disgusted with military life” that he resigned his commission a few months after admittance.⁶⁶

Perea awaited his father’s wishes at school in Connecticut, and soon went home to New Mexico. But he returned in a state of rebellion against his religious upbringing. He was no longer Catholic, but he was not yet formally a member of any Protestant church. His new religious ideas did not sit well with his family. He wrote, “On my return my father treated me with severity and fearing my influence with the family took me to St. Louis to Wilson Cooper Co’s dry goods store as clerk.”⁶⁷ Perhaps despairing of a military career for his son and perturbed at his heterodox opinions, Juan Perea chose to give his son an education in the “American way of business,” drawing on his mercantile connections in the Santa Fe trade.

Wilson & Cooper’s dry goods store was located in downtown St. Louis at the corner of Locust and Fourth streets. It specialized in material for women’s clothing and advertised that “ladies visiting St. Louis may at all times find the largest assortment of New, Fashionable, and Domestic Dry Goods at the lowest cash prices.” It also specifically advertised the helpfulness of its staff: “Our clerks are invariably obliging and attentive; the annoying system of importuning and misrepresenting the quality of goods is strictly discountenanced.”⁶⁸

⁶⁶ José Ynéz Perea to Rev. Norman Skinner, 19 January 1897, JYP, MHL.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ “Elegant Stock of Dry Goods at Wilson & Cooper’s One Price Cash Store,” *Glasgow (Mo.) Weekly Times*, 6 November 1856; and “Domestic Economy,” *Glasgow (Mo.) Weekly Times*, 10 December 1857.

Wilson, one of the partners in the store, later explained: “At the suggestion of the late Hon. Don Miguel Otero, two of these Mexican boys were placed under the care of Messrs. W. & C. as clerks, without salary. They were quiet, intelligent boys, and seemed willing to learn.” Perhaps unbeknownst to Juan Perea, at least one of the partners in the dry goods store was a devout Presbyterian. Wilson would go on to become a pastor and home missionary in the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (PCUSA).⁶⁹

At the time, Wilson was unaware of the educational and religious saga that had brought Perea to his store. As far as he knew, both boys had been “raised in the Roman Catholic faith,” and “it was understood that their Presbyterian employers should not interfere with their religious duties and belief.” Wilson “frequently invited” the young men to his home, but because, as he believed, they were “bashful and unused to our language,” they “seldom came.” Wilson noticed, however, that “the Jesuit brothers called on them frequently at the store, and seemed to take considerable interest in them.” The Jesuits had likely been alerted by José Ynez’s family to his waywardness and both they and his family hoped to bring him back into the Catholic fold.⁷⁰

Wilson did not know that Perea had already begun breaking away from Catholicism, and believed that the process started in St. Louis: “It seems that while his employers, bound by their promise, were confined to teaching him ‘the American way’ of doing business, ‘the word of God,’ which ‘is not bound,’ had been teaching him ‘a better way.’ Graciously led by the Spirit of God, he stepped one Sabbath morning into a

⁶⁹ Wilson, “An Episode in the Lives of Two Home Missionaries,” *The Church at Home and Abroad*, October 1888, p. 304. Miguel Otero belonged to another wealthy New Mexican family engaged in the Santa Fe trade and would be territorial delegate from New Mexico when the Civil War broke out.

⁷⁰ Wilson, “An Episode in the Lives of Two Home Missionaries,” *The Church at Home and Abroad*, October 1888, p. 304.

Presbyterian Sabbath-school, and was so interested that he returned frequently, and was finally brought to a saving knowledge of Jesus.” The result was that, “no longer willing to attend the confessional, the ‘brothers’ followed him up, insisting on his return to ‘duty;’ and became so annoyingly urgent as to make it exceedingly unpleasant for him.”⁷¹

According to Wilson, “this state of affairs continued for perhaps a year—the boys meanwhile conducting themselves in a gentlemanly manner, and improving business habits.” Then on 4 July 1855, Perea suddenly disappeared. Wilson wrote, “His companion, Adolfo, did not know where he had gone, or why, only that ‘he had gone away not to return any more,’ and intimated that it might be something about his ‘not going to confession,’ as ‘the brothers’ had been talking very earnestly to him lately.” For Perea’s part, he wrote, “Fearing my parents continued and growing opposition, I thought the better part of valor would be to flee, so . . . I took a steamer for New Orleans and went to sea for five years.”⁷²

Perea gave no details about his time at sea in his writings. The only insights come from Craig’s profile, eulogies at Perea’s death, and his former employer Wilson’s account of a conversation he and Perea had while Perea was returning home to New Mexico from his travels. According to those sources, Perea lived a life of Protestant piety at sea. He set out from New Orleans and ended up after five years in Boston. Robert Craig listed Perea’s ports of call as “Rio [de] Janeiro, Mobile, Liverpool, Calcutta and the

⁷¹ Wilson, “An Episode in the Lives of Two Home Missionaries,” *The Church at Home and Abroad*, October 1888, p. 304.

⁷² José Ynéz Perea to Rev. Norman Skinner, 19 January 1897, JYP, MHL.

Sandwich Islands, and back to Boston.”⁷³ According to Clifford Perea, his father first sailed to Liverpool, and from there embarked on another voyage around the world.⁷⁴

According to Wilson, Perea’s sea-going career began inauspiciously: “On reaching New Orleans he went to a sailors’ boarding-house, and told the proprietor that he wanted to go to sea and learn to be a sailor. This land-shark, after having robbed him of everything, shipped him as an *able-bodied seaman*, and drew his first month’s wages for the board of a few days.” The result was a wrathful captain and rough treatment. Wilson wrote: “[Perea] said it was brutal beyond description. But, cuffed, kicked and beaten unmercifully, he began ‘to get hold of the ropes,’ and by and by his soft hands became hard and horny, and his fingers became nimble, hauling a rope and reefing a sail with any of them.”⁷⁵

In Wilson’s retelling, a long voyage gave “our young missionary an opportunity of starting a prayer-meeting before the mast, a work in which he was encouraged by the officers as an aid to subordination and good morals.” Waxing eloquent, Wilson declared: “Wherever he went sailors were his companions—his *family*; so wherever he went he erected a *family altar*, and sailors knelt around it. Lips that had been steeped in blasphemy learned there to pray; and feet that had wandered far from the Father’s house were led into the way of faith, of penitence and peace.” According to Wilson, Perea developed something of a reputation: “On one occasion he went aboard a ship in Liverpool about to start a Long Voyage, when the mate immediately recognizing him

⁷³ Craig, 91; and “Memorial Sketch of the Reverend Jose Ynes Perea,” *La Aurora* (Las Vegas, N.Mex.), 15 November 1910.

⁷⁴ Clifford Perea to J. A. Schufle, n.d., JYP, MHL.

⁷⁵ Wilson, “An Episode in the Lives of Two Home Missionaries,” *The Church at Home and Abroad*, October 1888, p. 305.

cried out, ‘Hillo! here comes our little praying Methodist; don’t you want to come along?’ And he went.”⁷⁶

In 1859 Perea arrived back in Boston. According to Craig there was a “great revival” in Boston at the time and Perea “became deeply concerned” in it. Perea’s time in Boston corresponded with the close of the 1857 Awakening that had swept through the major cities of the North. The revival Perea experienced in Boston helps clarify his embrace of the specifically Presbyterian approach to Christian faith prior to his return to New Mexico.

The revival began in the wake of the financial panic of 1857 and became known as the “businessman’s revival.” In the aftermath of widespread financial loss and ruin, many sufferers turned with new enthusiasm to religion, sparking a significant uptick in church participation in the North on the eve of the Civil War. According to Kathryn Theresa Long, author of the primary historical analysis of the event, the revival that began in 1857 was “perhaps the closest thing to a truly national revival in American history.” Long declares, “The actual awakening was a diffuse and multifaceted movement, touching the lives of millions of Americans from every major Protestant denomination” that helped “create the beginnings of a public, transdenominational religious identity among evangelicals, especially among lay men and women in the northern states.”⁷⁷

⁷⁶ Wilson, “An Episode in the Lives of Two Home Missionaries,” *The Church at Home and Abroad*, October 1888, p. 304.

⁷⁷ Kathryn Teresa Long, *The Revival of 1857–58: Interpreting an American Religious Awakening* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 7.

Earlier nineteenth-century revivals had been largely the province of what Long describes as the “populist” strand of American Christianity. The populists, of whom Methodists and Baptists were the largest groups, “stressed the emotional trauma and ecstasy of the New Birth, an experience empowering and open to all regardless of intellectual or social attainments, race, or gender.” Populist denominations preached a “democratic, Arminianized gospel message in which the grace for conversion (and by extension, revival) was always available, needing only to be ‘stirred up’ or ‘brought down’ by preaching, prayer, testimony, or song.”⁷⁸

In contrast, the revival that began in 1857 attracted the support of clergy from “the formalist wing of evangelicalism,” who rushed “to claim the revival and position it within the context of a ‘deradicalized’ American revival tradition.” Formalist churches, among them the Episcopalians, Congregationalists, and Presbyterians, “stressed decorum” and “valued order in worship, theological precision, and an educated ministry.” In their theology, revivals were the “surprising and mysterious work of God that brought an unexpected response to preaching prayer,” and could not be inaugurated through human agency.⁷⁹

A sermon delivered in 1859 by Manton Eastburn, the Episcopal bishop of the Diocese of Massachusetts, exemplifies the formalist understanding of the revival. Prior to the awakening, Eastburn declared, there had been a “universal reign of indifference.” Both rich and poor neglected spiritual matters, either for “pursuit of riches” or for “the excitements of frivolous pleasure.” In this apathetic environment, “the voices of the great

⁷⁸ Long, 6.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 6, 7–8.

‘company of preachers’ were lifted up in vain. There were no tokens for good.” Then suddenly, “amidst this disheartening deadness of the whole land, it pleased divine Providence . . . to bring about, some time ago, a change as remarkable as it was unexpected.”⁸⁰

In Eastman’s view, that change came initially through God’s judgement. In his telling, “the inhabitants of the land were lying smitten by the hand of God” in the aftermath of the financial crisis of 1857, which left them “in financial prostration and ruin.” With the future suddenly uncertain, those who had been apathetic turned to prayer and repentance to invest in their Christian faith and recuperate their souls.⁸¹

Eastman was careful in his sermon to differentiate the revival of 1857 from other more-emotional religious movements. He argued that the revival was not prompted by “powerful and stimulating oratory” and was therefore not “a matter of mere sensation and sympathy.” Instead, he declared the revival the result of the “direct quickening influence of the Spirit of God.” He assured his listeners, the gathered Episcopal clergy of Massachusetts, that his revival meetings had “been free from any thing objectionable even to the most fastidious taste. Quietness, sobriety, and heavenly peace, have characterized our blessed opportunities of approach to the Hearer of prayer.” These dignified revival services attracted an elite audience, “persons cultivated in intellect, and highly conservative in tendencies and habits.”⁸²

⁸⁰ Manton Eastburn, *The Signal Work of the Holy Spirit in these United States: The Third Charge to the Clergy of the Diocese of Massachusetts* (Boston: James B. Dow, 1859), <http://anglicanhistory.org/usa/meastburn/charge1859.html>.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid.

Although the discourse that surrounded the revival emphasized formalist ideas and doctrines, Perea's experience in 1859 was of the populist strand of American Christianity. He attended the Seaman's Bethel, a Methodist church pastored by Father Edward Taylor and devoted to outreach among the transient sailor population of Boston. Taylor was renowned for his oratory. Praising Taylor, the poet Walt Whitman declared, "I have never heard but one essentially perfect orator—one who satisfied those depths of the emotional nature that in most cases go through life quite untouched, unfeared—who held every hearer by spells which no conventionalist, high or low—nor any pride of composure nor resistance of intellect—could stand against for ten minutes." Whitman elaborated: "when Father Taylor preached or prayed, the rhetoric and art, the mere words . . . seemed altogether to disappear, and the *live feeling* advanced upon you and seized you with a power before unknown."⁸³

Taylor's powerful rhetoric had a profoundly unsettling effect on Perea, making him uncertain of his salvation and fearful about his standing before God. Soon after his experience in Boston, he had a conversation with his former employer, Wilson, and declared, "Oh, Mr. W—, I wish I was a Christian." When Wilson responded in confusion, having just heard Perea's account of his pious years at sea, Perea explained, "I was told at the Seamen's Bethel in Boston that if I was a *true* Christian I would never have any doubt about it; that I must always have such and such *feelings*—and *I don't*."⁸⁴

⁸³ Walt Whitman, "Father Taylor and Oratory," in *Life of Father Taylor: The Sailor Preacher* (Boston: Boston Port and Seamen's Aid Society, 1904), lxvii, lxix.

⁸⁴ Wilson, "An Episode in the Lives of Two Home Missionaries," *The Church at Home and Abroad*, October 1888, pp. 305–6.

Perea's conversation with Wilson took place as the returning sailor journeyed back to New Mexico. While Perea was in Boston, he had intersected with his father's extended business network. One business associate alerted Juan Perea that his son had reappeared. Five years of worrying and not knowing their son's whereabouts had apparently softened the family's attitude toward José Ynéz. He later explained, "In 1860, toward the fall, my father wrote to me to Boston to come home and I would be tolerated in religion."⁸⁵

As he traveled home, Perea serendipitously reunited with Wilson, with both traveling to St. Louis on the same train. In response to Perea's religious anxiety, Wilson offered reassurance: "Why, Inez, you *are* a Christian," and went on to describe Presbyterian doctrine. Unlike the Methodism Perea encountered at the Seaman's Bethel, the more formalist doctrines of the PCUSA emphasized the primacy of God's activity in salvation, rooting confidence in one's salvation in God's work rather than in the Christian's emotional response. Perea apparently found peace in the doctrines he learned from Wilson. He promised, "I will be a Presbyterian too." Upon arriving in St. Louis, Perea officially joined a Presbyterian church before completing his journey to New Mexico. Presbyterianism would continue as a stable part of Perea's identity for the rest of his life.⁸⁶

Soon after arriving in New Mexico in 1860, Perea set out for California, probably as part of a trading expedition to the gold mines. He returned home to New Mexico to

⁸⁵ Craig, 91; and José Ynéz Perea to Rev. Norman Skinner, 19 January 1897, JYP, MHL.

⁸⁶ Wilson, "An Episode in the Lives of Two Home Missionaries," *The Church at Home and Abroad*, October 1888, p. 306.

stay in late 1863 or early 1864.⁸⁷ It may have been news of ill-health that brought Perea back from California to New Mexico, as his father died in 1865. The family had apparently reconciled—Perea, along with his brother Julian, was executor of his father’s estate. When Josefa died the following year, José Ynéz and Julian were also her executors.⁸⁸

Unlike his brother Francisco, Perea took no active role in the Civil War battles that took place in New Mexico. Francisco was a lieutenant colonel in the New Mexico militia and served at the battle of Glorieta Pass, where Union forces turned back the Confederate invasion of New Mexico and prevented its advance toward Fort Union. José Ynéz did participate, however, in skirmishes with Navajos and with outlaws. In 1865 Perea took command of a company of militia raised by his future father-in-law, Ambrosio Armijo, and went in pursuit of Navajos threatening livestock herds along the Río Pecos and Río Puerco. The reports do not make clear whether Perea ever engaged the Navajos, who returned to the Bosque Redondo, where the federal government had incarcerated over eight thousand of their people. But, as Armijo wrote in his report, Perea did succeed in capturing “three of the most notorious thieves in the territory.”⁸⁹

⁸⁷ In a letter to Reverend Norman Skinner Perea wrote that he returned to New Mexico in 1864, but in his testimony in the *Private Land Claim of José Garcia* he says he returned in 1863. José Ynéz Perea to Rev. Norman Skinner, 19 January 1897, JYP, MHL; and U.S. Congress, Senate, *Private Land Claim of José Garcia*, 51st Cong., 1st sess., 1890, SED 2, ser. no. 2678, p. 31.

⁸⁸ Purchase of Land from the Estate of Juan Perea by Jesus Maria Perea, 17 April 1868, folder 122, box 2, Yrisarri Family Papers, 1697–1951, col. no. 1985-092, New Mexico State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe; “Aviso de Ejecutores,” *Santa Fe (N.Mex.) Weekly Post*, 22 October 1864; and José Ynéz Perea to Rev. Norman Skinner, 19 January 1897, JYP, MHL.

⁸⁹ Capt. Ambrosio Armijo to Capt. Francis McCabe, 25 June 1865, in *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 4 series, 128 vols. (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1880–1901), ser. 1, vol. 48, pt. 2, p. 995.

In 1867 Perea married Victoria Armijo, the daughter of Ambrosio. Despite Perea's convictions, it is likely that they were married in a Catholic ceremony, given the prominence of the Armijo family. After only a year of marriage, Victoria died. It is uncertain from the records whether Perea was with his wife when she passed, or even how much time they spent together. The year of 1867–1868 was a busy one for Perea, who did not record whether his wife accompanied him on any of his travels through New Mexico.⁹⁰

He first attempted, along with Francisco Aragon, to settle along the Río Puerco at Salazar. He had pastured cattle and sheep there for the previous three years and ridden all over the area looking for lost stock. He believed that he “couldn't find a better ranch for the cattle.” In the years previous, by Perea's reckoning, the Navajos had driven off twelve hundred of his sheep. He believed, however, that with the Navajos confined to Bosque Redondo, the Río Puerco country could host a profitable ranching enterprise. Fugitives from Bosque Redonodo, however, drove off his and Aragon's stock, and Perea left for San Miguel County in the spring of 1868. He settled on the Canadian River with a group of friends, starting the village of La Cinta, approximately seventy miles east of Las Vegas.⁹¹

The years following Perea's return to New Mexico after his various travels indicate that he was traveling a path toward prosperity and respectability within the parameters of the traditional Hispano community. He ran for office as the New Mexico delegate to Congress and, although he lost, made a good showing in the polls. Despite

⁹⁰ José Ynéz Perea to Rev. Norman Skinner, 19 January 1897, JYP, MHL

⁹¹ U.S. Congress, Senate, *Private Land Claim of José Garcia*, 51st Cong., 1st sess., 1890, SED 2, ser. no. 2678, p. 31.

setbacks from Navajo raids, he was successfully developing a prosperous sheep and cattle business, and was expanding into dry-goods retail with Anglo partners in Las Vegas. An article he wrote for *La Aurora* evoked the growing prosperity of those years: “I was herding 15,000 sheep in the western part of San Miguel county amidst the great herd of buffaloes, treading the richest pasturage and fields of living green.”⁹²

Even as he pursued his business interests, however, Perea remained an outspoken Protestant. In the same *La Aurora* article, Perea reminisced, “I had been visiting the families with Bible and tracts, and I argued and exhorted among the homes of the people and among my shepherds.” His vocal Protestantism complicated Perea’s position within the Hispano community. Gabino Rendón, who grew up in Las Vegas, remembered the tensions that framed community perceptions of Perea. On the one hand, Perea was “the son of a prominent Spaniard in Bernalillo and had traveled around the world. For that reason, people looked up to him.” On the other, “he was a *protestante* . . . and I got the impression that he probably had horns and a tail.” Catholic clergy in New Mexico labored hard to demonize Protestants and to keep Hispanos in the traditional faith. Although Perea’s Protestantism made him an eccentric outlier in his community, it did not yet lead to outright ostracism.⁹³

Perea’s conversion to the Presbyterian viewpoint was intrafaith rather than interfaith. Interfaith conversion usually involves a radical break from the previous religion and a belief that the new religion will bring some form of salvation the previous

⁹² U.S. Congress, House, *Papers in the Case of Chaves v. Clever*, 40th Cong., 2d sess., 1868, Misc. Doc. 154, ser. no. 1350, p. 19; and José Ynéz Perea, “Early Presbyterian Missions,” *La Aurora* (Las Vegas, N.Mex.), 21 March 1902.

⁹³ Perea, “Early Presbyterian Missions,” *La Aurora* (Las Vegas, N.Mex.), 21 March 1902; and Gabino Rendón, *Hand on My Shoulder*, ed. Edith Agnew (New York: Board of National Missions, Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A, 1953), 17.

faith could not. The relationship between the old religion and the new is simple: the convert believes that the old religion is false and that the new religion is true. In Perea's experience, however, the core tenets of faith remained the same. Presbyterians and Catholics are both expressions of the Christian religion and look forward to the same eschatological state with the same fundamental basis for hope. Ultimately, Perea did not adopt the worship of a new god.

Even so, conversion remains the best way to describe Perea's experience. He did change horses. His shift from one understanding of Christian faith to another was more significant than a simple change of opinion. Catholicism and Presbyterianism exist at opposite poles of the spectrum of Christian belief. They hold radically different ideas about God, mankind, sin, salvation, and the Christian life. Shifting from one to the other involved a thoroughgoing change in how Perea related to faith, to himself, and to the world at large.

The tension between the fundamental sameness of Catholicism and Presbyterianism and their deep-rooted opposition would define Perea's life and ministry after conversion. The opposition between the two initially led to his alienation from his family. On his return to New Mexico, their sameness allowed him to participate in his community and gain both prosperity and respect. However, when he began his active ministry, the differences would hamper his missionary work and lead to his alienation once again.

Chapter 2

El Evangelista

For the five years between 1864 and 1869, Perea lived as a Protestant alone among his Catholic peers. Although his views may have seemed strange to his fellow New Mexicans, his new theological perspectives did not alienate him from his community. His daily activities were those of a man of good family building his fortune. He married into a distinguished Catholic family. He worked to grow both his herd and his land base. The course of his life appeared to fall firmly within expected Hispano norms. The year 1869, however, marked a sea change in Perea's life.

In late 1869, Perea met Rev. John Annin, a Presbyterian home missionary tasked with starting a church in Las Vegas, New Mexico. Their meeting had dramatic and lasting repercussions both for Perea's life and for Presbyterian home missions in the region. Over the course of the next decade, Perea would devote ever more of his time to ministry, this transition culminating in 1880 with his ordination as a pastor in the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. For Annin and the PCUSA, contact with Perea facilitated a shift in Presbyterian missionary outreach to the Hispano population of New Mexico.

