

FRANCIS CLEMENT KELLEY AND
THE MEXICAN REVOLUTION

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PREFACE

During the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920) and for many years afterwards, revolutionary soldiers and state officials abused, extorted, and exiled Catholic clerics. Many of the expatriots came to the United States, where American Catholics gave them aid and later committed their lives to ending the persecution in Mexico. One of the leaders in this effort was Francis Clement Kelley, who became the second bishop of Oklahoma in 1924. Relying mostly on the Bishop's personal papers, this study analyzes Kelley's goals for Mexico and the methods he used in attempting to achieve them.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Mexican Revolution (1910-1920) was a matter of great concern to the United States, but it particularly affected American Catholics. The persecution of Catholic clerics that occurred under various revolutionary leaders produced a sense of outrage among many Catholics in this country as Mexican bishops, priests, and nuns sought refuge in the southern border states. American clergymen gave these expatriates food, clothing, and shelter and recorded their testimonies of persecution. After hearing the stories, they demanded that the United States take action to stop the reported atrocities.

One of the most influential American spokesmen for the Mexican Church was Francis Clement Kelley, a priest who became the Bishop of Oklahoma in 1924. Kelley was a prolific writer. His correspondence with United States presidents, secretaries of state, important businessmen, and Catholic dignitaries attests to his deep involvement in Mexico's religious conflict. Kelley's correspondence pertaining to Mexico spans the years from 1913 to 1935.

Besides these personal letters, Bishop Kelley wrote several books that reveal his perceptions of Mexico's Church/State conflict. Those works include The Book of Red

and Yellow: Being a Story of Blood and a Yellow Streak (1915), Blood-Drenched Altars (1935), and The Bishop Jots it Down (1939), his autobiography. Kelley also wrote numerous articles in Extension magazine and various other periodicals.

Kelley's analysis of the Church/State conflict in Mexico was entirely influenced by his Catholic faith. For instance, in Blood-Drenched Altars, he cites only Mexican conservatives or clergymen, such as Lucas Alamán, D. Francisco Plancarte, Bernardino de Sahagún, Juan de Zumárraga, and Bernal Díaz. Due to this one-sided aspect of his research and the fact that he had visited Mexico only once, most of his writing on the subject lacks depth and objectivity.

Kelley's involvement with Mexico developed as a consequence of his work with the Catholic Church Extension Society. In 1914 a priest in San Antonio, Texas, Father H. A. Constantineau, asked the Society for assistance in aiding a group of Mexican refugees who had just fled their country because of religious persecution. Kelley used Extension funds to feed, clothe, and house these men and women. He also listened to and recorded their testimonies about the ordeals they had recently undergone. After hearing their stories, Kelley made a commitment to try to end the religious persecution.

The Bishop's papers reveal that Kelley used three distinct methods in his attempts to aid the Mexican Church.

In 1914, when he first became aware of religious persecution in Mexico, he advocated the withholding of United States diplomatic recognition from any Mexican government that denied religious freedom. Kelley also aided an unsuccessful Mexican counter-revolt. In the mid-1920s, he participated in an intricate propaganda campaign that denounced the Mexican Revolution as part of a worldwide communist plot. With these efforts he hoped to discredit the Mexican Revolution and reinstate Catholicism to its former position of influence.

His first, and most moderate, approach to the problem of religious persecution in Mexico was the encouragement of a policy of non-recognition. In 1915, Kelley met with both President Woodrow Wilson and Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan and encouraged the Wilson administration to deny recognition to Venustiano Carranza's Constitutionalist government. Carranza had successfully opposed conservative President Victoriano Huerta and restored a revolutionary government in Mexico. Despite Kelley's efforts, Wilson recognized Carranza in October 1915. Kelley reacted to Wilson's decision by openly criticizing him and encouraging Catholics to vote for his opponent, Charles Evans Hughes, in the election of 1916.

Although this political action brought Kelley criticism and the enmity of Wilson, the Bishop continued to urge a policy of non-recognition. He published articles and editorials that sensationalized the purported atrocities

taking place in Mexico. Kelley wrote The book of Red and Yellow to raise funds and create public awareness. He succeeded in gaining attention, but his efforts to achieve a policy of non-recognition based on religious freedom ultimately failed.

During the same period, from about 1915 to 1917, Kelley also attempted to aid the Mexican Church by assisting and funding a counter-revolt. He obtained financial support for General Félix Díaz, a political exile opposed to the Revolution's liberal reforms. Díaz had conspired with Victoriano Huerta in 1913 to overthrow Francisco Madero. After his self-imposed exile to the United States, Félix Díaz obtained financial backing from American businessmen and Catholic clergymen to stage another coup against the Carranza government.

Díaz attracted the attention of several American companies, including Wrigley Chewing Gum and International Harvester. Xenophobia and nationalism were characteristic of the Revolution and these businesses were anxious to secure a government in Mexico that would be friendly to foreigners. Kelley, who wanted to see a conservative and, therefore, pro-Catholic administration restored to Mexico, collected funds from these businesses. Together, Kelley and the companies placed their hopes on Félix Díaz.

The Díaz revolt was a dismal failure, and despite Kelley's efforts, persecution of the Mexican Church continued sporadically throughout the administrations of

Alvaro Obregón (1920-1924) and Plutarco Elías Calles (1924-1928). The Bishop never abandoned the struggle, but by the mid-1920s, he recognized the futility of seeking either a diplomatic or a military solution to the problem.

Kelley's third approach involved the use of propaganda. He recognized that Mexico's devastated economy required foreign investment. Several of Kelley's wealthy friends convinced him that many opportunities awaited United States' investors once they were assured that Mexico was a safe place for their money. Because Mexican administrations were disseminating propaganda in the United States, Kelley surmised that Mexico was concerned about its image. The Bishop believed that anti-clerical Mexican governments would be more congenial to the Church if negative propaganda discouraged American investors.

Throughout the late 1920s and early 1930s, many Americans, including Kelley, viewed the Mexican government as a communist regime. Mexico was becoming more socialistic, beginning with a new constitution adopted in 1917 that nationalized land and minerals. The Carranza government had alarmed United States' investors by nationalizing communication and transportation industries. The Revolution's anti-clericalism also disturbed American Catholics. The Constitution of 1917 secularized education, and in 1934 a new amendment required that socialistic education be taught in the public schools.

Kelley reacted to these developments by designing an elaborate propaganda program. Along with his friend, Eber Cole Byam, a self-proclaimed expert on Mexico, Kelley produced a plan that outlined the exact steps to be followed in this campaign. His intention was to alarm Americans by convincing them that the Mexican government intended to destroy religion and steal American-owned properties in Mexico.

This last plan of Kelley's also failed to produce the results for which he had hoped. Americans generally were not concerned about Mexico and the Church's problems. The fear of communism raged briefly and then died out as the public lost interest. In Mexico, the relationship between President Lázaro Cárdenas (1934-1940) and the Church gradually became more congenial as the new administration concentrated on rebuilding the economy and encouraging national harmony. After twenty-one years of trying to restore the Church's status as it had existed before the Revolution, Kelley finally resolved himself to accepting the new status quo.

CHAPTER II

FRANCIS C. KELLEY AND THE CHURCH-STATE CONFLICT

Francis Clement Kelley devoted over twenty years of his life to ending the persecution of Catholic clerics in Mexico. During this time he wrote books, pamphlets, articles, and letters decribing the atrocities committed against clergymen during the Revolution. He was determined to see that these men and women returned to their native land and regained the influence they had enjoyed before the Revolution.

The displaced archbishops, bishops, priests, and nuns stated that men under Pancho Villa, Alvaro Obregón, and other military leaders committed outrages against the clergy. They described churches converted into barracks and storage buildings. Some recounted the destruction of archives and libraries, the public burning of furniture, the damaging of religious statues, and the profanation of sacred vessels. Revolutionary generals had closed the seminaries and impressed the students into their armies.¹ According to the Catholic World newspaper, some commanders had ordered their men and female camp followers to "eat, drink, gamble, and sleep in the churches" to prove that ecclesiastical

buildings were not really sacred. They even fed the Holy Eucharist to their horses.²

The revolutionaries physically and psychologically abused the clergymen. Soldiers paraded the priests through the streets and ridiculed them. They held the upper clergy for ransom and forced them to beg door-to-door for money to aid the Revolution. Another form of extortion was mock execution, which often took the form of a "half-hanging." When priests could not collect the required amount of money, the soldiers threatened them with death; they even placed a noose around the victim's neck, hoping that they would admit to having other sources of cash or valuables. Still, these men had been fortunate; soldiers had imprisoned or murdered other clergymen.³

The most compelling testimonies, however, were those pertaining to nuns. Many of the exiled men and women stated that they had heard of nuns who were raped. They claimed that some of the victims believed they were pregnant or had venereal diseases as a result of their ordeals.⁴ Referring to them in a speech in Chicago, Kelley said that "There have been many instances where girls have asked their confessor if it would be right for them to commit suicide to escape their shame." In the same address, Kelley stated that the conditions in Mexico were worse than those in Belgium; of course, he was referring to World War I.⁵ These accounts about nuns always produced the most compassion, but they also caused some skepticism.

Kelley never supplied the names of witnesses or mentioned specific places in his accounts of religious persecution. For that reason, many readers doubted the validity of some of his accusations against the revolutionaries, especially those pertaining to nuns. His own reason for omitting these specific details was to protect the victims and witnesses from recrimination upon their return to Mexico.⁶ A more feasible explanation, however, is that Kelley could not substantiate the claims of rape against nuns even though he believed they were true. None of the accounts about rape came from victims or eyewitnesses; all were second- and third-hand reports. These stories were always the most effective in provoking outrage, and Kelley did not want to omit them. Their inclusion, however, threatened his credibility.⁷

John Tracy Ellis, in his biography of Cardinal James Gibbons of Baltimore, noted that, in the beginning the Cardinal was "suspicious" of Kelley's evidence. When Kelley first reported the atrocities to Richard Tierney, editor of the Jesuit weekly America, he told the editor that "[t]he difficulty is with regard to the stories [about] the Sisters. While there is no doubt at all regarding the truth of the matter, it is most difficult to find actual evidence." Several years later, Reverend R. Planchet of Devine, Texas, asked for permission to reprint the affidavits in their original Spanish. Kelley refused to turn them over, saying that Archbishop Quigley and his

"Mexican advisors" had discouraged it because of the "shocking" nature of the testimony.⁸

Historians Charles C. Cumberland and Robert E. Quirk conclude that the revolutionaries physically abused priests and held them for ransom, but they admit that there is little evidence to support the accusation that nuns were raped. J. Lloyd Mecham points out that many of the claims made by the Church are impossible to ascertain. Mecham, however, thought that Kelley's accounts were "substantially correct."⁹

As Kelley became the friend and official spokesman for these Mexican clerics, he gained national attention for his efforts on their behalf. He had already achieved some notoriety as the creator of the Catholic Church Extension Society. He was recognized as being energetic, innovative, and ambitious.

It is sometimes difficult to know a person simply by reading his books and correspondence or observing his frozen image in a photograph. Francis Kelley, however, was a man who never shied away from self expression, and, therefore, one may still feel acquainted with him through his work. In appearance Kelley was a man of medium height, a bit rotund, with a broad smiling Irish face. Judging from black and white photos, he appears to have had light brown or reddish hair. Although he did not look overly-studious, his portraits project the image of a fatherly and wise figure.

Kelley emerges from his writings as a man with great charm and a wonderful sense of humor. He exemplified this aspect of his personality in his autobiography, The Bishop Jots It Down. In this work, Kelley reveals himself as an astute observer of humanity and a great lover of people. He records his recollections with such warmth and humor that the reader often feels compelled to smile or even to laugh out loud. For instance, when describing a long-winded speaker he had once heard, he said the man was "an orator without terminal facilities."¹⁰ Kelley's humor could be sarcastic or biting at times as in a remark about the similarity between Joel Roberts Poinsett and the flowering plant that bears his name: "They must generally be grouped . . . to conceal their bare crooked stems."¹¹ Speaking of the Mexican dictator Santa Anna, he noted that "[a] little one-legged Highness made a poor show of majesty."¹² He also called William Jennings Bryan "one of the most picturesque and brilliant failures in American political history."¹³

Another obvious aspect of Kelley's personality was his pride. He was known to be fastidious in his dress and his surroundings. All who knew him noticed that he was always courteous and mannerly, two characteristics that he greatly admired in others. Kelley had a genuine appreciation for the better things in life and was devoted to good food and expensive tobaccos.¹⁴ Many of his associates were critical of his materialism, especially when he established his office for the newly-created Extension Society in 1905.

People remarked that it was quite "elegant." During this time he lived at the posh University Club in Chicago, while other priests were required to live in far less luxurious parish houses.¹⁵

This same pride could at times reveal itself as extreme sensitivity or stubbornness; in fact, he himself called this tendency a "miserable weakness."¹⁶ For instance, in 1930 when the position of vice-chancellor of the Extension Society became open, he fully expected to receive the appointment. When he was not offered the prestigious post, he spitefully disassociated himself from the entire organization for ten years.¹⁷

He was extremely ambitious and coveted publicity. When Kelley did not get his way, he sometimes broke the chain of command, even appealing directly to the Vatican if necessary. This type of independence and arrogance often caused friction with his superiors; in fact, some clerics believed that he was made Bishop of Oklahoma because the hierarchy disapproved of his actions. Many thought that Kelley was sent to the unimportant bishopric to remove him from the limelight.¹⁸

Kelley always acted boldly. Many of his accomplishments were vast in scope and required that he deal with important figures on an equal footing. He seldom, if ever, recoiled from that challenge. A brief overview of his childhood and young manhood will demonstrate that this

courage and determination were innate and not simply acquired through experience.

A native of Canada, Francis Clement Kelley was born on Prince Edward Island in 1870; he was the second of eight children and the oldest son. His father, a rather austere man, owned a small store, farmed, and was a rural magistrate. As a child, Kelley did not exhibit any extraordinary talents or virtues; in fact, his father once told him that he would probably never accomplish much in life because he appeared to be lazy. This criticism, given when Kelley was a teenager, stung him; from that point forward he determined to become a person of whom his parents would be proud.¹⁹ While in college, he gained an extraordinary appreciation for his Catholic faith and decided to enter the priesthood. Kelley later remarked that at that moment, he "saw the Church as a whole. The picture," he said, "charmed me with its beauty and satisfied me by its logical completeness."²⁰

The future bishop attended St. Dunstan's College in Quebec, and while there he learned to speak French. Later in life he would remark that "[t]he trouble with most of us is that we know only one language and therefore know only ourselves--our race, our nation, our ideas of government, our systems."²¹ Many people would accuse him of this same sort of narrow-mindedness in regards to Mexico.

In 1893, Kelley was ordained at Nicolet Seminary in Quebec and sent to the diocese of Detroit. He was later

appointed pastor of Lapeer, Michigan. In Lapeer, the young pastor was overseeing the construction of a new church when the Spanish-American War broke out. He considered the war "an American crime" but volunteered to go anyway. He felt it his duty to provide his services and it also offered him the opportunity to insure himself for the amount of money needed to complete the church. He spent most of the short war in Florida and Alabama, and he never saw action.²²

Between 1899 and 1906 he became a Chatauqua lecturer in order to raise funds for the still unfinished church. A fellow lecturer on this circuit was a man who would later play a major role in Kelley's life--William Jennings Bryan. In 1912 Bryan became Woodrow Wilson's first Secretary of State and as such was an adversary of Francis Clement Kelley over Mexico.²³

In Kelley's opinion, the greatest benefit of his lectures was demonstrating to westerners, as he put it, that Catholics "did not really conceal horns under [their] hair or use shoes to cover cloven hoofs."²⁴ An anti-Catholic sentiment pervaded the country during this time. Prejudice was more pronounced in the newer states, where Catholics still constituted a small minority.²⁵

The prevalence of this attitude nationwide can be deduced from the fact that Woodrow Wilson participated in a college debate in which the issue was "the Roman Catholic element" as "a menace to American Institutions."²⁶ In 1912, Kelley was told that there were rumors of Wilson's "hostile

inclination . . . towards . . . Catholics."²⁷ Kelley did not vote for Wilson, but it was only because he was a Republican. However, he would later come to view both Wilson and William Jennings Bryan as anti-Catholic when, in his opinion, they seemed to show little concern for the plight of Mexican Catholics during the Revolution.²⁸

Kelley was sensitive to criticism of his Catholic faith. Perhaps the most significant observation that can be made about him is that, above all other earthly things, he loved the Church. He lived in a time when many Americans still feared Catholics. He worked hard to disprove the stereotypes that many people associated with Catholicism. It is important to recognize this tendency when trying to comprehend how he later became so obsessed with the Church in Mexico.

