

Religion, Culture, and Society in Colombia

Medellín and Antioquia, 1850–1930

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CONTENTS

<i>List of maps</i>	ix
<i>List of tables</i>	x
<i>List of appendices</i>	xii
<i>Abbreviations</i>	xiii
Introduction	I
Prologue: Antioquia and its people	9
PART I. THE CATHOLIC CHURCH	
1. ' <i>Una República de Curas</i> ': Church and Politics	31
2. Towards a Greater Presence of the Church	56
3. Proliferation of Devotional Associations	96
4. Religiosity in Daily Life	126
5. A Plethora of Charity Societies	164
PART II. EDUCATION AND CULTURE AS FACTORS OF COHESION	
6. Developments and Achievements in Education	187
7. New Cultural Societies	216
Final Comments	299
<i>Appendices</i>	316

Bibliography

353

Index

385

Part I

The Catholic Church

To affirm that religion pervaded the daily life of Antioqueños is nothing new. What this chapter describes is how, where, and when this religiosity and the ecclesiastical institutions that expressed and supported it became so firmly established in the region. The Church, with strong political support, expanded its institutional framework through a large number of religious communities and devotional associations, and provided coherence and stability to Antioqueño society. Religion became a common cultural reference which united social differences, and acted as a bond between classes, unifying expectations and beliefs.

As in the rest of Colombia, and indeed in vast parts of Latin America in the years under study, religion amounts almost exclusively to Catholicism. There are no reliable statistics on Church affiliations for the nineteenth century, but the census of 1928 is revealing: 99 per cent of the Antioqueño population was registered as Catholic. Only 1,477 persons declared themselves members of other denominations.¹

During the colonial period the Catholic Church in Antioquia was neither as prosperous nor as powerful as it had traditionally been in large parts of the Spanish Empire. Some cities such as Mexico, Lima, or Quito, and, in the New Kingdom of Granada, Santafé de Bogotá, Tunja, Pasto, Pamplona, and Cartagena, are famous for the grand conventual architecture that the religious orders left behind. In contrast, in the province of Antioquia, instead of convents or regulars, the Church consisted largely of an active secular clergy scattered in small rural towns and in parishes, living off a profusion of *capellanías* (endowed benefices).²

Only a few members of the regular orders had established themselves in the province of Antioquia. The Jesuits had conducted missionary *correrías* or visits in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. They maintained a school in Santa Fe de Antioquia from 1726 until 1767, when the order was banished by Charles III from Spanish territories. Franciscan friars sporadically visited the area in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, reappeared from 1803 to 1821, but returned to stay permanently only in 1895. The Brothers Hospitallers of St John of God settled in 1796 in Santa Fe de Antioquia, but by the mid-nineteenth century they had gone. The relatively late arrival, the instability and the

¹ Sección Estadística Departamental, *Boletín de Estadística*, 27 (Medellín, 1930), 39.

² C. E. Mesa, CMF, 'La Iglesia', *Historia de Antioquia* (Bogotá, 1988), 385-6; and his *La Iglesia y Antioquia* (Medellín, 1983), 46-7; J. Piedrahíta, Pbro., *Historia eclesiástica de Antioquia. Colonia e Independencia, 1545-1828* (Medellín, 1973), 303-13; J. Serna Gómez, 'Antioquia, creación espiritual del clero diocesano', *Revista de la Academia Colombiana de Historia Eclesiástica*, 21-2 (Bogotá, January-July 1971), 135-58.

low numbers of regular clergy that came to the province of Antioquia help to explain why the Church in Antioquia did not accumulate land and wealth.³

At the end of the colonial era, the presence of the institutional Church in the province was not particularly strong. It did not become an episcopal see until 1804, and it received few pastoral visits from the bishops of the dioceses of Popayán, Cartagena, and the archdiocese of Santafé de Bogotá to which its territory previously belonged. To a great extent this neglect can be accounted for by Antioquia's difficult and rugged geography, which isolated the region from the rest of the viceroyalty. In addition, the scattered inhabitants of the rural areas were relatively immune to the socializing and controlling mechanisms employed by the local authorities. Most Antioqueños during the Colonial years engaged in both a shifting agriculture and small-scale placer mining, and were frequently on the move. Independent placer miners were constantly seeking gold, while many others made a living as itinerant merchants.⁴ To control, much less catechize, such a disperse and mobile population was not an easy task.