When they met, Annin had only just arrived in Las Vegas in October 1869 and Perea had been pasturing sheep in San Miguel County for the previous two years. Annin was not sanguine about the prospects of his field. He originally arrived in New Mexico to start a church among the Anglo American population of Las Vegas, anticipating the imminent arrival of the railroad and an accompanying wave of immigration. In December 1871, however, the railroad had still not arrived (and would not for another nine years),

and Annin wrote his sending board, “I can give you but little idea of the state of things in this place—the degradation, the ignorance, and the terrible immorality.” He complained, “A very large proportion of the non-Mexican population are German Jews, many of them atheistic or infidel, and none of them (almost of course) caring for the success of a Presbyterian minister.” As for the people to whom he was supposed to be ministering, “A large proportion of the very few American men who are here are living in sin and shame; few have any regard for my work.” In his view, ministering to the Anglo Americans of Las Vegas “would come clearly under the head of our Saviour’s language about *casting pearls, &c.*” He tried distributing evangelistic tracts to federal soldiers visiting from Fort Union, but wrote, “It is quite probable that neither you nor I shall ever know much of the results.”⁹⁴ In this bleak religious environment, Perea emerged as a solitary beam of hope.

Perea saw his meeting with Annin as an answer to prayer. He later recounted:

“Often on bended knee at the foot of some tree in the howling wilderness I would beseech the Lord for help and some Moses to lead this people out of Egyptian darkness. As I beheld the smiling bright face of Mr. Annin my aching heart did beat for joy, and I felt a call to aid in the great change and regeneration of this priest-ridden people.”⁹⁵

Galvanized by their meeting, the two men began a church in 1870 and a school as well. Annin pastored the church and headed the school; Perea served as ruling elder for the church and provided much of the financial backing for the construction of the necessary buildings.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ John Annin, “From New Mexico,” *Presbyterian Monthly Record*, March 1871, 87.

⁹⁵ José Ynéz Perea, “Early Presbyterian Missions,” *La Aurora* (Las Vegas, N.Mex.), 21 March 1902.

⁹⁶ José Ynéz Perea to Norman Skinner, 4 January 1897, JYP, MHL.

Perea's contribution toward the basic expenses of the fledgling congregation was significant: the Presbyterian publication *Our Mission* placed Perea's contribution toward the purchase of the church property at twelve hundred dollars.⁹⁷ Perea's support, however, went beyond the land and construction expenses. He also provided personal financial support to Annin and his family, paying the pastor's salary out of his own pocket before the Board of Home Missions was able to finance the work.⁹⁸ He also lent to the new institutions the status and respect he enjoyed in the community. Much later, Gabino Rendón wrote in his memoirs: "Men in town were glad to work for Don Ynez. It was certain that no man in the territory was more fair in business dealings than he, in spite of his strange ideas about religion."⁹⁹

Annin and Perea hoped that such "strange ideas about religion" would find an audience in northern New Mexico, and that from small beginnings a strong church could be formed. One of Annin's early reports back to the board indicates both the opportunities and the challenges that Presbyterian missionaries faced. Regarding the new church, Annin wrote, "It now numbers twenty-one, and I think there will be thirty by spring." He noted, however, that "almost none of them live in Las Vegas, but at distances of fifteen, forty, and eighty miles." There was an audience for Presbyterian preaching, even if a small one, but it was scattered and decentralized—nowhere did it constitute a majority. But Annin and Perea believed that further inroads were possible. Annin wrote

⁹⁷ "First Annual Report of the Ladies' Board of Missions," *Our Mission Field*, January 1872, p. 8.

⁹⁸ Clifford Perea to Rev. C. F. Blekking, 17 March 1930, JYP, MHL.

⁹⁹ Perea, "Early Presbyterian Missions," *La Aurora* (Las Vegas, N.Mex.), 21 March 1902; and Rendón, *Hand on My Shoulder*, 23.

to the board: “There is an element of this population disaffected, I am told, to the Romish church, and ready to adopt something better. Pray for us.”¹⁰⁰

Although it did not ultimately lead to the hordes of converts that Annin and Perea doubtless wished, the disaffection that Annin reported was not a figment of his imagination. Catholicism was woven into the fabric of everyday life and connections to the Roman church ran deep in the culture and history of New Mexico, but there was also a significant ferment of dissatisfaction among the people, especially in the Rio Arriba region in the north of the territory. That unhappiness provided cultural and religious space for opposition to the Catholic Church, including a foothold for Presbyterian missions in the region.

The secular geopolitical rearrangement that followed the U.S.-Mexico War and the U.S. acquisition of Mexico’s far northern territories, New Mexico and California, also caused a shakeup in the institutional administration of the Catholic Church. When a Spanish and a Mexican territory, New Mexico had fallen under the Archdiocese of Durango. Despite attempts to make New Mexico its own diocese beginning in the 1600s, it was only after the United States annexed New Mexico that Pope Pius IX finally established, in 1850, the Vicariate Apostolic of Santa Fe, a provisional step on the path to becoming a full Catholic diocese.¹⁰¹

Pius IX appointed Jean Baptiste Lamy, a Frenchman, the first bishop of the newly organized vicariate. In his new post, Lamy would grapple with the legacy of several centuries of ecclesiastical neglect in New Mexico. Upon arriving at his new post in the

¹⁰⁰ John Annin, “From New Mexico,” *Presbyterian Monthly Record*, March 1871, p. 88.

¹⁰¹ Horgan, 70.

summer of 1851, he encountered the first of several challenges that would dog his administration. Most of the local clergy refused to recognize Lamy as their bishop, remaining loyal to Archbishop José Antonio Laureano de Zubiría in Durango, Mexico. Lamy had to travel to Durango to persuade Zubiría to instruct New Mexican clergy to follow their new bishop. Even when Zubiría did so, problems persisted in defining the boundaries of the two dioceses, with both Lamy and Zubiría believing Las Cruces and Mesilla to be under their authority.¹⁰²

During his tenure, Lamy worked to modernize and Europeanize New Mexican Catholicism. He displaced local clergy, recruiting and appointing European priests in their stead. He faced resilient opposition in the northern parishes of the territory, particularly from Padre Antonio José Martínez of Taos. Martínez insisted on maintaining his autonomy. He objected to Lamy's suspension of New Mexican clergy and replacement of them with European priests. He also clashed with Lamy over the bishop's imposition and collection of mandatory tithes. Lamy suspended Martínez from his pastorate at Arroyo Hondo and then, when Martínez continued to teach and give the sacraments, resorted to the church's final sanction, having Martínez orally excommunicated. Taos proved to be a long way from Santa Fe, however, and Martínez served as the pastor of his parish until his death in 1867, at which time the community buried him with all formal honors and grief. Lamy's struggles with Martínez would prove

¹⁰² Horgan, 123.

a to be wedge in the northern region that the Presbyterians gladly exploited to pry New Mexicans away from Catholicism and into Protestantism.¹⁰³

The Penitente order epitomized the sort of Catholicism Lamy sought to curb and reform. *La Fraternidad Piadosa de Nuestro Padre Jesús Nazareno* (The Pious Fraternity of Our Father Jesus the Nazarene) was a lay brotherhood of mutual support and piety. Arising in the late eighteenth century, the *hermanos* (brothers) operated without supervision from the church and practiced flagellant disciplines. In the Lenten season and Holy Week, their devotions, normally hidden within the walls of *moradas* (chapter houses) took on a public dimension. The brothers would go on procession in their communities, flagellating themselves as they went, with the discipline sometimes culminating in the tying of one of the brothers to a cross.¹⁰⁴

Lamy's troubles with the Penitentes were not unique to his episcopacy. The Penitentes had also irked his predecessor, Archbishop Zubiría. But the Penitentes posed an especial problem to Lamy. Decentralized, lay-driven, indigenized, and sensational, the Penitentes did not fit into the European Catholicism Lamy sought to impart to his diocese. In an American religious environment where a hostile Protestant mainstream castigated the Catholic Church as superstitious and backward, the Penitentes, with their flagellant practices and lay enthusiasm, were a profound embarrassment and problem for Lamy.

¹⁰³ Ray John de Aragon, *Padre Martínez and Bishop Lamy* (Santa Fe, N.Mex.: Sunstone Press, 2006). For Martínez's opposition to the Lamy's suspension of New Mexican priests, see 64–65; for opposition to mandatory tithing, 90–91, 101; for excommunication 95; and for funeral 109.

¹⁰⁴ Marta Weigle, *Brothers of Light, Brothers of Blood: The Penitentes of the Southwest* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 1976). For rituals within the *moradas*, see 155–157; for physical penance, 159–162; for Holy Week observances, 162–166; and for re-enactments of crucifixions, 171–173.

Early in his bishopric, Lamy adopted a conciliatory attitude toward the brotherhood, possibly hoping to thereby cajole it into change. He examined the prayers used by the Penitentes and declared that they were not contrary to Catholic faith. In 1853 and again in 1856 he issued rules that subordinated the lay brotherhood to priestly oversight and sought to formalize leadership and membership.¹⁰⁵ By 1879, however, Lamy was out of patience. In his pastoral letter he wrote: “In times past we had approved the rules of these brotherhoods with the express condition that no penance would be done without the respective parish priest, and under his direction. But unfortunately, the leaders of these societies have not acted according to our orders.” Instead, the Penitentes continued following “their cruel practices and customs in remote places, and at night, giving themselves such terrible lashes that many have not only become sick as a consequence of these penances, but some also have died.” Lamy declared, “All these are great abuses that the Church condemns rather than approves.”¹⁰⁶

Beyond his disapproval of Penitente practices, Lamy’s chief objection to the brotherhood lay in its resistance to his authority. He warned that the dramatic penances of the hermanos “far from pleasing God instead offend . . . him” because they were “not done according to the obedience that is owed the church.” He contrasted the unruly Rio Arriba parishes, where the Penitentes maintained a strong presence, with other, “more orderly parishes,” and urged his readers to “imitate their example and comport yourselves

¹⁰⁵ Weigle, 56.

¹⁰⁶ En tiempos pasados habíamos aprobado las reglas de estas cofradías con la condición expresa de que no se haría ninguna penitencia sin contar con el párroco respectivo, y bajo su dirección. Pero desafortunadamente los jefes de estas sociedades no han hecho caso de nuestras órdenes; antes bien ellos han seguido sus prácticas y costumbres crueles en partes retiradas, y de noche, dándose azotes tan terribles que muchos no solamente se han enfermado á consecuencia de estas penitencias, sino que también algunos se han muerto. . . . Todos estos son abusos grandes que la Iglesia reprueba en lugar de aprobarlos. Jean Baptiste Lamy, “Carta Pastoral,” *La Revista Católica* (Las Vegas, N.Mex.), 8 February 1879, p. 66.

as obedient children of the Church.” In his view, “Obedience to the authority of the church in all that she commands and prohibits on behalf of God will be worth more to you than all those penances that some from the order practice, and with excessive rigor, which God will not take into account, because they are not done according to obedience.” Not only did the Penitentes flout the authority of the Catholic Church, but in doing so Lamy worried that they contributed to negative Anglo American perspectives of Catholicism. He concluded by declaring that the Penitentes “have given and give a place to blaspheming of our religion.” With their extreme practices, the brotherhood was a force of resistance not only to Lamy’s diocese but to U.S. assimilation. To polite society in the East, the hermanos seemed like an utterly foreign, savage, and medieval holdover in the rapidly industrializing and modernizing United States.¹⁰⁷

The Penitentes indeed proved a source of repugnance for outside observers. Presbyterian missionaries and visitors decried what they saw as the fanaticism and barbarism of Penitente observances and rituals. At the same time, Presbyterian publications displayed a morbid fascination with the activities of the hermanos. Especially in the 1880s and 1890s, when the Presbyterian missionary effort in New Mexico became an increasingly visible part of the home missions movement, Presbyterian publications frequently featured exposés of Penitente exercises. They

¹⁰⁷ Os exhortamos encarecidamente á no dejaros alucinar por una falsa especie de devoción, que legos de agradar á Dios mas bien le ofende porque no se hace según la obediencia que se debe á la Iglesia y la hacen despreciar. En las parroquias mas arregladas que pudiéramos mencionar no existen estos abusos ni tampoco estas cofradías. Imitad sus ejemplos y comportaos como hijos obedientes de la Iglesia. Y tened bien presente esta máxima del Espíritu Santo: 'La obediencia vale mas que los sacrificios.' Sí, la obediencia á la autoridad de la Iglesia en todo lo que ella manda y prohíbe de parte de Dios, os valdrá mas que todas aquellas penitencias que practican algunos fueron del orden y con rigor excesivo, de las cuales Dios no les tendrá cuenta, porque no se hacen según la obediencia; á mas de que han dado y dan lugar á hacer blasfemar de nuestra religión. Jean Baptiste Lamy, “Carta Pastoral,” *La Revista Católica* (Las Vegas, N.Mex.), 8 February 1879, p. 66.

described in detail the painful use of cactuses and the profusion of blood, the simulated crucifixions and secret meetings. To Presbyterian writers, the Penitentes were evidence of the backwardness and even savagery of Hispanos under Catholicism. Missionary pastor John Menaull wrote, “Very few eastern people could be induced to believe that there exists in these United States, among a people calling themselves Christian, a sect of self-torturers, whose performances would take a high rank with the heathen tortures of India or the sun dances of the wildest Indians on the American plains.”¹⁰⁸ Another pastor, James Fraser, concluded that the Penitentes demonstrated “the hold . . . galling ignorance has upon the people of this land, depriving them of the very spirit of manhood and independence.”¹⁰⁹ Despite missionaries’ disdain, however, it was in the Penitente heartland of the Rio Arriba that the Presbyterians would enjoy the most success.

La Revista Catolica, a newspaper published by the Jesuits to counter Perea’s and Annin’s evangelism, emphasized a link between Penitentes and Presbyterians. In an article published in 1876, *La Revista* responded to a column in a Presbyterian newspaper that reported a meeting between several Presbyterian missionaries and two “*hermanos mayores Mejicanos*” (Mexican older brothers) from Mora County. *La Revista* acknowledged that the phrase might refer to Hispanos who had become Protestants and were now elders within the Presbyterian Church, such as Perea. More likely, however, *La Revista* suspected “it must be understood as two true Hermanos mayores, as those Penitentes here are called, with whom some Protestants have shown sympathy.” The Jesuits warned, “Watch out for the Penitentes of Mora,” alleging that there must be at

¹⁰⁸ John Menaull, “Our Mexican and Indian Mission Work,” *The Church at Home and Abroad*, September 1890, p. 223.

¹⁰⁹ James Fraser, “New Mexico,” *The Church at Home and Abroad*, September 1888, p. 270.

least two who wanted to deliver the brotherhood into Presbyterianism, “as Judas delivered Jesus Christ.”¹¹⁰

To the Presbyterians, *La Revista* wrote, “The Mexicans that tear away the Catholic Church . . . will not make either good or bad Protestants: such people leave their true religion, because it weighs heavy on them, but do not take hold of a false one because it is useless.” Such people would “cease to be Catholics,” but would not “begin to be Protestants.” Instead, they would “remain renegades, apostates, foolish ones that do not know what they were or what they are going to be.” The Jesuits saw the prospect of Penitente conversion to Protestantism as good riddance, declaring, “If the Protestants think to gain them, we leave them with good will: we do not think to lose, but to win by separating them from us.”¹¹¹

Padre Martínez died in 1867, two years before Annin and Perea met and began their joint ministry. By that time, Lamy had been bishop or archbishop in Santa Fe for almost two decades. Although the controversies occasioned by Lamy’s early reforms had faded, and although his primary opponent in New Mexico Catholicism had died, resentments still lingered in northern New Mexico. Further, despite Lamy’s reforms, the chronic shortage of priests continued to hamper the Catholic Church in the Rio Arriba.

¹¹⁰ Con las palabras dos Hermanos mayores, ¿qué cosa se quiso decir? ¿Acaso que dos Mejicanos se hallan agregados á esa secta, y que los haya hecho sus diáconos ó asistentes elders como los llaman? Pero tememos que deba entenderse de dos verdaderos Hermanos mayores como se les dice á esos penitentes de aquí, con los cuales han dado muestras de simpatizar algunos protestantes. Pues si fuera así, cuidado á los penitentes de Mora. Deberá haber entre ellos dos Hermanos mayores, que los querrán hacer Protestantes, y que los vendrian á entregar en esa reunion presbiteriana, como Judas fue á entregar á Jesucristo. “*El Advertiser*,” *La Revista Catolica* (Las Vegas, N.Mex.), 11 November 1876, p. 545.

¹¹¹ De los Mejicanos que arrancan de la Iglesia Católica, no harán ni buenos ni malos protestantes: esos tales dejan su verdadera religión, porque les pesa, y no agarran ni una falsa porque no sirve. Dejan de ser católicos, pero no principian á ser protestantes, y se quedan unos renegados, apóstatas, ridículos que no saben lo que eran y lo que van á ser. Si los protestantes piensan ganar con ellos, se los dejamos de buena gana: nosotros al revés no pensamos perder, sino ganar con separarse ellos de nosotros. *Ibid.*

That shortage, combined with the resentment of Hispanos who had been told they were on the fringes of Catholic orthodoxy, meant that Presbyterian missionaries such as Perea could find ears willing to listen to their Protestant religious message.

In the early years after meeting Annin, Perea continued pursuing his business endeavors. He pastured sheep in western San Miguel County. He attempted to open a store in Las Vegas. Even in his business endeavors, however, Perea apparently became more vocal about his Protestant faith.

In an obituary published in 1910, fellow Hispano pastor Santiago Chaves, a Methodist, described Perea's evangelistic approach to business. Chaves did not explain why he was in Perea's company, only that he was with him where "he had his flocks of small livestock." Chaves remembered: "I listened with much pleasure to his preaching. He had a habit of preaching every night to all the men he had at work taking care of his flocks. He did not care what class of people they were, but he gathered them and preached Christ and Him Crucified." Chaves declared, "In that time I saw various acts that he did and although others are called Christian I have not seen any do as Mr. Perea did."¹¹²

In addition to his gospel preaching, Perea also worked to cultivate his Protestant ethic in his workers. Chaves highlighted an incident in which one of Perea's shepherds cursed in frustration and "took the holy name of God in vain" after a sheep jumped out of the corral. Perea called the shepherd over and asked, "Man, how much do I owe you?"

¹¹² El que estas cortas líneas escribe lo tuvo por experiencia, yo el abajo firmado estuve con él en el año de 1872 hasta el de 1873, en donde el tenía sus rebaños de ganado menor. En ese tiempo yo escuchaba con mucho gusto sus predicaciones. El tenía de costumbre de predicar todas las noches á todos los hombres que tenía en el trabajo cuidando sus rebaños. No le importaba que clase de gente fuera, el les reunía y les predicaba á Cristo y á El crucificado. En este tiempo ví varios hechos que hizo y que á otros aunque se titulan de cristianos no les he visto hacer como lo hizo el Sr. Perea. Santiago Chaves, "Recuerdos de el Reverendo Jose Ynes Perea," *La Aurora* (Las Vegas, N.Mex.), 15 December 1910.

The man responded that he was working to pay off a debt he owed to Perea in the amount of fifteen pesos. According to Chaves, “Then brother Perea gave the man a receipt for the 15 pesos saying: You owe me nothing, withdraw from my work, I don’t want men like you who do not fear God, but blaspheme against Him.”¹¹³

Perea’s position in the community became complicated as he increasingly promoted his understanding of Christian faith in public and as his message received Anglo institutional support. The presence of a Presbyterian school in Las Vegas prompted a Catholic response, and the Archdiocese of Santa Fe sent up Jesuit priests to open their own school. Rendón wrote, “With the coming of the Jesuits [Perea’s] trading post had been boycotted, and little by little his interests had driven away from the neighborhood.” The presence of two formal institutions, one Protestant and the other Catholic, probably led to a hardening of community attitudes toward Perea, whether or not the priests specifically called for a boycott.¹¹⁴

In addition to the boycott, Perea also suffered a blow to the respect that he had previously enjoyed in the community. When Rendón became a Protestant, his father appealed to the example of Perea to dissuade his son: “You are sure to be hated. I saw what happened to Don Ynez Perea. He suffered insults by the dozen. Small wonder he has gone to work elsewhere.” No longer was Perea’s Protestant faith an eccentric and

¹¹³ Es tal; que en una vez los pastores todos á una encerrando diferentes atajos de ovejas, una oveja brinca del corral y uno de los hombres pastores fue tras de la oveja maldiciendo blasfemando, tomó el santo nombre de Dios en vano. En era momento estaba yo y el Sr. Perea, juntos y me dije, llámame á ese hombre que blasfemó tanto, lo hize, y cuando el vino le dije: hombre ¿cuanto te debo? El hombre respondió, no señor yo le debo á usted 15 pesos. Luego el hermano Perea le dió al hombre un recibo de los 15 pesos diciendole: Nada me debes, retírate de mi trabajo, no quiero hombres como tu que no temen á Dios, sino blasfemando en contra de El. Santiago Chaves, “Recuerdos de el Reverendo Jose Ynes Perea,” *La Aurora* (Las Vegas, N.Mex.), 15 December 1910.

¹¹⁴ Rendón, *Hand on My Shoulder*, 42.

personal foible. Through Perea's increased activity and the institutional support he received from Annin and the Presbyterian Church, his faith had become a possible threat to old ways of life and belief deeply entrenched in the communities of northern New Mexico. Those to whom Perea preached could not ignore the connection between his new doctrines and the incoming Anglos, who were eager for economic gain and willing to displace Hispanos to get ahead. To Rendón's father at least, Perea's association with Annin carried disturbing implications of subjection and subordination. Rendón wrote: "I remembered my father's telling me that Don Ynez and Rafael Gallegos used to haul water for Mr. Annin. He thought it degraded them."¹¹⁵

Perea's store failed in 1872. He spent the next two years pasturing cattle and sheep on the Río Pecos, and then two more on the Río Puerco.¹¹⁶ Perea's pastoral career, however, came to an end in 1876. That year, the New Mexico Presbytery¹¹⁷ decided "to inquire with Mr. Jose Ynes Perea in reference to entering our evangelistic work in the territory." Perea answered their call. He left his herds, probably with a manager, and in 1877 began studying with Annin in Las Vegas.¹¹⁸

Unfortunately, the factors that influenced Perea's decision are not explicit in the historical record. At the New Mexico Presbytery meeting in 1877, the gathered pastors

¹¹⁵ Rendón, *Hand on My Shoulder*, 52, 98.

¹¹⁶ José Ynez Perea to Norman Skinner, 19 January 1897, JYP, MHL.

¹¹⁷ PCUSA polity grouped churches by region, with the churches of a given region forming a Presbytery. The pastors and sometimes the elders of each church in the presbytery would meet annually. At the Presbytery meeting the gathered clergymen made decisions regarding issues affecting the churches, commissioned new pastors and evangelists, and drew up reports and requests to send to the General Assembly, the national meeting of the PCUSA.