Another result of his travels on the lecture circuit was his conception of the idea for a Catholic home mission. While touring in the more remote parts of the country, he noticed that there was a great need to provide services to the Catholics living there and also to promote conversions. In 1905, while in Ellsworth, Kansas, he wrote a pamphlet entitled "Little Shanty Story" to promote his plan. It attracted the attention of James Edward Quigley, Archbishop of Chicago. With Quigley's support, the Catholic Church Extension Society was formed in 1905 and became a remarkable success. The Society was responsible for the construction of more than one-half of the new Catholic churches built

during the early 1900s. It eventually expanded outside the United States into Puerto Rico, the Philippines, and Canada.²⁹ In 1910, a committee of the Extension Society told Pope Benedict XV that it was "universally admitted that Francis Clement Kelley [had] promoted and successfully organized the greatest movement for the salvation of souls yet established in the Church of the United States."³⁰

Perhaps the most important by-product of the Society was Extension magazine. Eventually, this weekly periodical gained the largest circulation of any religious publication in the world. The magazine became valuable to Kelley as a vehicle to carry his messages before the public about the Mexican Church.³¹ When Kelley left Chicago to become the Bishop of Oklahoma in 1924, he missed having this publication at hand. In fact, he later felt that the "Mexican Bishops . . . practically ignored [him]" after the move because he was "nothing but a poor missionary" and "could not be of as much service to them as" before.³²

The loss of his magazine, however, did not keep Kelley from publishing. He loved to write. In all, he published seventeen books, including a Catholic history of Mexico, some fiction, a play, and an autobiography. One of his first books, Letters to Jack (1917), survived ten editions, demonstrating the popular appeal of his work.³³

Kelley's writing style was the key to his success. Although not a great writer, he had a natural sense of drama and a talent for expressing emotion. He was still a

nineteenth-century romanticist at a time when others were breaking away from colorful and poignant phrases to settle for more clipped, journalistic styles. Kelley did not lose this inclination with time, as shown by this excerpt from Blood-Drenched Altars, written in 1935:

I had enough of dreamers; wild-eyed patriots
spouting poetry . . . crazy theorists . . .
[making] marble statues out of cloud banks . . .
ambitious madmen in palaces . . . fools in hovels
idealizing their rags and all the while longing to
change them by theft for ermine . . . fighters on
the battlefield rising to a murderers heaven on
the miasma of death.³⁴

A survey of Kelley's writing reveals a man driven by causes and broad, but impersonal crusades. He seems to have found relating to humanity in a collective sense easier than forging intimate bonds with individuals. Kelley had many friends, but he kept them at a comfortable distance. His concern for friends and family had a paternalistic, lecturing quality. For instance, in Letters to Jack, which was written to his nephew, he advised the young man about the ways humans can best interact with one another and gain acceptance within the community.³⁵

Kelley undertook much of his writing for practical reasons. He was a man who could not only draw people's sentiments to a cause but could gain access to their pocketbooks as well. The Bishop was even able to raise funds from Protestants.³⁶ He wrote the Book of Red and Yellow primarily to solicit aid for Mexican refugees. As a result, he collected contributions that vastly alleviated the financial pressures on the parishes along the southern

border. Cities such as San Antonio, El Paso, Laredo, Galveston, and New Orleans were crowded with exiled clergymen who refused to disperse and relieve the burden on local communities. By 1914, San Antonio alone had attracted four archbishops, five bishops, and forty priests.³⁷ Appeals through Extension magazine and the sale of The Book of Red and Yellow helped provide the means to shelter, feed, and clothe these men.³⁸

Through his association with the Mexican clerics, Kelley learned of the atrocities taking place in Mexico. He recorded their testimonies in notarized affidavits. Kelley found that these men and women were intelligent and well-educated and that many were bilingual. Many of the clerics in exile were Europeans because the revolutionaries particularly resented foreign clergymen. All of them loved Mexico and hoped to return there as soon as possible. They were not anti-American and did not want the United States to intervene militarily in Mexico. Kelley noted that almost every witness described the same sorts of outrages; this fact convinced him that he must do something to relieve their plight. From these testimonies he composed The Book of Red and Yellow.³⁹

In this exposé, Kelley lists the outrages that the Mexican clerics had suffered in their native land. His simple but highly emotional text evokes compassion for the clerics and outrage against both the Mexican government and the Wilson administration. Besides the actions already

mentioned, Kelley describes the robbery and desecration of graves.⁴⁰ He discusses how some priests were forced to sweep the streets and undergo various other types of humiliation. A prioress told him that at her convent men and women used religious clothing as "saddle blankets and ornaments" on horses. The soldiers drank from Church vases or used them as "night vessels." They even converted some churches into dance halls.⁴¹

The most prevalent form of persecution was extortion. A typical case involved Francisco Villa and his men who told a group of priests that they would die unless they could raise one million pesos. When the clerics complained that the amount was unreasonable, the villistas asked them how they would like to die, by hanging or firing squad? The men informed the priests that their graves already had been dug and that they needed to prepare their wills. The soldiers then sent the clergymen to beg funds from the local community. The citizens were so frightened for their priests that they gave all they could. The priest who told the story to Kelley said that "even the little children gave them their pennies."⁴² After the clergymen had obtained as much as possible, they were sent to the United States.⁴³

As Kelley publicized these accounts, he also made a point of blaming the Wilson administration for what was happening in Mexico. Kelley justified his accusations against Wilson by claiming that the President assisted in the overthrow of Victoriano Huerta, who had been friendly to

the Church. After Huerta's downfall, the revolutionaries, who were persecuting the Church, obtained national power. Kelley stated that it was easy to understand how the administration might have been deceived since "they are not on the ground."⁴⁴ Kelley believed that the deceivers were American Protestants and Masons who wanted to see Catholicism destroyed in Mexico.⁴⁵

In 1917, the revolutionary government of Venustiano Carranza adopted a new constitution that further angered Kelley. The document severely restricted the autonomy of the Church by limiting the number of priests who could practice, eliminating foreign priests, outlawing religious orders, removing the Church from the education process, and denying the institution a political identity. The constitution's anti-clerical clauses convinced Kelley that the revolutionaries sought to obliterate Catholic influence from Mexican society.⁴⁶

In The Book of Red and Yellow, Kelley claimed that Mexico could not manage its affairs without "the advice of a big brother."⁴⁷ In the the same book, he eloquently summarized his interpretation of the historical role of Catholicism in Mexico. Speaking as the Church personified, he asked the country to:

"[s]how me one good thing . . . I did not give you. . . . Cut away from your country all that I put in it, and see what remains. You may thrust me out, exile my bishops, murder my priests, again steal my schools, desecrate my sanctuaries and my virgins, but you cannot blot out history, you can not erase the mark I have left on you--not in a century of centuries."⁴⁸

Kelley viewed the destruction and turmoil of the Revolution in Mexico as a result of the loss of Church influence. He thought that the solution to the conflict was the restoration of the Roman Catholic Church as the nation's most respected and influential institution, its moral authority, and its educator. He believed that Mexico's most illustrious period had been the era of Porfirio Díaz (1876-1910), a dictator who had been conciliatory toward the Church. Díaz had modernized the country, but his policies had also caused social discontent that eventually led to the Revolution.

Many of the revolutionaries, on the other hand, were convinced that the Church's social and political power in Mexico must be destroyed. Their determination resulted from many years of struggle between liberal and conservative forces that developed shortly after Mexico won its independence in 1821. By 1935 when Kelley's involvement with Mexico ended, liberals not only had separated the Church from the State but had made it submissive to the government as well. The religious conflict that Francis Clement Kelley witnessed during the Revolution had its roots in nineteenth century Mexico.

ENDNOTES

¹Kelley's accounts were based on testimonies given to him by the exiled clergymen in notarized affidavits. English translations from the original documents can be seen in the Kelley Papers, "Mexican Question" Files 1-4, Archives of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, Saint Francis de Sales Archdiocesan Pastoral Center, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. The original affidavits (in Spanish) remain with the Apostolic Delegate in Washington, D.C. Published accounts of the devastation perpetrated against Church property can be found in Francis Clement Kelley, The Book of Red and Yellow: Being a Story of Blood and a Yellow Streak (Chicago: Press of the Henry O. Shepard Co., 1915), 11-39 and Francis Clement Kelley, Blood-Drenched Altars: Mexican Study and Comment (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Co., 1935), 234-235. Details about the impressment of students are noted in Francis Clement Kelley, The Bishop Jots it Down: An Autobiographical Strain on Memories (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1939), 188.

²"On the Church in Mexico," Catholic World 117 (June 1923): 394.

³For details about the persecution of priests see Kelley, Red and Yellow, 6-19. This book also describes how Indians were misled by the Carrancistas into fighting a Don Clero, who they understood to be an individual (58). Accounts of priests forced to beg can be found in Kelley, Jots, 195. Mock executions are described in Kelley, Blood-Drenched Altars, 235.

⁴Details about the atrocities against nuns can be seen in Kelley, Red and Yellow, 36-39. Kelley later showed his affidavits to Theodore Roosevelt who used them as ammunition against Wilson in the election of 1916. Kelley, Jots, 190-191.

⁵New York Times, 19 November 1914 and 19 December 1914.

⁶Kelley, Red and Yellow, 5.

⁷"Mexican Question" Files 1-4, Kelley Papers.

⁸John Tracy Ellis, The Life of James Cardinal Gibbons: Archbishop of Baltimore, 1834-1921 2 vols. (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Co., 1952), 212. Ellis also says that Gibbons was highly critical of Kelley's attacks on Woodrow Wilson. Later, Gibbons changed his stance and became convinced that intervention in Mexico was inevitable (211-216). Kelley to Tierney (Copies), 19 October 1914 and 26 October 1914, Kelley Papers. Reverend R. Planchet to Kelley, 31 May 1916, Kelley Papers. Kelley's reply was handwritten on Planchet's letter presumably for his secretary to prepare and mail. Much of the Bishop's correspondence was so marked.

⁹Charles C. Cumberland, Mexican Revolution: The Constitutionalist Years (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1972), 79 and 185. Robert E. Quirk, The Mexican Revolution and the Catholic Church 1910-1929, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973), 60 and 186-192. J. Lloyd Mecham, Church and State in Latin America: A History of Politico-Ecclesiastical Relations (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1934), 463.

¹⁰Kelley, Jots, 67.

¹¹Kelley, Blood-Drenched Altars, 167.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Kelley, Jots, 86.

¹⁴James P. Gaffey, Francis Clement Kelley and the American Catholic Dream 2 vols. (Bensenville, Illinois: The Heritage Foundation, Inc., 1980), 4-8.

¹⁵Ibid., 129 and 146.

¹⁶Kelley, Jots, 23.

¹⁷Gaffey, Francis Clement Kelley, 356-360.

¹⁸Ibid., 201-202.

¹⁹Kelley, Jots, 4-36.

²⁰Ibid., 36.

²¹Ibid., 73.

²²For a discussion of Kelley at Nicolet see Kelley, Jots, 62. Information about his life at Lapeer can be seen in Thomas Elton Brown, "Bible-Belt Catholicism: A History of the Roman Catholic Church in Oklahoma, 1905-1945" (Ph.D. diss., Oklahoma State University, 1974), 124. Details about

Kelley's military service can be found in Kelley, Jots, 96-106.

²³Kelley, Jots, 106-110.

²⁴Ibid., 110.

²⁵Brown, "Bible-Belt Catholicism," Introduction.

²⁶August Heckscher, Woodrow Wilson: A Biography (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1991), 51.

²⁷Reverend J. Francis Prim to Kelley, 18 September 1912, Kelley Papers.

²⁸Gaffey, Francis Clement Kelley, 14-16.

²⁹Kelley, Jots, 118-155.

³⁰"A Committee of the Catholic Church Extension Society to Pope Benedict XV" (Copy), 9 June 1910, Kelley Papers. This letter also suggested that Kelley be made a Titular Bishop.

³¹Kelley, Jots, 161.

³²Kelley to Reverend Wilfrid Parsons (Copy), 26 January 1928, Kelley Papers.

³³James D. White, The Souls of the Just: A Necrology of the Catholic Church in Oklahoma (Tulsa: The Sarto Press, 1983), 39.

³⁴Kelley, Blood-Drenched Altars, 238.

³⁵Francis Clement Kelley, Letters to Jack: Written by a Priest to his Nephew (Chicago: Extension Press, 1917).

³⁶Brown, "Bible-Belt Catholicism," 139.

³⁷Descriptions of border towns can be seen in Kelley, Red and Yellow, 4-5 and Gaffey, Francis Clement Kelley, 7-11.

³⁸An example of the type of article used to raise money can be seen in Kelley, "Where the Gates of Hell are Open," Extension (November 1914).

³⁹"Mexican Question" Files 1-4, Kelley Papers. These files contain newspaper clippings, articles, and over fifty affidavits translated from Spanish. See also Kelley, Book of Red and Yellow, 10 and 70.

⁴⁰Kelley, Red and Yellow, 9.

⁴¹Ibid., 42. The tale of the prioress is noted on pages 35-38.

⁴²Ibid., 30.

⁴³Ibid., 29-31.

⁴⁴Ibid., 5.

⁴⁵Ibid., 63-69.

⁴⁶Cumberland, Constitutionalist Years, 340-360. Kelley, Altars, 261-265.

⁴⁷Kelley, Red and Yellow, 74.

⁴⁸Ibid., 73-74.

CHAPTER III

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN MEXICO: FROM CORTEZ TO CARDENAS

There is no comparison between the influence of any single religious institution in the United States and that of the Roman Catholic Church in Mexico. Spanish Catholicism in colonial Mexico produced a monopolistic, elitist institution that was identified with the mother country. Following independence, the Church refused to adapt to democratic forms of government and chose to align with conservative, authoritarian regimes in order to maintain its privileged status. During the nineteenth century, Mexican liberals became convinced that the Church was an impediment to progress and must, therefore, not only be separate from the State but submissive to it as well.

Unlike many English settlers who came to the New World, the Spaniards were not at odds with their sovereign in regards to religion. In fact, the Spanish Conquest was an act of glorification of both the monarch and the Catholic faith. Shortly after subduing the Aztecs, Cortés asked Charles V to send friars to convert them. The process of colonization, therefore, required the integration of a vastly different indigenous culture into the Spanish system.

Throughout the Colonial Period, however, Spaniards always dominated the political, social, and religious spheres.¹

Because of Iberian domination, Catholic clerics failed to produce a "native priesthood" in New Spain. As Robert Ricard notes, their neglect prevented the Church from "striking deep roots in the nation [and] gave it the appearance and character of a foreign institution." It also made the Church "dependent upon the mother country."² The reason for this development centered on a basic assumption that the Indians were inferior and, therefore, incapable of understanding the intricacies of Western theology. During the Colonial Period, only 32 of 171 bishops and archbishops were American-born.³ A shortage of foreign priests later necessitated the recruitment of native clergymen, but even then, they were relegated to the poorest parishes. Understandably, American-born Spaniards, or criollos, and the indigenous peoples perceived the Church as an elitist institution.⁴

The Catholic Church received special privileges from the Spanish crown that allowed it to become a powerful entity in the New World. The most important of these was its status as the official state religion, which meant in essence, that Catholicism in Spanish America never had to compete with other religions for influence. Another significant privilege was the fuero eclesiástico, or the right to try clergymen in the Church's own courts. As historian Richard N. Sinkin describes it, the fuero

essentially created a "state within the state."⁵ The most important privilege from an economic standpoint was the system of mortmain. This legal advantage allowed the Church to accumulate vast amounts of property that could never be alienated and was exempt from taxation. In addition, the Church became the primary lending institution of the Spanish colonies and grew wealthy from benefices, investments, and mortgages.⁶

The Church enjoyed these special privileges and also held great control over the general populace in New Spain. It maintained a pervasive influence over every aspect of the individual's existence. Through education; the confessional; the Inquisition; marriage, birth, and death rites; and the power of excommunication; the Catholic clergy exercised spiritual and social control.⁷ Sinkin notes that "At every major juncture in his life the Mexican was required to pledge once again his obedience to the Church."⁸

Although the Church held much power in New Spain, the Crown restricted its autonomy. The king maintained several privileges that allowed him to control the Church, such as the "royal patronage" or the right to nominate vacant clerical positions. The monarch also had the right to determine the boundaries of future dioceses, receive and distribute a portion of the ecclesiastical tithes, and veto all Papal correspondence. Spain further required the colonial Church to seek permission before building churches, monasteries, or hospitals.⁹

The Catholic Church was the most visible aspect of the traditional Old World system in the Americas. The colonists associated it with European monarchism and the Papacy and recognized it as an epitome of elitism. J. Lloyd Mecham points out that dissatisfaction with the Church was not a major cause of independence; nevertheless, the clergy's actions during the revolt, and throughout the nineteenth century, caused Liberals to harbor resentment toward it.¹⁰

By 1810, when the movement for independence began, the colonial Church had become politically and economically weakened and experienced a severe shortage of clerics. This condition resulted from several royal decrees issued during the eighteenth century that attempted to curtail the power of the orders. One of these decrees ordered the expulsion of the Jesuits in 1767. In 1804, to raise funds for its war against Great Britain, the Crown began to force loans from mortgages held on chantries and pious works in New Spain. This action particularly affected the lower clergy, who were dependent on these funds for their livelihood.¹¹

Dissatisfaction within the priesthood was evident as the Independence movement began. Several priests, including Miguel Hidalgo and José María Morelos, not only supported separation from Spain but also led the uprising. The colonial hierarchy condemned this action and excommunicated the two men. In 1820, however, when liberal reforms were forced upon the Spanish king, the American episcopate changed its allegiance and supported independence. The

hierarchy now feared that loyalty to the mother country would entail the loss of its own privileges.¹²