In his visit to the province of Antioquia in 1615 the *Oidor* Herrera Campuzano commented that the Indians were ignorant of religious doctrines and reluctant to accept evangelization. A closer look, however, reveals that complete neglect in religious matters was not entirely the rule, especially after the Jesuits settled in the area in the 1720s. Antioqueños were noted for the generous way in which they sponsored the educational work of the Company of Jesus, donating gold, houses, and slaves. Soon the region began to generate abundant religious vocations, many from well-to-do families. Most candidates travelled to Bogotá to study in the schools of Santo Tomás, El Rosario, or San Bartolomé, while others went to the San Francisco de Asís seminary in Popayán, and a few even attended the universities of Alcalá de Henares and Salamanca in Spain. Some researchers consider that this early influence of the Jesuits planted the seeds for the intense religiosity that was to flourish from the mid-nineteenth century onwards in the region.⁵ It

³ J. Piedrahíta, Pbro., *Documentos y estudios para la historia de Medellín* (Medellín, n.d.), 399.

⁴ P. Rodríguez, 'Promesas, seducción y matrimonio en Antioquia colonial', *Seducción, amancebamiento y abandono en la Colonia* (Bogotá, 1991), 60.

⁵ R. Silva, *Saber, cultura y sociedad en el Nuevo Reino de Granada, siglos XVII y XVIII* (Bogotá, 1984), 171; Mesa, *La Iglesia y Antioquia*, 82-4; F. González, 'La Iglesia, organización en la Colonia, acción misional y educativa', *Historia de Colombia*, Ed. Salvat, vol. 5 (Bogotá, 1988), 543.

seems there were also a great number of female religious vocations. The lack of local convents forced applicants to travel to Santafé de Bogotá, Cartagena, Popayán, or other cities with convents. According to a communication sent by several members of the Cabildo of Medellín to the Crown on 9 September 1720, ‘. . . due to a unique favour from heaven, the vast majority of women here boast an innate inclination towards a religious calling . . . and so it is that there are currently 30 nuns in convents in the city of Santafé [de Bogotá], and that two natives from this Province set out from the Convento del Carmen in Cartagena to found the house in Havana . . .’.⁶

In 1776 Governor Francisco Silvestre wrote in his *Relación* that religious vocations in the province of Antioquia abounded, ‘. . . because it was almost a “reason of state” [*razón de estado*] in families of tradition that there had to be a priest and a nun in every one . . .’.⁷

An 1802 report reveals that, in contrast with information concerning Socorro or Sogamoso, not all Antioqueños lived away from towns as *montaraces* (people in the wild), or lacked ‘civil morals or education’. In the main urban centres of Medellín, Rionegro, and Marinilla, as well as in the new towns founded by Mon y Velarde in 1788, San Luis de Góngora (today Yarumal), San Antonio del Infante (today Don Matías), and in Carolina del Príncipe, ‘. . . the Rules and Precepts of Our Holy Mother Church are invariably obeyed . . .’. The report attributed this to ‘. . . the constant abundance of many great men in the ecclesiastical career . . .’, who had not limited their work to collecting fees, but had also conducted visits and organized missions in the area.⁸

Between independence and the middle of the nineteenth century the presence of the Church seems to have declined in Antioquia. Manuel Pombo, on his trip to Medellín in 1852, noted that, ‘In Antioquia there are barely enough ecclesiastics for the essential services, and it is the only part that I know in the Republic where, apart from the small nunnery in Medellín, there is neither a convent nor a barracks.’⁹

From mid-century onwards, both the Church’s organization and its spiritual influence increased. Religious values became an important

⁶ P. Bernardo G., OCD, *Monasterio de San José de Carmelitas Descalzas, de Medellín, 1791–1991* (Medellín, 1989), 8.

⁷ F. Silvestre, *Relación de la Provincia de Antioquia* (Medellín, 1988), 240.

⁸ R. Silva, *Universidad y sociedad en el Nuevo Reino de Granada* (Bogotá, 1992), 303–9. The report, written by Francisco Josef Bohórquez, is reproduced in: ‘Aspectos de la situación social del Nuevo Reino de Granada a comienzos del siglo XIX’, *ACHSC*, 2/2 (Bogotá, 1964), 531–60.