¹¹⁸ November 1876, Presbytery Minutes, p. 130, r. 15, microfilm, *Santa Fe Presbytery (PCUSA) Minutes, 1868–1928*, Menaul Historical Library, Albuquerque, New Mexico [hereafter MF 15, SFPM-MHL].

examined Perea regarding his “religious experience and in respect to his motives in appearing . . . as a candidate for licensure,” but the secretary did not record his responses. Perea’s decision was a weighty one. In becoming a licentiate,¹¹⁹ a first step toward becoming a pastor, he formally inscribed Presbyterianism in his identity. The decision demanded he give up his profitable secular business pursuits and instead support himself with a stipend provided by the Board of Home Missions, whose fiscal health was sometimes shaky. Even before Annin arrived, however, evangelism had been Perea’s passion. He likely saw full-time ministry as the necessary outgrowth of his personal religious experience.

Whatever the reasons undergirding his decision, in November 1877 Perea received from the New Mexico Presbytery his commission as a licensed evangelist. The Presbytery credentialed as licentiates three other evangelists at the same time: Rafael Gallegos, José Mondragon, and Vicente Romero. Of the evangelists, however, Perea received special attention from the Presbytery. Possibly because he was already planning on becoming a pastor, and in part because of “his extraordinary qualifications for the work among the natives of New Mexico and . . . his special training in business and his scientific attainments [and] in view of classical and other preparations which he has been able to make” the Presbytery recommended to the Board of Home Missions that Perea receive a significantly higher salary than the other evangelists. Even so, Perea and the others would receive from the Board only half of what the Presbytery recommended.¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ Licentiates were salaried missionaries supported by the Board of Home Missions. As such, they were examined and commissioned by the Presbytery. They neither had the authority of a pastor, nor enjoyed the same salary.

¹²⁰ November 1877, Presbytery Minutes, p. 142–43, MF 15, SFPM-MHL.

As they prepared for licensure and in the months after their commissioning, Perea and Gallegos undertook a grueling schedule of missionary tours through the villages of northern New Mexico. Through 1877 and 1878, they would study and work with Annin for a week to prepare a series of sermons, and then go on a “preaching tour all over the country, which would often take us more than a month, holding thirty or forty religious services, before each service visiting every house, inviting all whom we met and conversing with them in order to gather them for our evening service.” Perea claimed that he and Gallegos preached “in every village and ranch of both San Miguel and Mora Counties.”¹²¹

Perea’s ministerial activities did not go unnoticed by the more orthodox of his peers. *La Revista Catolica* printed a letter from Benjamin Read, himself a prominent New Mexican businessman and the son of an Anglo who had married into a leading New Mexico family, that described and derided one of Perea’s missionary tours to Santa Fe. Read was not complimentary: “So it was, that four lunatic Presbyterians (all Mexicans) suddenly appeared in the principal street of this city.” Two of the evangelists were from Taos, most likely Jose Mondragon and Vicente Romero, and two were from Las Vegas, one of whom was Perea, the other most likely being Rafael Gallegos. Perea was the only evangelist Read mentioned by name.¹²²

¹²¹ José Ynéz Perea, “Early Presbyterian Missions,” *La Aurora* (Las Vegas, N.Mex.), 21 March 1902; and José Ynéz Perea to Norman Skinner, 19 January 1897, JYP, MHL.

¹²² Fue, que repentinamente aparecieron cuatro lunáticos presbiterianos (todos mejicanos) en la calle principal de esta ciudad. Según nos informaron, dos son de Las Vegas, y dos de Taos; por sus nombres no puedo mencionarlos, porque solo obtuve el de uno: Inés Perea. Benjamin Read, “Santa Fé,” *La Revista Catolica* (Las Vegas, N.Mex.), 14 September 1878, p. 433.

Read watched the evangelists give a gospel presentation and sing a hymn, after which they invited all their listeners to go to the house of “Mr. Smith (Minister),” to hear more. With their public declamation complete, the evangelists began to converse with the crowd that had gathered. Read engaged one of the evangelists in an extended conversation regarding the nature of the church and of authority. Although Read did not write specifically that he talked with Perea, it is likely, as he recorded only Perea’s name in his letter. Perea’s educational background would also explain Read’s observation that his interlocutor was “the one I considered the most eloquent of them.”¹²³

Their conversation ended abruptly as the crowd grew restive, declaring to the evangelists, “This was not the country in which they could be praying the streets, that we all had our Church to gather and render to God our worship.” Read recounted, somewhat bemusedly, “There were some men who, even though they are Catholics, broke down somewhat, and directed some insults and threats to the ministers.” In Read’s view, such a response was unnecessary and “badly done, because they were only talking and not insulting anyone.” Nonetheless, Read concluded that the encounter should have persuaded the evangelists that “this city does not only have the name of Holy Faith, but that it is so in reality; and that they have little hope of advancing their cause here.”¹²⁴

¹²³ Entonces el que yo consideré el más elocuente de ellos se dirigió á mí, y entramos in conversaci3n. Benjamin Read, “Santa F3,” *La Revista Cat3lica* (Las Vegas, N.Mex.), 14 September 1878, p. 433.

¹²⁴ En esto, nuestra conversaci3n fu3 interrumpida por la muchedumbre que se agrupaba r3pidamente. Dijeron á los predicantes que este no era el pa3 en que ellos pod3an estar orando en las calles, que nosotros todos ten3amos nuestra Iglesia para reunarnos y rendir á Dios nuestro culto. En esto hubo algunos hombres que, aunque sean cat3licos, se descomidieron alg3n tanto, y dirigieron al algunos insultos y amenazas á los Sres. Ministros; lo que yo considero como mal hecho, porque aquellos estaban solamente hablando y no insultando á nadie. Creo que con lo que observaron quedaron bien persuadidos que esta ciudad no solo tiene el nombre de Santa F3, sino que lo es en realidad; y que ellos tienen pocas esperanzas de hacer adelantar aqu3 su causa. Benjamin Read, “Santa F3,” *La Revista Cat3lica* (Las Vegas, N.Mex.), 14 September 1878, p. 433.

In addition to street preaching, printed evangelistic tracts played an important role in evangelism in New Mexico. Annin wrote to the Board: “Your Spanish publications I would greatly desire in considerable quantities. I have put a number of ‘*Andres Dunn*,’ in circulation and desire more. I am using also the Shorter Catechism and shall use it more and more, I think.” The tract Annin referenced, *Andres Dunn*, was the Spanish translation of the popular Protestant tract *Andrew Dunn*, in which an Irish Catholic converts to Protestant Christianity upon reading the Bible. The tract illustrates the objections that Perea and his fellow evangelists raised against Catholic Christianity and showcases the conversion ideal that they hoped to see in New Mexico.¹²⁵

In the tract, Andrew has questions about the church and about the Christian life, which his priest does not answer to his satisfaction. Amid Andrew’s uncertainty, the kind wife of an English squire gives him a New Testament, and later a complete Bible. As Andrew reads the Bible, he comes to a crisis of guilt and despair. In his reading, he sees no reference to any of the doctrines taught by his priest—no saintly intercession, no confession, and no priestly absolution. Instead he reads proclamations of God’s wrath against sinners and considers himself among them. Denied the solace of Catholic ritual, he exists in this state of anguish until one day, while reading the parable of the prodigal son, he enjoys the internal experience of being born again, gaining emotional surety that the message of the gospel applies personally to him.¹²⁶

After his conversion experience, Andrew turns his back on Catholic observances, refusing to go to Mass or say confession. Slowly he begins to persuade his family of his

¹²⁵ *The History of Andrew Dunn, an Irish Catholic* (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1908).

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 12, 16–20.

new outlook on faith. The crucial moment for his family comes after Andrew and the priest have an argument in the Dunn home. During the argument, Andrew runs through a laundry list of Reformed objections to Catholicism: “*the mass—confession—penance and absolution—anoointing—purgatory—praying to saints—and, above all, human merit.*”¹²⁷ The priest, unable to respond to Andrew’s arguments and appeals to Scripture, leaves discomfited and furious. Andrew’s family, now convinced that he has indeed discovered true religion, join him in the rejection of Catholic rituals.

The priest excommunicates the Dunn family and denounces it from the pulpit, alienating all the Dunns from the community. Over time, however, the community observes Andrew Dunn’s evangelical behavior and the economic success that accompanies his family’s new mode of life. Instead of God showing his displeasure with Andrew’s heresy, “Andrew was thriving in his worldly circumstances more than any of his neighbors in his own line of life.” Whereas before his wife and children had been “lazy and idle,” they “now became . . . active and industrious.”¹²⁸ Andrew worked for the squire whose wife gave him the Bible, taking on more and more responsibility. Several of Andrew’s neighbors begin to attend the Dunn family’s devotional services, and Dunn becomes de facto pastor of a growing congregation. Even an old enemy, who comes to Dunn’s house to beat or even kill him, repents when he hears Dunn praying and joins Dunn’s community of Protestant faith.¹²⁹

¹²⁷ *Andrew Dunn*, 34.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 92.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 79–81.

The idealized portrait of Andrew Dunn may have resonated with Perea for its consonance with his own conversion experience, in which exposure to personal reading of the Bible led him to reject Catholic doctrine and practice. Little of the narrative, however, characterized the Presbyterian experience in New Mexico. The Hispano Presbyterian community remained small; no sudden outpouring of economic prosperity manifested to attract converts' neighbors to Protestantism. More relevant was the political subtext of the tract, which blithely asserted Anglo superiority: a wealthy and enlightened English woman plays the key role in awakening an earnest but ignorant Irishman to the light of true understanding. That Irishman then happily works for the woman's husband, with his rising fortunes thus directly tied to English interests. The consistent identification of Presbyterianism with Anglo economic interests and cultural agendas and the threat of political and racial subordination proved persistent challenges for Hispano evangelists as they sought to influence their communities.

La Revista Catolica referenced the themes of identity and subordination in its depictions of Perea. In addition to his missionary journeys, Perea also assisted Annin with the production of a Presbyterian newspaper, *La Revista Evangelica*, to which the Catholic paper was a direct response. In the vein of nineteenth-century newspaper editorial practice, *La Revista Catolica* minced no words and spared no criticisms of its Protestant rival. Perea and the Catholic journal would square off several times through the closing decades of the nineteenth century. Their clashes were doctrinal, but the Catholic journal frequently personally attacked, defamed, and demonized Perea.

The thrust of these personal attacks emphasized the fraught place that Perea held in the Hispano community on account of his public Presbyterianism. Perea's Spanish was

the frequent butt of the Catholic journal's jibes. The Jesuits implied that Perea's high-class and flowery Spanish indicated his lack of connection with the people to whom he preached. According to them, Perea was simply too fancy, too highly cultivated and educated, to be relatable. Perea translated Annin's writings for *La Revista Evangelica* and at times contributed his own articles. Responding to one of Perea's translations, *La Revista Catolica* sneered that Annin's writing lacked "that holy simplicity and that somewhat rough color that characterizes the productions of the various apostles."¹³⁰ The Catholic paper then asked, "But whose fault is it if not that of his faithful disciple, Mr. Inés, who wants to absolutely throw elegance with a shovel on the writings of his Master?" *La Revista Catolica* portrayed Perea as an out-of-touch elite Hispano dangerously close to losing his identity to the Anglos with whom he worked. On the one hand, the Jesuits applied a *dicho* (saying) to Perea, writing "It is a long way to raise the hummocks to Mr. Inés's helmet."¹³¹ On the other, "the light of the *pure gospel*" threatened to leave him "dazzled to the point of making him lose sight of his own personality."¹³² The Jesuits insisted on a fundamental link between Catholic and Hispano identity, declaring, "Of a Mexican Catholic you will never make a Protestant at heart."¹³³

¹³⁰ Lástima que falten á su estilo aquella santa sencillez y aquel colorido algo tosco que caracterizan las producciones de los varones Apostólicos. Pero ¿de quién la culpa si no de aquel fiel discípulo suyo, el Señor Inés, el cual quiere absolutamente echar elegancias á porrillos sobre los escritos de su Maestro? "Revista Contemporanea," *La Revista Catolica*, 7 September 1878, p. 424.

¹³¹ Muy lejos está de hacer subir los humillos á los cascos del Señor Inés. Roughly equivalent to "He has his head high in the clouds." Ibid.

¹³² . . . á menos que la luz del puro Evangelio no le haya deslumbrado ya hasta el punto de hacerle perder de vista su misma personalidad. Ibid.

¹³³ ¡Ah, señores! De un Católico Mejicano no haréis nunca un Protestante de corazón! "Hazañas del Presbiterio," *Revista Catolica* (Las Vegas, N.Mex.), 24 August 1878, p. 406.

When Perea and Annin first began in 1870 to challenge the link between Hispano identity and Catholicism, they invited not only Catholic opposition, but Presbyterian criticism as well. By starting a church and school attended primarily by the Hispano residents of the Las Vegas area, Perea and Annin acted against specific instructions from the Board of Home Missions. When the Board first heard of Annin's Hispano-focused ministry, Henry Kendall, the director of the Board of Home Missions, sent Sheldon Jackson, the presbyterial missions superintendent for much of the American West, to evaluate the state of home missionary activity in New Mexico.

Annin had apparently informed Kendall that "none who understands the English language come to hear him so he is trying to learn Spanish that he may meet the Spanish population of New Mexico, and teaching school five hours a day and five days in the week." Kendall emphatically expressed his discomfort with Annin's decision: "Our leading idea must be to preach the Gospel in English, and to an English speaking people. We cannot pay for school teaching, for colportage, or for any work among other nationalities, till we have first cared for our own." Ministry in Spanish, or in "German and the Scandinavian tongues," could be undertaken "only sparingly and only as it can be made subordinate to preaching the gospel."¹³⁴

Kendall's concern stemmed from administrative worry intertwined with ethnocentrism. He wrote Jackson, "The Spanish population cannot compare in importance with the English speaking people; we wish to sustain Home Missions in New Mexico or elsewhere mainly; for the incoming flood of our own people." The emphasis

¹³⁴ Henry Kendall to Sheldon Jackson, 18 July 1870, p. 323–24, v. 3, r. 20, microfilm, (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Historical Society, 1978), *Sheldon Jackson Correspondence Transcripts*, Heritage Patron Micropublication no. 169, Menaul Historical Library, Albuquerque, New Mexico [hereafter MF 20, SJC-MHL].

on English-speakers had a practical edge. Kendall continued, “Our means and resources will tell more effectually on our people and produce larger results with this same expenditure.” Kendall raised some doubts about the sustainability of the Home Mission Board’s undertaking any work in New Mexico at all: “But for the probability of an early influx of our own people in New Mexico we should doubt the propriety of sustaining missionary work there. The old Spanish population there we regard as best looked after by the Foreign Board, or the American and Foreign Christian Union.” In his view New Mexico was an internal foreign colony in the United States.¹³⁵

The independence and enthusiasm of frontier missionaries such as Annin apparently disconcerted Kendall. He closed his letter to Jackson with stern warnings about listening to or seriously entertaining the input of local missionaries. Kendall instructed, “If a field is promising say so, of course; but if it is unpromising, let no persuasions of ardent or interested men have undue influence with you.” Kendall made clear that Jackson’s career rested in large part on his reports to the Board about missionary possibilities: “In New Mexico . . . we wish you to remember that you are acting for us—you are eyes for us. . . . We shall very largely accept and act on your judgment. If it be found reliable we shall act on it—more and more. But if following your guidance, we are led to venturesome undertakings, betrayed into an extravagant or unsuccessful outlay; it cannot fail to operate to your disparagement.”¹³⁶

The PCUSA had only just arrived at a point where it could extend its home missionary efforts to a place as far-flung as New Mexico. For much of the nineteenth

¹³⁵ Henry Kendall to Sheldon Jackson, 18 July 1870, p. 323–24, MF 20, SJC-MHL.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

century, the Presbyterian Church in the United States had been riven by doctrinal and regional difference into several different denominations. The so-called Great Awakenings, particularly the Second Great Awakening of the early nineteenth century, divided Old School Presbyterians from New School Presbyterians. The Old School held to a doctrinaire Calvinism that rejected revivalist theology and the Arminianism that accompanied it, while the New School embraced revivalism. The issue of slavery further divided the Presbyterians, with both the Old and New School branches containing Northern and Southern factions. These regional divisions would persist into the twentieth century, but the year 1869 saw the reunion of Old and New Schools in both the North and the South. In the North, the general assemblies of both schools approved a Plan of Union and reorganized as the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. The PCUSA entered on the home missionary project with remarkable fervor, raising a five-million-dollar fund for use in mission efforts.¹³⁷

Home missions encompassed a broad array of activities across the United States. As the frontier proceeded west, preachers had followed in its wake, starting churches among the newly transplanted settlers. Historically, the revivalist denominations, the Baptists and Methodists, held the advantage in the church-planting work. The reunion of Old and New Schools in the PUCSA, however, was confirmation that revivalism, and the Arminianism latent within it, had carried the day in American religion and signaled that the Methodists and Baptists would not have the western frontier to themselves.

For much of the nineteenth century, home missions had consisted primarily of the formation of churches among already-religious transplants. The goal was in part to spread

¹³⁷ Mark Banker, *Presbyterian Missions and Cultural Interaction in the Far Southwest, 1850–1950* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 14.

and maintain Anglo American concepts of civilization. Churches supposedly counteracted the chaos of the frontier, which threatened to return settlers to a state of savagery. After the Civil War, however, the aims of home missions expanded. With the assimilation of New Mexico and with increasing immigration to the United States from Catholic countries, home missions became a movement to counter Catholicism. In the postwar South, where federal Reconstruction was underway, the PCUSA Board of Home Missions took up educational programs among the freedmen as part of its mandate. With increasing urbanization, the Board supported Sunday schools to combat the demoralizing effects of city life.¹³⁸

Perea's and Annin's programs in Las Vegas came at a potent moment of transition in the PCUSA and in Protestant home missions in general. The authorities in the Presbyterian Church hierarchy did not quite know how to categorize New Mexico. It was technically part of the United States, but its population—Hispano, Indigenous, and Anglo—spoke several languages, practiced multiple faiths, and enacted cultures different from those of the church leaders on the Board of Home Missions. The Board first tried to solve the issue by transferring the ministry among the Hispanos of New Mexico to the Board of Foreign Missions, which already administered missionary outreach to indigenous groups. Annin, "heretofore under the appointment of the Board of Home Missions," was subsequently "appointed as a missionary of the Foreign Board."¹³⁹

¹³⁸ "The Transfer," *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America* 5 (1878): 75; "Roman Catholics," *ibid.*: 206; and Martin Marty, *Righteous Empire: The Protestant Experience in America* (New York: Dial Press, 1970), 75–76.

¹³⁹ "Additional Recommendations," *Presbyterian Monthly Record*, July 1871, p. 197; and "Recent Intelligence," *Presbyterian Monthly Record*, August 1871, p. 237.

By the end of the decade, however, the General Assembly changed its mind and officially returned New Mexico to the purview of the Board of Home Missions. The shift occasioned skepticism and criticism. The Board had not before undertaken thoroughgoing evangelism in an unfamiliar language and culture. The work among “exceptional populations,” as the Board termed the Mormon residents of Utah and Idaho, the Hispanos and Indigenous people of New Mexico, the indigenous groups of Alaska, and, at times the “mountaineers” of Appalachia and the Ozarks, dramatically expanded the Board’s mandate. In addition to churches, these ministries required “the establishment and maintenance of schools necessary to prepare the way.”¹⁴⁰

To any who might “doubt . . . our work of teaching the Indians, Mormons, and New Mexicans,” the *Presbyterian Monthly Record* declared: “People who never dare undertake anything which their fathers did not seldom make much progress in the world.” The Home Mission Board justified its work among these exceptional populations by reframing them as U.S. citizens in need of assimilation rather than residents of internal foreign colonies. The Board’s task had always been to “extend and build up our own Church in our own land,” and it could do so by naturalizing “all foreign elements.” Part of the purpose of the home missionary laboring among exceptional populations would be ultimately to render them unexceptional. As the *Record* argued, “they [New Mexicans] are now a part of our permanent population, to influence for good or ill the future of our dear country.”¹⁴¹

¹⁴⁰ “Special Subjects,” *Presbyterian Monthly Record*, July 1878, p. 202.

¹⁴¹ “Texas, New Mexico, and Montana,” *Presbyterian Monthly Record*, February 1875, p. 36; and “Special Subjects,” *Presbyterian Monthly Record*, July 1878, p. 202.

Holding a high view of the social function of its educational work, the Board of Home Missions argued that the religious and social institutions of New Mexico “will never reform themselves.” Instead, “left to themselves they will grow worse sooner than they will become better.” The PCUSA’s mandate seemed clear: “No form of civilizing and Christianizing agencies will ever fit the people for either state or national citizenship which omits *Christian schools*.” As a result, teachers would play a primary role in the Presbyterian missionary endeavor. The Board feared that if the Presbyterians neglected schools, New Mexico would be left in its “semi-barbaric and godless condition.”¹⁴²

The Home Mission Board’s pivot toward missionary work among the Hispanos of New Mexico, however, did not always govern in the field. Traditional, Anglo-centric perspectives still exercised their influence among Anglo American Presbyterian parishioners. Annin himself was forced from the Las Vegas pulpit in 1880, probably in large part because of his emphasis on Hispano ministry. In December 1879, B. B. Borden, a new resident of Las Vegas, wrote to Sheldon Jackson, complaining about “our church prospects here.” He declared, “I have been here but a short time—some six weeks. Our church is, from some cause, not flourishing as it should be, where the fault is I don’t know, but I do know the other churches are getting way ahead of it which is too bad, with the start we had, having held it for so many years.” He carefully noted, “I want to say that I have no fault to find with Rev. Annin, he has treated me as a gentleman and Christian.” At the same time, he complained, “Hasn’t he [Annin] got into an old rut that he will never get out of? In other words would not a change be better both to him and the

¹⁴² “Enlargement of the Work in New Mexico,” *Presbyterian Monthly Record*, November 1880, p. 355.

cause.”¹⁴³ The anticipated wave of Anglo American immigration that first brought Annin to Las Vegas had finally begun to arrive, over a decade later than the Presbyterians had expected. Annin apparently persisted in ministering to the Hispano community, allowing other denominations to make gains among the new Anglo American population.