Following independence in 1821, Mexico experienced thirty-four years of rebellions and counterrebellions. This period produced forty-five governments and five constitutions. These conflicts largely resulted from the struggle between the Liberals, or Federalists, and the Conservatives, or Centralists. The Centralists included the landed aristocracy, the military, and the clergy. The group was comprised almost entirely of urbanites; many were avowed monarchists. The opposing Federalists consisted of liberal criollo and mestizo (mixed blood) professionals and intellectuals. They were democratic in ideology and supported a federalist system.¹³

The Centralists believed that Catholicism was an important part of the traditional system that should be retained in Mexico. An integral aspect of the Old World system was its assumption that society was based on a God-given hierarchy that required some men to be followers and others to be leaders. Therefore, Conservatives, especially clergymen, opposed democracy.¹⁴ The most prominent spokesman for the Centralists, Lucas Alamán, thought that Catholicism was the only institution that united all Mexicans. The anarchy that followed independence convinced Alamán and other conservatives such as José María Gutiérrez de Estrada that foreign liberal ideas were the cause of Mexico's turmoil. They believed that Mexicans were not

prepared for republicanism and that only a constitutional monarchy would restore order and stability.¹⁵

British and French political philosophy, however, influenced the Federalists. They believed in the concepts of individual human rights and a division of political powers.¹⁶ The Liberals were generally young professionals who had been educated in secular institutions; many could not remember living under the Spanish monarchy. The majority were mestizos who resented the prejudice and arrogance of the elitist conservatives and the Church.¹⁷

As children or young men, most of the Liberals had experienced or witnessed injustices committed by clergymen. For instance, Melchor Ocampo knew of a priest who had refused to bury a man because the man's widow lacked the required fee. Another prominent Liberal, Benito Juárez, had been jailed in the 1830s when a Church official ordered his arrest for defending a village "against the excessive demands of [their] local curate."¹⁸ Liberals denounced the clergy for their excessive fees for baptisms, marriages, and funerals. The inability of the poor to pay these fees contributed to debt peonage as people borrowed the money needed for these services from their landlords. It also resulted in a high rate of illegitimacy because couples could not afford to pay for the marriage ceremony. As a result of these types of clerical injustices, almost all of the Liberals were anticlerical.¹⁹

Men such as José María Luis Mora and Lorenzo de Zavala believed that social attitudes must change before Mexicans would be receptive to new political ideas. Liberals were convinced that identification with "corporate" entities such as the Church, haciendas, ejidos (communally-owned land), and the military, prevented Mexicans from developing a sense of nationalism. Therefore, they considered these groups, especially the Church, obstructions to progress.²⁰

In 1824, Mexicans established a federal republic under a new constitution. As a concession to the Centralists, the Federalists compromised over the issue of religion. The Conservatives, led by Fray Servando Teresa de Mier and Carlos María de Bustamante, were able to retain Roman Catholicism as the official religion. The republic would continue to deny religious toleration, and both the Church and the military would retain their fueros.²¹

From independence until the Mexican-American War (1846-1848), the prevailing political trend in Mexico was the development of strong, autonomous leaders known as caudillos. Perhaps the most important of these charismatic men was Antonio López de Santa Anna, who became president of Mexico eleven times. Santa Anna began his political career as a Liberal, but because he seemed to have no real sense of loyalty or political conviction, he became a defender of conservatism.²²

In 1833, Mexicans elected Santa Anna and Valentín Gómez Farías president and vice-president, respectively. Gómez

Farías was a staunch Liberal who immediately instituted reforms against the military and the Church. These reforms abolished fueros, secularized education, declared monastic vows non-binding, made the State responsible for clerical appointments, and declared that the tithe was no longer mandatory. Conservatives were outraged and convinced the unscrupulous Santa Anna to oust Gómez Farías and rescind the reform legislation. In 1836, the Conservatives drafted a new constitution that restored the Church's status under the Constitution of 1824.²³

Sinkin states that "The Santa Anna dictatorship was . . . the precipitating event in the development of a liberal Reform movement in Mexico." Santa Anna expelled almost all of the Liberals during his dictatorship. In the United States these exiles joined together and developed a common ideology and distinct goals. The most immediate objective of the Liberals was to oust Santa Anna, and in 1855 they succeeded in doing so under the banner of the Revolution of Ayutla.²⁴

Another of the Liberals' primary goals was to curtail the power of the Church. The progressive group felt a great deal of bitterness toward the clergy for their perceived part in the war with the United States from 1846 to 1848. In 1846, the Mexican government sent General Mariano Paredes to oppose a northern invasion by the United States, but Paredes led his men to the capital and overthrew his own government instead. The Church supported Paredes, and, in

return, he appointed twenty clerics to Congress.²⁵ One year later, when President Gómez Farías attempted to expropriate Church property to fund the war effort, a pro-clerical army known as the "Polkos" attacked the government.²⁶ Liberals emerging under the leadership of Benito Juárez considered the Church's actions during the war treasonous.²⁷

As the Liberals gained control of the central government following the Ayutla movement, they instituted a number of sweeping reforms. The period is therefore remembered as Mexico's Reform Era. The most well-known reformers during this time were Benito Juárez, Miguel Lerdo de Tejada, and Ignacio Comonfort. Under the Ley Juárez of 1855, the Liberals suppressed all of the Church's special tribunals except the ecclesiastical courts.²⁸

The Liberals enacted other laws to curb the power of the Church. The first, known as the Ley Lerdo of 1856, stipulated that the Church could not own property or buildings unless they were used specifically for religious services. Other Church holdings were to be sold; the proceeds going to the State. The law required, however, that the purchaser pay the Church interest equivalent to any rents formerly received from the property. Therefore, the Church maintained its wealth, but only in the form of money and not property.²⁹ A later law in 1857 made the registration of births, marriages, adoptions, and deaths civil functions and no longer the prerogative of the Church.

In the same year, the Ley Iglesias gave the State the right to regulate fees for the administering of the sacraments.³⁰

The Constitution of 1857 and the legislation that followed in 1859 and 1860 were the culmination of the Liberal drive to bring the Church under State control. The new constitution incorporated all of the various laws enacted during the Reform Era. For the first time in Mexico, a constitution did not proclaim Roman Catholicism the State religion, and Mexicans were given a bill of rights. Another unique aspect of the document was the requirement that all Mexicans swear an oath of allegiance to it. The reformers wanted the people to feel a sense of loyalty to the law and not to personalities such as Santa Anna.³¹

The new constitution eliminated all fueros. It secularized education, denied the civil responsibility to pay tithes, forbade priests from discussing politics in public, and made the fulfillment of monastic vows optional instead of obligatory. The Constitution also made marriage a civil contract and gave the government control over cemeteries and marriage and death records. Furthermore, clergymen were now forbidden to wear their clerical garb in public.³²

The severity of this legislation produced a bitter conflict between Liberals and Conservatives that resulted in a civil war between 1858 and 1861 known as the Reform War. The Church's response to the constitution was to deny the

administering of the sacraments to anyone who took an oath of loyalty to it. When faced with a choice between their religion and their government, many Mexicans sided with the Church and were prepared to use violence to defend it.³³

The Church's response to the Constitution of 1857 strengthened Liberal antagonism toward the clergy. Formerly moderate anti-clericals became radicals. Now almost all Liberals referred to the clergy as "anti-Mexican."³⁴

The Reform War began when Conservative General Félix Zuloaga arrested Benito Juárez, dissolved the Congress, and established his own government in Mexico City. Zuloaga then nullified the Reform Laws and gained the support of the Church. Juárez later escaped and, refusing to recognize Zuloaga as president, established his own government in Veracruz.³⁵

While Juárez was in Veracruz, he issued decrees that virtually subordinated the Church in Mexico to the State. In 1859, Juárez outlawed all monastic orders, secularized cemeteries, eliminated nunneries, nationalized all Church property, and restricted the number of religious holidays. The Reformer further outlawed the selling of Church property and made it illegal for government officials to participate in public religious functions. In 1860, Juárez established religious toleration in Mexico for the first time. He also denied the clergy the right to offer criminals asylum in churches, and he declared that churches must financially support the government when requested to do so. These laws

took effect when the Liberals emerged victorious in 1861 and Juárez was elected president.³⁶

The chaotic political condition of Mexico since Independence had convinced many Conservatives and clerics that only a monarchy could restore peace and stability in Mexico. In 1862, with Conservative support, the French occupied the country; two years later Napoleon III imposed Archduke Maximilian of Austria as Emperor of Mexico. This action outraged the juaristas, who once again abandoned Mexico City.³⁷

The Emperor Maximilian, however, disappointed the Conservatives and the Church almost as much as he antagonized the Liberals. The clergy expected the Emperor to revoke the Reform laws and restore the Church's property, but at heart, Maximilian himself was a Liberal. He hoped to attract the support of the Mexican progressives; but in the process, he alienated both groups. In 1867, Napoleon III withdrew his military support, and the juaristas quickly overthrew the Emperor and executed him. Afterwards, Mexicans associated the Liberals with nationalism and the Conservatives were greatly discredited.³⁸

Despite their achievements, the Liberals discovered that legislation would not guarantee social change unless future executives were committed to enforcement. In 1876, Mexicans again placed their government in the hands of a caudillo because they were weary of war, political instability, and economic deprivation. Porfirio Díaz

governed Mexico as a virtual dictator for almost thirty-five years. Although Díaz brought economic growth and modernization to the country, his indifference to social problems and his disregard for the constitution created an impetus for change that ultimately led to the Mexican Revolution in 1910.³⁹

The Díaz Era produced a xenophobia in Mexico that would later characterize the Revolution. To encourage economic development, Díaz welcomed foreign investors and gave them special concessions and legal privileges. Many Mexicans resented the favoritism that Díaz showed foreigners because it limited economic opportunities and produced a great disparity in income.⁴⁰ Another reason for discontent was Díaz's attitude toward the Church. In order to ensure social harmony and to gain the Church's support, Díaz ignored the anti-clerical reforms of the Constitution of 1857 and allowed the clergy virtual autonomy. One result of Díaz' conciliatory policy was an increase in the number of European, especially Spanish, priests in Mexico. This group became a target for persecution during the Revolution.⁴¹

During the first decade of the twentieth century, labor disputes, Indian revolts, and social protests interrupted the Díaz regime. Led by the Flores Magón brothers, a new generation of Liberals emerged who were more radical than their nineteenth century predecessors. Many of the Liberals were from the northern border states, where Roman Catholicism was not as pervasive and was influenced by

American Protestantism and Freemasonry. The group denounced the suppression of the Constitution. Individuals arose with political and social plans that expressed more concern for the poor and advocated programs of land and education reform.⁴²

In 1911, Francisco Madero overthrew Díaz by advocating immediate political reforms including no reelection of the president. Madero, however, was slower in addressing Mexico's social problems. Radical Liberals demanded that Madero quickly implement needed changes in land distribution, education, and labor reform. When Madero failed to take action on these issues, radicals, such as Emiliano Zapata, rebelled against the new president.⁴³

Conservatives, on the other hand, wanted to restore an autocratic system like that of Porfirio Díaz'. These men feared losing their favored status because Madero hoped to eliminate special privileges and monopolies. Although Madero was not an anticlerical and had allowed the formation of a Catholic Party, the clergy also opposed him. They realized that Liberals could choose to enforce the anti-clerical clauses of the constitution.⁴⁴

In 1913, a conservative coalition succeeded in overthrowing Madero and assassinating him. An agreement among the conspirators placed General Victoriano Huerta in charge of a provisional government with an understanding that General Félix Díaz would later be "elected" president. Huerta, however, ensured his own election by sending Díaz

and another opponent, Federico Gamboa, out of the country while the voting took place.⁴⁵

Both Díaz and Gamboa had been involved in the conspiracy to oust Madero. Díaz was the nephew of Porfirio and stood as a symbol of autocracy and privilege. Gamboa was a famous lay Catholic novelist and diplomat. Other men who took part in the revolt included: Cecilio Ocón, a Mexico City businessman; Aureliano Blanquet, the former military commander of Veracruz; and Manuel Mondragón, a federal army officer.⁴⁶ During Huerta's brief administration, these "felicistas" became political exiles who eventually reunited in the United States. In July 1914, Venustiano Carranza, who had proclaimed himself the First Chief of the Constitutionalist Army, overthrew Huerta. While Carranza headed the government, the exiled felicistas staged an unsuccessful counter-revolution in 1917. In the process, they became acquainted with Francis Clement Kelley, who assisted them with their plans.⁴⁷

Kelley became interested in aiding a counter-revolt because some revolutionary officers and state governors had murdered, extorted, and exiled Mexican and foreign clergymen. Historian Charles C. Cumberland notes that it is difficult to substantiate all of the claims made by the Church because many of the accounts did not supply the names of victims and were based on "fourth-hand testimonies."⁴⁸ However, Cumberland adds that State Department files verify many of the Church's claims. The files reveal that by 1914,

persecution of clergymen was "commonplace throughout the regions dominated by the Constitutionalists."⁴⁹

The revolutionaries demanded money from the clergy, confiscated Church property, and exiled clerics. As Cumberland states, the "revolutionists mistreated the foreign religious, often in near-barbarous forms."⁵⁰ General Alvaro Obregón sentenced a bishop to eight years imprisonment, and in Guadalajara, "he exiled all foreign clerics, jailed all nationals, imposed on them a ransom of 100,000 pesos, closed all the churches, and converted the bishop's palace into a barracks."⁵¹ In Mexico City, Obregón arrested hundreds of clergymen and demanded half a million pesos from them.⁵²

Historian Robert E. Quirk notes that Pancho Villa was the most anti-clerical of the revolutionary generals.⁵³ In 1914, Villa executed five priests in Zacatecas.⁵⁴ Witnesses testified that, besides executing and ransoming clergymen, Villa confiscated nunneries and placed brothels in them.⁵⁵

The revolutionaries offered several reasons for their actions against the Church. They believed that the Church was wealthy and, therefore, their demands for money were common. They particularly resented the number of foreign clerics in Mexico and often exiled them. Many of the revolutionists thought that the Church supported the hacendados, whom they believed contributed to Mexico's extreme poverty.⁵⁶ The most common complaint against the Church, however, was that it had supported Victoriano

Huerta.⁵⁷ The Catholic daily El País had endorsed Huerta, while the Catholic Party and the Mexican hierarchy denounced the Constitutionalists.⁵⁸

Venustiano Carranza was de facto head of the revolutionary government from late 1915 to 1917, then served as the elected president until 1920. Carranza believed in regulating the Church, but he was not a radical anti-clerical. As historian Douglas Richmond notes, Carranza respected Mexican piety and recognized the danger in "provoking the religious masses."⁵⁹ He only suppressed the Church when he believed that it was interfering in politics. Therefore, the First Chief expelled sixty-five foreign priests in October of 1914 because he thought they were supporting Huerta.⁶⁰ Later, however, Carranza became more conciliatory toward the Church because he needed to stabilize the country and he wanted their support. In 1919, he allowed all of the exiled clergymen to return to Mexico.⁶¹

American Catholics were not the only group in the United States who opposed Carranza and the Revolution. United States businessmen with financial interests in Mexico also feared the movement. Carranza was a true nationalist and, beginning in 1914, issued decrees that were deemed socialistic and potentially damaging to foreign economic concerns. The First Chief hoped to reduce foreign-owned concessions granted during the Porfiriato. He began by nationalizing Mexico's railroad, telegraph, and telephone

systems. He then increased taxes on mining and oil industries. Americans affected by these measures, along with many Catholics in the United States, urged President Woodrow Wilson to deny Carranza diplomatic recognition unless he issued guarantees protecting foreign interests and the Mexican Church.⁶²

Wilson was indeed reluctant to grant Carranza recognition. In 1914 when the revolutionary coalition emerged victorious over Victoriano Huerta, Carranza called for a convention to select a Mexican president. The result of this meeting, held in Aguascalientes, was a division between Carranza and his former allies, Emiliano Zapata and Pancho Villa. Carranza gained control over much of the country, but violence continued, some of it directed against Americans.⁶³

From the beginning of the Revolution in 1910, Americans in Mexico and along the United States border, had died as a result of the warfare. In 1919, the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations held hearings to investigate Mexican affairs. During the hearings, the State Department reported that it had received 73 claims of deaths since 1910. The Committee, however, concluded that the number of Americans killed as a result of the Revolution was 461.⁶⁴ Despite the absence of definite figures, the deaths alarmed the public and the government.