⁹ M. Pombo, ‘De Medellín a Bogotá’, *Obras inéditas* (Bogotá, 1914), 32.

element in Antioqueño culture, at least in the more populated central zone, limited to the north by Yarumal, to the south by Sonsón, to the east by Marinilla and Santuario, and to the west by Santa Fe de Antioquia and San Jerónimo.¹⁰

References to the significance of religion in the life of Antioqueños appear constantly in the last quarter of the nineteenth century in travellers' accounts, literature, and newspapers. In 1950 the region was still regarded as the 'most fanatically Catholic in Colombia', a country which in turn was considered one of the most Catholic in America.¹¹ In 1960 Antioquia had the largest number of parishes, the highest proportion of priests per head of population, the highest number of religious vocations for both sexes, and the largest number of devotional associations in Colombia.¹²

¹⁰ B. Restrepo G., 'Religiosidad y moralidad en Antioquia', *Memoria de gobierno*, vol. 1 (Medellín, 1990), 170.

¹¹ L. H. Fajardo, *La moralidad protestante de los antioqueños* (Cali, n.d.), 63; F. Aguilar, *Colombia en presencia de las Repúblicas hispanoamericanas* (Bogotá, 1884), 225.

¹² V. Gutiérrez de Pineda, *Familia y cultura en Colombia* (Medellín, 3rd edn. 1994), 373-402.

I

‘Una República de Curas’: *Church and Politics*

In Spanish America, the wealth accumulated in real estate and income from annuities by the colonial Church sustained its political power. After independence, Liberal parties viewed ecclesiastical influence, wealth, and privileges as rival to the state, and adopted a series of measures to diminish them.¹ The Church–state issue became a source of dispute, particularly during the second half of the nineteenth century. Liberals, and sometimes Conservatives too, saw Church property—both of the dioceses and of the regular religious orders—as a source of revenue for the state. Conflicts arose mainly over the prerogative to appoint bishops, over property rights, and the control of education.

How does the case of Antioquia from 1850 to 1930 fit in the wider Colombian and Latin American context in the way Church and state conflicts were resolved?

This section first considers local reactions to the return of the Jesuits in 1844, an episode that defined some of the interests and positions that would emerge recurrently during the third quarter of the nineteenth century. Next, it examines the effect on the Antioqueño Church of two rounds of Liberal reforms introduced on a national scale: first under the government of the Caucano General José Hilario López, 1849–53; and later under the presidency of another Caucano, General Tomás Cipriano de Mosquera, 1861–4. It comments on the local suspension of discord between Church and state achieved in Antioquia by Pedro Justo Berrio’s Conservative administration, brought to an end by the national civil war of 1876–7. With the occupation of Antioquia by Liberal forces, the region’s clergy experienced another difficult period. This lapse was followed by the renewal of harmonious relations between state and Church, thanks to the policies of the *Regeneración*, 1878–98; the 1886 Constitution; and the 1887 Concordat. These years mark the beginning of a ‘golden age’ for the Colombian Church, particularly evident in

¹ J. Lynch, ‘The Catholic Church’, *Latin America: Economy and Society, 1870–1930*, ed. by L. Bethell (Cambridge, 1989), 301–5.

Antioquia. Finally, this section will discuss the ideological ascendancy of the Church with the compliance of civil authorities, and the questioning to its authority posed by the new realities of the early twentieth century.

LOCAL REACTIONS TO THE RETURN OF THE JESUITS

In parts of New Granada, particularly in the capital Bogotá, the return of the Company of Jesus in 1844, after its 1767 banishment, met with strong opposition from Liberal groups. In contrast, the governor of Antioquia, Mariano Ospina Rodríguez, welcomed the Jesuits in the belief that they would counter what he considered to be the 'immoral' education imparted by the laicising *Colegio Académico* since the 1830s, and that they would also become a source of scientific and technical education, highly needed in this mining region. Local opposition was headed by *El Amigo del País*, a small Liberal newspaper published by a club of the same name from December 1845 to October 1847. Among its members were young intellectuals, including the writers Gregorio Gutiérrez González, Juan de Dios Restrepo (Emiro Kastos), and Camilo Antonio (*El Tuerto*) Echeverri.² It also numbered among its members lawyers, merchants, and miners, J. M. Facio Lince, Nicolás F. Villa, Pedro Antonio Restrepo Escovar, and Tomás and Elías Santamaria; and two Englishmen, Tyrell Moore and William Jervis. Although the club members were neither atheists nor even strongly anticlerical, they stood against the Conservative government of Ospina and the fanaticism they attributed to the Company of Jesus. Some of them taught in the official *Colegio Académico* and saw the Jesuits as competition, but what they basically disliked was the idea that the education of the young should fall into the hands of 'ultramontane' foreigners.³ In their newspaper these Antioqueño Liberals insisted that it was an error to expect moral education from an order which France and other European nations '... being able to understand and judge it better than us, cast off as