Borden kept writing to Jackson, a later letter reporting the physical toll of New Mexico on Annin and his family: “Bro. Annin is having considerable sickness in his family. He lost the ends of two of his fingers in a hay cutter, but they are nearly well. Both of the daughters are having the measles, but are doing well. Mrs. A. I don’t suppose will ever recover in this place and perhaps not if she were removed to some other climate.” He then declared: “There is no change at the church. On last Sabbath there were 13 persons at church all told and a very pleasant day. It partly owing to sickness.” The persistent smallness of the Las Vegas congregation, and possibly its ethnic makeup, contrasted with Borden’s belief that, as a city, “Las Vegas is improving very rapidly.”¹⁴⁴

By May 1880, Borden had his way, and Annin was recalled. Borden wrote Jackson, declaring that “our members are well pleased” and insinuating that the only people sad to see Annin go were the leaders of rival denominations. Borden reported: “Our Methodist brethren are terribly indignant at Bro. A. dismissal. Their paper the Gazette gave you a terrible racking.” One prominent Methodist apparently distributed a petition urging the Board of Home Missions to reinstate Annin. Borden noted: “The first name on it was a Roman Catholic, and you may be sure no friend of ours or Mr. A.

¹⁴³ B. B. Borden to Sheldon Jackson, 15 December 1879, p. 315, v. 9, MF 21, SJC-MHL.

¹⁴⁴ B. B. Borden to Sheldon Jackson, 14 April 1880, p. 112, v. 10, MF 22, SJC-MHL.

either. The fact is his leaving is a fearful blow to them.”¹⁴⁵ Annin’s successor would remove the church from the Hispano Old Town of Las Vegas to a new building in the Anglo American New Town. Gone as well was Annin’s emphasis on preaching and teaching in Spanish.

Annin returned to the East, taking on the pastorate of a church in Rolla, Missouri, where he is buried. In all his published articles concerning Annin, Perea was unfailingly positive in his assessment of his fellow pastor. A letter in 1895 from Annin to Gabino Rendón, however, implies that Perea and Annin had experienced a falling out at some point. Annin wrote Rendón, “Rev. Ynes Perea was once very friendly to me and seemed to think I had done him good—but great changes take place in life.”¹⁴⁶

It is unclear from the historical record what led Annin to consider his friendship with Perea closed. Perea worked with Annin through the autumn of 1878. At that juncture, Perea then went with medical missionary Taylor Ealy to work at a mission station at Zuni Pueblo. Perea’s work at the Zuni mission was primarily menial, not ministerial. He and Ealy built new houses and transported supplies. Again Perea contributed financially to the sustaining of Presbyterian missionary efforts in the territory, with Ealy writing to Jackson in December 1878, “I owe Mr. Perea eighty-five dollars which he loaned me to pay a bill on the house.”¹⁴⁷ Perea apparently had difficulties in ministering at Zuni, although the record is not clear about the specifics. Ealy wrote Jackson, “The Governor, Casique [*sic*] (King) Pedro Pino, Alcalde, and others came and .

¹⁴⁵ B. B. Borden to Sheldon Jackson, 10 May 1880, p. 152, v. 10, MF 22, SJC-MHL.

¹⁴⁶ John Annin to Gabino Rendón, 21 August 1895, John Alexander Annin Information File, 1824–1903, identification no. 2011.01.30, Menaul Historical Library of the Southwest, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

¹⁴⁷ T. F. Ealy to Sheldon Jackson, December 1878, p. 25, vol. 9, MF 21, SJC-MHL.

. . . wanted to order Perea out of town for ten days. I objected; then they consented to allow him to remain shut up in the house.”¹⁴⁸

Perea’s time at Zuni was not wholly unprofitable. On Christmas day 1878, he married Susan Gates, who had come West with Ealy and his wife to serve as a school teacher. The record does not show when the two first met, but they were apparently courting by August 1878. At that time, Perea wrote to Susan, “Please tell brother Gallegos to find out which is the distance between Agua Negra and Santa Fe. Mr. Annin said that if it is nearer from there to Santa Fe, then we can go that way when we go to Presbytery and see how you are getting on.”¹⁴⁹

Perhaps because of Perea’s difficulties at Zuni, the Board of Home Missions then attempted to send him and Susan, now his wife, to Jemez Pueblo, to work as schoolteachers and assist Dr. James Shields in his ministry there. The appointment, however, was complicated by Shields’s reluctance and the political realities of the pueblo. Benjamin Thomas, the Indian agent, was himself a Presbyterian and his hiring of Presbyterian missionaries to fill government positions provided ample grounds for criticism by the local Catholic priest. Thomas insisted that bringing the Pereas to Jemez must not “give additional prominence, for the present, to church matters at Jemes. Presbyterianism has been brought to the front too rapidly.”¹⁵⁰ For his part, Shields did not think it was wise “to make a change on account of the Indians.”¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁸ T. F. Ealy to Sheldon Jackson, 3 December 1878, pp. 27–28, vol. 9, MF 21, SJC-MHL.

¹⁴⁹ José Ynéz Perea to Norman Skinner, 19 January 1897, JYP, MHL; and José Ynéz Perea to Susan Gates, 8 August 1878, JYP, MHL.

¹⁵⁰ Benjamin Thomas to Sheldon Jackson, 21 January 1879, pp. 82–83, v. 9, MF 21, SJC-MHL.

¹⁵¹ M. E. Griffith to Sheldon Jackson, 2 February 1879, p. 98, v. 9, MF 21, SJC-MHL.

Shields wanted Perea to reside in and work out of Cañon, three miles from Jemez, and minister from there to the surrounding villages. Perea, however, believed that his talents could be better utilized elsewhere. He wrote Jackson: “I ought to have for my center of operations a larger village such as Bernalillo, Corrales, or Albuquerque so that when engaged in my studies the work may continue. Some may be calling on me, or I may at any spare moment go and visit some.” He thought that Albuquerque was “full of Jesuits” and that Corrales was the best option. He had apparently asked Annin about coming back to work in San Miguel County, but Annin replied that Perea “had been acting too long” under his “own responsibility” for Annin “take [him] into his field again.” In his request to move to Corrales, Perea wrote, “I would wish to establish myself now in such a place where I could make it my life work and be gaining the good will of the people from year to year.”¹⁵²

Perea’s licensure and marriage marked a new chapter in the course of his life. He was no longer a layman—no longer an incidental Presbyterian member of his community. He was now an authority figure, a symbol of a different understanding of faith. His marriage to Susan Gates wove tighter his connections with Anglo American society, further complicating his place in Hispano New Mexico. At the same time, Perea’s efforts played a key role in shifting the PCUSA’s attitude toward New Mexico. His example and evangelism opened a place for Hispanos in the Presbyterian Church. After being a lone Protestant, isolated from his community by religion, he was now one of several passionate Hispano Presbyterians. With them, he was building a new community. As yet, the community remained small, but as Perea moved to Corrales he

¹⁵² José Ynéz Perea to Sheldon Jackson, 20 February 1879, 115–16, v. 9, MF 21, SJC-MHL.

looked forward hopefully to the possibility of a thriving Spanish-speaking Presbyterian church in New Mexico. The difficult realities of ministry in the following decades, however, would consistently frustrate his hopes.

Chapter 3

El Pastor

A decade after he had helped open the door for Presbyterian missionary outreach among the Hispanos of New Mexico, Perea began his career in full-time ministry among his countrymen in the Rio Abajo. Newly married and freshly commissioned as a licentiate by the New Mexico Presbytery, he entered his new field full of hope for the prospects of an Hispano Presbyterian church. The realities of the mission field, however, repeatedly frustrated his expectations.

In his first years at Corrales, while he was only a licentiate, he attributed the lackluster progress of his ministry to the unwillingness of the PCUSA to fully commit to missionary outreach in New Mexico. He struggled to provide for his family on inadequate pay. He could not convince his neighbors of the significance of his message when his sending board would not provide the necessary resources to build the physical infrastructure of church and school.

After nearly two years of difficult straits, Perea's ordination as a pastor in 1880 signaled a new level of commitment by the PCUSA to the New Mexico project. Even with increased support, however, Perea's ministry could not find traction among New Mexicans. Vociferous and persistent opposition from Catholic clergy contributed to Perea's isolation from the community, and personal tragedy ravaged his family. Unable to found a church in Corrales, he traveled through the communities along the Rio Grande, preaching to families and individuals. Despite his ministry's constant setbacks and the personal tragedies his family faced, Perea maintained hope for the establishment of

Hispano Presbyterianism. He fashioned himself as a prophetic figure, pointing to a future constantly deferred.

José Ynéz and Susan Perea moved to Corrales, just north of Albuquerque, in early 1879, soon after their marriage and well over a year before his ordination. When he first arrived, Perea was primarily concerned with striking while the iron was hot. He believed there was an opportunity for the Presbyterian understanding of Christianity to take root and thrive, if only the necessary institutions could be established in a timely fashion. His main worry was that the bureaucracy of the Board of Home Missions would move too slowly and that the window of opportunity would close. In the weeks after the Pereas moved to Corrales, José Ynéz urged Sheldon Jackson to push the Board for the support necessary to start a school. Perea argued that “it would have been expedient to come here with the school at once,” and worried that “by the time the Board may be willing to commission the teacher here, many who are now very willing to have our school will become prejudiced . . . on account of our evangelistic work among them.”¹⁵³

Perea described his new neighbors in Corrales as “the strongest kind of Catholics,” but noted that “they are friendly to me if not to the cause I represent.” Perea believed that by providing a tangible service to the community through the formation of a school, he could turn the personal friendliness he experienced from the people of Corrales into receptivity to his proclamations of the gospel. A school “could win the children and the parents soon” and would provide a strong foundation for Perea’s future ministry in

¹⁵³ José Ynéz Perea to Sheldon Jackson, 30 April 1879, pp. 200–201, v. 9, MF 21, SJC-MHL.

the town. “If we could open our school soon . . . the work would be started in such a way as to secure its success with God’s help,” he advised.¹⁵⁴

A school, even in a small community such as Corrales, would require institutional support from the PCUSA. Perea wrote Jackson, “If I could, I would open the school any way now,” but the necessary capital outlay was beyond Perea’s means, now that he had devoted his life to full-time ministry. In previous years, Perea had been a benefactor for Presbyterian missionary efforts in New Mexico, footing the bill to fund projects when the Board of Home Missions had been slow to support. Now, however, he was dependent on the Board himself, with no outside benefactor in sight. As he declared to Jackson, “I am now somewhat in debt and out of money.”¹⁵⁵

It was not until December 1879 that Susan Perea was able to open a school. But José Ynéz did not think it would be sustainable for Susan to bear the brunt of teaching. As he explained to Jackson, the difficulties were in part physical and practical: “My wife opened her school on the 1st instant in the most difficult circumstances. We feel that she cannot keep it up without overworking herself. She has all the housework to do, the child to nurse and the school to teach.” Susan gave birth to the couple’s first child, Mosheim, in September 1879. Then there was the social cost exacted by Catholic clerical opposition to her school. José Ynéz reported to Jackson: “The Catholic priests have set themselves against her and declared a most relentless war. Every time they say mass in Corrales, they exhort the people not to send their children to our school. They have represented me before the people as a corrupt and wicked heretic and they have expressly commanded

¹⁵⁴ José Ynéz Perea to Sheldon Jackson, 30 April 1879, pp. 200–201, v. 9, MF 21, SJC-MHL.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

them not to associate with me.”¹⁵⁶ Susan’s place in Hispano society was most likely already tenuous; a sustained campaign of criticism by the priests, who exercised a great deal of social and cultural power among the Hispano families in the community, must have threatened her with further isolation.

Susan had not moved to New Mexico to work among Hispanos. She came west from Pennsylvania with the Presbyterian medical missionary Taylor Ealy and his wife, Mary. The group’s original plan had been to minister to the Anglo population in Lincoln, New Mexico, where they had received a request from Alexander McSween for a Presbyterian pastor. The Ealys and Susan arrived the day after the murder of British cattleman John Tunstall, and the Lincoln County War soon set their proposed mission field ablaze with bloody violence. Taylor Ealy’s first service as a pastor in New Mexico was Tunstall’s funeral. After the conflagration drove them away, the Ealys and Susan moved to Laguna Pueblo, where she soon married José Ynez.¹⁵⁷ Four months later, the couple moved to Corrales and Susan had to adapt to an entirely new culture and language. The record does not show whether Susan knew Spanish before coming to the territory, or the extent to which she engaged with the community apart from the school. She was a long way from her home in Schellsburg, Pennsylvania. Her husband traveled frequently for his ministry and the record does not indicate that she had any ties in the community. José Ynez’s letters to Sheldon Jackson indicate that Susan struggled frequently with poor health. It is quite likely that she experienced dramatic culture shock and loneliness along with the physical stress of pregnancy, giving birth, and motherhood.

¹⁵⁶ José Ynez Perea to Sheldon Jackson, 8 December 1879, p. 305, v. 9, MF 21, SJC-MHL.

¹⁵⁷ Norman Bender, ed., *Missionaries, Outlaws, and Indians: Taylor F. Ealy at Lincoln and Zuni, 1878–1881* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1984), 4–6, 18.

José Ynéz wanted to ease his wife's burden, and he asked Jackson whether her salary could be raised and "a lady teacher sent." At the same time, he expressed his optimism for their ministry. The hostility of the Catholic priests was cause for concern but was to be expected. Perea even saw grounds for hope in the response of the people of Corrales to the priests' imprecations: "I have been surprised however with the independence of the people. They continued to deal with me in the most friendly terms, they are sending their children without hesitation." Although a burden on his wife, the school itself seemed off to a good start in Perea's eyes. Two weeks after starting, seventeen students from prominent families had enrolled. The school used the New Testament as its reader, and Perea reported, "No objection is made by the parents."¹⁵⁸

Perea hoped that community support would coalesce around the young school and drive a wedge between Corrales residents and the priests. He described a conversation he had with one of the parents who had enrolled a child in the school and who declared: "The Jesuits harangue was useless." According to this parent, "everybody in town if they had any sense could tell who their true friend was. . . . Societies of strangers in the East were doing more for us in providing useful instruction at a sacrifice, while the priests who are living on the fat of the land had no better advice to give than that they had better keep their children from the school and so have them in ignorance."¹⁵⁹ It was in the religious space created by this disgruntlement toward the Catholic Church that Perea hoped to build an Hispano Presbyterian church in Corrales, then in New Mexico.

¹⁵⁸ José Ynéz Perea to Sheldon Jackson, 8 December 1879, p. 305, v. 9, MF 21, SJC-MHL.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

Although the school at Corrales was Perea's key ministry interest, he also traveled through the region, preaching and evangelizing as he found opportunity. He did little preaching in Corrales. He explained to Jackson, "I have not had much of a religious service here during the winter. The people drink so much wine in that season that they often promised to come but did not. When I went in the afternoon to see them, I found them drunk or gambling." Instead, he continued the work the Presbytery had first given him at Jemez Springs and the surrounding area. He visited "Placitas, Cañada, and Cile [where] men and women seem to be taking interest in religion." In these missionary travels he found encouragement and grounds for hope. In one instance he reported to Jackson: "At the Hot Springs we have had a revival. Eleven members were received by baptism the last two months, and some children baptised. Four more are thinking of joining."¹⁶⁰

Perea practiced a direct style of evangelism that hinged on personal contact, particularly with people who seemed to entertain doubts regarding Catholic doctrine or practice. In a letter from March 1880, Perea wrote, "I have not neglected to preach whenever and wherever an opportunity offered, nor the reading of the Scriptures from house to house." Going wherever there was interest, he recounted, "At Placitas . . . a number of persons seem to be taking interest in religion, and I have endeavored to go as often as possible—four men reading the Scriptures and becoming concerned in religious matters." To his Presbyterian backers, Perea emphasized his hope for the field and envisioned the possibility of dramatic change, declaring that of the men with whom he interacted, "One of them owns the Catholic chapel. He has told me[,] 'I may put the

¹⁶⁰ José Ynéz Perea to Sheldon Jackson, 9 April 1880, p. 94, v. 10, MF 21, SJC-MHL.

priest out of my chapel at any time.”¹⁶¹ His letter described the arduous labor of chipping away at Catholic hegemony a few people at a time and, bit by bit, claiming souls for Presbyterianism in New Mexico.

Perea also worked in concert with other Hispano Presbyterians during his extended travels throughout his mission field. He reported to the *Presbyterian Monthly Record*: “Brother Montoya came on the 3d inst., and we made a tour. We left home on the 5th inst., returned the 15th. We visited Bernalillo, Algodones, passed the night at Cubero. I preached there. They seemed glad to hear us, and we were urged to go again. Next day we passed Peña Blanca, not finding a chance to preach there.” Frequently, their ministry took place in private homes rather than in public meeting spaces. In his recounting of his activities, Perea underscored the role of Spanish Bibles as fruitful seeds for his own work: “We read and commented on the Scriptures in two houses. One of the men we spoke with told us he had found religion far beyond what the priests teach it by reading the Bible, and in his conversation recited many Scripture texts.”¹⁶²

On other occasions, Perea preached in public to larger audiences. He described his evangelical labors in the *Presbyterian Monthly Record*: “We passed the night at Cochiti, where we were asked to preach. I preached to a small attendance of ten or twelve auditors. Next day I preached at Cañada. There the whole town turned out to hear us. I was told that only one family refused to attend.”¹⁶³ A public harangue by a Protestant Nuevomexicano must have elicited a great deal of excitement in these rural villages and

¹⁶¹ “From One of our Mexican Licentiate,” *Presbyterian Monthly Record*, July 1880, 174–75.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

towns. Perea offered the residents a rich religious or cultural diversion whether they embraced his message or intended to hold fast to their Catholicism. For Perea and his fellow missionaries, these small communities constituted the unguarded chinks in the Catholic Church's armor. Few of these small, rural communities had a resident priest to minister to residents' daily lives and to disrupt or challenge the proselytizing of Protestant missionaries.

Perea dedicated himself to his ministry and believed that success waited around the corner. In his first years in Corrales, however, he suffered from neglect by the PCUSA and feared that his treatment indicated that the denomination was not as committed to the missionary effort as he was. The combined salaries of both Pereas were not enough to support their family. Whatever personal satisfaction and meaning the couple derived from the ministry, the work took a toll on their health, financial and physical.

Through all of 1879 and well into 1880, Perea's financial hardships were a frequent theme in his correspondence. He wrote Jackson: "I have not heard from the Board and the 1st month of the quarter is over and I have no provisions. We have been living very poorly for the last month and to do so we got in debt. I have to pay freight for the boxes of books and furniture from Santa Fe and have not the money. I am in great straits. I expect the money every day but it has not come." A month later he complained, "I have not yet heard from the Board and am in the greatest straits, paying freight, and yet not having what to pay with, having no provisions bought yet owing accounts everywhere and being pressed for payment."¹⁶⁴

¹⁶⁴ José Ynéz Perea to Sheldon Jackson, 30 April 1879, pp. 200–201, v. 9, MF 21, SJC-MHL; and José Ynéz Perea to Sheldon Jackson, 8 May 1879, p. 214–13, v. 9, MF 21, SJC-MHL.

As a licentiate, before his ordination as a pastor, Perea worked on short wages. The Presbytery of Santa Fe had recommended to the Board that he be paid eight hundred dollars, but the Board cut the already small sum in half. Susan Perea drew a schoolteacher's salary but with both their salaries combined the Pereas only had \$750 to live on annually.¹⁶⁵ Their difficulties were compounded by an apparent misunderstanding with the Board of Home Missions. Through the winter and spring of early 1880, Perea wrote increasingly strained letters to Jackson. In January Perea vented to Jackson: "I have just received my commission from our board. It is for six months with a salary of \$375 and [a] note is included notifying that all licentiates will be commissioned only for six months and the rest of the time they might do business for themselves. I think you must see at once the sore tribulation into which my family and I are cast." Perea had given up all his secular businesses when he began pursuing full-time ministry.

He despaired: "I am holding no property, own no land, nor house. The one I live in is rented. I have no business, no profession, nor anything to fall back on. I was required when I entered the evangelistic work to give up all secular business. I did so I assumed the evangelistic work heart and soul." The news that he would only be paid for six months and was expected to look after his own affairs for the remainder of the year came as a shock. He warned: "Now if our board should discontinue me I would be left in utter destitution, the many enemies of the good cause in this country would greatly rejoice and I do not know where or how I could get anything to do to support my family. I had never thought that such a thing could be done in our church and so it has found me

¹⁶⁵ José Ynéz Perea to Sheldon Jackson, 3 April 1880, pp. 94–95, v. 10, MF 22, SJC-MHL.

entirely unprepared.”¹⁶⁶ Perea expected some kind of reciprocity from the Presbyterian Church. Although he and Susan pioneered the Presbyterian faith among Nuevomexicanos, the church now seemed unwilling to fully support their ministry. José Ynéz was dumbfounded.

In addition to the pecuniary difficulties his family would face six months out of the year, Perea argued that making the ministry a half-year enterprise could only harm the prospects of Presbyterian missionary efforts. He explained: “Now if our labors be stopped for six months it will be a complete loss for us and a gain to our adversaries. A long suspension of the work will put it back and I do seriously believe that to resume it with the intention of stopping it for six months will be time, money, and effort lost. The work is hard up hill work.” He particularly worried that any person who showed interest in the Presbyterian message would be alienated were he or she abandoned by the church. He warned: “We find the greatest opposition and whenever we give up those who have begun to search out the truth, we find them afterwards the bitterest enemies of the Gospel.” It is possible that Perea was describing his own feelings of abandonment and isolation, his own disappointment with the church to which he had dedicated his life. He closed by pleading, “I do not see how I can go back to secular affairs again and be forced by want and destitution to abandon this most delightful employment,” working for “the salvation of my fellow country men and their spiritual and mental regeneration.”¹⁶⁷

Perea was comparatively restrained in his plea to his missionary supervisor. He was less so in a letter he wrote at the same time to fellow missionary J. M. Shields,

¹⁶⁶ José Ynéz Perea to Sheldon Jackson, 27 January 1880, p. 16, v. 10, MF 21, SJC-MHL.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

asking him to lobby Jackson and the Board on Perea's behalf. To Shields, Perea confessed his sense of betrayal: "I am surprised and thunderstruck at this order of our board. I never thought that our church would do any such a thing as this." He once again referred to his dilemma: The Presbyterian Church had required him to give up his secular business holdings when he entered the ministry but had left his family in seriously reduced straits. He described his predicament: "I am living in a rented house and have no house of my own. The sheep I own I gave out as required by Presbytery and I gave them for six years."¹⁶⁸

To Shields, Perea also confessed that his active Protestantism had alienated him from his social and familial networks, lamenting, "I can get no employment from my relations and wealthy friends, for they have taken deep offence at my preaching Protestantism." The result would be disaster for him and his family: "If our board withdraws its support from me, then I'll be left in complete destitution for I have not been prepared for such an emergency, and as I said it is the Presbytery which required me to give up all secular affairs." His situation was stark and precarious. He took up the Presbyterian ministry with devotion and joy to save souls and advance the gospel, but the church now seemed unwilling to save him and his family from poverty. Perea concluded, "I was attending to secular affairs when I first entered the evangelistic work but now I have no property I can dispose of, no home and land of my own as I had then, and no friends I can call on for aid or employment, for my friends have become my bitter enemies ever since I assumed evangelistic duties."¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁸ José Ynéz Perea to J. M. Shields, 28 January 1880, p. 17, v. 10, MF 21, SJC-MHL.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

To Shields, Perea was also more emphatic about the missional consequences of the Board's policy. He declared: "For the life of me I cannot see the advantage of this upon our work. If we abandon our work for the space of six months it will surely be a complete wreck." He went so far as to say that if missionary labor continued on a half-year basis only, the Board should invest the money "in some other missionary enterprise, for it is not right for our church to throw money away." Instead, he argued that "it would be far better to send us a few more ordained preachers who could learn the language and could be kept constantly at work without intermission."¹⁷⁰ A successful ministry required manpower, fiscal resources, constant labor—it required commitment from the sending body.