In 1915, President Woodrow Wilson obtained certain guarantees from Carranza for the protection of American

citizens and their property in Mexico. With these assurances, Wilson granted Carranza recognition. As a consequence, however, Pancho Villa reacted to the news by attacking Americans at Santa Isabel, Chihuahua, and Columbus, New Mexico, provoking the Pershing Expedition. United States' complaints regarding the treatment of Americans, their property, and their investments continued for many years.⁶⁵

In 1917, American investors and Catholics grew even more concerned when Mexico enacted a new constitution. The document contained articles that affected both groups' interests. Articles 3, 5, 27, and 130 related to the Church and included restrictions against Church-directed education and political parties with religious affiliations. The Constitution of 1917 forbade monastic orders and religious acts performed outside church buildings. Article 27 also reconfirmed the Constitution of 1857's nationalization of Church property. It prohibited foreign priests from practicing in the country and granted states the right to regulate the number of ministers. All priests were required to register with civil authorities.⁶⁶

Thousands of American investors and property owners also had good reason to be alarmed by the new constitution. Article 27 gave the State the right to expropriate private property by nationalizing subsoil and mineral rights. Carranza, however, did not enforce most of these laws.⁶⁷

The Mexican President did not enforce the legislation because he did not endorse most of it. When Carranza had called for a convention to meet at Querétaro in 1916, he had envisioned a constitution that only slightly revised the Constitution of 1857. The constituent congress, however, consisted of a majority of radical liberals who outmaneuvered the President and his followers. The result was a radical document that remains in effect to the present.⁶⁸

Tension between Church and State in Mexico subsided between 1918 and 1920. Beginning in the 1920s, however, the Church began to clash with rising reform groups. Some of the reformers embraced communism or socialism and were anti-clerical. The national labor organization, Confederación Regional Obrera Mexicana, or CROM, committed acts of violence against the Church. Catholics, in turn, started an anti-socialism campaign and organized the National Catholic Labor Conference.⁶⁹

In 1923, President Alvaro Obregón (1920-1924) expelled the Apostolic Delegate Archbishop Ernesto Filippi because the cleric had violated the law by performing an outdoor religious ceremony dressed in his clerical robes. Obregón wanted to demonstrate that the government would uphold the law because the number of participants in the event was alarming. The action did not cause much dissent, however, because Obregón tended to ignore most other religious restrictions. He was principally interested in implementing

social reforms and needed the support of the religious masses.⁷⁰

American investors obtained a degree of financial security during Obregón's administration. After three years as president, Obregón finally gained diplomatic recognition by agreeing to the Bucareli accords in 1923. These agreements stipulated that Mexico would not enforce Article 27 of the 1917 Constitution retroactively. This arrangement offered Americans with oil and land investments in Mexico a temporary reprieve from the threat of nationalization.⁷¹

Plutarco Elías Calles, who was president from 1924 to 1928, destroyed the relatively peaceful coexistence that had developed between the clergy and the government. The conciliatory Obregón had allowed a new Apostolic Delegate to correspond with the Vatican in code. In return, the Papacy promised to appoint only bishops who would avoid involvement in politics. Calles, an avid anti-clerical, did not consider himself bound by this agreement because the Constitution of 1917 prohibited correspondence with Rome. The new Mexican president intended to enforce the Constitution in regards to religion.⁷²

In 1926, the Archbishop of Mexico City, José Mora y del Rio, told a newspaper reporter that Catholics would not obey the religious restrictions of the Constitution. The State charged him with sedition, but later dropped the charge when he denied the existence of a conspiracy. Calles, however, became fearful that the clergy was encouraging militancy,

and, therefore, he enforced long ignored legislation. He ordered the expulsion of all foreign priests and enacted a new penal code that made anti-clerical legislation effective.⁷³

These new codes prohibited monasteries and nunneries and established fines for inducing minors to take religious vows. The legislation provided severe penalties for clergymen who engaged in political activity. The government was also authorized to confiscate all Church property. The codes further outlawed parochial schools and the use of religious ornamentation in any school.⁷⁴

Calles' action led to a suspension of Church services by the Mexican clergy and initiated a new wave of clerical refugees to the United States. The Church also attempted to cripple the economy by asking Catholics to stage an economic boycott. But the most important consequence of the new laws was a religious revolt known as the Cristero Rebellion (1926-1929).⁷⁵

In 1926, groups of peasants began to stage revolts in the Mexican countryside, claiming to act in the name of "Christ the King." The uprisings were unorganized and lacking in resources; in the beginning, the cristeros, as they were called, used "slings, sticks, and machetes."⁷⁶ Lacking leadership and military expertise, the cristeros relied on sporadic guerrilla attacks. The number of participants eventually exceeded 50,000, and most of these were willing to be martyrs to their cause.

After three years of fighting, more than 90,000 combatants were killed; the number of civilians who died as a result of the war is unknown. The Papacy and the Mexican hierarchy opposed this movement, and only five priests are known to have participated actively. By 1929, both sides knew that the war could go on indefinitely because the government could not curtail the cristeros' guerrilla activity and the Catholics were unwilling to surrender.⁷⁷

Calles' strict adherence to the constitution brought into question the very nature of ecclesiastical authority. The Church considered its own law superior to civil or man-made law; therefore, submission to this legislation meant, in essence, a denial of the Church's higher authority. Because the State forbade the clergy to be involved in politics, the Church could not legitimately defend its position. Protest, therefore, was left in the hands of the laity.⁷⁸

Another event that intensified the conflict concerned the appointment of a new Apostolic Delegate. The new Delegate's name was Jorge I. Caruana, a naturalized American citizen. The Calles' administration claimed that Caruana had misrepresented himself when entering the country. The government stated that Caruana had identified himself as a professor because foreign clerics were forbidden in Mexico. The Apostolic Delegate denied these charges, but the Mexican government expelled him nonetheless.⁷⁹

The relationship between American investors and the Mexican government also became deeply strained during the Calles administration. In 1925 Mexico passed a law requiring all oil companies to apply to the government to confirm their concessions. The law also stated that, in the future, Mexico would only grant fifty year concessions. As a consequence, United States Ambassador James Sheffield, Secretary of State Frank B. Kellogg, and numerous other Americans, publicly denounced Calles as a "Bolshevik." The conflict became so intense that President Calvin Coolidge sent Ambassador Dwight W. Morrow to Mexico to "'keep us out of war.'"⁸⁰ Morrow succeeded in concluding a compromise that left the application requirement intact but removed the fifty year limitation.⁸¹

In 1928, the assassination of President-elect Alvaro Obregón exacerbated the religious conflict. Obregón's murder by a Catholic terrorist blatantly demonstrated the intensity of the Catholics' conviction to defy anti-clerical legislation. Interim President Emilio Portes Gil (1928-1930), realized the necessity for reaching a compromise with the Church to end the violence.⁸² Ambassador Morrow also recognized this need and was instrumental in negotiating a modus vivendi.

In 1929, Morrow arranged a meeting between Calles, Emilio Portes Gil, and Father John J. Burke, the General Secretary of the National Catholic Welfare Conference. The three men were able to reach a compromise that ended the

Cristero Rebellion and the suspension of Church services. Essentially, the agreement left the legal situation the same as it had been in 1926 when the conflict began. The Church agreed to the registration of priests, and the new penal code remained unchanged. The State compromised on one issue; it permitted the clergy to petition the government to amend the Constitution. The important aspect of the compromise was that neither side gave the appearance of being defeated.⁸³

Most violence between Church and State ended in 1929, but the 1930s brought a new dispute. Historian Stanley E. Hilton calls education the major source of conflict between the clergy and the government during that decade. The Revolutionaries realized that they must indoctrinate the Mexican public through education. In 1933, President Abelardo Rodríguez implemented a six-year plan intended to socialize Mexico's education system. The following year, Article 3 of the Constitution was amended to require the teaching of socialism in primary, secondary, and normal schools.⁸⁴

The Mexican hierarchy considered the action heretical and threatened to excommunicate any Catholic who taught socialism. One bishop warned Catholic parents against sending their children to such schools. Archbishop Pascual Díaz warned the public that "Bolshevism" would destroy religion in Mexico just as it was being destroyed in Russia.⁸⁵

President Lázaro Cárdenas (1934-1940) intended to enforce the Constitution, but he did not want to destroy religion in Mexico. Cárdenas was more committed to social reform in Mexico than any president before him. He needed the support of the pious lower classes to implement his social and economic programs. Cárdenas took a conciliatory stance toward the Church, and most of the clerical opposition disappeared.⁸⁶

The Cárdenas Presidency witnessed the culmination of the Liberals' drive to subdue the Catholic Church in Mexico. Throughout Mexican history, the clergy had generally supported the social institutions, ideologies, and individuals that the Liberals opposed. As a consequence, Liberals placed extreme limitations upon the Church's political and social freedom. As Conservatives and Liberals alternately controlled the government, enforcement of repressive legislation was applied inconsistently for many years. Religious reformers grew progressively more radical as conservative administrations refused to adhere to the anti-clerical reforms.

By the time of the Revolution, radicals were determined to render the Church submissive to State authority. They popularized the conception that the Revolution represented Mexican nationalism. The Revolution ultimately replaced Roman Catholicism as the country's most cohesive institution. It gave the nation a uniqueness and a new

sense of identity, but it never destroyed the influence of Catholicism completely.

ENDNOTES

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CHAPTER IV
NON-RECOGNITION AND COUNTER-
REVOLUTIONARIES, 1914-1920

In 1914, when Francis Clement Kelley became involved with the Mexican Church conflict, the Revolution was in its fourth year. For the next six years Kelley wrote continually to enlighten the American public about the religious persecution. He blamed Venustiano Carranza for the atrocities, and he encouraged the Wilson administration to deny him diplomatic recognition. Despite Kelley's efforts, Wilson extended de facto recognition to Carranza in October 1915.

Between 1915 and 1917 Kelley financially assisted the Félix Díaz counter-revolution in hopes of restoring the Church's status in Mexico. The Mexican Constitution of 1917 heightened Kelley's concern for the Church, and he became convinced that the Revolution intended to destroy religion in Mexico. The attempted revolt failed, but in 1919, Carranza, who was never a radical anti-cleric, permitted the exiled clergymen to return home. For the remainder of the Carranza administration, the government and the Church coexisted relatively harmoniously.

When Kelley first made the commitment to help end the persecution of the Mexican Church in 1914, he quickly acquired an important ally in Richard Henry Tierney, the editor of America, a Jesuit weekly published in New York City. Following the recognition of Carranza, Tierney became highly critical of Woodrow Wilson in his editorials. Tierney denounced the President because he had intervened on Carranza's behalf to help defeat Huerta. Wilson had greatly facilitated Huerta's downfall by permitting arms and supplies to reach the anti-clerical revolutionaries.¹

Tierney was an emotional writer, and, as historian Dwayne Cox remarks, the formerly "lackluster" publication acquired "new fire" after Tierney became editor.² Tierney could be offensive in his overzealousness, and he made many enemies during the crusade. As Dwayne Cox further notes, Tierney managed to "earn the contempt" of the Masons, the Red Cross, and the American Federation of Labor. The editor denounced the Masons because he believed they encouraged the persecution of Catholics in Mexico; he was critical of the AFL for endorsing Carranza. Tierney also faulted the Red Cross because he thought they showed a lack of concern for Catholic refugees.³ In spite of these tirades against opponents, Pope Benedict XV commended both Tierney and Kelley for their efforts regarding the Mexican Church.⁴

In September 1914, Tierney attended the Annual Convention of the American Federation of Catholic Societies and helped write a letter of protest to Secretary of State

William Jennings Bryan. Bryan asked for a specific set of grievances, and Tierney prepared a detailed list of the atrocities and requested that the government intervene to stop the persecution. Bryan and the President replied that Catholics were simply unaware of the administration's efforts, and Wilson assured the Federation that he was doing all that he could.⁵

The President did not think that intervention was justifiable in the Mexican Church/State conflict. Both he and Bryan sent letters to Carranza, cautioning him against the ill effects of negative world opinion, but that was as far as Wilson was willing to pursue the matter. He did not believe that the United States should defend Mexican nationals or Europeans. Wilson's primary concern in regards to Mexico was the protection of American lives and property. Despite Catholic appeals, the President remained adamant on this point.⁶

In November 1914, an article appeared in Extension entitled "Where the Gates of Hell are Open." This article by Kelley exemplified his approach to both enlightening the public and soliciting contributions. The piece began with Kelley's appeal to his readers' emotions. As he related incidents of persecution against Mexican clergymen, his sorrow and anger were evident. Kelley stated that "he could not use words plain enough to tell the vileness." He spoke of exiles "crowded into cattle cars, confined in dungeons, 'insulted, reviled, [and] spit upon' like their Master."

The stories of the nuns, he said, were "too horrible to tell." If Madero's death required vengeance, Kelley asked, "did it need rivers of better blood than ever flowed in his apostate veins, oceans of tears, and sin enough to glut the very gates of hell?"⁷

Kelley appealed for donations by implying that it was the United States' fault that the atrocities were taking place because this country had aided the overthrow of Huerta. He inquired, "Who is to blame?" His answer was: "Ourselves!" Kelley said that "Whoever did the work was a representative of the American people." He added that the Extension Society could use any donation the reader could offer; even five cents would be appreciated to heal the "wounds for which we are so largely responsible."⁸

His methods offended Wilson and perhaps explain the cool reception that Kelley received from William Jennings Bryan when the Secretary agreed to meet with him in early 1915. Bryan inquired if Kelley was editor of Extension and if this "had anything to do with a political campaign?"⁹ Bryan was probably referring to the fact that in December of 1914, Kelley had given Theodore Roosevelt information from his affidavits to use in a newspaper article that denounced Wilson's Mexican policy.¹⁰

Kelley did not forget the matter. In February, Kelley wrote an article regarding the Catholic Party in Mexico. He explained the party's platform, which espoused liberty of conscience, honest elections, a free press, and parental

rights. Kelley asked, "How do you, Mr. American Citizen, like them?" He said that these ideals were dead in Mexico because "the American people . . . helped to kill [them]." Kelley added that only a churchman could restore them. Evidently he believed that the Revolution had destroyed these human rights in Mexico and that the Catholic Party would reestablish them.¹¹

Despite Kelley's hostility toward Wilson, the President agreed to grant the cleric an interview. Wilson was much warmer than his Secretary of State had been, and he talked with Kelley for quite some time. Wilson explained his own views of the Revolution and discussed the need for land reform in Mexico. He told Kelley that some good might eventually emerge from all the bloodshed just as it had in France following the French Revolution. Apparently Wilson considered Mexico's economic problems more urgent than the question of religious freedom.¹² Many years later Kelley would say that Wilson only "half-loved" the principle of "freedom of conscience." He was never a great admirer of Wilson.¹³

As a result of this meeting, Wilson promised Kelley a letter that would outline the administration's policy and its concern for the Mexican Church. The President said that Bryan would send Kelley this statement as soon as possible; Kelley, however, suggested having it published in the press instead. The promised letter appeared in the New York Times on April 22.¹⁴

Bryan, speaking for the President, stated that the administration was concerned about the Catholics in Mexico. He noted, however, that that country's problems could only be settled by an improvement in its economy through land reform and, following that, by education. The Secretary added that the United States must act only in the role of a "friend and advisor." Bryan quoted from a message that he had sent to both Villa and Carranza in July 1914. At that time, he told the revolutionaries that "[n]othing will shock the civilized world more than . . . vindictive action toward priests or ministers." Bryan also warned them that "the treatment already said to have been accorded priests has had a most unfortunate effect upon opinion outside of Mexico." He concluded by informing the Mexicans that religious freedom would be one point that the United States would consider in determining recognition.¹⁵

This threat was what Kelley and many others had desired. Catholics from around the country mailed letters to the President insisting on this course of action. Wilson received letters from almost every United States' bishop, the Federation of Catholic Societies, the Catholic Truth Society, the Knights of Columbus, the Catholic Women's League, the Conference of Catholic Charities, and the Ladies' Catholic Benevolent Association.¹⁶

In mid-1915, the President was still undecided about recognizing Carranza. Carranza had issued statements assuring Wilson that he would respect the freedom of

religion as long as the Church operated within the limits of the law. Later in the year, Wilson asked a hemispheric conference on United States-Latin American Affairs to offer a recommendation concerning recognition. Six Latin American nations, including Argentina, Brazil, and Chile, unanimously concluded that Carranza should be recognized; as a result, Wilson granted the First Chief de facto recognition on October 19, 1915.¹⁷

Arthur S. Link points out that "the effect of the Catholic campaign at home [had been], if anything, to harden [the administration's] determination to proceed" with recognition. Wilson was aware that most Protestants as well as organized labor would support his action. Reporters were told "that the administration was satisfied with Carranza's promises of religious freedom and . . . that Mexican priests who entered politics must expect to be treated like politicians."¹⁸

The President's action produced a profound and lasting effect on Kelley. He would forever feel bitter toward Wilson, and, in fact, later he would try to prevent the President's reelection. In spite of his immense disappointment over this action, Kelley built a seminary for the Mexican exiles in Castroville, Texas. Former Mexican professors taught at the school, and it remained in operation for three years. One of its students later became a bishop.¹⁹

Kelley became more convinced that Protestants and Masons were determined to destroy the Mexican Church. According to historian Douglas Richmond, Masons and Protestants did encourage the persecution. In the Book of Red and Yellow, Kelley had accused anti-Catholic Protestants in the United States of spreading propaganda through the mail. In Extension, Kelley expressed his bitterness over the appointment in Mexico of a Protestant to oversee the YMCA there. He was disturbed by the assignment of a Protestant for a nation that was 98 percent Catholic.²⁰