² In his youth Echeverri was a fierce critic of the Jesuits and clerics in general. In the 1870s, after spending some time in the San Juan de Dios Hospital in Bogotá, he repented his 'excesses' against the Pope and the clergy, and asked forgiveness for his sins. See: M. T. Uribe de H., 'Camilo Antonio Echeverri: el niño terrible de la Antioquia decimonónica', *Figuras políticas de Antioquia, siglos XIX y XX* (Medellín, 1987), 86.

³ R. Brew, 'Aspects of Politics in Antioquia, 1850-1865', M. Phil. thesis (Oxford University, 1971), 52-8; *El Amigo del País*, 2 (Medellín, 1 January 1846), n.p.n.; J. A. Restrepo, *Retrato de un patriarca antioqueño. Pedro Antonio Restrepo Escovar, 1815-1899* (Medellín, 1992), 60-6.

immoral and dangerous . . . [the Jesuits] always leave tears, discord and anarchy behind wherever their ill-fated destiny takes them'.⁴

When the Jesuits were again expelled in 1850, *El Espía*, another local Liberal newspaper issued in Medellín between September 1851 and December 1851, again criticized the Company of Jesus and its alliance with the Conservative party.

THE FIRST PERIOD OF LIBERAL REFORMS

In New Granada the systematic attacks of Liberal central governments against Church privileges began under the presidency of General López. His reforms—universal male suffrage, abolition of slavery, and partition of communal Indian lands, among others—have been considered more radical than similar steps taken in other Latin American countries at the time.⁵ As to religion, the reforms began with the expulsion once again of the Jesuits on 18 May 1850. In May 1851 he decreed the abolition of the ecclesiastical *fueros*. Civil and criminal offences involving the clergy would henceforth be judged by the secular courts. He ordered the redemption of *censos*, the major item of church income, exempting from these obligations those owners who paid to the government half the capital they represented. López also abolished tithes and decreed the election of parish priests by the local secular Cabildos, which were to assign them a fixed salary. Civil marriage became compulsory. López and his successor, General José María Obando, also sponsored the National Constitution of 1853, which guaranteed freedom of worship and education to all citizens. Though this Constitution omitted any explicit reference to Church–state relations, a law passed later that year separated the two.⁶

López's reforms met with strong opposition. In 1851 a Conservative revolt broke out in the province of Cauca and spread to Antioquia. The Antioqueño Conservatives, led by the Caucaño General Eusebio Borrero, took up arms under the slogan of '*Dios y la Federación*'. Besides their discontent with centralism, the rebels disapproved of Liberal reforms against the Church, portrayed as threats to moral education and

⁴ *El Amigo del País*, 2 (Medellín, 1 January 1846), n.p.n.

⁵ D. Bushnell and N. Macaulay, *The Emergence of Latin America in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford, 1988), 209–15; Lynch, 'Catholic Church', 336–58.

⁶ F. Díaz Díaz, 'Estado, Iglesia y desamortización', *Manual de Historia de Colombia*, vol. 2, 3rd edn. (Bogotá, 1984), 435–42; J. I. Cadavid, Pbro., *Los fueros de la Iglesia ante el liberalismo y el conservatismo en Colombia* (Medellín, 1955), 43–50.

to the family. The reactions of the local clergy were divided. Those close to Santa Fe de Antioquia and the so-called 'Jacobin' bishop Juan de la Cruz Gómez Plata, sympathized with the Liberals and their belief that the civil authorities should be placed above the Church. But most clerics, especially in the east of Antioquia, openly backed the Conservatives and urged their flocks to join the 'holy cause'. A few, like José María Hoyos, priest of El Peñol, a town east of Medellín, assembled small militias; his troops fought in the battles of Abejorral and Rionegro. But the insurrection did not last long, and the Antioqueños, lacking military experience, were easily defeated by the national army.⁷