Perea had interested some residents of Corrales in his Presbyterian message, but he warned that few people were willing to publicly display sympathy with his cause unless the PCUSA tangibly demonstrated its commitment to the region. He explained to Jackson: "Some men have told me, we do not dare to come out and show our sympathy with you, because you are not living among us as one who intends to remain. If you should leave after showing your sympathy, we will have to leave too." Perea argued that building the infrastructure of permanent settlement in the Rio Abajo would be a boon to the Presbyterian mission among the Catholic population. He advised: "They say they want to see me build a good schoolroom with a bell, and school books would be a great impetus. I have not the least doubt as to success."¹⁷¹ But the Board would have to exhibit commitment through investment, both in buildings and in personnel.

¹⁷⁰ José Ynéz Perea to J. M. Shields, 28 January 1880, p. 17, v. 10, MF 21, SJC-MHL.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

Perea's challenges were compounded by the poor health of his wife and new-born son, Mosheim. Perea declared to Jackson: "My wife and child are sick. She does more work than she can bear and I am afraid she will have to give up the school."¹⁷² When Perea wrote again later in the spring of 1880, the problems had not ameliorated. At the advice of the Board, he had looked at the possibility of moving to Albuquerque, but the cost of living was only higher in the railroad town. In the meantime, Susan carried on with the school, but Perea wrote: "Mrs. P. is unable to continue the school as the baby is sick, and she gets no sleep at night. She thinks she can not teach the school any more." Perea pleaded: "How can we do? \$750 is not sufficient for our support. We have been trying to do too much. I have neglected my own work to keep up the school which appeared to be a most important part of our work."¹⁷³ The Pereas badly needed direction and resources from the Board to carry on their labors for the Presbyterian Church.

Even in the face of these difficulties, José Ynéz still held out hope for his ministry in the Rio Abajo. After describing his financial straits, he reported to Jackson: "Everything else looks very promising, the people very friendly. We have a number of men reading the scriptures, they are Catholics but are not unwilling to talk about the bible. I have not been able to do much so far, as I am preparing the house we are going to live in; but I lose no time by talking with the people I meet." These small successes likely made his poverty bearable and the battle with Catholicism worthwhile. His optimism was not unbounded, however. He declared to Jackson: "The work is the hardest that can be

¹⁷² José Ynéz Perea to Sheldon Jackson, 27 January 1880, p. 16, v. 10, MF 21, SJC-MHL.

¹⁷³ José Ynéz Perea to Sheldon Jackson, 3 April 1880, v. 10, MF 21, SJC-MHL.

imagined, but the Lord is mightier than the mighty. . . . Pray for us, we need the prayers of good Christians above all things.”¹⁷⁴

Perea’s financial circumstances changed by the end of 1880. At the September meeting of the Presbytery of New Mexico, after he had been “laboring four years as an evangelist or licentiate,” Perea met with a committee to determine his fitness for “ordination to the full work of the gospel ministry.”¹⁷⁵ After having “ascertained the wishes of that brother [Perea]; and considered the propriety of his ordination,” the committee approved Perea, allowing him to proceed to an examination before the Presbytery. Perea faced examination in four key areas: church government, sacraments, theology, and church history. Perea successfully demonstrated his knowledge of and compliance with Presbyterian doctrine, and after a trial sermon the following day, the Presbytery “voted unanimously that he be ordained.” The Presbytery then affirmed Corrales as Perea’s field of endeavor, and recommended that he, as well as the other pastors, receive a salary of one thousand dollars.¹⁷⁶

On September 5, Perea “was called forward . . . and was solemnly ordained to the sacred ministry of the gospel by the laying on of hands of the Presbytery and by prayer.”¹⁷⁷ His ordination reflected a new, conscious emphasis on Hispano outreach on the part of the Presbytery. In addition to Perea’s ordination as pastor, the Presbytery appointed him official translator, instituting a standing order that “all motions made in the Presbytery be interpreted into Spanish for the benefit of the Spanish-speaking elders and

¹⁷⁴ José Ynéz Perea to Sheldon Jackson, 30 April 1879, p. 200–201, v. 9, MF 21, SJC-MHL.

¹⁷⁵ Minutes, 4 September 1880, pp. 60–61, r. 15, MF 15, SFPM.

¹⁷⁶ Minutes, 4 September 1880, pp. 65–66, r. 15, MF 15, SFPM.

¹⁷⁷ Minutes, 5 September 1880, p. 69, r. 15, MF 15, SFPM.

licentiates.”¹⁷⁸ Indeed, the Presbyterial meeting was a bilingual affair, with sermons delivered by Hispano evangelists and licentiates in Spanish.

In the wake of the Presbytery meeting, many of the Perea's early challenges ceased. Perea now had a salary that, although not luxurious, was enough for his family's needs. The Board sent another teacher to Corrales to take the brunt of the teaching burden off Susan. These changes corresponded with an uptick in Presbyterian commitment to and confidence in its missionary efforts in New Mexico. To the PCUSA, the arrival of the railroads in New Mexico seemed to make inevitable the incorporation of New Mexico into the mainstream of the United States, and therefore into Protestantism. The *Presbyterian Monthly Record* waxed eloquent in its optimism: “The railroads are pushing towards Old Mexico and the Pacific coast, letting the daylight of a Christian civilization into regions made dark and desolate by Papal superstition.”¹⁷⁹ To the Board of Home Missions, the railroads were like blood vessels carrying a transfusion of new life into New Mexico. With new settlers and new markets came a new “spirit of religious inquiry,” and the PCUSA believed that Presbyterian missionaries would play a vital role in transforming the Hispano population to accord with Anglo American conceptions of modernity.¹⁸⁰

In Corrales, the newly ordained Perea returned to his ministry with great hope for the future. At the moment, he was a pastor without a church, but he had plans and optimism. He wrote Jackson: “No church organized yet. . . . The number has increased of

¹⁷⁸ Minutes, 3 September 1880, p. 56, r. 15, MF 15, SFPM.

¹⁷⁹ “Open Doors,” *Presbyterian Monthly Record*, March 1880, p. 88.

¹⁸⁰ “Growth in the West,” *Presbyterian Monthly Record*, February 1880, p. 35.

those who would adhere to us. . . . The church organization must be delayed until we can discover the good material for a foundation.” As he waited, he observed: “No opposition is manifested. The bible is read and commented upon in almost every house. Those who can read accept reading matter except the rich and even some of them do.” Perea believed that the school had been and would continue to be the path to the hearts of the community. He declared “The school work will tell in its time. Twenty children are attending the Sunday-school. Their parents know that they are taught religion. Their prejudices are rapidly disappearing and they themselves are greatly influenced.”¹⁸¹ It seemed as though Perea’s dreams of an Hispano Presbyterian church were on the verge of fulfillment.

Perea’s hopes were soon to be dashed. When he was a licentiate, the chief difficulty he faced had been the apathy of his own sending board, but after he became a pastor the Catholic Church redoubled its opposition. His activities in Corrales prompted the Archdiocese of Santa Fe to dispatch Jesuit fathers to Corrales. During the Christmas season that spanned 1880 and 1881—from December 27 until January 5—the Jesuit fathers sponsored a Catholic mission, a revival series of sermons and religious activities over the course of nine days. Their mission scuppered Perea’s ministry in the community for the rest of the decade. The narrative of what occurred during the mission comes from newspaper exchanges two years later, in late 1883.

Perea’s side of the story was picked up by several papers, as widely flung as the *Rochester Democrat* in New York state and the *Arizona Weekly Citizen* in Tucson. The *Weekly Citizen* concluded that the incident illustrated the backwardness of New Mexico:

¹⁸¹ José Ynéz Perea to Sheldon Jackson, 29 February 1881, pp. 71–72, v. 11, MF 22, SJC-MHL.

“The history of the school which the contributions of several eastern ladies enabled the Rev. José Ynéz Perea to establish in Los Corrales, New Mexico, a year and a half ago, reveals one of the obstacles to civilization in that region.” According to the editor, “By hard work and honest persuasion Mr. Perea succeeded in enrolling forty-five native scholars, who, moreover became much interested in their studies. There was no attempt to inculcate any religious belief in the school, excepting that thirteen of the children were instructed in the Protestant faith at the request of their parents.” The Catholic Church did not see Perea’s instruction as so innocuous and benign, however, and Jesuit priests “interfered.” The *Weekly Citizen* described the fathers resorting to sensational fear tactics: “In order to shut up the school the children were led to believe that the school house was in the possession of the evil one, and that their teacher held nightly consultation with his satanic majesty, and that something horrible would happen to them if they went near the place.” The result was that Perea lost all his students, with little hope of getting them back in the future.¹⁸²

La Revista Catolica responded to the same article when it was reprinted by the *Rochester Democrat*. The Jesuit author lamented, “Only with lies and calumnies can Protestantism attack Catholicism, as in the present case.”¹⁸³ In *La Revista*’s telling, the Jesuits prevented heresy from taking root in Los Corrales, an innocent Hispano village. According to *La Revista*, “The Plaza of Los Corrales was, and continues to be by the grace of God, one of the best plazas of the county, of the parish, and even of the whole of New Mexico. It is completely composed of Catholics, most of whom are very good

¹⁸² “The History of the School,” *Tucson Arizona Weekly Citizen*, 24 November 1883.

¹⁸³ Solo con mentiras y calumnias puede el protestantismo atacar al catolicismo, como sucede en el caso presente. “Otro Vez lo Mismo,” *La Revista Catolica* (Las Vegas, N.Mex.), 20 January 1884, p. 31.

Catholics.”¹⁸⁴ This village of faithful Catholics, however, was under threat, for in 1880, “the demon of heresy went to nest there.”¹⁸⁵

La Revista made clear where the appeal of Perea’s school lay. Although Corrales had “a modest school for boys and another for girls,” the advent of the railroad made English skills necessary for economic prosperity and survival. *La Revista* moaned, “[English] is already so fashionable, that the *How do you do* is like a sign of civilization; and the enthusiasm has reached the point that four words of English eclipse all moral, scientific and religious merit.” The threat posed by Perea’s school was cultural as well as religious. The author highlighted the danger of cultural assimilation: “No few natives are ashamed to speak the beautiful Spanish language, and prefer to talk nonsense in a language that they barely know.” The demand for English instruction provided an inroad for Perea—in the words of *La Revista*, “A good occasion to catch the incautious.”¹⁸⁶

La Revista minced no words in its assessment of Perea, calling him “a renegade Mexican.”¹⁸⁷ It also protested the Protestant claim that his school had not been religious in character. The Jesuit author denounced the school as simply part of a larger campaign

¹⁸⁴ La plaza de Los Corrales era, y sigue siéndolo por la gracia de Dios, una de las mejores plazas del condado, de la parroquia y aun de todo el Nuevo Méjico. Está completamente compuesta de Católicos, que son e su gran mayoría muy buenos Católicos, que son en su gran mayoría muy buenos Católicos. “Otro Vez lo Mismo,” *La Revista Catolica* (Las Vegas, N.Mex.), 20 January 1884, p. 31.

¹⁸⁵ A la época, pues, á que nos referimos, año de 1880, se fue para anidarse allí el demonio de la herejía. *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁶ La gente de aquella plaza tenia una modesta escuela para niños, y otra para niñas. Pero con el ferrocarril ha entrado en el Territorio la necesidad de saber el inglés, y va ya tan de moda, que el *How do you do* es como la señal de la civilizacion; y ha llegado á tal punto el entusiasmo que cuatro palabras de inglés eclipsan todo mérito moral, científico y religioso: y no pocos naturales se avergüenzan de hablar el hermoso lenguaje español, y prefieren disparatar en un idioma que apenas que conocen. Pues buena ocasión para coger á los incautos. *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁷ Héte aquí pues á un renegado Mejicano, que con un poco de ingles y con dos ladies americanas planta una escuela en la plaza de Los Corrales. *Ibid.*

of Protestant missionary activity. The school did not come into Corrales alone, but “with the school a protestant chapel was opened, with protestant service and sermon.” Along with the school and chapel came “protestant propaganda in all possible forms, with zeal worthy of a better cause.” Perea was a busy missionary, and Corrales was the scene of “home visits, councils, worthless books, bibles and brochures.”¹⁸⁸

Catholic authorities looked gravely on the threat of the Protestant incursion. Some said that “Los Corrales was lost, that many had become Protestants.”¹⁸⁹ *La Revista* maintained that none had actually strayed from the one true faith but reiterated the reality of the danger. Had the Jesuits not arrived, “who knows what would have happened; because the propaganda of the renegade [Perea] was constant, and the attraction of the English school was powerful.”¹⁹⁰ *La Revista*, like Perea, saw the Protestant school as the key to Presbyterian ministry in the community. The school could soften parents’ hearts to Protestantism even as it educated their children in basic reading, writing, and arithmetic.

In their mission, the Jesuit fathers exhorted Corrales parishioners about the spiritual hazards that a Protestant school posed to parents and their children. They declared repeatedly: “It is not permitted to Catholics to go to Protestant or heretical churches, without exposing themselves to the danger of losing their faith. . . . It is not

¹⁸⁸ Dicen que no enseñaban religion en la escuela; pero con la escuela se abrió una capilla protestante, con servicio y sermon protestantes. Con la escuela y capilla se dió principio tambien á la propaganda protestante con todos los medios posibles, y con un celo digno de mejor causa. Visitas á domicilio, consejos, libracos, biblias y folletos, en fin se comenzó una propaganda infernal. “Otro Vez lo Mismo,” *La Revista Catolica* (Las Vegas, N.Mex.), 20 January 1884, p. 31.

¹⁸⁹ Ya se decia que Los Corrales estaba perdido, que muchos se habian hecho Protestantes, etcétera, etcétera. *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁰ Mas no habia tal cosa: ninguna de aquellos tan buenos Católicos habia tenido la desdicha de renegar de su santa religion. No obstante el peligro era cierto; y á no haber acudido pronto, quién sabe lo que hubiera pasado; porque la propaganda del renegado era constante, y el atractivo de la escuela inglesa de que se servia era poderoso. *Ibid.*

permitted to send their children to schools of Protestant propaganda, because the loss of their religion is real. . . . It is preferable a thousand times to have their children without instruction than to make them lose the true faith.” The Jeuits recognized that education was not a neutral value in the late-nineteenth-century United States; even public schools promoted the worldview of the Protestant Anglo American mainstream. Denominational schools such as Perea’s were direct threats to Catholic faith.¹⁹¹

The Jesuits’ message was emphatic: Salvation was at stake and the survival of Spanish culture was in jeopardy. The choice facing the residents of Corrales was clear and they apparently rejected Perea en masse. The *Revista* declared victory: “The wolf of heresy had to flee, and to abandon the field where he thought to make good prey.”¹⁹² As for the people of Corrales, “all those good Catholics . . . purified their consciences in the court of penance, even those who had given occasion to suspect the integrity of their faith. And all, all withdrew their children from that school, keeping them away from the danger of losing their faith.”¹⁹³

Whatever damage was done to Perea’s ministry by the Jesuit mission itself, his response only compounded the effect. He apparently wrote a letter to the Protestant newspaper, *El Anciano*, based in Trinidad, Colorado, and leveled several charges against the Jesuit father who led the mission. His original letter has not been preserved, but *La*

¹⁹¹ Les dijeron y les explicaron repetidas veces que no es permitido á los Católicos acudir á los templos protestantes ó heréticos, sin exponerse al peligro de perder su fe: que no les es permitido enviar á sus hijos á escuelas de propaganda protestante, porque es cierta la pérdida de su religion. Y que es preferible mil veces tener los hijos sin instrucción que hacerles perder la verdadera fe. “Otro Vez lo Mismo,” *La Revista Catolica* (Las Vegas, N.Mex.), 20 January 1884, p. 31.

¹⁹² El lobo de la herejía tuvo que huir, y abandonar el campo donde pensaba hacer buena presa. Ibid.

¹⁹³ Todos, todos aquellos buenos Católicos de Los Corrales purificaron sus consciencias en el tribunal de la penitencia, aun los que habian dado ocasión á que se sospechara de la integridad de su fe. Y todos, todos retiraron de aquella escuela á sus hijos, alejándolos del peligro de perder su fe. Ibid.

Revista triumphantly recorded the result. The Catholic Society of Corrales, a lay brotherhood associated with the Jesuit Order, published an open letter flatly contradicting Perea's account. In their letter, the authors declared that Perea had written to *El Anciano* that "Reverend Father Luis Gentile, S. J., during the Mission that took place here last January, spoke against the Government of the United States and its Laws, and sent the inhabitants of this town to stone the Protestant minister that lives here and the two women who accompany him."¹⁹⁴ The Catholic authors denied the charges: "We who attended the Mission, and heard the sermons that were preached in it, declare and testify, that these imputations of Mr. J. Inés Perea against Rev. Father L. Gentile, S. J., are pure falsehood and calumny. . . . Such assertions are nothing but a multitude of lies, published by one who outrages the feelings of his Catholic fellow citizens."¹⁹⁵

Whatever the truth of the conflicting claims, the open letter, signed by many prominent citizens in Corrales, suggests that Perea had become alienated from the community. Some of the names of the signatories even bespeak possible kinship and social ties with Perea, highlighting the depth of alienation. The first name on the letter, the president of the Catholic Society, was Francisco Armijo y Perea. Other signatories

¹⁹⁴ Nosotros los abajo firmados, residentes de Los Corrales, N. M., y miembros de la "Sociedad Católica" del mismo lugar, protestamos contra las falsedades de un artículo del Sr. J. Inés Perea, que apareció en el papel protestante de Trinidad, Colo., *El Anciano*, Num. 2. En ese artículo se afirma que el Rndo. Padr Luis Gentile, S. J., durante la Mision que tuvo aquí lugar en el último Enero, habló contra el Gobierno de los Estados Unidos y sus Leyes, y mandó á los habitantes de esta poblacion, que apedreasen al Ministro Protestante que aquí vive y á las dos Señoras que le acompañan. "Otro Piropo para el Sr. J. Inés Perea," *La Revista Catolica* (Las Vegas, N.Mex.), 29 July 1882, p. 358.

¹⁹⁵ Nosotros que asistimos á la Mision, y oimos los sermones que en ella se predicaron, declaramos y atestiguamos, que estas imputaciones del Sr. J. Inés Perea contra el R. P. L. Gentile, S. J., son una pura mentira y calumnia. Por tanto movidos solamente del amor á la verdad, y celosos del honor de Nuestra Religion, Católica, Apostólica y Romana, nos vemos obligados á protestar con toda la energía posible de nuestra alma, haciendo saber á todos que tales asertos no son sino una cáfila de embustes, publicados por uno que ultraja los sentimientos de sus conciudadanos católicos. *Ibid.*

were Fernando Armijo, Guadalupe Armijo, and Manuel Perea. The Jesuit mission may have severed Rev. José Ynéz Perea's few remaining ties to his family, near and extended.

Perea was eventually able to reestablish the school in Corrales, but he never could organize a church there. Stymied in Corrales, he looked farther south down the Rio Grande, planting a church at Pajarito, now the South Valley of Albuquerque, in 1884. This congregation would persist through the rest of his missionary career and would eventually become one of the primary focuses of his ministry, but it too had its difficulties. There were seventeen members after the first year, including seven adults who were baptized, presumably upon their conversion to Presbyterian Christianity. The following year, however, the number of church members had dropped by more than half, with only eight members on the rolls. It is possible that even more of the original seventeen had left the church—membership data for Perea's church plants comes primarily from the annual statistics tables compiled by the PCUSA in the *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America*. The data offer numbers, not explanations. In 1885 Perea reported eight members and eight adult baptisms. The most extreme reading could indicate that all seventeen of the original members had left the church and been replaced by eight new converts.¹⁹⁶

In addition to his ministerial difficulties, the decade of the 1880s was a period of family tragedy for Perea. Between 1879 and 1891, Susan Perea gave birth to eight children. In that same time, she and José Ynéz buried five. Only three of the Pereas' children—George, Wendell Somers, and Clifford—lived to adulthood. Mary Josefine,

¹⁹⁶ "Presb. of Santa Fe," *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America* 8 (1884): 269; and "Presb. of Santa Fe," *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America* 8 (1885): 862.

their first daughter, was born 18 November 1880 and died 27 February 1881. Upon her passing, José described his daughter's sickness and decline to Sheldon Jackson: "We are in great affliction caused by the death of our little girl, Mary. . . . Our baby died last Sunday morning 27^{inst}. The doctor says it was congestion of the lungs. We feel perfectly desolate and destitute with out that dear companion that the Lord had given us in great mercy. She was sick nine days and I had been sick ten days before her illness."¹⁹⁷

During the 1880s, there were only two years in which the Pereas did not have either a birth or death in the family, and several years saw both. Particularly devastating were the deaths of Laura Emily and Anna Ester, who died of scarlet fever within weeks of each other at the close of 1886 and beginning of 1887. The ordeal deeply traumatized the Perea family. Nearly two decades later, George Perea, born soon after the deaths of his sisters, committed a robbery in Albuquerque and was committed to an asylum after being judged insane. A newspaper at the time reported: "It was also proven that he had been borne [*sic*] with a weak mind, as about two weeks previous to his birth, two young daughters in the family had died of scarlet fever. Their death was a severe blow to the mother, who was almost driven to distraction at the time."¹⁹⁸

In the midst of tragedy, Perea soldiered on in his Presbyterian ministry. Without a church in Corrales, he traveled to fulfill his pastoral obligations, undoubtedly leaving Susan alone to keep the house and raise their children for some time each year. In 1897 he described his ministry during the 1880s: "My field was in both sides of the Rio Grande, on the west it reached to San Rafael around the San Mateo Mts., embracing 27

¹⁹⁷ José Ynéz Perea to Sheldon Jackson, 29 February 1881, p. 71, v. 11, MF 22, SJC-MHL.