Kelley was just as concerned about Masons. He told Tierney that he was not sure "just how deep American Masons" were involved in the Revolution, but that there was "some influence keeping the facts from the people."²¹ Tierney was also convinced of this. He informed Kelley that "American masons helped in the . . . revolution by arms and ammunition" and that he could provide "the name of the American agent" and his address.²² In 1917, when Kelley realized that no Catholics had been promoted to general in the United States Army, he remarked that "[t]he influence of the square and compass . . . is very strong."²³

The two crusaders also faulted the American Federation of Labor (AFL) for endorsing Carranza. In the September 1916 issue of Extension, Kelley said that the AFL had endorsed a "looting, thieving, murdering band that has destroyed religion in Mexico."²⁴ The General Secretary of the AFL, Frank Duffy, was a Catholic. Kelley wrote to him

several times to protest the organization's support for the Mexican government and the Mexican labor movement known as Casa del Obrero Mundial, or House of the World's Worker.²⁵

Duffy told Kelley that he first became aware of the organization's actions when he read about them in the Chicago Daily Tribune. He, in turn, protested to AFL President Samuel Gompers.²⁶ The Chicago newspaper had claimed that Carranza hoped to prevent American intervention by forming an alliance with the federation.²⁷ Kelley offered to send all AFL Executive Council members a copy of the Book of Red and Yellow.²⁸

Some groups and individuals in the United States thought that Americans had no right to interfere in the internal affairs of Mexico. A number of Catholics even disliked what Kelley and Tierney were trying to do. A few of Kelley's readers asked why the bishops had left Mexico instead of staying and fighting. One man from Rhinelander, Wisconsin, told Kelley that "when the Bishops Peter and Paul and James were persecuted they did not flee to a friendly country."²⁹

Dr. John W. Butler of the Protestant Missionaries in Mexico City blamed the atrocities on forces outside Carranza's control. In an article for Current Opinion, he said that outrages were committed by "irresponsible mobs or degenerate soldiers, condemned alike by Mexicans of all faiths and revolutionary factions."³⁰ Tierney told Kelley that a Reverend Edward Flannery in the Hartford Times had

written "a long, a mean and an absolutely inconclusive attack on you and me." In another letter, Tierney said that "some of the clergy are not keenly on our side" and that he was getting some "vigorous letters of protest against [his] attitude."³¹

Many publications across the country also defended Wilson's Mexican policy and objected to any kind of American intervention over the issue. Carranza even had his own propaganda publication in the United States called the Mexican Review. The two most prominent American magazines supporting the Mexican president were The Nation and The New Republic. Most Protestant missions also favored the Revolution, including the Methodists, Presbyterians, and Quakers. Although they did not condone the violence, these publications insisted that one could understand the persecution of the Mexican Church only after becoming aware of Mexico's historical experience with Catholicism.³²

American Catholics predominantly opposed the aims and measures of the Constitutionalist, but some remained neutral and considered religious conflicts Mexico's concern. One such Catholic was Joseph P. Tumulty, President Wilson's personal secretary. Tumulty was loyal to his employer and did not allow his religious affiliation to interfere with his professional obligations. On November 29, 1915, the President's secretary issued a press release that became known as the "Tumulty Letter."³³

In this statement Tumulty expressed the administration's reasons for recognizing Venustiano Carranza. The Secretary began by citing historical precedence. He claimed that President James Buchanan had recognized Benito Juárez while being well aware of the reformer's liberal legislation. Those laws were the same ones currently under dispute with the Mexican Church. Presumably, the administration did not want United States Mexican policy to be inconsistent.³⁴

Tumulty listed three more points. He began by citing the agreement among six Latin American countries that recognition of Carranza was desirable. Next, the Secretary explained that Carranza had a loyal following. The United States had sent a series of telegrams to "all generals, governors, and leaders of factions." These men were asked to attend a discussion to reach a "peaceful settlement of their differences." As a result, all of the villistas replied independently and agreed to meet. The carrancistas, however, all referred the matter to their leader--indicating to the Americans a solidarity in Carranza's camp. The final factor was Carranza's guarantee to allow freedom of worship.³⁵

The Tumulty statement concluded by adding that the administration could not substantiate the reports of atrocities toward Mexican nuns. The Secretary stated that "there [were] no official record[s] of a single proven case of this dastardly crime in the files of the Department of

State." He went on to say that the Vicar General of Mexico City, Antonio J. Paredes, could not substantiate any violation of nuns. Tumulty quoted Paredes as follows: "'I have been unable to confirm the rumors that violated nuns have arrived in this capital from other places.'"³⁶

When Francis Clement Kelley read the administration's remarks, he exploded in anger and frustration. In a letter to the editor of the Rock Island Argus in Illinois, Kelley explained that Paredes had been appointed by Carranza and, therefore, the veracity of his statements was highly questionable. Kelley referred to Tumulty's remarks as "misstatements . . . being published throughout the country." He added that if State Department files did not "contain any record of outrages to nuns and persecution of priests and religious," it was "because such records [had] not been allowed to get into the files." "No doubt," he said "these representations themselves are masons, representing anti-Catholic governments." Kelley described the letter as "rot" and accused Tumulty of "selling his birthright."³⁷

In a letter to Richard Tierney, Kelley remarked, "It was the most foolish thing that Wilson ever did." Referring to the upcoming election, he went on to say that:

"It is my judgement that that one letter has lost [Wilson] hundreds of thousands of votes already, and I am afraid it puts an end to poor Tumulty, who I am convinced, never wrote a line of it."³⁸

Kelley also told a Washington attorney that the letter "practically calls the author of the Book of Red and Yellow

a falsifier." Tierney suggested that one of the bishops make a public statement because it was "high time that these men appreciated what we have done for them."³⁹

During this trying time, Kelley carried out his most militant and controversial actions. He joined Senator Albert B. Fall, Theodore Roosevelt, and former Mexican Ambassador Henry Lane Wilson in publicly denouncing Woodrow Wilson's Mexican policy. Kelley also attended the Republican Convention in Chicago in 1916 and used Extension to endorse candidate Charles Evans Hughes. He wrote the editor of the Queen's Work that "If Mr. Hughes wins, I have reason to believe that Carranza will fall at once."⁴⁰

An article in Extension warned the Democrats of the consequences in alienating the Catholic vote. Kelley said that "[i]t is a danger to the prosperity of several thousands of densely ignorant bigots south of the Mason and Dixon line, who now and then ride into power on the back of a long-eared northern jackass."⁴¹ He blasted Wilson in an article the following month, saying that the President was "at heart . . . a parlor socialist."⁴² Another time, he stated that "[t]here isn't a nasty little revolutionist in the world we have not patted on the back." Wilson's actions, Kelley said, caused the world to view the United States as "meddlesome mischief-makers."⁴³ In another instance, he called Wilson's policy "weak" and "conscienceless," and he stated that "it is [a] sign of degradation that many are found to champion it."⁴⁴

Kelley's criticism of Wilson was inconsistent at this point. On one hand, he wanted Wilson to intervene in Mexico for the sake of religious freedom, but, on the other hand, he denounced the president for being "meddlesome." Kelley had been highly critical when Wilson had helped Carranza overthrow Huerta. Kelley favored intervention against the revolutionary government but not against conservatives who favored the Church.

Kelley told Tierney that he was aware of "the danger of being pulled into politics over [the] Mexican situation." He claimed that he did not want to see "an anti-Catholic campaign" but that the Democrats could not afford to lose the Catholic vote. Kelley stressed that the emphasis should be on the "religious liberty issue" and that they must insist that it was "not an exclusively Catholic question."⁴⁵

During this time, many Americans thought that Mexican society was becoming socialistic. Labor organizations emerged, the most important being the radical Casa del Obrero Mundial. Carranza had also nationalized Mexico's railroads, telegraphs, and telephones. Although the Carranza government did exhibit socialist tendencies, in actuality, the Mexican president was motivated more by sentiments of nationalism than socialism.⁴⁶

In 1916, Kelley sent a letter to the Catholic clergy of the United States regarding Mexican socialism. He stated that he considered it his duty to inform them "as to just what [was] going on." Kelley did not indicate where any

"new" information was coming from, but he claimed that, "Recent happenings absolutely prove[d] that the Constitutionalists propose[d] to destroy the Church root and branch." Kelley informed the clergy that "Socialism . . . is in the saddle now." He further stated that "the Industrial Workers of the World have received many Catholic buildings." The "question" he added, is one "of saving the Catholic Church in a whole nation."⁴⁷

Kelley's and Tierney's militancy alienated more Catholics. One Extension subscriber complained to Kelley about a pamphlet he had received entitled "Wilson, Gompers, and Carranza." The man wanted to know if he had been sent the pamphlet because he was Catholic. He thought that it had been mailed to Catholics to "[create] hostility [toward] President Wilson."⁴⁸ Another man from Los Angeles told Kelley that "Protestants say we are against labor." This same person wanted to know why Catholics were opposed to socialism when it was a system designed to distribute wealth.⁴⁹ These types of responses probably prompted Kelley to remark in Extension that the fight would continue; if some people did not approve, they had the option of "lumping it."⁵⁰

Kelley's anti-Wilson campaign came to an abrupt halt when Montana Senator Thomas J. Walsh, member of the Democratic National Committee, sent a letter of protest to George Willian Mundelein, the Archbishop of Chicago. Walsh, a Roman Catholic, was blunt and firm in criticizing the

September issue of Extension for its endorsement of Hughes. He threatened to make Kelley's anti-Wilson campaign a political issue if the Church persisted in "trying to control the government." The senator accused the magazine of becoming "a partisan journal." Mundelein immediately informed Kelley of Walsh's complaints, and the articles ceased.⁵¹

Although Wilson won the election, the Catholic campaign had an effect, especially in Indiana, where the President lost the state. Wilson biographer, Arthur S. Link, claims that Kelley had an important influence on the Catholic vote and that The Book of Red and Yellow made a definite impact. Many American Catholics felt that Wilson was unconcerned about the plight of the Mexican Church.⁵²

The President was perplexed over the Catholics' defiance. He could not understand why Catholics criticized his position on Mexico and his belief that the United States had no right to interfere in another nation's internal politics. He attributed much of their animosity to Kelley. After the election, Wilson informed Tumulty that any requests from Kelley were to be "simply . . . overlooked, not only as far as I am concerned but so far as members of the Cabinet are concerned." Kelley later told Bishop William T. Russell that he was "a persona non grata at the White House."⁵³

President Wilson had another reason to dislike Kelley. Kelley's biographer, James Gaffey, notes that Wilson

suspected Kelley and the exiled Mexican bishops of supporting a counter-revolutionary named Eduardo Iturbide. Iturbide had been the Huertista governor of the Federal District, and some Catholic clergymen favored him as president. Gaffey, however, believes that there is insufficient evidence to support the President's accusation.⁵⁴

There are, however, incriminating statements in Kelley's correspondence that indicate that he did aid General Félix Díaz in his attempt to overthrow Carranza. It will be recalled that Félix Díaz, along with Cecilio Ocón, Manuel Mondragón, and Federico Gamboa, were accomplices in the Huertista revolt that succeeded in ousting Francisco Madero. Beginning in 1914, Kelley began negotiating with these conspirators, who were now plotting a counter-revolt from New Orleans. In a letter to the Society of American Bishops the following year, Kelley said that, "Our work has been to secure pledges from different parties which will become operative in case the members of these parties come into power" and "to work up such sentiment amongst Catholics of the United States as will insure the government assisting."⁵⁵ This explanation for Kelley's actions, however, is not entirely in keeping with the evidence at hand. Several statements in his own correspondence reveal that his involvement went deeper than he indicated to the American bishops.

In December of 1914, Colonel J. A. Robertson, a wealthy rancher and businessman from Texas, wrote a letter of introduction for Kelley to Félix Díaz. The colonel told Díaz that Kelley "comes to you . . . for the good of the fatherland." On the same day, Robertson also framed a letter of introduction for Thomas V. Shannon to the same general. Father Shannon was the editor of the New World, a Catholic weekly in Chicago. He was also a close personal friend of Kelley. In his letter, Robertson described Shannon as "a friend of the cause for which you are so valiantly battling." This was the beginning of an association between the two priests and several of the Mexican counter-revolutionists.⁵⁶

A few weeks after these introductory letters were written, Robertson contacted Daniel Guggenheim, owner of the American Smelting and Refining Company. Guggenheim held vast interests in Mexico. Again, Robertson introduced Kelley and informed Guggenheim that the Monsignor would "lay before you certain plans whereby powerful influences may be brought about to effect a settlement of the troubles now existing in Mexico." Other wealthy American investors, such as Oscar J. Braniff and J.I. McCullough, would also become friends of Kelley in the months to follow.⁵⁷

Dwayne Cox notes that Richard Tierney endorsed both Eduardo Iturbide and Félix Díaz. The author says that Tierney's associates encouraged Díaz to appoint Federico Gamboa to an important post if the general succeeded in

becoming Mexico's president. It should be recalled that Gamboa had been the candidate of the Catholic Party in 1913. "In the meantime," Cox adds, "sympathetic Americans were recruited to help Díaz mind his affairs." About this time Kelley wrote to Tierney and said he had been "advised of the new movement and saw the gentleman in New Orleans. He is perfectly willing to give guarantees as to religious liberty." Kelley does not mention the "gentleman's" name, but New Orleans was the headquarters for many of the collaborators, including Félix Díaz.⁵⁸

In the early part of 1915, Colonel Robertson wrote that there were rumors that the United States government was "shadowing" Kelley.⁵⁹ This "shadowing" did indeed happen. Between 1915 and 1917, no fewer than four agents of the Department of Justice's Bureau of Investigation and one United States Consul to Mexico reported that both Shannon and Kelley were securing funds for Félix Díaz's movement. Reports indicate that Cecilio Ocón was appointed Díaz's "lawful attorney . . . for the purpose of collecting the necessary funds to carry on the plans of the" movement. The group included Manuel Mondragón, Aureliano Blanquet, Ramón Díaz, and Pedro del Villar, Díaz' personal agent. Ramón Díaz was an intimate friend of Colonel J.A. Robertson.⁶⁰

Both Villar and Ocón reportedly negotiated with Kelley for financial backing from the International Harvester Company and Wrigley Chewing Gum Company. The harvester company expected to obtain exclusive rights to the sisal

industry in the Yucatán if Félix Díaz succeeded in gaining control of Mexico. Wrigley hoped to acquire the same privilege in regards to Mexico's chicle industry.⁶¹

In January of 1916, Tierney told Kelley that he believed the United States government had begun its "defense." He stated that the secret service had been "nosing about" but that they would not find "anything against the American Catholics" because there was "nothing to be found." It appears that Tierney did not know about Kelley's financial transactions. Kelley replied that any accusations involving Félix Díaz were unfounded. He stated that Díaz had "called on" him two or three times but that he had assured the felicistas that the Church did not want to be involved in revolutions.⁶²

Evidently Archbishop Farley was informed of the accusations because Kelley wrote him a letter of explanation in February. He told Farley that he had been "approached" by three men: Félix Díaz, a Zapata representative, and Ocón. This account was somewhat misleading because Kelley obviously initiated a meeting with Díaz, as evidenced by his letter of introduction from J.A. Robertson. In his letter to Farley, Kelley also mentioned a press interview in which Cardinal Gibbons repeated a statement that Kelley had made to him earlier. Kelley had told Gibbons that "neither Villa nor Carranza would be the man to bring peace to Mexico, but that some stronger man would arise out of the difficulty later on." During the interview, Gibbons quoted Kelley on

this, and some people had taken the statement as evidence that Catholic clergymen had knowledge of a proposed counter-revolt; obviously they were right.⁶³

The matter seems to have subsided for almost a year, until Tierney received a letter in October 1916 from a Joaquín Amor. Amor informed the editor that Cecilio Ocón told a Díaz representative in New York that Kelley and Shannon of Chicago had obtained a one million dollar loan for General Díaz. Amor also informed Tierney that the supposed lender was "Wrigley." A letter from Colonel Robertson to Kelley about this same time stated that "if the needful facilities reach Gen'l Diaz [sic] in reasonable time, I feel sure most excellent results may be expected." The Colonel went on to say that the "powerful aid and untiring efforts of Father Shannon" would be appreciated by the people of Mexico. Despite these incriminating statements, Kelley reassured Tierney that he had "no connection in any way, shape or manner with Mexican revolutions."⁶⁴

In October 1916, Amor told Tierney that Ocón claimed that \$900,000 had been sent to Guatemala. Díaz planned to invade Mexico from Guatemala and had discussed the project with Guatemalan President, Manuel Estrada Cabrera. An undated letter to Amor from a Mr. "Tridon" said the Ocón story was absolutely true and that \$500,000 had been sent to "our friend Felix [sic]." He said that Wrigley owned the chicle company and headed the syndicate to raise the cash.