From the 1830s to the 1870s the position of the Church in Antioquia, especially on issues concerning education and moral values, was best expressed by Mariano Ospina Rodríguez, a prominent national figure and one of the founders of the Conservative party. Though he was a native of Guasca, Cundinamarca, he represented a group of Antioqueño entrepreneurs, intellectuals, and political leaders, including the wealthy miners and merchants Julián and Pedro Vásquez, the ex-governor Juan de Dios Aranzazu, and the large Barrientos and Gómez Londoño families, members of the region's upper class. Mariano Ospina's thinking was closely linked with the Jesuits; as Secretary of Interior and External Relations, he had helped to bring them back to the country in 1844. Ospina argued for peace, social stability, thrift, and pragmatism, and believed that an intellectual and ethical reform, accomplished through better education and the teaching of the Catholic religion, would bring about the order required for the prosperity and civilization. From the 1840s onwards, in part due to his influence, most of the Antioqueño clergy sided with the Conservative party. A small nucleus of Liberal supporters remained, mainly around Rionegro, Santa Fe de Antioquia, and a few minor towns in the lowlands.⁸ As governor of the province of Antioquia, 1845–7, and of the province of Medellín, 1854, and later as president of New Granada, 1857–61, Ospina helped to ease tensions between Church and state, encouraging the former to recover some of its original sway. In 1856 the Constitution of Antioquia declared the Catholic religion to be the sole religion in the state, banned the assign-

⁷ L. J. Ortiz M., *El Federalismo en Antioquia, 1850–1880, Aspectos políticos* (Bogotá, 1985), 25–7; Brew, 'Aspects of Politics', 60–1.

⁸ E. Gómez Barrientos's *Don Mariano Ospina y su época*, 2 vols. (Medellín, 1913–15) is still a very useful biography. See also D. Wise de G. (comp.), *Antología del pensamiento de Mariano Ospina Rodríguez*, vol. 1 (Bogotá, 1990), 3–10, 55; and J. O. Melo, 'Progreso y guerras civiles entre 1829 y 1852', *Historia de Antioquia* (Bogotá, 1988), 101, 107, 111.

ment to alternative uses of places of worship, and protected ecclesiastical properties.⁹

In 1859 Tomás Cipriano de Mosquera rebelled against the legitimate government of Ospina Rodríguez. Mosquera, victorious in the civil war that followed, assumed the presidency of the Confederación Granadina. Ospina fled from Bogotá, but in July 1861 was captured and sent to prison in Cartagena, although he managed to escape into exile. He and his family lived in Guatemala until 1871. They were received there by Telésforo Paúl SJ, the future archbishop of Bogotá, 1884–9, and one of the designers of the Concordat adopted in 1887, described below. In 1872 Ospina was back in Medellín, actively involved in the creation of the *Sociedad Católica* and its newspaper *La Sociedad*, where he wrote regularly against the Radical Liberal reform of education.¹⁰

THE SECOND WAVE OF LIBERAL ATTACKS ON THE CHURCH

As provisional head of state, Mosquera in 1861 revived the Liberal attack. One of his targets was again the Church, which still maintained some of its privileges. On 20 July he decreed the *tuición de cultos*, the state's right of 'tuition' over the Church;¹¹ on 26 July he expelled the Jesuits for a third time; on 9 September he decreed the disentanglement of property in 'dead hands' and enforced its sale by public auction. On 5 November he suppressed all religious orders.¹² Significantly, the new Constitution for the United States of Colombia issued in Rionegro, Antioquia, and adopted in May 1863, did not begin with the usual words, 'In the name of God'.¹³ It established freedom of religion, banned the clergy from federal offices, warned the Church against interfering in politics, and prohibited ecclesiastical bodies from the acquisition and possession of real property. This Constitution was in force for twenty years, and is often cited as an example of the most drastic Liberalism in nineteenth-century Latin America. It has been blamed for the political instability and the frequent local, regional, and even national civil wars of these years, fuelled by the exacerbation of conflict

⁹ Ortiz, *El Federalismo en Antioquia*, 110.

¹⁰ Wise de G., *Antología del pensamiento de Mariano Ospina*, L–LXII.

¹¹ Explained a few pages ahead.

¹² Cadavid, *Los fueros de la Iglesia*, 51–7; Díaz Díaz, 'Estado, Iglesia', 444–8.