¹⁹⁸ "George Perea Adjudged Insane," *Albuquerque (N.Mex.) Evening Citizen*, 22 July 1905.

villages.”¹⁹⁹ By the time he wrote this sketch, his responsibilities had changed, and the field had been divided in two. But through the early 1890s, Perea’s ministry consisted of long journeys through the various villages along the Rio Grande, and he preached wherever he had contacts or opportunity. In 1890, Perea reported on his work: “I have just arrived from a tour to the San Mateo Mountain, to Brother Adolfo Chaves’ field. I preached at the village of Juan Tafoya; had a good attendance, though it is a time when the men are absent working.”²⁰⁰

In 1890, Perea wrote a report to the Presbyterian serial, *The Church at Home and Abroad*. His report encapsulated both his hopes for his ministry and the difficulties he faced. In hope, Perea wrote: “There is a loud call there for gospel truth. The principal families are showing such a spirit of independence and are earnestly asking to be helped to become emancipated from the fetters that have bound them to the Roman Church for many generations.” To his Presbyterian audience he announced, “The chief women say to us at the opening of one of our meetings, ‘Speak! Do not keep back anything! The priests are branded with eternal infamy! They have robbed us a thousand times! They have driven us almost crazy!’”²⁰¹

At the same time, however, the day-to-day reality of his ministry was one of slow, if any, progress—tiny steps at best. Success was measured in individuals, not in masses of converts. Perea explained: “My work is going on slowly. Two are earnestly thinking of joining the Pajarito church on our next communion.” The constant travel also imposed

¹⁹⁹ José Ynéz Perea to Norman Skinner, 19 January 1897, JYP, MHL.

²⁰⁰ José Ynéz Perea, “New Mexico,” *The Church at Home and Abroad*, September 1890, p. 267. Perea referenced the seasonal migration of rural Hispano men to labor for wages in industrial, agricultural, and pastoral jobs throughout the West. See Deutsch, *No Separate Refuge*, 55.

²⁰¹ José Ynéz Perea, “New Mexico,” *The Church at Home and Abroad*, September 1890, p. 267.

significant limits on his outreach. Perea reported: “There are a number of other villages to which we give some attention, but it is beyond our ability to do justice to all their demands. It keeps us going in a constant, incessant round.” Success remained elusively in the future, a matter of hope and prayer, as he concluded, “I always have the feeling that if I am faithful the Lord will bless my humble efforts and in due season visit this people with the joy of salvation.”²⁰²

The year 1890 was one of transition for Perea. After over a decade of living in Corrales but being unable to found a church, he relocated to Pajarito. His move corresponded with a brief uptick in membership at the Pajarito church, although it would never rise above the seventeen members with which he first started. The data on Perea’s ministry through the 1890s is sparse. The *Minutes of the General Assembly* show only the numbers of church members, infant and adult baptisms. Perea’s defining ministry event of the 1890s, as shown in the *Minutes*, was his organization of another church at Los Lentos, just south of Isleta Pueblo, in 1896. Perea would serve the churches at Pajarito and Los Lentos until his retirement.

The slowness of Perea’s work was representative of many Presbyterian efforts in the region through the 1880s and 1890s. Despite the incremental progress of these ministries, however, the Presbyterian Church devoted increasing resources to the endeavor. Perea’s ordination in 1880 marked the start of a sustained campaign of church planting that lasted into the first decades of the twentieth century. In addition to pastors, tracts, and Bibles, the Presbyterian Church also ramped up its dispatch of teachers and doctors to the New Mexico Territory.

²⁰² José Ynéz Perea, “New Mexico,” *The Church at Home and Abroad*, September 1890, p. 267.

Increased missionary efforts in New Mexico heightened the territory's visibility in Presbyterian publications and discourse. Throughout the 1880s and 1890s, Presbyterian newsletters printed letters and reports from the New Mexico field, connecting donors in the East to ministry in the Southwest. The missionary commitment to New Mexico corresponded with a new communications mandate within the Presbyterian church. The PCUSA had at no point suffered a dearth of publications and print resources, but prior to the 1880s they tended to be professional or institutional literature, such as the *Minutes of the General Assembly*, oriented toward pastors and elders. The 1880s saw the beginning of an endeavor to make the activities of the Presbyterian Church more legible to the broad lay audience through a popular journal.

In 1886 the General Assembly of the PCUSA appointed a committee "to arrange and issue" a new, consolidated magazine, *The Church at Home and Abroad*. In their introduction to the first issue, the editors noted, "The magazine is to be devoted to the benevolent work of the Presbyterian Church, at home and abroad, not omitting, however, information upon the work of other branches of the Church of Christ." This serial was not a theological journal, but primarily a social magazine "intended to represent all the departments of the Church's work . . . and to be, in a special sense, the organ of the Boards." One goal of the publication was to be entertaining as well as informative: "If the magazine shall be only an inventory of facts, or an aggregate of statistics and correspondence, it will fail of its purpose. The ideal of the rank and file of the Church has been shaped by the current secular magazines, which are at once instructive and entertaining." Edited by Henry A. Nelson, *The Church at Home and Abroad* ran from

1887 to 1898 and is a vital resource for understanding Presbyterian missionary discourse at the close of the nineteenth century.²⁰³

As the institutions of the Presbyterian Church proliferated and matured, and as its congregants and pastors placed increasing emphasis on professionalism, *The Church at Home and Abroad* sought to portray Presbyterian missionary activity as part of a unified whole, rather than piecemeal applications to specific fields. In the first editorial of the new publication, Marvin Vincent described the church's professional ethos and rational organization, highlighting the linkages between each ministry: "The several departments of our church work together [and] make up one compact system for the proclamation and diffusion of the gospel. Home Missions, and the Freedmen's cause, for instance, are ministered to by each of the other Boards; Education and Aid for Colleges train their heralds; Church Election builds their temples; Publication arms their pastors and teachers with Christian literature; Ministerial Relief is their Hospital corps." The mission of the serial was closely tied to the quest for institutional funding and support. The goal was that an institutional magazine would lead to consolidated and consistent giving by Presbyterians around the United States.²⁰⁴

The issue of funding was a persistent question for Presbyterian home missions in New Mexico. As early as 1880, frequent pleas for donations accompanied optimistic reports from the field. At that time, the *Presbyterian Monthly Record* raised the alarm: "We have been able to send forward but a scant supply [of Spanish tracts]. Our funds will not permit us to meet all the wants of these faithful missionaries." The *Record*

²⁰³ "Introduction," *The Church at Home and Abroad*, January 1887, p. 1.

²⁰⁴ "The Church at Home and Abroad," *The Church at Home and Abroad*, January 1887, p. 3.

importuned Presbyterians to give: “Grand opportunities are opening for the Church. The railroads, that do not stop for mountains or rivers, must be followed. The tract and book missionary must scatter the seeds of gospel truth.” A decade later, the financial demands of the missionary effort had only grown.²⁰⁵

As the 1880s wore on, the Board of Home Missions cast its work in the terms of the U.S. national project of assimilation and incorporation. One such article linked missionary outreach among the Hispanos of New Mexico with that among Native Americans and African Americans, all in the interest of their assimilation into mainstream American society. The article held up missionary outreach up as the cure for Anglo American racial fear: “Save the poor Indian of Alaska and the half-breeds of New Mexico for their own sake. Their souls are precious. Save also these restless, aspiring, deeply-wronged Negroes. Save them for what they are; save them for the sake of the Dark Continent, and save them for your own protection. The very life of the nation is at stake.”²⁰⁶

Even as the PCUSA pushed to assimilate the Hispanos of New Mexico, many of the writers in *The Church at Home and Abroad* continued to see New Mexico as an alien internal colony. In their articles they exoticized the territory and its Hispanic and Native peoples. Writers and readers were both fascinated and repulsed by the foreign nature of its history, societies, and cultures. Some authors tried to construct a useable past from New Mexico history, explaining all the Territory’s problems, as perceived by Protestant Anglos, in terms of Catholicism and its clergy. In their accounts, the Black Legend of

²⁰⁵ “Open Doors,” *Presbyterian Monthly Record*, March 1880, p. 88.

²⁰⁶ D. J. Satterfield, “Higher Education for Colored People,” *The Church at Home and Abroad*, October 1889, p. 327.

Spanish colonialism played an important role. In one article, D. J. McMillan explained: “The Spanish explorers were all Romanists, but their settlements, like their religion, had no vitalizing power. Their purposes were adventure and conquest, their motives, acquisition and wealth.” In his view, New Mexico demonstrated that Catholicism “paralyzes whatever it touches.”²⁰⁷

In an earlier article John Menaul, who came alongside Perea in the late 1890s to share the burden of missionary travel along the Rio Grande, described Catholicism in New Mexico as he saw it. He broadcast to eastern supporters the necessity of Presbyterian missionary outreach: “The assumption that these Spanish-speaking people, being nominally Christians and members of the Roman Catholic Church, do not need missionary work is as erroneous as to suppose that Hindus or Mohammedans do not need missionary work because they hold a high rank in civilization, education, arts, and sciences.” In Menaul’s view, New Mexican Catholicism was “purely and simply Romanism.” He elaborated, “It is Mary, saint, image, picture, and cross-worship, with scarcely a trace of Christianity in it.” Invoking their institutional and religious authority, Catholic priests told their parishioners, “You cannot pray except I give you leave.” Menaul derided the folk-Catholic practices and their accompanying imagery that he observed in New Mexico: “If prayers to dead Mary, and daubs called pictures of saints, and crosses set up by the wayside, and beads, and scapulars, and charms, and

²⁰⁷ D. J. McMillan, “The Church and the Country,” *The Church at Home and Abroad*, September 1898, 234.

incantations, and self-torture, etc., can save men, then these people do not need the gospel of Christ.”²⁰⁸

Presbyterian publications, despite their engaging stories and passionate editorials, could not mask the fact that evangelism in New Mexico was a slow, frustrating process. In the absence of conversions, the Presbyterian Church invoked its schools as a metric of progress. In 1895, an article in *The Church at Home and Abroad* declared proudly: “The effects of mission work are perceptible [*sic*] in the moral fibre, and in the correct habits of the people, who come under its training. Even casual observers discern differences in small matters. A man of affairs said that going up and down through New Mexico, he ‘knew as soon as he went into a Mexican plaza, whether there was a Presbyterian school there or not by the appearance of the children.’”²⁰⁹

Even with the slow progress of missionary work in New Mexico, as the new century approached, the Presbyterian Church in 1895 could boast twenty-seven Hispano churches scattered throughout the territory, with a total Hispano membership of 842. Reverend Perea had played a significant role in five, nearly a quarter of the total.²¹⁰ For the Presbyterian Church, hope sprang eternal. The attitude of the PCUSA through the 1890s is best summed up in an article from *The Church at Home and Abroad* in 1895: “A greater harvest still seems to be in prospect.”²¹¹

²⁰⁸ John Menaul, “The Spanish Work,” *The Church at Home and Abroad*, September 1888, pp. 275–76.

²⁰⁹ “The Effects of Mission Work,” *The Church at Home and Abroad*, October 1895, p. 286.

²¹⁰ “The Mexicans,” *The Church at Home and Abroad*, November 1895, p. 374.

²¹¹ “Notes,” *The Church at Home and Abroad*, April 1895, p. 286.

For his part, Perea began to slow down in his active ministry in 1897. John Menaul took on half of Perea's previous circuit, preaching to villages west of the Rio Grande. Perea went on preaching east of the river. As his ministry slowed, Perea viewed his pastorate as comparable to a farmer plowing and seeding the ground from which, he hoped, would spring a bountiful harvest for the Presbyterian message. As he wrote in a retrospective letter in 1897, "There are six organized churches now in my original field: two congregational, one Methodist and three Presbyterian, but I was the 'John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness,' preparing the way of the Lord for all of them."²¹² The preparatory theme had been developing in his mind for much of his career. As early as 1881 he described his hope for the success of a future generation of pastors: "We must not forget that we are only their forerunners and are only preparing the way for them. We are plowing in the asses and that is why the work is slow. They in their time will gather in the seed sown and the Holy Spirit will give the most abundant increase."²¹³

Although Perea's ministry struggled, and although Presbyterian missionary outreach would achieve only limited numerical success relative to the total Hispano population of New Mexico, Perea's hopes were in part fulfilled. His ordination set the precedent for a generation of Hispano pastors who would follow in his footsteps. Some of them, working in the Rio Arriba region of the state, would plant churches that endured through the twentieth century. As the new century dawned, Perea increasingly took on the role of mentor and adviser to the next generation of Hispano Presbyterian leadership.

²¹² José Ynéz Perea to Norman Skinner, 19 January 1897, JYP, MHL.

²¹³ José Ynéz Perea to Sheldon Jackson, 29 February 1881, p. 74, v. 11, MF 22, SJC-MHL. "Plowing in the asses" refers to breaking in a new team.

Chapter 4

El Cansado Peregrino

In 1897, Reverend Perea slowed down in his missionary endeavors. Now sixty years old, he focused his attentions on the east side of the Rio Grande and on his congregations at Los Lentos and Pajarito. After nearly three decades of evangelistic labor, two decades of which he served as an ordained pastor, Perea increasingly assumed the role of elder statesman within the Presbyterian community in New Mexico. Although his own congregations in the Rio Abajo still struggled to survive and prosper, he worked to support other Hispano Presbyterian pastors and laity through his writings and mentorship. Perea retired in 1905 but continued to write on Presbyterian issues and work within his congregation at Pajarito. His death in 1910 occasioned an outpouring of public admiration, especially within the Presbyterian community of New Mexico. The paths of his family after his death, however, indicate the extent to which Perea's Presbyterianism, the spiritual passion of his life, had isolated him from the mainstream of New Mexico society.

For the larger Presbyterian missionary effort in New Mexico, the dawn of the twentieth century marked the height of evangelistic outreach. In 1900 the PCUSA could look back on thirty years of missionary work among the Hispanos of New Mexico. The Presbyterian missionary cadre consisted of ten pastors ministering to twenty-eight Hispano churches throughout the territory. Of those pastors, three were Hispanos, including José Ynéz Perea. Alongside the pastors, sixteen Hispano licentiates and evangelists carried the Presbyterian understanding of Christianity to remote rural villages. Forty-eight teachers at twenty-five Presbyterian schools taught about 1,446 Hispano

students. The evangelistic result of these efforts were 909 Hispanos who had become members of the Presbyterian Church.²¹⁴

As a new century dawned, there was reason for anxiety and uncertainty on the part of the Presbyterian Board of Home Missions. Despite decades of labor and intensive missionary activity, conversions in the Hispano community at large remained meager. At the same time, several writers also saw reason for hope. Hispano converts, although relatively few, demonstrated a zeal that seemed to promise a great revival waiting just around the corner. In the first decade of the century, the Presbyterians planted up to seven new churches throughout the Rio Arriba region of the state and added many new members.²¹⁵ This spurt of evangelistic outreach, however, did not lead to the revival for which many pastors prayed. In hindsight, the final flurry of activity during the first decade of the twentieth century appears as a last attempt before the Home Mission Board admitted defeat and ceased active church planting. Some of the churches established by missionary pastors in the early twentieth century, however, would endure throughout the rest of the century and into the twenty-first.²¹⁶

²¹⁴ “Synod of New Mexico,” *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America* 23 (1900): 538–39; and “Statistical Report of the School Department,” *Ninety-Eighth Annual Report of the Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America* (New York: Presbyterian Building, 1900), 46.

²¹⁵ The exact number of new Hispano churches is difficult to determine from the available record, the *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States*. Usually the *Minutes* indicate Hispano congregations with an “Sp.” for Spanish. The *Minutes* from 1910 include the “Sp.” note for four new churches in the Rio Arriba: Tierra Amarilla, Las Truchas, Chimayó, and Petaca. Up to three other new churches, however, show indications of at least having a significant Hispano membership, although they are not marked as Spanish. The pastor of the new church at Hachita, Samuel Van Wagner, tended three other congregations, all of which were Spanish speaking. The pastor of the new churches at Trementina and at Stanley was a Hispano home missionary, Eliseo Cordova. The PCUSA tended to utilize its Hispano evangelists to work primarily with the Spanish-speaking population of New Mexico, making it likely that Cordova’s congregations were partially Hispano. “Synod of New Mexico,” *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America* 10, no. 2 (1910): 677–78.

²¹⁶ “Statistical Report of the Mission School Department,” *One Hundred and Eighth Annual Report of the Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America* (New

In 1900, however, the decline of active outreach was still in the future. Perea was a Presbyterian pastor and evangelism was still the order of the day. He and his fellow missionaries earnestly worked and prayed for a religious sea-change in New Mexican society. In Pajarito and the surrounding communities, Perea's ministry remained focused on individual families and households. He reported on one of his visitations: "When evening came Mr. L. took out his Bible and hymn books and his whole family joined in our worship. Afterward I'd drew him into conversation and it really surprised me to find how his mind sparkled with the thoughts of the living God." Perea wrote that Mr. L "helped me to secure a hall for meetings." The two of them then "visited every house in the village." Perea's report clearly shows that although age had shrunk the area in which he ministered, within that area his work continued unabated. He still believed his fellow Hispanos desperately needed the alternative truths about Christianity he had come to embrace. He asked readers in the *Assembly Herald* for their prayers "that a wide door may be open to this poor, superstitious and needy people and that they may be led securely to their patiently waiting Saviour."²¹⁷

Despite years of difficult ministry, Perea highlighted points for hope, at least in his reports to the Board. He wrote: "When at market in Albuquerque the other day one of my old acquaintances met me and to my surprise embraced and kissed me before I was aware of it. With a great effort I tried to extricate myself; but as he is a strong man he held me fast." Such a demonstrative physical greeting went against Perea's sense of

York: Presbyterian Building, 1910), 86; and "Synod of New Mexico," *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America* 10, no. 2 (1910): 677-78.

²¹⁷ "Young People's Department," *The Assembly Herald*, November 1900, 862.

decorum: “I told him I was no Catholic priest and that such usages, born of superstition, were rapidly dying out in the light of our Christian civilization.”²¹⁸

Even faced with this less-than-friendly response to his overtures, the acquaintance hastened to declare that he “had found no other way of expressing the great love he bore for me [Perea], nor could he forget my oft-repeated exhortation and good advice.” As far as the records show, such a positive attitude had not characterized Perea’s interactions with his friends and family since he began his public ministry as a Presbyterian pastor. In the 1880s, he lamented that everyone he knew had abandoned him on account of his decision to preach a different understanding of faith. The passage of twenty years may have softened some of his acquaintances’ perspectives toward him and even toward the doctrines he taught. Perea recounted that his friend “urged me to go to Juan Tafoya, where he was sure a good number wished to be Presbyterians, and he told me how the priest had refused confirmation to Mr. A’s children because the father would not give up the reading of the Bible in his family.”²¹⁹ Perhaps Perea saw in this conversation with an old acquaintance the possibility that the walls of alienation that separated him from his peers were weakening.

His mode of preaching, however, was unlikely to conciliate any of his former friends who were not already inclined to agree with him. Perea sought to prompt conversions like his own, decades earlier, by highlighting what he perceived as the errors of Roman Catholicism. His was apparently a polemical evangelistic style, albeit one that dialogued with the discursive environment of his day. Perea’s account of his preaching in

²¹⁸ “Young People’s Department,” *The Assembly Herald*, November 1900, 862.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*

1901 serves as an example. That year, Perea leveraged Spain, which had recently been defeated by the United States, as an example of the stultifying impact of Catholicism. In so doing, he drew on the wider discourse surrounding Hispano identity in the wake of the Spanish-American War.

In the last years of the nineteenth century, advocates for New Mexico statehood had begun to emphasize Nuevomexicanos' Spanish heritage to "whiten" the population and thereby make New Mexico's admission as a state more palatable to the racist mainstream of U.S. society. The Spanish-American war had complicated the narrative and invited Anglo American newspapers and politicians to question Hispanos' loyalty and patriotism. The high-profile military service of Maximiliano Luna, the son of a distinguished Rio Abajo family, and his death during the occupation of the Philippines, however, served as vindication for Nuevomexicanos. Anglo American newspapers changed their tune and sang the praises of the "Spanish-Americans" of New Mexico. Hispano and Anglo publications alike began to identify Hispanos with a legendary heroic past, one that merited their inclusion as fellow whites by Anglo American society. As Charles Montgomery writes in *The Spanish Redemption*, the discourse of the day held that "all Hispanos carried within them the spirit of the first Spanish soldiers, and with it the qualities necessary to join the American nation."²²⁰

On his preaching tours in 1901, Perea took with him his translation of the "Anti-Clerical Movement in Spain." He told his audiences that he "would read to them interesting news from old Spain, the greatest world power during the discovery of

²²⁰ Montgomery, 77–78. The most-recent biography of Luna is Richard Melzer, *Captain Maximiliano Luna: A New Mexico Rough Rider*, intro. Paul Andrew Hutton (Rio Rancho, N.Mex.: Rio Grande Books), 2017.

America—a second-rate power now, and why?” The answer, of course, was “the tyrannical spiritual power wielded by the priest for ages.” His evangelistic approach acknowledged the dignity of Spanish heritage. Spain had been after all, “the greatest world power during the discovery of America.” But now, because of Catholicism, Spain had fallen from its glory. Hispanos of New Mexico had the opportunity to recover the dignity of their forebears by embracing the Protestantism, the doctrines that defined the new, Anglo American world order. According to Perea, his utilization of the Spanish example found interested ears: “They were very attentive and expressed wonder and indignation.”²²¹

When he turned from Spain to New Mexico, however, the strength of Perea’s denunciations of Catholicism probably alienated many who heard him. He would declare to his listeners “how ingeniously they have been kept from knowing the truth.” New Mexico was no better than Spain—benighted, if not decadent. Perea proclaimed: “Here in New Mexico priests are called, even by intelligent Roma[n] Catholics, Christs of the earth! The Virgin Mary represents the church, and the church is the priest. The lighted candles are symbols of the suppression of the gospel light and the substitution of priestly teaching. Images, medals, bones of dead saints and relics sprinkled with holy water are symbols of your slavery. The holy water is perverted truth which turns pure worship into idolatry.”²²² Such attacks on treasured Catholic practices could not have sat well with most who listened.