The man who had gotten everything together was Father Shannon.⁶⁵

About one year later, in January 1918, Kelley informed Tierney that the "people in New York" were angry about something concerning Federico Gamboa and General Díaz. He mentioned that one of his "clerical friends [probably Shannon]" had "helped very materially" someone associated with the conspirators. Tierney reported that Kelley's "very intimate clerical [friend] in Chicago" had been writing letters to New York that were upsetting associates of Félix Díaz. Díaz claimed that their "cause" was "being betrayed."⁶⁶

Following these remarkable exchanges, Tierney and Kelley began using the initials G. (probably Gamboa) and O. (probably Ocón) in their letters. Tierney informed Kelley that New York was upset because O. was considered "a consummate rascal" and "a very dangerous man." Presumably, the "people in New York" referred to the Catholic hierarchy. It should be recalled that Cecilio Ocón was implicated in the assassination of Francisco Madero, and in fact, the Bureau of Investigation reported that he was "the man who had Gustavo Madero [brother of the President] assassinated." Tierney goes on to say that "as to G. New York believes that he is not reliable or representative. Firstly because he did not sever his connection with Masons . . . [s]econdly because he wrote an immoral novel." He adds that "[t]here are other things concerning the matter which I do not care

to commit to writing." Tierney ends by saying that "your clerical friend is I feel making a grave mistake."⁶⁷

Kelley's response to this information was that he had seen Shannon, who had admitted to writing one letter. Kelley added that, "He soaked me a good hard one when I spoke about F. G. saying he must be acceptable to Catholics since he was nominated for President of Mexico by the Catholic party and elected." Kelley ended by saying that Shannon believed in O. C. [Cecilio Ocón?] and F. G. [Federico Gamboa] but that he had "lost interest to a great extent." Kelley asked Tierney to relay this information to New York.⁶⁸

This exchange concludes discussion of the subject in Kelley's correspondence. Kelley had claimed that he only sought to obtain guarantees of religious freedom from prospective Mexican presidents. His letters, however, demonstrate that he initiated an introduction to Félix Díaz, while he told his superiors that he had been "approached" by the Mexican general. One of his closest friends, Richard Tierney, was informed personally by members of the Mexican movement that Kelley and Shannon had obtained money from American businessmen. Although Kelley denied the accusations, his associate Colonel Robertson wrote him that he expected a good outcome for General Díaz if the "needful facilities" were delivered on time. Robertson could have been referring only to either money or arms. Later Kelley told Tierney that his "clerical friend in Chicago" helped

the movement "very materially." Lastly, it is obvious that Kelley and Tierney were involved in something secretive when they began using initials to hide the identities of Ocón and Gamboa.

Historian Peter Henderson notes that the felicistas did stage an unsuccessful revolt in 1917. Afterwards, Félix Díaz joined another revolutionary, Manuel Peláez, in extorting American oil companies in Veracruz. The two obtained money by offering protection for American interests there.⁶⁹ Kelley ended his association with Díaz and the other felicistas when it became obvious that the State Department and others suspected him of engaging in illegal activities. His interest in the matter continued, however, and was especially piqued when Mexico enacted the Constitution of 1917 that included severe restrictions against the Church.

American businessmen were also concerned about the constitution because it threatened their financial interests in Mexico. They united in an effort to protect their property and investments. The group hoped to incite intervention by dramatizing atrocities perpetrated against American citizens in Mexico.⁷⁰

In 1918, one businessman who attempted to provoke intervention was Edward L. Doheny. Doheny, one of the largest investors in Mexican oil production, planned to pay various professors to investigate social and political conditions in Mexico. Kelley became distressed when he

discovered the plan because no Catholics had been selected to participate in the work. Tierney informed him that it was probably better that Protestants complete the reports because he had complete control over the religious aspect of the investigation. Obviously, Doheny intended the project to be sympathetic to the Church and critical of Carranza. A letter from "C. Fitzgerald" of the Sonora Investment Company to Tierney clarifies the plan. Fitzgerald wrote that "the real and only reason for the entire thing is TO GET CARRANZA [capitals in original]," and that Doheny wanted to encourage "peaceful intervention."⁷¹

In 1919, New Mexico Senator Albert B. Fall initiated another effort to raise public interest. The senator had once owned mining property in Mexico and still maintained friendships with important Mexican landowners and several American businessmen who had large investments there. Fall introduced a resolution into the Senate for an investigation of Mexican affairs. A subcommittee of the Committee on Foreign Relations heard the testimonies of 257 witnesses, including Francis Clement Kelley and his friend Eber Cole Byam. Byam, a businessman who had lived in Mexico for twelve years, later collaborated with Kelley to write the lengthy history of Mexico entitled Blood-Drenched Altars.⁷²

Kelley explained his connection to the exiled Mexican clergymen and then gave the subcommittee his analysis of the Mexican political and social situation. He told the members of the committee that he had collected over \$75,000

to aid the exiled Mexican clerics. He blamed most of the problems in that country on anti-clericalism. He stated that Mexicans believed that Americans hated Catholicism, and, therefore, they persecuted the Church in order to appeal to the United States. As to the accusations he had heard that Mexico was "priest-ridden," he noted that the country had a ratio of 1 priest per 3000 people, whereas in the United States, the ratio of ministers (other than Catholic) was 1 to 153 people.⁷³

Eber Cole Byam's testimony supported Kelley's. Byam had lived in Mexico from 1895 to 1907 and believed that Huerta had been Mexico's best hope for peace and prosperity. He labeled the leaders of the current revolution "socialists" and stated that the fundamental cause of the violence and lawlessness in Mexico was "anti-clericalism."⁷⁴

In its final recommendations, the Fall Committee Hearings made two points. First, the subcommittee advised the administration to deny recognition to Mexican governments that did not respect American property rights in Mexico and suggested that United States property be exempted from Article 27. The final point stipulated that the United States should "reserve the prerogative of intervention" if future violations occurred.⁷⁵

The outcome of the hearings was predictable given the views of Senator Fall and most of the witnesses. Woodrow Wilson probably was not surprised by its recommendations, and he refused to be coerced into intervention. The

President simply killed the resolution and informed Fall that it was the responsibility of the Chief Executive to determine America's policy towards Mexico.⁷⁶ The Fall hearings did not attract much public interest. Americans were generally weary of conflict, having just emerged from the War in Europe, and events in Mexico were of little concern to them.⁷⁷

Many Americans believed that millionaires and Catholic clergymen were conspiring to provoke intervention for purely selfish reasons. Woodrow Wilson was particularly sensitive to this type of intimidation, and he resented it. In 1919, he gave an address in which he bitterly stated that "I learned what I know about Mexico . . . by hearing a large number of liars tell me all about it." Many Catholics, including Kelley and Tierney, believed that his remarks were directed at them. They were probably correct; but people such as Albert B. Fall and Edward L. Doheny were most likely on the President's mind as well.⁷⁸

Even some of the exiled archbishops began to suspect that oil companies were using Catholics to further their own financial interests. The clerics spoke out around the country and encouraged American Catholics to be patient. They were cautious during this time because conditions had changed in Mexico, and there was a strong possibility that they would be allowed to go home. The archbishops did not want public criticism to endanger that opportunity; their caution proved to be wise.⁷⁹

Late in 1919, Venustiano Carranza permitted the exiled clergymen to return home. For the remainder of his administration, Carranza left the Church alone; in fact, just before leaving office, he appealed to the Mexican Congress to amend Article 130 to allow religious freedom. One reason that Carranza became friendlier to the Church was to weaken the popular support of opponents such as Félix Díaz.⁸⁰

Kelley had his own opinion of Carranza's change in attitude. In 1935, he wrote that Carranza finally had realized that suppression of the Church was detrimental to the welfare of the country. He believed that Carranza had come to appreciate the value of Catholic education and social influence. In the end, Kelley spoke highly of the former president for his efforts to curtail the severity of revolutionary anti-clericalism.⁸¹

The first six years of Kelley's campaign to end persecution of the Mexican Church were counterproductive. The United States did not adopt a policy of recognition that excluded leaders who refused to guarantee religious freedom. Kelley's efforts to fund a conservative counter-revolution also met with failure. Furthermore, his criticism of Woodrow Wilson and his involvement in the election of 1916 alienated the President and many other Americans as well. In the future, he would be careful not to involve himself in politics.

ENDNOTES

¹Dwayne Cox, "Richard Henry Tierney and the Mexican Revolution, 1914-1917," Mid-America 59 (1977): 93-101. Comments regarding Kelley's association with Tierney can be found in Gaffey, Francis Clement Kelley, 12.

²Cox, Richard Tierney, 93.

³Ibid., 97.

⁴Robert E. Quigley, "American Catholic Opinions of Mexican Anticlericalism, 1910-1936," (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1965), 21.

⁵Ibid., 27; Cox, "Richard Henry Tierney," 95.

⁶Quirk, Revolution and the Church, 62.

⁷Francis Clement Kelley, "Where the Gates of Hell are Open," Extension (November 1914), 3-4.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Kelley to Archbishop Farley, 28 February 1916, Kelley Papers; Gaffey, Francis Clement Kelley, 20.

¹⁰Quirk, Revolution and the Church, 65-66. See also Theodore Roosevelt, "Our Responsibility in Mexico," New York Times, 6 December 1914, 6,1:1-5.

¹¹Francis Clement Kelley, "The Catholic Party in Mexico," Extension (February 1915).

¹²Gaffey, Francis Clement Kelley, 24-25; Kelley, Blood-Drenched Altars, 237.

¹³Kelley, Jots, 194.

¹⁴Ibid. See also Woodrow Wilson to Kelley, 18 March 1915, Kelley Papers.

¹⁵New York Times, 22 April 1915, 6:2. In an undated confidential draft that was seemingly never mailed, Kelley was more adverse to Bryan's statement. He said that "if Mr. Bryan's letter indicates a policy of minimizing the outrage

in Mexico" then he could see "nothing ahead but two years of passionate agitation against wrongs and injustices, for which many will blame the Administration." See Kelley to J. P. Tumulty (Copy), No Date, Kelley Papers.

¹⁶An undated partial list of correspondents can be found in Kelley's Papers; see also Arthur S. Link, Wilson: The Struggle for Neutrality 1914-1915 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960), 641. Wilson's threat to Carranza is noted in Kelley, Blood-Drenched Altars, 239-241. Kelley believed that this would be a "death sentence" to Carranza.

¹⁷Gaffey, Francis Clement Kelley, 28; see also the Tumulty Letter released to the Press on 29 November 1915, Kelley Papers; Quigley, "American Catholic Opinions," 48.

¹⁸Link, Struggle for Neutrality, 642.

¹⁹Gaffey, Francis Clement Kelley, 25. For accounts of the seminary, see Kelley, Jots, 188.

²⁰Douglas W. Richmond, Venustiano Carranza's Nationalist Struggle, 1893-1920 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983), 184. Kelley, Red and Yellow, 67-69. Kelley, "The Mexican Commission," Extension (October 1916): 4.

²¹Kelley to Tierney (Copy), 21 April 1915, Kelley Papers.

²²Tierney to Kelley, 19 April 1915, Kelley Papers.

²³Kelley to Tierney (Copy), 13 June 1917, Kelley Papers.

²⁴Francis Clement Kelley, "Labor and Mexico," Extension (September 1916): 4.

²⁵Kelley to Duffey (Copies), 20 April 1916 and 25 May 1916, Kelley Papers. Kelley told Duffy that the Federation's "action in endorsing Carranza encouraged . . . one of the greatest religious persecutions in modern times." He demanded that they withdraw their endorsement.

²⁶Duffy to Gompers (Copy), 26 May 1916, Kelley Papers.

²⁷Chicago Daily Tribune, 25 May 1916. The newspaper claimed that Washington officials were "astounded."

²⁸Kelley to Duffy (Copy), 10 April 1916, Kelley Papers.

²⁹Reverend W. A. Beaudette to Kelley, 25 April 1916, Kelley Papers. Kelley replied that the Mexican bishops had not left because they were "cowards" but because they were being used to extort money from the poor, see Kelley to Beaudette (Copy), 26 April 1916, Kelley Papers. Kelley told

another critic that "the Church really prefers to suffer rather than mingle in politics," see Kelley to Elbert T. Baldin (Copy), 26 June 1915, Kelley Papers.

³⁰John W. Butler, "Tolerant and Intolerant Attitudes Toward Religious Issues in Mexico," Current Opinion 58 (May 1915): 345-346.

³¹Tierney to Kelley, 22 December 1915 and 7 December 1915, Kelley Papers.

³²For information about those who opposed intervention, see Charles Dennis Ignasias, "Reluctant Recognition: The United States and the Recognition of Alvaro Obregón of Mexico, 1920-1924" (Ph.D. diss., Michigan State University, 1967), 31.

³³Press release of the Tumulty Letter, 29 November 1915, can be found in the Kelley Papers.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Kelley to Editor of the Rock Island Argus, 10 December 1915, Kelley Papers.

³⁸Kelley to Tierney, 2 December 1915, Kelley Papers.

³⁹Kelley to Tierney, 2 December 1915, Kelley Papers.
Kelley to John M. Clifton, 2 December 1915, Kelley Papers.
Tierney to Kelley, 6 December 1915, Kelley Papers.

⁴⁰The three politicians criticized Wilson for his failure "to protect American lives and property" as he had promised in the 1912 Election, see Cline, United States and Mexico, 175. Kelley's attendance at the Convention and his support of Hughes is noted in Gaffey, Francis Clement Kelley, 36. Kelley to Reverend E. F. Garesche, S. J. (Copy), 20 October 1916, Kelley Papers.

⁴¹Francis C. Kelley, "The Danger," Extension, (May 1916).

⁴²Francis C. Kelley, "The President's Mexican Policy," Extension (June 1916): 3-4.

⁴³Francis C. Kelley, "At the Root of the Trouble," Extension (September 1916): 3-4.

⁴⁴Francis C. Kelley, "Mr. Hughes and Mexico," Extension (September 1916), 3.

⁴⁵Kelley to Tierney (Copy), 24 December 1915, Kelley Papers. In this letter, Kelley also suggested the formation of a vigilance committee to prevent a war like Mexico's in the rest of Latin America.

⁴⁶Richmond, Carranza, 92-99.

⁴⁷"A Letter On the Mexican Situation to the Reverend Clergy of the United States" (Copy), Dated 1916, Kelley Papers.

⁴⁸Daniel R. Foley to Kelley, 3 November 1916, Kelley Papers.

⁴⁹J. H. McMackin to Kelley, 28 October 1916 and 20 October 1916, Kelley Papers.

⁵⁰Francis Clement Kelley, "An Ultimatum," Extension (November 1916): 3.

⁵¹Thomas J. Walsh to Mundelein (Copy), 13 September 1916, Kelley Papers; see also Gaffey, Francis Clement Kelley, 37.

⁵²Gaffey, Francis Clement Kelley, 36-38; Arthur S. Link, Campaigns for Progressivism and Peace, 1916-1917 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), 132-133.

⁵³For an account of Wilson's statement, see Gaffey, Francis Clement Kelley, 18. Kelley to William T. Russell, 2 January 1917, Kelley Papers.

⁵⁴Gaffey, Francis Clement Kelley, 26. Quirk, Revolution and the Church, 69.

⁵⁵Letter from the Extension Society to the American Bishops (Copy), Dated 1915, Kelley Papers.

⁵⁶J. A. Robertson to General Felix Diaz (Copy), 12 December 1914 and 12 December 1914 (Copy), Kelley Papers.

⁵⁷Robertson to Guggenheim (Copy), 14 December 1914, Kelley Papers. Guggenheim's interests in Mexico are noted in Esther Wilson Hannon, "The Evolution of the Mexican Liberal Authoritarian Regime and its Prospects for Change," (Ph.D. diss., University of Virginia, 1990), 213. Colonel Robertson also issued letters of introduction for Kelley to William Jennings Bryan (Copy), 21 December 1914 and to C. M. Hitch (Department of State, Latin American Department (Copy), 21 December 1914, Kelley Papers. In a letter of introduction to an Isaac Seligman from Robertson, he says that Kelley "will be able to render material service through the influential cooperation he has to further the cause of peace." See Robertson to Seligman (Copy), 21 December 1914,

Kelley Papers. Kelley received a letter from Oscar J. Braniff, 4 March 1915, in which the Mexican investor told Kelley that "The only manner of impressing the American Government favorably will be to present a cohesive organization." See Kelley Papers. In 1918 Kelley told the owner of a Mexican mining concern that he "would consider it . . . a great honor . . . if [he] could help even in a modest way, to see the country restored to religious, social, and material prosperity." See Kelley to J.I. McCullough (Copy), 18 February 1918, Kelley Papers.

⁵⁸Cox, "Tierney and the Mexican Revolution," 99. Kelley to Tierney (Copy), 18 December 1914, Kelley Papers.

⁵⁹Robertson to Kelley, 2 January 1915, Kelley Papers.

⁶⁰For an account of Ocón's appointment as Díaz's attorney, see Department of Justice, Bureau of Investigation, Investigative Case Files 1908-1922, Investigative Records Relating to Mexican Neutrality Violations (Washington D.C.: National Archives Microfilm Publications, 1982), roll 860, copy of a letter written by Félix Díaz, dated 1917. (Source will hereafter be referred to as Investigative Records). Information about the movement's membership can be found on roll 860, Informant Charles E. Jones, No Date, in a report entitled "Additional Data Regarding Mexican Affairs."