¹³ For the full text of the Constitution of the United States of Colombia of 8 May 1863, see: D. Uribe Vargas (ed.), *Las Constituciones de Colombia*, vol. 2 (Madrid, 1985), 1037–68.

with the Church.¹⁴ The Colombian Church hierarchy, with the example and support of Rome where the Pope was facing Victor Emmanuel II and Garibaldi, responded by condemning Liberalism. Pope Pius IX excommunicated Mosquera. The intransigent position of the Vatican, product of the radical anticlerical movements then current in Europe and the sufferings of the Papacy in the process of Italian reunification, helped to deepen the conflict.¹⁵

Antioquia surrendered to Mosquera's forces in October 1862, and until January 1864, when the Conservatives recaptured local power, the state presidency was in the hands of the Liberals backed by national troops. Initially Mosquera himself governed Antioquia: in April 1863 he was succeeded by the Antioqueño Pascual Bravo, who ruled until 1864. The young politician Bravo had a hard time, for he represented a minority imposed from outside. Besides his political and military opponents, he had to face an economic crisis and religious conflict.

It is at first somewhat surprising, given the religiosity of Antioqueños, that the proceeds of Church property sold off locally seem to have been surprisingly low. No doubt this was partially due to the fact that the local Church had not inherited or accumulated wealth on the same scale as in other parts of the country. To cite an example, about 20 per cent of the real property in Bogotá belonged to the Church; and some convents like Santo Domingo or Concepción were certainly rich. Entailment, however, covered all types of corporate property owned by religious communities, lay brotherhoods, or by *capellanías*. In Antioquia the bulk of the property held in mortmain was in the form of *censos*, but after Mosquera's decree only a few of these were redeemed in the national treasury. Antioqueño landowners felt confused, and feared the disapproval of the Church, which would come down on them when they needed the sacraments. In addition to the pressure of public opinion, the restraint of the local authorities, especially after Pascual Bravo was overthrown by the Conservative Pedro Justo Berrío at the beginning of 1864, made the registration and public auction of entailed property almost impossible, as both federal agents and buyers felt intimidated.¹⁶

¹⁴ Bushnell and Macaulay, *The Emergence of Latin America*, 217; E. Gutiérrez Cely, 'El Radicalismo 1860-1878', *Gran Enciclopedia de Colombia*, vol. 2 (Bogotá, 1991), 389-90.

¹⁵ J. P. Restrepo's *La Iglesia y el Estado en Colombia* (London, 1885) is still a useful work on this period, particularly on Mosquera and his conduct within Antioquia. See also Lynch, 'The Catholic Church', 315-18.

¹⁶ Brew, 'Aspects of Politics', 73-5; Díaz Díaz, 'Estado, Iglesia', 458-60.

The measure to suppress religious orders did not cause major disruptions in Antioquia, given that the only existing convent was that of the Discalced Carmelite Sisters. However, symbolically it meant much, as the emotional response to its closing revealed. The expulsion of the nuns was decreed in February 1863, and carried out by troops of the Bomboná battalion in April, under the personal supervision of Mosquera.¹⁷

Local reactions to the *tuición* laws were more heated. These required that priests in order to perform religious services had to obtain a *pase*, or official permit. They had to report to the nearest civil authority to swear obedience to the Constitution and laws of the republic. Recalcitrant non-jurors were to be exiled. The official newspaper printed the names of the priests who submitted to this requirement, with the date when they did so.¹⁸ The Bishop of Antioquia, Domingo Antonio Riaño, authorized by Pope Pius IX, declared the measure contrary to Church law and forbade the clergy to obey it. Mosquera tried in person to persuade Bishop Riaño to retract, with no success.

Juan Pablo Restrepo in *La Iglesia y el Estado en Colombia* describes in detail the memorable meeting.¹⁹ Bishop Riaño '... while in Medellín, received an order from the Secretary of Government instructing him in the name of the President of the United States of Colombia to attend a meeting at twelve o'clock sharp the following day to discuss the tuition decrees and the freeing of assets from mortmain.'

The bishop appeared at the appointed time, escorted by three priests and three doctors. Restrepo says that 'The prelate went without his walking stick, because he heard that General Mosquera had said that if he went with it, he would break it over in his head.' The interview took place in the presence of the secretaries, a number of military men, and several eminent personalities of the city, '... there was such a large crowd of people there that the room was almost full, and there were people in the inside gallery as well. Virtually all the support was for the Liberal party. You saw very few Conservatives there.'

After exchanging greetings, both men sat down on a sofa and exchanged a few words about the general's health. Mosquera then bade the bishop to obey the decrees, insisting they did not contradict Catholic dogma. He blamed the clergy's meddling in politics for the continuation

¹⁷ C. E. Mesa, CMF, *La Iglesia y Antioquia. Derrotero histórico y panorama actual* (Medellín, 1983), 215; Brew, 'Aspects of Politics', 73-5.