²²¹ “Young People’s Department,” *The Assembly Herald*, November 1901, p. 419.

²²² *Ibid.*

According to Perea, however, his polemics occasionally struck a resonant chord with his audience. Perea described one family that heard his condemnations of Catholicism, writing that they listened to him “patiently, and often assented especially when I mentioned the untold revenues of the church, the church lotteries, Sunday bull fights, etc.” Even among Catholic Nuevomexicanos there could be dissatisfaction with the Catholic Church, but its spiritual and cultural grip on parishioners was strong and difficult to break. In general the prospect of even small numbers of converts remained distant, with Perea admitting, “Powerful adversaries are alert and watching every attendant at our services, placing every obstacle in the way.” Even so, Perea retained a hope undimmed by decades of setbacks: “We need not despair, for in due time we shall ‘reap in joy.’ Do not forget us in your prayers, for the best of workers cannot move the soul without much prayer.”²²³

In addition to his preaching and evangelistic visits, which had always been a part of his ministry, in the 1900s Perea began working with the Menaul School to help train the next generation of Hispano evangelists. The Menaul School was a Presbyterian boarding school in Albuquerque that missionary James Menaul started in 1896 to serve Spanish-speaking students. A previous Presbyterian boarding school had taken in students from the Pueblos until the commissioner of Indian Affairs placed Pueblo education in the hands of the federal government in the late 1880s. Perea had suggested the need for a boarding school for Hispano youth as early as 1881: “A boarding school for the Mexicans is a great want. It should be provided by our church at the earliest possibility.” At that time, he was optimistic that such a school would be a powerful

²²³ “Young People’s Department,” *The Assembly Herald*, November 1901, p. 419.

attraction among Hispanos to the Presbyterian Church: “I have not the least hesitation to say that the great masses of the native populations would be soon evangelized and redeemed. I have been frequently asked by the Mexicans whether the Indian boarding school would be willing to take in their children. I told them that it is a protestant school and they say well let them learn and when they are of age let them choose their own religion.”²²⁴

In association with the Menaul School, Perea hosted and oversaw students as part of a ministerial training program. He reported to the General Assembly that “during vacation time these young men have demonstrated the value of their training.” He wrote particularly of the “patient, consecrated services of one member of the class who has visited every home in seven villages.” The following year, Perea reported in greater depth on the activities of a student he supervised. He wrote, “One of Dr. Henry Thomson’s theological students has been doing good work here this summer. He carries with him Testaments, Gospels and tracts, and a panorama of Bible scenes, and has even sold the Shorter Catechism for ten cents.” A student selling tracts was able to make inroads in places where the door was closed to Perea. He wrote, “Some of the most bigoted Roman Catholics let him come in their homes, because he is selling something. At one home they told him to leave when he had shown the Bibles, but he told of his panorama and they allowed him to show it and were deeply interested in the pictures – and the sermon preached as he showed them. In this way he gets admission to many a home where

²²⁴ Jose Ynes Perea to Sheldon Jackson, 29 February 1881, p. 74, v. 11, MF 22, SJC-MHL; and “History,” Menaul School website, accessed 3 April 2020, <https://www.menaulschool.org/about/history/>.

preachers, evangelists and teachers are shut out.”²²⁵ The promise of free entertainment could at least secure an audience, even if it was unlikely to lead to conversion.

As the longest-serving Hispano pastor in New Mexico, Perea was an important voice at two pastors’ conferences held in Albuquerque in 1903 and 1905. At the meetings, revival was the topic on everyone’s mind. The *Assembly Herald* reported, “The theme discussed at the conference included ‘The Need of an Awakening,’ ‘The Hindrances,’ ‘Obstacles Met With,’ ‘The Signs of Revivals,’ and ‘The Means to be Employed to Promote the Religious Life and Quickening in Our Churches.’” At the conferences, Perea crossed paths with Gabino Rendón, who as a child and young man in Las Vegas saw Perea as one of the only living examples of Protestantism in the region. The opportunity to meet with fellow pastors who shared their struggles appears as a bright spot in both Rendón’s and Perea’s remembrances. At the conference, “the Rev. Gabino Rendon represented his fellow countrymen in a brief but forceful address. Spanish hymns were sung by the Mexicans and enthusiasm rose with every minute.” Anglo observers concluded, “The gratitude, affection and consecration of our Mexican workers among their own people can be but feebly expressed in words compared with its eloquent expression in the faces and manner at the Menaul School on that Sabbath afternoon.”²²⁶

Rendón later wrote warmly of encountering Perea at the conference. He recalled: “I was happy to see again Don Ynez Perea and Mr. Whitlock, my old friends of John Annin’s time. At that meeting, for some reason, we were short of hot water. Someone had

²²⁵ “Young People’s Department,” *The Assembly Herald*, October 1902, 408; and “Young People’s Department,” in *The Assembly Herald*, October 1903, 469.

²²⁶ “Mexican Conference,” *The Assembly Herald*, November 1903, p. 529.

to rise early, heat it, and bring it to the others for washing and shaving. We young ministers were not the ones who thought of it. . . . It was Don Ynez and Mr. Whitlock! They got up early and brought it to the rest of us.” The incident made an impression on Rendón, who later wrote: “Now who was I that men like these should bring warm water to me? Somehow I was reminded of One who washed his disciples’ feet. I was ashamed. I remembered my father’s telling me that Don Ynez and Rafael Gallegos used to haul water for Mr. Anning. He thought it degraded them. But my father had never read nor heard, ‘He that is greatest among you shall be your servant.’”²²⁷

Despite the hardships of Protestant evangelism in New Mexico, Perea seemed to carry a great deal of optimism and foresee a bright future for the Presbyterian Church. He reported on the 1905 conference, “It would have done you good to hear the conference of our Mexican evangelists, to hear their prayers and testimonies, reports, and hopes for a coming revival; their joy and promptness in taking part on every subject before us.” For Perea, the ministers at the conference represented tangible hope after his years of ministry among Nuevomexicanos. He wrote, “Just think of nineteen Mexican young men who but a few years ago were under the deadening spell of the priest, with their relations, friends and neighbors against their regeneration. These have come out bravely for Christ and for the freedom of the sons of God.”²²⁸

Family difficulties, however, plagued Perea’s personal life. In the 1880s, he had buried five children. In the first decade of the 1900s, insanity claimed one of the three who remained. On 18 July 1905, the *Albuquerque Evening Citizen* reported, “This

²²⁷ Rendón, *Hand on My Shoulder*, 98.

²²⁸ “Young People’s Department,” *The Assembly Herald*, November 1905, 592.

morning at 8 o'clock Chief of Police Thomas McMillin and Policeman A. Knapp arrested George Perea, formerly a stenographer in the office of the probate clerk, charging him with having burglarized the dry goods store of L. Kempenich last Sunday night." When the police searched George's lodgings, they found the articles stolen from the store, including "two 38-caliber Forehand revolvers, one 38-caliber bulldog revolver, [and] one 44 caliber bulldog revolver." After being taken into custody and as the police transported him to city hall, "Perea confessed that he committed the burglary." When asked why, "he stated that it was due to his being drunk at the time."²²⁹ To the Reverend Perea, his son's dissolution was undoubtedly deeply painful, disappointing, and disturbing.

The *Evening Citizen* went on to report: "George Perea is the son of Rev. Jose Perea, residing at Pajarito. He formerly bore a good reputation and this is the first serious trouble he has gotten into. The young man is only about 18 or 19 years of age. He was formerly a student at the university and also has attended the New Mexico Military Institute at Roswell." It then noted, "People who know the young man say that of late he has acted in a strange manner and it is believed that his mind is unbalanced."²³⁰ Later articles would emphasize George's instability.

Perea employed Albuquerque attorney R. W. D. Bryan, who would later serve as president of the Board of Regents for the University of New Mexico. Bryan called for an examination of George's sanity, which took place before Judge John McFie. At the hearing, "a number of witnesses including the boy's parents, Jesus y Perea [*sic*] and wife,

²²⁹ "Officers Capture Kempenich Burglar," *Albuquerque (N.Mex.) Evening Citizen*, 18 July 1905.

²³⁰ "His Father a Preacher," *Albuquerque (N.Mex.) Evening Citizen*, 18 July 1905.

of Pajarito, were examined and it was proven beyond a doubt that the boy is of unsound mind, and has been more or less so ever since his birth.”²³¹

George’s parents testified that “insanity in his case was hereditary, he having a number of very near relatives confined in asylums.” The authorities and reporters unfairly laid the cause of George’s mental incapacity at Susan Perea’s feet. The *Evening Citizen* reported: “it was also proven that he had probably been borne [*sic*] with a weak mind as about two weeks previous to his birth, two young daughters in the family had died of scarlet fever. Their death was a severe blow to the mother, who was almost driven to distraction at the time.” A later article in the *Las Vegas Daily Optic* perpetuated the theme of placing responsibility for George’s mental state on the emotional distress of his mother prior to his birth. The *Optic* recounted: “Two weeks before the boy was born, the mother received a terrible fright by seeing her two little girls in a run-away accident. It is believed that this had its effect on the boy.”²³² Susan probably anguished over the causes of her son’s turbulent behavior; the blame leveled at her likely deepened her emotional pain.

According to newspaper accounts of the testimony at George’s hearing, he displayed alarming antisocial behavior. The *Albuquerque Evening Citizen* stated: “Perea had a mania for scaring other people with revolvers and other dangerous weapons. This testimony was borne out by the fact that when arrested he was in possession of no less than half a dozen revolvers of various sizes.” Further embellishing the report, the *Optic*

²³¹ *The Alumni Directory of the University of New Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 1918), 25; and “Perea Will Probably Be Committed to Asylum,” *Albuquerque (N.Mex.) Evening Citizen*, 19 July 1905.

²³² “George Perea Adjudged Insane,” *Albuquerque (N.Mex.) Evening Citizen*, 22 July 1905; and “Brought to Asylum,” *Las Vegas (N.Mex.) Daily Optic*, 24 July 1905.

declared, “Evidence showed that Perea had always had an inclination to scare children with firearms.” The *Optic* emphasized that Perea had stolen “a small arsenal” from Kempernich’s store in Albuquerque, but questioned whether “the boy is more vicious than crazy.”²³³

Whatever the Las Vegas paper’s insinuations, Judge McFie ruled that “Perea was not a safe person to be allowed to roam at large and he was ordered to be committed to the asylum at Las Vegas.” George’s institutionalization apparently did not shock his parents. His mental deterioration had been a familial strain for some time. The *Evening Citizen* reported: “The verdict of the court was satisfactory to his parents, as for some time they have known that he would eventually have to be committed to an asylum of some sort for treatment.”²³⁴ George’s legal commitment came as a relief to José Ynez and Susan, who had feared for his life and the safety of the community.

The same year Judge McFie committed George to the asylum, José Ynez retired. He had started the church in Pajarito in 1884 with seventeen members. He took on the church at Los Lentos twelve years later, at which time that church also had seventeen members. When Perea retired, the church at Pajarito stood again at seventeen and the church at Los Lentos had slipped to fifteen members. In both congregations, the intervening years had seen annual flux in membership numbers, but always within tight boundaries. Pajarito never exceeded seventeen members and dropped to a mere eight in 1895. Even at its height in 1901, Los Lentos boasted only twenty-three members.²³⁵

²³³ “George Perea Adjudged Insane,” *Albuquerque (N.Mex.) Evening Citizen*, 22 July 1905; and “Brought to Asylum,” *Las Vegas (N.Mex.) Daily Optic*, 24 July 1905.

²³⁴ “George Perea Adjudged Insane,” *Albuquerque (N.Mex.) Evening Citizen*, 22 July 1905.

²³⁵ “Presb. of Santa Fe,” *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America* 8 (1884): 269; “Presb. of Santa Fe,” *Minutes of the General Assembly of the*

After Perea's retirement, both churches fell under the purview of a series of home missionaries and short-term pastors. In 1909, the two churches were consolidated at Pajarito. Pajarito enjoyed a brief jump in membership and Los Lentos disappeared from the records of the General Assembly. The Pajarito church persisted for another decade, slowly declining in membership as time passed. In 1920 its membership stood at six, and by 1924 the church no longer appeared in PCUSA records.²³⁶

In his retirement, Perea devoted himself to writing for the Presbyterian newspaper *La Aurora*, edited by Gabino Rendón. Perea wrote semi-regular columns on church history, particularly focusing on the Protestant Reformation and Catholic persecution of Protestants. His last article, published posthumously in a tribute edition of *La Aurora*, dealt with the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre of 1572. The theme of Catholic persecution of the early Protestant reformers deeply resonated with Perea, himself among the earliest Presbyterian missionaries in Catholic New Mexico. Over the decades, his letters and writings often alluded to the motif of the Reformation.²³⁷

On 16 July 1910, the *Albuquerque Journal* reported, "Rev. Inez Perea, a Presbyterian missionary, a brother of Colonel Francisco Perea, is reported to be critically

Presbyterian Church in the United States of America 9 (1886): 283; "Presb. of the Rio Grande," *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America* 18 (1895): 530; "Presb. of the Rio Grande," *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America* 10, no. 2 (1910): 677; and "Presb. of the Rio Grande," *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America* 1, no. 1 (1901): 538.

²³⁶ "Presb. of the Rio Grande," *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America* 8, no. 2 (1908): 672; "Presb. of the Rio Grande," *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America* 9, no. 2 (1909): 673; "Presb. of the Rio Grande," *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America* 20 (1920): 687; and "Presb. of the Rio Grande," *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America* 3 (1924): 739.

²³⁷ José Ynéz Perea, "La Matanza de San Bartolome," *La Aurora* (Las Vegas, N.Mex.), 15 November 1910.

ill at his home in Pajarito. Rev. Mr. Perea recently suffered a paralytic stroke and grave fears are entertained for his recovery.”²³⁸ Perea died the following day. He had been in poor health for several years. The *Journal* confirmed, “For the past three years Rev. Mr. Perea was practically unable to perform his missionary work, but until the last month was strong enough to walk about the grounds of his home. On June 8 a decline set in.”²³⁹

On Perea’s death, the eulogies began. The *Journal* cited Perea’s significance to the New Mexico Territory, describing him as “the first ordained minister of the Presbyterian church among the native people of New Mexico.” The territory’s main Presbyterian newspaper, *La Aurora*, devoted a whole issue to Perea’s life. *La Aurora* proclaimed, “His quiet simplicity of nature and his spiritual beauty of character greatly endeared him to his fellow workers and to those for whom he labored.” It continued: “His purity of life won him the respect even of those inclined to be his enemies. Wholly unassuming in his bearing and retiring by natural temperament, yet he had lion-hearted courage in maintaining his religious convictions and a gentle persistency which no opposition could discourage or overcome.” Perea stood as an ideal missionary, with *La Aurora* recounting, “His whole nature was pervaded with the richness of the transforming truths of the Bible, and his faith and love shone in his face and trembled in his voice when he spoke the word of life.”²⁴⁰

²³⁸ “Rev. Inez Perea,” *Albuquerque (N.Mex.) Journal*, 16 July 1910.

²³⁹ “Well Known Minister Passes to Reward,” *Albuquerque (N.Mex.) Morning Journal*, 18 July 1910.

²⁴⁰ “Well Known Minister Passes to Reward,” *Albuquerque (N.Mex.) Morning Journal*, 18 July 1910; and “Memorial Sketch of the Reverend Jose Ynez Perea,” *La Aurora* (Las Vegas, N.Mex.), 15 November 1910.

The tribute issue held up Perea as an example for other missionaries and wrote of the hope that Perea's model would inspire Hispano youth to follow his footsteps. *La Aurora* declared, "[The Presbyterian Church] accords him signal honor and remembrance as the first of the Mexican race to be ordained to its ministry in the United States, and cherishes his life and work as a prophecy of the raising up of many others of that race who shall follow his pure life, splendid courage, scriptural faith, and prayerful consecration in the Christian ministry."²⁴¹ Several authors, including Gabino Rendón and Hispano Methodist minister Santiago Chavez, remembered the humility and piety of Perea, both as a minister and a layman.

The issue closed by reprinting Perea's favorite hymn, "Al Cansado Peregrino" (To the Tired Pilgrim), a hymn of encouragement in trial well-suited to Perea's experience:

To the tired pilgrim
 That in his breast feels faith
 The Lord has promised
 "With my arm I will guide you
 With my arm, with my arm, with my arm I will guide you."

When the world its snare
 Throws before your foot
 God your refuge will tell you
 "With my arm I will guide you
 With my arm, with my arm, with my arm I will guide you."

If your hope leaves you
 With a shadow of what was
 Listen carefully to the promise
 "With my arm I will guide you
 With my arm, with my arm, with my arm I will guide you."

When death to your home
 With eager striking comes

²⁴¹ "Memorial Sketch of the Reverend Jose Ynez Perea," *La Aurora* (Las Vegas, N.Mex.), 15 November 1910.

Take comfort in the words
 “With my arm I will guide you
 With my arm, with my arm, with my arm I will guide you.”²⁴²

Despite the outpouring of support from Presbyterian publications, Perea’s family apparently found little reason to stay in New Mexico after José Ynez’s death. The family stayed through 1911, allowing Wendell Somers to complete his high school education at the Menaul School, where he graduated on 10 May 1911. In that time, Susan Perea administered Jose’s estate, which was large enough to merit a \$7,000 bond in probate court.²⁴³ After Wendell’s graduation and the settling of the estate, however, few ties bound the family to New Mexico. Clifford had already graduated from the Menaul School in 1906 and left the territory to pursue his higher education. He completed his studies at Tusculum College, a Presbyterian college in Tennessee, prior to his father’s death, and enrolled at McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago.²⁴⁴ By 1913, the whole family had left New Mexico. George Perea had been released from the asylum by this time and moved to Berlin, Pennsylvania, near his mother’s original hometown of Schellsburg. It is likely that Susan also moved to Berlin, possibly to provide care and support for George. Wendell attended school in Emporia, Kansas, and Clifford remained in Chicago.

²⁴² Al cansado peregrino/Que en el pecho siente fe/El Señor ha prometido:”Con mi brazo te guiaré,/Con mi brazo, con mi brazo,/Con mi brazo te guiaré;/. . .Cuando sus lazos el mundo/Arrojare ante tu pié,/Te dirá Dios tu refugio,/”Con mi brazo te guiaré,/Con mi brazo, con mi brazo,/Con mi brazo te guiaré;/. . . Si tu esperanza se aleja/Cual sombra de lo que fue,/Oye atento la promesa/”Con mi brazo te guiaré,/Con mi brazo, con mi brazo,/Con mi brazo te guiaré;/. . . Cuando la muerte á tu estancia/Con afán golpeando esté./Tén consuelo en las palabras,/”Con mi brazo te guiaré,/Con mi brazo, con mi brazo,/Con mi brazo te guiaré. “Al Cansado Peregrino,” *La Aurora* (Las Vegas, N.Mex.), 15 November 1910.

²⁴³ “Lengthy Session of the Probate Court,” *Albuquerque (N.Mex.) Journal*, 8 September 1910.

²⁴⁴ “The New Mexican Says,” *Albuquerque (N.Mex.) Citizen*, 27 August 1906; “Chas. Cordova,” *Albuquerque (N.Mex.) Citizen*, 28 August 1906; and “Memorial Sketch of the Reverend Jose Ynez Perea,” *La Aurora* (Las Vegas, N.Mex.), 15 November 1910.

At school in Kansas, Wendell followed in his father's ministerial footsteps, performing evangelistic outreach among the local Spanish-speaking population brought to Emporia by the railroad. The *Emporia Gazette* reported, "Some Emporia people have been interesting themselves in the Mexicans who live in the neighborhood of the roundhouse." Conditions were difficult for Spanish-speakers in Emporia. The newspaper continued, "In one settlement probably twenty-five families are huddled together in a few poor little houses." Although the newspaper believed that "Mexicans are frugal and can live on much less than white people," it acknowledged that "some of them do not seem to manage well, and in some cases, it is said, they suffer." In New Mexico, all laws passed by the Territorial Legislature had to be printed in both English and Spanish; that guideline was absent in Kansas. As a result, Spanish-speaking residents in Emporia risked running afoul of laws of which they were unaware. The *Emporia Gazette* unsympathetically remarked: "As a class the Mexicans are hard to deal with because of their ignorance, as in most cases they do not understand the laws of this country. Last year several Mexican men were fined for having failed to pay their poll-tax, when they were ignorant of the fact that they should have done so."²⁴⁵ To these isolated residents of Mexican-descent, Wendell hoped to bring religious comfort, even if he could afford little protection from the callousness of the wider community.

The *Gazette* noted that in other places with Spanish-speaking populations, "the Catholic Church has sent Spanish-speaking priests among the people with good results. Some Emporia Catholics believe the condition of the Mexicans in Emporia could be improved if a Catholic priest, who could speak their native tongue, were put to work

²⁴⁵ "Chance for Missionary Work," *Emporia (Kans.) Weekly Gazette*, 9 January 1912.

among them.” As it was, the Spanish-speaking community of Emporia was isolated and vulnerable. The “liquor houses” were apparently one of the few community institutions working to reach out in Spanish, “circulating booze pamphlets,” which the *Gazette* blamed for the “impoverished circumstances of the Mexicans.”²⁴⁶ This attitude toward the Hispanic residents of Emporia, which blamed them for the poverty of their working-class circumstances, reflected the deep racial prejudice and fears of white Progressive reformers. The willingness to welcome Catholic priests, however, was a departure from the normal phobia of Catholics that characterized Anglo American publications.

According to the *Gazette*, Wendell began working with the Spanish-speaking community soon after his arrival at school in 1911. Like his father, he practiced a personal and direct form of evangelism. The *Gazette* reported: “He spent his Sundays among them, going from house to house teaching and talking with them. He won their confidence and they were friendly to him.”²⁴⁷ Wendell spent the summer holiday of 1912 evangelizing among the Spanish-speaking population of Hutchinson, Kansas, about a hundred miles from Emporia. The *Gazette* reported: “W. Somers Perea, a sophomore at the College, returned yesterday from Hutchinson, where he spent the summer. Perea has been doing missionary work among the Mexican laborers on the railroads near Hutchinson.” The *Gazette* described Perea: “He has been associated with Mexicans in New Mexico and speaks Spanish fluently.” Although José Ynéz was an Hispano, his Presbyterianism and marriage to an Anglo American woman apparently rendered his son an Anglo American in the eyes of the Kansas newspaper. Wendell was not himself a

²⁴⁶ “Chance for Missionary Work,” *Emporia (Kans.) Weekly Gazette*, 9 January 1912.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

“Mexican,” but had merely been “associated with Mexicans” in the past.²⁴⁸ The *Gazette*’s account functionally erased Wendell’s New Mexican past and family, especially his father’s roots.