⁶¹Investigative Records, roll 860, Charles E. Jones, "Additional Data Regarding Mexican Affairs"; see also a report by Agent F.C. Pendleton, New Orleans, 29 May 1916; 17 June 1916; 20 June 1916; and a "Special Report Regarding Mexican Matters" Charles E. Jones, No Date. Roll 861, "Memorandum For Mr. Warren: On The Financial Interests Backing the Díaz Revolution in Mexico," Unsigned, 20 March 1917; see also Letter signed "Chief" to H.C. Clabaugh, Chicago, 28 April 1916; Letter from George C. Carothers to the Secretary of State, Washington D.C., 6 March 1917. At this time Kelley told Shannon that Robertson and "Mr. Del Villar" wanted to meet him. Kelley to Robertson (Copy), 16 January 1917, Kelley Papers. Pedro del Villar was Félix Díaz' personal agent.

⁶²Tierney to Kelley, 21 January 1916 and Kelley to Tierney (Copy), 24 January 1916, Kelley Papers. David Lawrence of the New York Evening Post stated that Carranza accused the exiled clergymen of supporting Felix Diaz, see Milwaukee Journal, 17 December 1915.

⁶³Gaffey, Francis Clement Kelley, 27. Ellis believes that the man Kelley referred to was Félix Diaz, see Ellis, Life of Cardinal Gibbons, 216.

⁶⁴Amor to Tierney (Copy), 24 October 1916, Kelley Papers. J.A. Robertson to Kelley (Copy), 16 March 1917, Kelley Papers. Kelley to Tierney (Copy), 27 October 1916, Kelley Papers.

⁶⁵Amor to Tierney (Copy), 24 October 1916, Kelley Papers. Díaz' planned invasion from Guatemala can be seen in Henderson, Felix Diaz, 122. Tridon to Amor (Copy), No Date, Kelley Papers. This author was unable to find Tridon's first name and credentials. The latter also applies to Joaquín Amor.

⁶⁶Kelley to Tierney (Copy), 4 January 1918 and Tierney to Kelley, 28 December 1917, Kelley Papers.

⁶⁷Tierney to Kelley, 16 January 1918, Kelley Papers. Investigative Records, interview of Agent Cantrell with Felix Sommerfield, 3 July 1915, roll 859.

⁶⁸Kelley to Tierney (Copy), 2 February 1918, Kelley Papers.

⁶⁹Peter V. N. Henderson, Félix Díaz, The Porfirians, and the Mexican Revolution (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1981), 123.

⁷⁰Ibid., 95.

⁷¹Kelley to Tierney (Copy), 2 February 1918 and Tierney to Kelley, 8 February 1918, Kelley Papers. C. Fitzgerald to Tierney (Copy), 12 March 1918, Kelley Papers.

⁷²Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Investigation of Mexican Affairs, 2 vols., 66th Cong., 2d sess., 1919-1920.

⁷³Ibid., 2656-2663.

⁷⁴Ibid., 2684-2704.

⁷⁵Mark T. Gilderhus, Diplomacy and Revolution: U.S.-Mexican Relations Under Wilson and Carranza (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1977), 111.

⁷⁶Wilson to Fall, The White House, 8 December 1919, The Papers of Woodrow Wilson, Arthur S. Link, et. al., eds., (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 64:152.

⁷⁷Quigley, "American Catholic Opinions," 60.

⁷⁸"Liar's Speech," 11 September 1919, The Papers of Woodrow Wilson, 63:195; see also Arthur S. Link, Wilson: Confusions and Crises 1915-1916 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), 204.

⁷⁹"Oil and Intervention in Mexico," The Nation 108 (12 April 1919): 538-539.

⁸⁰Richmond, Carranza, 185.

⁸¹Kelley, Altars, 242-244.

CHAPTER V

PROPAGANDA, RESIGNATION, AND *BLOOD-DRENCHED ALTARS*, 1920-1935

Despite his revised opinion of Venustiano Carranza, Francis Clement Kelley continued to denounce the Mexican government until 1935. President Alvaro Obregón (1920-1924) was conciliatory toward the Church, but President Plutarco Elías Calles (1924-1928) enforced the Constitution's anti-clerical legislation. As a result, between 1926 and 1929, religious zealots staged a revolt known as the Cristero Rebellion. During this time Kelley became convinced that Mexico's government was communist. He attempted to persuade the American public that Mexican presidents were "Bolsheviks" and that foreign businesses should not invest in Mexico. Kelley hoped to coerce Mexican presidents into allowing religious freedom by disseminating negative propaganda. By 1935, however, it would become evident to Kelley that Mexico would never revoke the anti-clerical provisions of the Constitution of 1917. At that time, he concluded his involvement with Mexico's Church/State conflict by writing Blood-Drenched Altars.

The 1920s began relatively peacefully in Mexico. Only one incident marred the otherwise cooperative spirit between

Obregón's government and the Church. That event, the expulsion of Archbishop Ernesto Filippi in 1923, did not produce a major conflict. The archbishop had performed a religious ceremony outdoors while wearing his clerical robes; clearly, he had violated the Mexican constitution. Obregón generally allowed the Church a great deal of latitude because he was more interested in restoring the country's devastated economy. In this particular instance, however, public attendance at the event was so great that Obregón believed he must enforce the law.¹

Francis Kelley attempted to arouse anger over the expulsion of Filippi, but he did not have much success. He told a friend that "the Obregón Government lost its protection from criticism on our part" when it expelled the archbishop.² Kelley was convinced that the Mexican government intended to eradicate religion in Mexico altogether. In Extension, Kelley wrote that Mexico teaches "us about what we may expect if we nurse hooded cobras."³ He did not provoke much sympathy, though, as Americans had lost interest in Mexico's religious disputes.⁴

Although it might appear that Kelley's public efforts on behalf of the Mexican Church waned in the 1920s, he was still intimately involved. After his appointment as Bishop of Oklahoma in 1924, his new duties and obligations prevented him from devoting as much time to the problem. As previously noted, he also lost control of Extension magazine. His associate, Richard Tierney, became ill during

this time and seems to have abandoned the fight. Kelley maintained his zeal, but his position was tempered by a more realistic appraisal of Mexico's religious conflict.⁵

After 1923, Kelley no longer stressed non-recognition as a means of forcing the restoration of religious freedom in Mexico. He recognized that the country was in desperate need of outside investment to improve its economy. Kelley doubted that Americans would take financial risks in Mexico if they questioned the country's political stability or friendliness toward foreigners. The Bishop hoped to discourage Americans from investing in Mexico as long as the government there denied religious freedom. He believed that Mexican presidents would become more conciliatory toward the Church in order to attract foreign investors.⁶

In 1926, following the defiance of Archbishop José Mora y del Rio, President Calles expelled all foreign clergymen and enacted a new penal code. In March, Kelley addressed the Knights of Columbus in Brooklyn and claimed that the Mexican government had made an issue of religious persecution in order to hide an ulterior motive. The Bishop stated that Mexico's real intent was to steal American-owned properties.⁷

Kelley hoped to frighten United States investors into demanding intervention against Calles. He knew that the government would not interfere in Mexican affairs on behalf of the Church, but they might do so to protect American oil companies. Kelley's ploy to unite the oil interests to the

cause of the Church did not succeed; he then began to focus his protests on Mexico's supposed communism.⁸

In 1926, some Americans suspected that the Mexican government was communist. The State Department had received alarming reports of "radical anti-American propaganda by . . . Mexican officials."⁹ Both Presidents Obregón and Calles had supported the CROM, or the Confederación Regional Obrera Mexicana, a labor organization formed in 1918 whose constitution included Marxist dogma.¹⁰ Catholics also believed that the Constitution of 1917 was influenced by communist doctrine. Critics of the Mexican government referred to it as "Bolshevik," because the Bolsheviks denounced capitalism and were atheistic.

Kelley believed that the communist threat in Mexico was real, but as Robert E. Quirk notes, the Mexican Revolution was not guided by any single ideology. The Revolution was pragmatic, adaptable, and personalistic.¹¹ The Church opposed secular reform movements because they subjected Catholic authority to State control. As a result, the Church considered anarchists, socialists, communists, and syndicalists threatening and categorized them as Bolsheviks.¹² Catholics were particularly alarmed by Marxism because its basis on a "classless society" denied the authority of social and political hierarchies.¹³

In September 1926, the Knights of Columbus compiled a pamphlet entitled "Red Mexico."¹⁴ Kelley contributed an article, and within a month, two million copies were

distributed in the United States and Canada.¹⁵ This publication equated the communist threat in Mexico to a disease. Catholic writers called it "vermin," an "infection," or the "red bacilli." In what is presumed to be Kelley's contribution to "Red Mexico," he claimed that the Revolution was causing the country to return to "pre-Columbian barbarism."¹⁶ Evidently, he was referring to violence and the lack of Christian influence.

In the summer of 1926, Kelley wrote a vicious rebuttal to an article by several Protestant ministers, including Methodist Bishop James Cannon, that had appeared in Current History. Entitled "The Church and State Conflict in Mexico," the article defended the Revolution and said that Catholicism had been an impediment to Mexican progress. According to historian Mollie Davis, Protestant missionaries had visions of a "Protestant Mexico" as they witnessed the decline of Catholic influence.¹⁷

In Commonweal, Kelley responded by emphasizing the important role through education that the Church had played in Mexico's history. He denounced several of the ministers and blatantly remarked that Cannon, in particular, was a liar. Kelley directed his most bitter comment against Mexican liberals, who, he said, had a "pet dream of an alliance with our colored people and with the Jap." He does not explain this accusation, which was obviously meant to arouse popular fears.¹⁸

In the same year, the U.P.C. News Service asked Kelley to write an article in answer to the question: "Is Mexico Dangerously Communistic?" Kelley replied that, "The only reason Mexico is not now a replica of Russia in its political life is the United States." Interestingly, though, in the same article, the Bishop declared that the Revolution would ultimately strengthen Catholicism. He stated that the Mexican Catholic "will be the better for it in the end . . . [i]t was evident that the century old sore would have to come to a head." Apparently, Kelley believed that the Revolution would force Catholics to reevaluate their faith and the Church's influence in their society.¹⁹

This type of article indicates the United States' preoccupation with communism during this time. Mollie Davis points out that in 1926 many national publications associated the Calles government with Bolshevism. The most vocal of these were America, Commonweal, Columbia, and the Hearst press. Other publications, however, especially the New Republic, Outlook, and The Nation, denounced this type of "Red" journalism.²⁰ The New York World stated that when articles referred to Mexico's "Bolshevism," they were really talking about nationalism. Many Americans considered the anti-revolutionary articles pure propaganda.²¹

Some Catholics, including Kelley, privately admitted that their own claims were meant as propaganda. In August 1926, Kelley wrote a letter to John J. Burke, Secretary of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, outlining a plan

that included the establishment of a "propaganda office [sic]." The Bishop told Burke that he intended to establish a national headquarters in Washington with Eber Cole Byam as its expert on Mexico.²²

Kelley's next step was to write a book answering all the charges that the Mexican government made against the Church. He said that this book would "be an epitome of Mexican history from the Catholic standpoint." The Bishop intended to sell a copy at cost to every priest in the United States. He would further ask that each priest buy extra copies to give to local Protestant clergymen, "heads of colleges, and . . . prominent politicians." The book would be mailed to senators, congressmen, and newspaper editors. Kelley estimated that the cost of carrying out this plan would be \$10,000.²³

Eber Cole Byam, by this time suffering from tuberculosis, assisted Kelley with this campaign. Kelley believed that Byam knew "more than any other man in the United States about Mexico."²⁴ Byam hoped to establish an organization in every parish to address the Mexican conflict. These groups would watch the newspapers for articles that favored Mexican radicals or that misrepresented Mexican history, and Bishop Kelley was to answer any such statements. When measures by the Mexican government affected the Church, Byam and Kelley planned to send letters of protest to senators and congressmen. Byam also wanted to create a central bureau of information under

Kelley's direction and establish an office in each diocese. He planned to use radio broadcasts to aid the cause and to secure pledges from wealthy Catholics for an endowment to establish a Bureau of Research for Catholic Defense.²⁵

Other Catholics developed their own organizations to address political concerns of the Church. One of these groups was the National Catholic Welfare Conference, established in 1919. Mollie Davis called the NCWC the first major religious lobby in the United States.²⁶ In 1926, the Conference issued to President Coolidge a formal statement that criticized United States' policy in Mexico.²⁷ Kelley claimed that these efforts had an effect on at least the Mexican government when he stated that "the Calles crowd seems to be afraid of me and that is half the battle."²⁸ There is no indication, however, that Calles feared American Catholics.

Kelley and other Catholics vehemently opposed Calles because of his radical anti-clericalism. He was portrayed as the "Black Czar," and a pamphlet by that title and bound in black appeared in El Paso. The authors called Calles a drunkard, cattle thief, murderer, swindler, and common bartender. The publication claimed that a colony of American communists was living in Mexico, and it mentioned the professor and political scientist Frank Tannenbaum as one of the group. It gave accounts of the execution of religious dissidents and even reproduced the ghastly photos of their last moments. Another pamphlet, published by Our

Sunday Visitor, claimed that "Calles carried in his pocket the power of attorney from one Nicolei Lenin."²⁹

Despite all the efforts to portray the Mexican government as communist, the campaign had little effect on the American public, who grew weary of the issue. In 1927, the Church hierarchy decided to issue a formal letter to state its official views on the Mexican Church/State conflict and answer accusations that American clerics advocated political intervention in Mexican affairs. The pastoral letter avoided the mention of atrocities and emphasized the Church's contributions to Mexican culture.³⁰ Robert E. Quigley found the letter so moderate that he did not think Kelley could have written it.³¹ Kelley, however, indeed was the author of the letter, and Eber Cole Byam assisted him in writing it. The letter was later translated into German, Polish, French, and Spanish.³²

When the American hierarchy issued its pastoral letter, Mexico was experiencing the Cristero Rebellion, which lasted until 1929. Following the modus vivendi established between Church and State in that year, the religious question in Mexico remained somewhat peaceful until the administration of Lázaro Cárdenas in 1934. Under Cárdenas, congress amended the constitution, requiring that education be socialistic as well as secular.³³ The amendment caused some American Catholics to perceive Cárdenas as an anti-cleric. The Catholic News protested that the new textbooks

issued under the Cárdenas administration were irreligious and communistic.³⁴

Kelley offered little protest against the Cárdenas administration. He apparently grew tired of the struggle and resigned to the futility of his campaign. The Bishop turned his attention instead to the writing of Blood-Drenched Altars, his history of Mexico from a Catholic perspective. Kelley enlisted the assistance of Eber Cole Byam for this lengthy project and dedicated the book to him. Kelley said that he had seen a need for the book for over twenty years and that he had made two attempts to find someone else to write it. He finally decided to undertake the work himself "because no one else would."³⁵

Among Kelley's papers is a pamphlet issued by the Cárdenas administration and written by Emilio Portes Gil, Interim President of Mexico from 1928 to 1930. It was an eloquent statement of the Revolution's stance toward the Catholic Church and no doubt prompted Bishop Kelley to write his own version of Mexican history. Portes Gil defended the Revolution's attitude toward the Church by pointing out that "the Revolution cannot permit . . . the people [to be] steeped in ignorance and . . . poverty." He stated that "men can no longer submit to gregarious spirituality at the expense of knowledge in scientific truth."³⁶

The author defended the confiscation of Church property, claiming that "wealth in the hands of the clergy has a tendency to remove it from the country so as to

support a foreign sovereignty." He went on to say that "the Indian never has understood and probably never will understand the true meaning of the Christian religion." He claimed that the native "priests were replaced by the Catholic clergy; their gods were replaced by the saints; their teocalli, by the Church; [and] their idols of stone . . . by images of saints." These statements were intended to justify the legal restrictions of the Revolution. Kelley responded by issuing a defense of the Church in Mexico.³⁷

There is no doubt that Kelley's historical account is blatantly biased. He was pro-Spanish and a great admirer of Cortés. His analyses of Mexico's problems were highly simplistic, as were his solutions. He argued that the Church was a benevolent institution and that the reports of its vast wealth were greatly over-estimated. Kelley claimed that the Church had made Mexico a civilized nation. He believed that governments following independence attacked the Church out of greed. He described twentieth century persecution as sadism committed by "criminal perverts" under the sanction of their leaders. The Bishop admitted that he had "found no other explanation" because "no other seems possible."³⁸

Kelley believed that Americans disliked Mexicans because of "racial tradition and religious prejudice." He postulated that the United States inherited a hatred for Spain that dated to Queen Elizabeth and the Spanish Armada.³⁹ The Bishop justified the Spanish colonial system

by emphasizing that it assimilated the Indians into its culture and educated them.⁴⁰ In an article written in 1926, Kelley had said that "[t]he Spanish found in Mexico a condition of cannibalistic savagery unequaled anywhere on earth." He noted that after the Revolution, the level of education in the country steadily declined.⁴¹

In Blood-Drenched Altars, Kelley mentioned several of the Church's contributions to Mexican society. He noted that the Church was responsible for the abolition of Indian slavery in the colonies.⁴² Kelley also informed the reader that Catholicism was responsible for the construction of medical schools in New Spain that taught botany and chemistry and trained surgeons.⁴³ He remarked that Liberals criticized Catholic instruction, but he adds that if the Church had not undertaken the task of education, the Revolution would have considered it derelict in its duty.⁴⁴ In this he is probably correct.