¹⁸ See *Gaceta Oficial de Antioquia*.

¹⁹ (London, 1885), 672-80. The following quotes are taken from this account.

of the war. The bishop replied that he could not submit before he received an answer from Rome. The general told him that if he would not yield at once, he should go straight to gaol, and be exiled next day to Iscuandé.²⁰ The bishop begged for a few days to arrange the trip, but they were not granted. Near the end, when both were already standing, the bishop reproached the president for losing his composure. Mosquera answered that it was not so, that he just happened to talk like that.

The meeting had lasted more than two hours. Each antagonist, certain of his position, offered the other elaborate arguments. Mosquera declared himself a Catholic by conviction, but resolved to enforce his decrees by force if necessary. 'And you', he said to the bishop, 'have a one-sided arrangement, where you put the best on one side for yourselves and leave the rest for everyone else'.

Riaño was exiled and replaced with a Liberal bishop, Lino Garro from Santa Fe de Antioquia. He was not accepted by the ecclesiastical authorities in Bogotá, who appointed Valerio Antonio Jiménez instead, producing virtual schism in the Antioqueño Church. A small group of priests from western Antioquia and a few from Rionegro submitted to the *tuición* laws, but after Riaño was sent into exile most clerics refused to obey Mosquera, and avoided persecution by hiding in the mountains or in private houses. Fugitive priests offered clandestine services, while people boycotted those performed by 'sworn' priests. Nevertheless, in January 1863 an embargo was placed on the effects and properties of those who still resisted, finally forcing almost half of the clergy to apply for the *pase*.²¹

The application of these laws aroused the resentment of the clergy and of Conservatives all over the country. In Antioquia even Liberals reacted against them, convinced that the persecution of bishops and priests had gone too far. The liberal '*Tuerto*' Echeverri described the disruptions brought to the religious practices of all Catholics, independent of their political affiliation:

The clergy . . . are still saying Mass for the most part out in the bushes . . . there are children here who are over one year old and who are still 'Moors', as they say around here, because there is nobody to baptise them, apart from some *Padre Sometido* . . .²²

²⁰ On the borders of the current departments of Cauca and Nariño.

²¹ Brew, 'Aspects of Politics', 67-73; Ortiz, *El Federalismo en Antioquia*, 110-11.

²² Quoted by E. Gómez Barrientos, *25 años a través del Estado de Antioquia*, Part I (Medellín, 1918), 54.

The benign attitude towards the Church adopted by Liberals in Antioquia shows the absence of strong anticlerical feelings, such as were found in Santander, Cauca, and other parts of the country. This may partially have derived from the limited economic importance that the Church had in the region. Many prominent Antioqueño Liberals also defended the interests of the Church because it was a matter of protecting family interests: many had relatives who had embraced the religious life. The cases of Pedro Antonio Restrepo Escovar, 1815–99, and of Vicente Restrepo, 1837–89, illustrate this point. The former, a brilliant lawyer and parliamentarian, had been Liberal until José Hilario López banned the collection of tithes and decreed that parish priests be elected and assigned a fixed income by the local Cabildos. Restrepo Escovar moved to the Conservative party; he found it impossible to accept these reforms or the general attitude of the central government towards the clergy. He had three uncles who were priests—two of whom had been his teachers during his childhood—and his father, Felipe Restrepo Granda, had as a widower become the parish priest of Itaguí, a town south of Medellín; after his wife had died in 1821, he had placed his seven children in the care of relatives and entered the seminary. Other widowers had taken similar decisions before; it was considered a logical alternative for men who had intellectual interests and no regular income.²³

Vicente Restrepo, a scientist of note, was a pious Catholic who had belonged to the Liberal party in his youth. He had studied mining in Paris and in Freiburg, Germany. Back in Medellín, he founded a smelting plant and the academic society *Escuela de Ciencias i Artes*. He was also a writer, served as a minister in the national government, and represented Antioquia in the *Congreso Nacional de Delegatarios* in 1886. He was one of the founders of the *Sociedad Católica* of Medellín in the 1870s. The following detail reveals something of his character: in 1855, while attending the *École des Mines* in Paris, despite their different ages, he had become a close friend of Gabriel García Moreno, the future ultramontane dictator of Ecuador, 1860–75, who was then in exile. For a year they lived in the 'pleasant intimacy produced by scientific affinities, without even once thinking of frequenting dances and cafés in the Latin Quarter'.²⁴

Vicente Restrepo's disillusion with the Liberal party began during Mosquera's regime, especially after the banishment of Bishop Riaño and

²³ Restrepo, *Retrato de un patriarca antioqueño*, 11–13, 83–4.