Wendell’s mission work and time at school were cut short in December 1912 by the death of his brother George. George was working as a brakeman on the Berlin branch of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. The *Emporia Gazette* reported: “[George] was ‘poling’ several loaded coal cars when the engine was backed forcibly, breaking the pole that Perea was using and throwing the young man against another car with such force as to break his neck. Death was instantaneous.” News of the accident ran in several eastern newspapers: the *Evening Star*, the *Washington Post*, and the *Baltimore Sun* all carried accounts of George’s death.²⁴⁹

George may have been trying to escape the stigma of his arrest and institutionalization by moving to Pennsylvania. Eastern newspaper accounts indicate that in this, at least, he was successful. All emphasized that he was the son of “the late Rev. J. Y. Perea, Presbyterian minister, the first ordained native missionary in the territory of New Mexico.” The *Evening Star* described Perea’s background: “Young Perea had been stenographer at the county court at Albuquerque and was later railway mail clerk. He

²⁴⁸ “W. Somers Perea,” *Emporia (Kans.) Gazette*, 5 September 1912.

²⁴⁹ “How George Perea Was Killed,” *Emporia (Kans.) Gazette*, 19 December 1912; “Railway Man Accidentally Killed,” *Washington (D. C.) Evening Star*, 8 December 1912; Death Certificate for George Perea, 3 December 1912, Berlin, Pennsylvania, certificate no. 101643, microfilm, (Harrisburg, Pa.: Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission) *Pennsylvania, Death Certificates, 1906–1967*, Records of the Pennsylvania Department of Health, Record Group 11, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania; “Brakeman Killed ‘Poling’ Cars,” *Washington (D.C.) Post*, 8 December 1912; and “Cumberland,” *Baltimore (Md.) Sun*, 8 December 1912.

resigned, on account of ill health, for outdoor work.”²⁵⁰ His criminal record and institutionalization did not appear in any newspaper accounts.

Following George’s death, Wendell left college in Kansas and resided with his mother and possibly attended college in Pennsylvania. The next time Wendell intersects with an archive, his promising future within Presbyterian Anglo American society had abruptly ended. By 1917, when he had to register for the draft, he had been institutionalized at the Eastern State Hospital for the Insane in Kentucky. His draft card was filled out entirely by the Superintendent J. Gordon. In response to the question, “Do you claim exemption from draft (specify grounds)?” Gordon wrote simply, “Insane.” Wendell apparently remained at the institution until his death in 1936. The 1930 census noted him as an inmate, and his death certificate listed his residence as the asylum. His death certificate stated that Wendell suffered from hebephrenic dementia praecox, now diagnosed as a form of schizophrenia.²⁵¹

With one brother killed in a workplace accident and the other institutionalized before turning twenty-six, Clifford was the only child of the José Ynéz and Susan Perea to survive childhood and enjoy a successful adult life. After attending the Menaul School,

²⁵⁰ “Railway Man Accidentally Killed,” *Washington (D. C.) Evening Star*, 8 December 1912.

²⁵¹ “W. Somers Perea,” *College Life* (Emporia, Kans.), 13 September 1913; “Schellsburg,” *Bedford (Pa.) Gazette*, 22 August 1913; Wendell Sommers Perea, Registration Card, 5 June 1917, Falmouth, Kentucky, r. KY25, microfilm, (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.) *World War I Selective Service System Draft Registration Cards*, M1509, National Archives Microfilm Publications, Records of the Selective Service System (WWI), Record Group 163, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C [hereafter Draft Registration Cards, M1509, RG 163, NARA].; Perea, W. S., Lexington City, Fayette County, Kentucky, p. 5B, r. 743, microfilm, (Washington, D.C.: National Archives Records Administration) *1930 United States Federal Census*, T626, National Archive Microfilm Publications, Records of the Bureau of the Census, Record Group 29, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D. C. [hereafter 1930 Federal Census, T626, RG 29, NARA]; and Somers W. Perea, Certificate of Death, 15 February 1938, Lexington, Kentucky, certificate no. 3632, r. 7020440, microfilm, (Frankfort: Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives, 1995) *Vital Statistics Original Death Certificates—Microfilm (1911–1964)*, Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives, Frankfort [hereafter Kentucky Death Certificates, KDLA].

he enrolled in a Presbyterian college in Greenville, Tennessee, before studying at McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago. While there, he met Della Stevenson from Decatur, Illinois, who was studying to become a nurse, and they were married in 1913. Clifford was ordained a Presbyterian pastor and took charge of a congregation in Falmouth, Kentucky.²⁵² Clifford's new post was about fifty miles from the hospital where Wendell was institutionalized. It is likely that Wendell's mental condition deteriorated in 1914 or 1915 and that his mother and brother decided to have him institutionalized at the facility nearest to Clifford.

Clifford was active in the governing presbytery of his region, serving as moderator in 1915. He was also chairman of the Ministerial Relief Committee. The local newspaper, the *Louisville Courier-Journal*, was somewhat confused in its description of Perea: "He is a native of Italy and has been in the ministry only a short time." It continued, correctly, "His mother, who was a missionary to New Mexico, is attending the meeting." Just as his brother Wendell experienced, Clifford's New Mexican and Hispano roots underwent erasure in the Anglo-American press.²⁵³

As the *Courier-Journal* noted, Susan Perea was with Clifford in 1915. Assuming Wendell had been institutionalized by that time, Susan likely moved from Pennsylvania in order to be with her sons. In 1917, however, Clifford moved his family to a new congregation, pastoring the Presbyterian church in Ponca, Nebraska. Susan had probably been living with Clifford and his family, but when they moved she chose to remain in Falmouth, perhaps so Wendell would still have familial support in the area. The census of

²⁵² "News Has Been Received," *Decatur (Ill.) Herald*, 29 October 1913.

²⁵³ "The Ebenezer Presbytery," *Louisville (Ky.) Courier-Journal*, 15 April 1915; and "Presbyterians in Session," *Mt. Sterling (Ky.) Advocate*, 14 April 1915.

1920 shows her living with another widowed woman, Mary Foley. Susan died four years later at the age of seventy-four. When Wendell passed in 1936, he was buried with his mother at Riverside Cemetery in Falmouth.²⁵⁴

By 1920, Clifford had moved again and changed his career, now teaching at a college in Dubuque County, Iowa. By 1924, when he signed his mother's death certificate, he and his family had relocated to Waxahachie City, where Clifford worked as registrar and professor of Spanish at Trinity University. He worked at Trinity until his retirement, moving to San Antonio when the university moved. Clifford, alone of the Perea children, met with apparent success in the Anglo American world. He pastored Anglo congregations in Kentucky and Iowa, then secured a prestigious job at a prominent Presbyterian university. Some of his correspondence, however, demonstrated an ambivalence toward the Anglo American culture he had assimilated into, and especially that culture's forgetfulness regarding the contributions of his father.²⁵⁵

From his position at Trinity University, he wrote a letter to Rev. C. P. Blekking, the pastor of the Presbyterian church in Las Vegas, New Mexico, as the church was preparing to celebrate its fiftieth anniversary. He declared, "My father's part was such an

²⁵⁴ Clifford Harvey Perea, Registration Card, 5 June 1917, Ponca City, Nebraska, r. NE12, microfilm, Draft Registration Cards, M1509, RG 163, NARA; Perea, Susan E., Falmouth, Pendleton County, Kentucky, p. 5A, r. 595, microfilm, 1920 Federal Census, T625, RG 29, NARA; Susan Gates Perea, Certificate of Death, 26 November 1924, Falmouth, Kentucky, certificate no. 25888, r. 7017495, microfilm, Kentucky Death Certificates, KDLA; and "Susan Gates Perea," Find A Grave website, accessed 3 April 2020, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/74968769/susan-perea>.

²⁵⁵ Perea, Clifford, Julien Township, Dubuque County, Iowa, p. 7A, r. 488, microfilm (Washington, D.C.: National Archives Records Administration), *1920 United States Federal Census*, T625, National Archive Microfilm Publications, Records of the Bureau of the Census, RG 29, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D. C. [hereafter 1920 Federal Census, T625, RG 29, NARA]; Susan Gate Perea, Certificate of Death, 26 November 1924, Falmouth, Kentucky, certificate no. 25888, r. 7017495, microfilm, Kentucky Death Certificates, KDLA; Perea, Clifford H., Waxahachie City, Ellis County, Texas, p. 9B, microfilm, r. 2326, 1930 Federal Census, T626, RG 29, NARA; and "Administration," in *The Mirage: 1947*, ed. Fred Crawford (Trinity University: San Antonio Texas, 1947), 16.

important one in the founding of Protestantism not only in Las Vegas but in all New Mexico that it seems hardly possible to have an anniversary of any kind without at least the mention of his name.” He then listed some of his father’s accomplishments and contributions: “Sheldon Jackson . . . would have never been able to get anywhere without the services of my father who not only acted as guide for him, but also interpreted into Spanish all of Dr. Jackson’s sermons.” At the Las Vegas church, “for several years before the Board was able to finance this work, he paid Dr. Annin’s salary out of his own pocket.” Yet despite Perea’s contributions, Clifford chided, “Whenever mention is made of this work in any of our church magazines or by one of our Board Secretaries, such men as Dr. Jackson, Dr. Annin, and Dr. Menaul get all the credit.”²⁵⁶ In his eyes, official Presbyterian histories had erased the pioneering work of Hispano missionaries such as his father.

In another letter, in response to a biographical questionnaire Clifford received from J. A. Schufle, who was writing a history of the Las Vegas church, Clifford wrote: “I might add that he [José Ynez Perea] paid Mr. Annin’s salary in Las Vegas and practically built the church with his own money. He was the first elder of that church. I don’t think the Board of Home Missions ever paid him as much as he paid Mr. Annin but he never complained of any sacrifice he was forced to make.”²⁵⁷ Clifford’s tone indicated that he considered his father ill-used by the PCUSA and that the neglect of his memory added insult to injury.

²⁵⁶ Clifford Perea to C. P. Blekking, 17 March 1930, JYP, MHL.

²⁵⁷ Clifford Perea to J. A. Schufle, Questionnaire, n.d., JYP, MHL.

The PCUSA's historical amnesia regarding José Ynez Perea's contributions stemmed in part from the Presbyterians' turn away from church planting and evangelism in New Mexico. Perea's last years of active ministry and years of retirement took place at a time when the Presbyterians were still invested in home missions as a vital component of the U.S. nation-building project. However, questions about the slow progress of church growth in New Mexico lurked under the surface of Presbyterian commitment. Missionary serials demonstrated a determined optimism, one that existed in dialogue with skepticism. Articles frequently responded to those who might doubt the missionary project. In 1905 the *Assembly Herald* printed a speech by a Miss Ladd, one of the teachers at the Menaul School. In her address, she described the difficulties of the mission field, dwelling on the obduracy of the population. But she concluded that although some might ask, "Do so few conversions pay," numbers alone could not provide a proper assessment of missional success. She declared, "One year there was but one conversion in a little church in Scotland, and that was David Livingston. Don't count your conversions, but weigh them."²⁵⁸ Measuring the quality of conversions versus their quantity, however, was not a justification that could endure indefinitely.

As the twentieth century wore on the PCUSA grew increasingly disillusioned with evangelistic outreach to the Hispanos of New Mexico. The shift was slow: Gabino Rendón, one of Perea's successors, was an active home missionary through the 1920s. The Presbyterian Church, however, was changing. The Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy roiled the church, with questions of basic Christian theology and practice

²⁵⁸ "Need of Mission Work in New Mexico," *The Assembly Herald*, November 1902, 434.

hotly debated between conservatives and liberals. That debate impacted Presbyterian policy toward missions and church planting in remote New Mexico.

The trend toward modernism in the Presbyterian Church had begun in the nineteenth century. In 1891, the appointment of Charles Briggs as Professor of Biblical Theology at Union Theological Seminary and his subsequent heresy trial revealed the growing divide within Presbyterianism and within U.S. Protestantism at large. Briggs's openness to the approach of higher criticism threatened what had historically been core tenets of the Christian faith. As the nineteenth century closed and the twentieth century dawned, debates raged in the Presbyterian Church regarding the proper relationship between Christian faith and scientific knowledge. By the 1920s, modernists were in the ascendance within the PCUSA.

The controversy inevitably informed the Presbyterian Church's attitude toward missions. Decades of labor with few converts contributed to a sense of futility. By 1932 the Presbyterian perspective on missions had dramatically altered. That year, the interdenominational Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry published its findings after a study of Protestant missionary outreach in India, China, and Japan. The report, published as *Re-Thinking Missions: A Laymen's Inquiry After 100 Years*, called for significant changes within Protestant missiology. The commission's report was not universally accepted within the PCUSA, but it shaped and guided Presbyterian debates regarding missionary outreach. Although the report focused on foreign missions, many of its observations could apply to the "exceptional" Hispano population, complicating its position within the home missions project.

The authors of *Re-Thinking Missions* argued that the scientific accomplishments and intellectual developments of the late nineteenth century required a reassessment of the motive behind missionary activity, and that the political and economic changes then taking place within foreign mission fields demanded a new set of practices. They argued that modern Western Christianity had “shifted its stress from the negative to the affirmative side of its message; it is less a religion of fear and more a religion of beneficence.” In their view, modern Christianity had “passed through and beyond the stage of bitter conflict with the scientific consciousness of the race over details of the mode of creation, the age of the earth, the descent of man, miracle and law, to the stage of maturity in which a free religion and a free science become inseparable and complementary elements in a complete world-view.”²⁵⁹ In their eyes, modern Christianity had shed the baggage of harsh and exclusive doctrines.

Whereas early Protestant missionary efforts had been motivated by the fear that unmissionized people lived in a state of condemnation and were doomed to Hell, the authors of the report argued that modern missions must reflect an evolving eschatology. According to *Re-Thinking Missions*, within modern Protestantism, “whatever its present conception of the future life, there is little disposition to believe that sincere and aspiring seekers after God in other religions are to be damned: it has become less concerned in any land to save men from eternal punishment than from the danger of losing the supreme good.”²⁶⁰ The goal of missions for these lay analysts was no longer salvation, but perfection.

²⁵⁹ The Commission of Appraisal, *Re-Thinking Missions: A Layman's Inquiry After One Hundred Years* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1932), 19.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 19.

Compounding the impact of theological changes in the “West,” political movements in foreign mission fields demonstrated a new set of needs. In the view of the authors of *Re-Thinking Missions*, Western and modern ideas had successfully been inculcated within the “Orient.” Missionized cultures were therefore increasingly self-aware and demonstrated independence in ways legible to the West. As a result, the committee urged, “The time comes when these centers [churches planted by evangelists] must be left to develop according to the genius of the place.”²⁶¹ Instead of evangelists focused on preaching, Protestant missionaries should be professional social workers devoted to materially improving the lives of the people to whom they ministered.

Some of the committee’s observations about foreign missions rhymed with modernists’ perspectives on New Mexico. Pastors and evangelists such as Perea had emphasized doctrine and much of their discourse had been focused on critiquing Catholicism. Modernists believed that “the Christian view of life has a magnificence and glory of which its interpreters, for the most part, give little hint: they seem prepared to correct, but seldom to inspire; they are better able to transmit the letter of doctrine than to understand and fulfil the religious life.” If, as they declared, “It is clearly not the duty of the Christian missionary to attack the non-Christian system of religion,” attacks on Catholicism were even less appropriate. Regarding Catholicism specifically, the authors of *Re-Thinking Missions* argued, “In general, our Protestant churches, as compared with Roman Catholic . . . have made too little of the concrete and poetic elements of religion, conveyed through all the forms of art, through local setting and ritual expression.”²⁶² In

²⁶¹ *Re-Thinking Missions*, 24.

²⁶² *Ibid.*, 16, 327, 51.

marked contrast to Perea's negative assessment of Catholicism, modernists included Catholic teaching under the "big tent" of Christian doctrine and even acknowledged areas where Catholic practice might exceed that of Protestantism.

Also applicable to New Mexico were the particular difficulties of rural ministry noted by the committee: "The maintenance of the rural church has in the past been one of the most baffling of all missionary problems. . . . It has been . . . usually looked upon by the community as a foreign importation, bringing nothing of value or interest to anybody except to its own members." In rural areas a pastor, such as Perea, was considered "a paid propagator of a foreign religion and therefore not a germane part of the community."²⁶³ The PCUSA was beginning to grapple with the problem of sustained alienation that had characterized Perea's experience and challenged his ministry.

Modernists argued that, although methods such as Perea's may have been appropriate in their time and sprang from good intentions, future ministry must look different. First, the committee declared, "Let there be an end to sectarianism." Protestant missionary outreach needed "less emphasis on doctrine," and "more unity and cooperation." Instead of emphasizing doctrine, missionaries should proclaim "a religion focused upon the vital issues of life for the individual and for the social environment in which the individual lives."²⁶⁴ Aggressive church planting in an already Christianized region such as New Mexico missed the true point of Christianity, in the modernists' analysis.

²⁶³ *Re-Thinking Missions*, 98–99.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 92, 94, 114.

Re-Thinking Missions argued, “We believe that the time has come to set the educational and other philanthropic aspects of mission work free from organized responsibility to the work of conscious and direct evangelism. We must work with greater faith in invisible success, be willing to give largely without any preaching, to cooperate whole-heartedly with non-Christian agencies for social improvement.” In rural environments such as New Mexico, missionary work “should not be done with the primary aim of organizing churches, but rather with the aim of penetrating country communities with ways of life that will bring enriched living to all the members of it, a truer spirit of cooperation, a more genuine interest in the education of the children, in the productivity of the soil and in methods of raising the economic level of the neighborhood as well as in the health and spiritual growth of the people.”²⁶⁵ Mission work would become social work.

The new Presbyterian attitude toward missionary outreach meant the end of the church planting and evangelistic efforts that had begun with Perea in 1869. When José Ynéz died in 1910, his passing represented the end of an era. Eulogies poured in for the man who had seen the start of Presbyterian missions in the New Mexico Territory and played a key role in them from the very beginning. In the years after his death, however, the Presbyterian Church began the process of stepping back from active outreach in New Mexico. The PCUSA would continue to staff schools and medical clinics but was no longer interested in planting new churches.

Perea’s legacy in New Mexico was complex. His own congregations in Pajarito and Los Lentos always struggled to attract members, and after his death they only

²⁶⁵ *Re-Thinking Missions*, 326, 99.

endured for another decade. His family, isolated from the mainstream of Hispano society, left New Mexico and either met tragedy or built lives in the Anglo American cultural sphere of the Presbyterian Church. Perea's Presbyterian faith, and his decision to foreground that faith in his identity, actively working as an ordained minister, exacted a heavy personal cost in his family.

At the same time, the Hispano missionary project that he helped to inaugurate did plant Presbyterian churches and institutions throughout the territory and state, particularly in the northern Rio Arriba region. Although relatively few Hispanos joined the small churches, those congregations endured through the twentieth century, with some still active in the twenty-first. These congregations afforded a place and meaningful religious experience to Hispanos alienated or isolated from the Catholic Church. Presbyterian social institutions provided educational opportunities and medical services to underserved communities. For his part, in the materials available in the archive, Perea never expressed regret for decisions he made, the road he took, and the Presbyterianism he embraced. To him, his missionary activity, and the cost it required, were a natural outgrowth of the understanding of faith that had given him security, comfort, and meaning.

Conclusion

The present-day Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, the successor denomination to the PCUSA of Perea's time, takes pride in being a "multicultural church," and vaunts the "diversity in [its] communities."²⁶⁶ That diversity rests on the foundation laid by missionaries such as José Ynéz Perea. He and his fellow church workers around the United States and around the world took the message of Presbyterian Christianity far beyond the boundaries of U.S. administration and Anglo American society. They established churches and institutions that nurtured new communities of faith in an array of languages and cultures.

There is a certain historical irony in the PC(USA)'s²⁶⁷ declarations of its diversity. The PC(USA) is the heir of the modernized missiology first proposed in *Re-Thinking Missions*. The church continues to support missionary outreach, both in the United States and abroad, but generally does not seek to plant new churches, preferring to work with existing church bodies and institutions. Evangelism is not the sole nor even the central aim of Presbyterian missionary efforts. The temporal concerns of social work and political engagement have become as important to the PC(USA)'s mission as the eternally oriented task of evangelism.²⁶⁸ The present missionary impulse is not the same

²⁶⁶ "Journeying and Awakening into God's Diverse World: 15th National Multicultural Conference," conference program, Presbyterian Mission Agency, Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, accessed 15 April 2020, <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/2014-nmcc-quickview/>.

²⁶⁷ The current acronym for the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, adopted in 1983.

²⁶⁸ "Transformational Mission: A Message from World Mission," World Mission page, Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, accessed 15 April 2020, <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/world-mission/>; and Sherron Kay George, "Reluctant Evangelists?" What We Believe: Evangelism, Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, accessed 15 April 2020, <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/what-we-believe/evangelism-2/>.

that drove Perea to alienate himself from family and friends. For Perea, and for many of his fellow missionaries, a concern for the souls of those they believed faced damnation led them to evangelize. It was their impassioned outreach that brought diverse cultural groups into the denomination. The current diversity of the PC(USA) rests on theologies and missionary activities out-of-step with current Presbyterian belief and practice.²⁶⁹

That irony is fittingly emblematic of Perea's experience. He left a successful pastoral life with his herds to struggle in pastoral ministry with his congregations. His hopes for a thriving Hispano Presbyterian Church in New Mexico never came to fruition. He faced alienation from the Hispano community and erasure by Anglo American Presbyterians. In the decades after Reverend Perea's death, the churches that he founded disappeared and the denomination to which he had devoted forty years of service ceased supporting the active outreach he had begun. But his ministry bore unexpected fruit nonetheless. His work carved out space, both in Hispano society and in the PCUSA, for a new religious identity. His example inspired other Hispano evangelists and pastors to take up his mantle. A scattering of churches in the Rio Arriba was perhaps not the harvest he would have wished, but they stand as tributes to his memory on the foundation he laid.

²⁶⁹ Alexa Smith, "Whatever Happened to Hell?" What We Believe: Hell, Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, accessed 15 April 2020, <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/what-we-believe/hell/>.

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