Kelley made several other points in defense of the Church. He noted that the Spanish Crown held so much power over the Church in the New World that the Church was forced to defend the monarchy in order to survive. The appointment of the clergy in New Spain was in the hands of the Spanish kings, who also controlled the tithes. Therefore, the livelihood of these men depended on their loyalty.⁴⁵ Kelley also addressed accusations that the clergy in Mexico were corrupt and immoral. He noted that every family has its black sheep, but that this fact never justifies the

condemnation of the entire family.⁴⁶ This is a weak defense because a shortage of rural clerics sometimes caused the hierarchy to ignore the problems.

Kelley also defended the Church by attacking the Revolution. In the Bishop's view of Mexican history, Calles and Juárez were no better than common "thieves."⁴⁷ He believed that anti-clericalism was simply an excuse to rob the Church of its wealth. The Bishop claimed that in the twentieth century "radicals in communication with Russia" persecuted the Church.⁴⁸

In a review of Edward Alsworth Ross's The Social Revolution in Mexico, Kelley denounced the author's assumption that Spain was evil. Kelley disputed Ross's claims of the Church's wealth and offered his own estimate of \$100,000,000 in 1829. According to historian Jan Bazant, who has done extensive research in this area, the Church's worth at the time of independence was approximately 100,000,000 pesos.⁴⁹ Kelley compared his estimation with the holdings of American Protestant churches and inquired how United States' citizens would react if their own government confiscated that property.⁵⁰

Arguments about the Church's net worth are meaningless. As Michael P. Costeloe notes, the important factor is that the Catholic Church in Mexico was the "richest single corporation in the country."⁵¹ Throughout the colonial period, the Church alone had the resources to act as Mexico's primary banking institution. According to

historian Karl Schmitt, "[a]griculture, industry, and commerce [were] . . . completely dependent on the pious funds."⁵² Therefore, Kelley's comparison between the Church's wealth in Mexico and that of all Protestant churches in the United States is misleading.

By the time that Kelley wrote his history of Mexico, he had altered his opinion of both Carranza and Obregón. He came to believe that each one belatedly recognized the value of the Church and regretted their actions against it. The Bishop was especially forgiving of Carranza because he had tried to modify the severity of the religious legislation toward the end of his administration. Kelley also noted that when the Mexican president died, he had been found wearing a crucifix and a religious medal.⁵³

Although Kelley's opinion softened toward these two men, he never relented in his animosity toward Wilson and Calles. In Blood-Drenched Altars, the Bishop wrote a twenty-one page attack against Calles, and he always referred to the Mexican leader as the "Iron Man."⁵⁴ As for Wilson, Kelley's bitterness was still apparant in 1939, when he wrote for America a retrospective article concerning Mexico during the Wilson administration. He continued to believe that Wilson was responsible for Mexico's political problems because of his "meddling." Kelley thought that Wilson was a pedant. He remarked that "anyone who can wave a magic wand over words and make them line up and march in rhythmic swing is sure to find admirers." Kelley, however,

thought that he would "reserve [his] adoration for truth" instead.⁵⁵

Kelley's simplistic analysis of Mexican history was characteristic of his attitude toward political and social questions in general. He attributed all social trends and actions to forces of good and evil. He himself stated that "we are changing the simple for the complex, thus multiplying our difficulties."⁵⁶ Actually, he was able to explain complicated issues in simple and superficial ways.

Like all of the Catholic propagandists at this time, Kelley placed anti-clericalism into two tidy categories. Masonry and greed led to persecution before the Russian Revolution; afterwards, Protestants and Bolsheviks encouraged it. There are some elements of truth in his accusations since Mexican Liberals were generally Masons, Protestant influence was strong in the northern border states, and many of the liberal reforms were socialist. Nevertheless, Kelley's analysis was simplistic. He did not recognize that personal resentment against clergymen often led to extreme anticlericalism, or that Liberals viewed the Church as an impediment to progress and the development of nationalism. Kelley and many other American Catholics came to their conclusions without having lived in Mexico and knowing very little about the country. Kelley personally visited Mexico only one time, in 1922, when he took a brief tour.⁵⁷

In spite of its flaws, Blood-Drenched Altars offers an opportunity to understand the Catholic perspective of the Church/State conflict. Perhaps its most important contribution is its emphasis on the Church's obvious benefits to Mexican society. One cannot doubt that its hospitals, libraries, schools, and charitable institutions were great assets to Mexican society. The Bishop also expressed admiration for the Spaniards for integrating the Indians into colonial society.

When Kelley wrote Blood-Drenched Altars, he no longer entertained any illusions that the Church in Mexico would ever regain its former political status. All of his efforts to help restore the Church's influence had failed. His new hope was that the Church could operate autonomously and peacefully within its own realm. He recognized his defeat and wrote a book instead. With that book, he attempted to give back to the Mexican Church the dignity and respect that he felt it deserved.

ENDNOTES

¹M. Elizabeth Ann Rice, "The Diplomatic Relations Between the United States and Mexico, as Affected by the Struggle for Religious Liberty in Mexico, 1925-1929" (Ph.D. diss., Catholic University of America, 1959), 29-57.

²Kelley to Frank McLaughlin, 5 May 1923, Kelley Papers.

³Francis C. Kelley, "The Country," Extension 17 (March 1923): 4.

⁴Quigley, "American Catholic Opinions," 59.

⁵*Ibid.*, 67-73. Kelley and Tierney were replaced in the limelight by Michael Joseph Curly, the Archbishop of Baltimore; Wilfrid Parsons, new editor of America; and Michael Williams, founder and editor of Commonweal.

⁶In a letter to the American Commissioners to Mexico, Kelley stated that "Of course we cannot ask the American Commissioners to insist on a change as the sine qua non for recognition. We know that it is an internal question." He went on to say that without religious freedom in Mexico, twenty million American Catholics will not express "confidence and good will." See Kelley to John Barton Payne (Copy), 12 May 1923, Kelley Papers. Kelley also said that "sometimes people do not take their opportunities because they are suspicious." He was referring to investment opportunities, see Kelley to Frank McLaughlin (Copy), 5 May 1923, Kelley Papers.

⁷New York Times, 1 March 1926, 19:1.

⁸Quirk, Revolution and the Church, 162-163.

⁹Rice, "Diplomatic Relations," 40.

¹⁰Quirk, Revolution and the Church, 123-124.

¹¹*Ibid.*, 23.

¹²*Ibid.*, 28.

¹³*Ibid.*, 124-126.

¹⁴"Red Mexico: The Facts," Knights of Columbus Supreme Council (New Haven, Connecticut, 1926).

¹⁵Connolly to Kelley, 7 September 1926 and 1 October 1926, Kelley Papers.

¹⁶"Red Mexico," 8.

¹⁷Davis, "Religious and Religiose Reaction," 85. Davis notes that missionaries reacted to the Cristero Rebellion by claiming that Catholic "landlordism helped keep the Mexican masses ignorant, provided no useful public education, encouraged superstition, and neglected education and social welfare in general." See page 84.

¹⁸Francis C. Kelley, "Plain Truth About Mexico: An Exposition and a Challenge," Commonweal (4 August 1926): 321-322.

¹⁹Willis J. Ballenger (Editor of U.P.C. News Service, Inc.) to Kelley, 1926, Kelley Papers.

²⁰Davis, "Religious and Religiose Reaction," 86-92.

²¹Rice, "Diplomatic Relations," 43.

²²Kelley to John J. Burke (Copy), 24 August 1926, Kelley Papers.

²³In describing the proposed book, Kelley later said that it would be "impossible to whitewash Hidalog [sic]" because "his campaign was one of the worst from the standpoint of murder and looting" see Kelley to Burke (Copy), 9 October 1926, Kelley Papers. He also said that the Knights of Columbus would print 25,000 copies at their own expense to be given to the bishops and 800,000 copies for themselves, see Kelley to Burke (Copy), 29 November 1926, Kelley Papers.

²⁴Kelley to Reverend J. P. Gleeson, 13 July 1923, Kelley Papers.

²⁵This information was found on the back of Byam's correspondence and dated 1926, Kelley Papers.

²⁶Davis, "Religious and Religiose Reaction," 81.

²⁷Quigley, "American Catholic Opinions," 118.

²⁸Kelley to Phillip Bernardini (Copy), 24 September 1926, Kelley Papers.

²⁹Francisco Gómez Del Rey and Hernán Díaz, The Black Czar: Plutarco Elías Calles, Bolshevik Dictator of Mexico (El Paso: El Diario De el Paso Press, 1928): 8-16. The Truth About the Trouble in Mexico (Huntington, Indiana: Our Visitor Press, 1925): 11. Sunday

³⁰"pastoral Letter of the Catholic Episcopate of the United States on the Religious Situation in Mexico," Committee of the American Episcopate (New York: The Paulist Press, 1926). A copy of the letter can be found in the Kelley papers.

³¹Quigley, "American Catholic Opinions," 140.

³²Kelley's collection includes several rough drafts of the letter. See also Kelley to Burke (Copy), 18 March 1927, Kelley papers.

³³Stanley E. Hilton, "The Church-State Dispute over Education in Mexico from Carranza to Cárdenas," The Americas 21 (1964): 165.

³⁴Examples given to demonstrate textbooks' irreligion do not demonstrate the Catholics' claims. They show merely nationalism and possibly socialistic tendencies. See "Sample of Irreligion Taught Children in Mexico," Catholic News (13 July 1935).

³⁵Kelley to Unknown (Copy), 19 March 1935, Kelley Papers.

³⁶Emilio Portes Gil, The Catholic Clergy Against the Mexican Government (Mexico City: Trens News Agency, 1934), 4.

³⁷*Ibid.*, 8.

³⁸Kelley, Blood-Drenched Altars, 339-340.

³⁹*Ibid.*, 12-13.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, 77-79.

⁴¹Francis C. Kelley, "The Church Side of the Mexican Conflict," Survey 57 (October 1926): 16.

⁴²Kelley, Blood-Drenched Altars, 60-62.

⁴³*Ibid.*, 94.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 317.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, 123-124.

⁴⁶Ibid., 306.

⁴⁷Ibid., 10-11.

⁴⁸Ibid., 238. Kelley, Jots, 184.

⁴⁹Jan Bazant, Alienation of Church Wealth in Mexico: Social and Economic Aspects of the Liberal Revolution 1856-1875 Translated and Edited by Michael P. Costeloe. (Cambridge: University Press, 1971), 13.

⁵⁰Francis Clement Kelley, reviewer, The Social Revolution in Mexico by Edward Alsworth Ross found in "Sociologist in Mexico," Catholic World 117 (July 1923): 502.

⁵¹Michael P. Costeloe, Church Wealth in Mexico: A Study of the "Juzgado de Capellanías" in the Archbishopric of Mexico 1800-1856 (Cambridge: University Press, 1967), 2.

⁵²Karl M. Schmitt, ed., The Roman Catholic Church in Modern Latin America (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1972), 53.

⁵³Kelley, Blood-Drenched Altars, 244.

⁵⁴Ibid., 257-278.

⁵⁵Francis C. Kelley, "History Points Finger At U.S.A. For Mexican Troubles: Personal Experiences During the Wilson Administration," America 60 (March 1939): 539.

⁵⁶Kelley, Blood-Drenched Altars, 360-361.

⁵⁷Gaffey, Francis Clement Kelley, 61.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

With the completion of Blood-Drenched Altars in 1935, Kelley gave up his fight for the Mexican Church. His efforts to restore the Church to its former status had been in vain. The campaign had lasted for over twenty years; it had projected him into the public eye and made him one of the most recognized Catholics in the United States. Through time, he became more moderate and accepting of the Mexican Revolution. In the end, his purpose was to restore the image of the Church in Mexico as a valuable and beneficent institution in both the past and the present. He abandoned the idea that the Catholic Church must regain its old political status in order to be effective. His conclusions were not based on ideology but rather on pragmatism.

A survey of Kelley's life exemplifies the fact that he loved the Church. He was not only quick to recognize the needs of his fellow Catholics but quick to respond to them as well. The formation of the Catholic Church Extension Society is an example of his readiness and ability to improvise solutions for complex problems that are large in scope.

Although unsuccessful, Kelley's work on behalf of the Mexican clergy is another example of his determination to

assist the Church. He had confidence that he would succeed. This optimism allowed him to confront some of the most important world leaders of his time, including Woodrow Wilson and William Jennings Bryan. Over the course of his crusade, he persisted even when his efforts met with disappointment. His several strategies did not fail for lack of effort but rather because Kelley had unrealistic expectations.

Kelley had anticipated that the Mexican Revolution would produce the same results as those of the United States and France. He expected Mexico to extend the same freedom of religion outlined in the United States Bill of Rights. Kelley overlooked the fact that for over three hundred years the Catholic Church in Mexico held a monopoly in the religious and political spheres that was uncomparable to the Church/State relationship in the United States. He failed to realize that religious separation from the motherland had already occurred before the English colonies achieved political independence. By contrast, in Mexico's struggle for independence, a single religious institution was identified with the Old World system.

As journalist Dudley G. Wooten remarks, "Catholicism, as part of the system of Spanish colonization, inevitably suffered from whatever penalties befell the conquerors in their final account with the conquered." The Mexican Church suffered a painful and forceful separation from the state, unlike the peaceful process experienced in the United

States. Although harsh and extreme, the religious persecution that occurred during the Revolution is more easily understood when seen within this context.¹

Kelley's efforts to discourage the diplomatic recognition of Venustiano Carranza failed because he misjudged Woodrow Wilson. Wilson's primary interests in regards to Mexico were American lives, property, and investments. Although the President was concerned about the persecution of Catholics, he considered the issue an internal matter for Mexicans. His decision to recognize the Constitutionalist regime was based on the fact that Carranza held military and political control over the country and that he promised to protect United States' interests.

Wilson's recognition of Carranza produced an animosity in Kelley that eventually harmed the Bishop's image. Kelley supported Wilson's opponent, Charles Evans Hughes, in the election of 1916. In doing so, he earned the contempt of the Wilson administration, as well as many other Americans. Even some Catholics thought that Kelley should not have meddled in politics.

Another reason for Kelley's failures in Mexico was his inability to appraise the sentiments of the American public. Kelley, along with many other Catholics, believed that the United States would intervene in the internal affairs of a foreign nation for the sake of religious freedom. As events were to demonstrate, citizenship became paramount over religious affiliation in determining when Americans would

consider interfering in Mexican politics. When Mexicans threatened American lives and property, the United States called for diplomatic or military action to curtail these excesses. When Mexicans mistreated their own countrymen or foreigners, however, Americans did not respond with the same sense of outrage.

Kelley's next tactic was just as much a failure as his first one. If the Félix Díaz revolt had succeeded, the religious situation in Mexico might have improved. Kelley's actions on behalf of Díaz placed him under suspicion by the United States' government and further tarnished his image.

When it became evident that the United States government would not meddle in Mexico's internal religious conflicts, Kelley changed his strategy again. Mexico's acceptance of Carranza, Obregón, and Calles proved that the Revolution was a fact of life in Mexico. From that point forward, Kelley relied on propaganda to discourage economic investment in Mexico, when Mexican governments repressed the Church. He hoped that revolutionary presidents would refuse to enforce the religious clauses of the constitution in return for an assurance of American investment.

The propaganda technique also failed to reap rewards. American businessmen did not rely on Catholic assessments of Mexico when making their decisions about investments there. They were no more dependent on Catholic opinion than the American government had been. Furthermore, the United States' public did not concern itself much with Catholic

propaganda. During the period, the country was still prejudiced against Catholics, and in fact, some Protestants hoped to proselytize Mexicans while the Church was being suppressed. Kelley overestimated his own influence and the Church's and the entire campaign simply dissolved.

After many years of struggling to restore the Church's influence in Mexico, Kelley finally admitted defeat in 1935. He did not succeed in helping the Mexican Church for two reasons. As previously stated, one explanation for his failure stems from his lack of understanding of Mexico's history. He could not grasp the deep complexities of Mexico's relationship with Catholicism. Another reason centers on his inability to gauge public sentiment. He seemed to be convinced that Americans would intervene in Mexico's internal affairs to ensure religious freedom there.

Although Bishop Kelley resolved himself to the Church's loss of influence in Mexico, he refused to admit that Catholicism had had negative effects on Mexico's historical development. His own version of Mexican history, Blood-Drenched Altars, was his lasting tribute to the contributions of Spanish Catholicism to Mexico.

Kelley's remaining years were not happy ones, as his failures brought disillusionment. In his autobiography, he remarked that as a young man he had been a great enthusiast about the human race. He went on to say that "each year of life after thirty seem[ed] to have lessened that enthusiasm."² In 1945, the Bishop suffered a series of

strokes that left him an embittered invalid until his death in 1948.

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¹Dudley G. Wooten, "Mexico for the Mexicans," Catholic World 100 (March 1915): 806.

²Kelley, Jots, 72.

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