²⁴ *Don Vicente Restrepo, apuntes autobiográficos* (Bogotá, 1939), 17.

the incarceration of one of his wife's uncles for not submitting to the *tuición* laws. Years later he wrote in his memoirs:

General Mosquera's attacks to the Colombian Church; the barbaric way he treated our shepherds and the loyal clergy in general; the deference he showed to *Padres Sometidos*, however contemptible they might be; his mocking of holy objects; all these things made an impression on my spirit. If political passion led me to look for reasons to gloss over these facts, which I never applauded, my conscience told me this was not the fine and wonderful freedom those who supported the revolution had been promised.²⁵

However, Restrepo remained a Liberal until he witnessed the progress brought to Antioquia by the Conservative government of Berrío. Other Liberals obstinately persisted in their anticlerical stand. The day after Restrepo announced his decision to join the Conservatives, anonymous signs reading: 'Vicente Restrepo, crooked Jesuit' appeared on some walls of the town.²⁶

BERRÍO'S ADMINISTRATION, A RESPITE FOR THE ANTIOQUEÑO CHURCH

By the end of 1863 the Antioqueño Conservatives had conducted a successful military campaign to overthrow Pascual Bravo. In January 1864 the Conservative Pedro Justo Berrío was appointed provisional head of state. He was formally elected president a few months later and re-elected in 1869. He remained in power for almost ten years, an unusual duration for those times in Colombia. Although he wished to install a civilian government, the fear of an invasion by Mosquera's forces constrained him to maintain a military regime during his first months in power. The belligerent climate was dispelled when Liberal Manuel Murillo Toro was appointed president of the union. Despite protests from some radical Liberals, he recognized Berrío's government. He skillfully used the influence of the rich Bogotano merchant Próspero Pereira Gamba, his friend and business partner, to get Berrío to sign a declaration accepting the Constitution of Rionegro. In return, Murillo Toro recognized his government.²⁷

²⁵ *Don Vicente Restrepo, apuntes autobiográficos*, 34.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 41.

²⁷ L. J. Villegas B., 'La trama de un poder. Administración de Pedro Justo Berrío, 1864-73', Master's thesis, History Department, Universidad Nacional (Medellín, 1994), 67-81; Uribe de H. 'Camilo Antonio Echeverri', 84.

Berrió's administration brought political stability and was applauded even by many Liberals. Born in northern Antioquia, he came from a modest family. He had the support of the local clergy and of the Giraldos, the Gómez, and other traditional families from the east, who exerted significant political and economic influence in the region.²⁸ Berrió's government provided a refuge for the Church at a time when it faced attacks in most other parts of the country, where the Liberals prevailed. He explicitly considered religion to be one of the bulwarks of Conservatism in Antioquia, and believed it could be a useful instrument for preserving peace and order between the different social classes. During his regime the persecution of the clergy was halted, and little or nothing was done to enforce the laws concerning ecclesiastical property. In 1867 the convent expropriated by Mosquera was returned to the Discalced Carmelites, and an official monthly subvention to compensate the nuns was approved. In July of that year, in response to a petition addressed by the Antioqueño Legislature, the National Congress annulled the *tuición* law of 1861. The state of Antioquia decreed in 1869 that dioceses and parishes had a legal right to own churches, episcopal and parish houses, and cemeteries.²⁹ In the early 1870s two devotional lay societies, the *Asociación del Sagrado Corazón de Jesús* for women and the *Sociedad Católica* for men, opened chapters in more than twenty towns in Antioquia.

The decision to move the episcopal see from Santa Fe de Antioquia to Medellín in 1868 recognized the fact that the more populated central and eastern part of the state had become the centre of local economic and political life. This was already evident by 1826, when Medellín had been declared the civil capital of the province. Moreover, the transfer of the see was a way of rewarding the role played by the Conservative clergy from the Medellín area during the local civil war of 1863 and during the subsequent occupation by Mosquera's forces. The bishop of the new diocese, Valerio Antonio Jiménez, a native of the eastern town of Marinilla, had been Berrió's schoolmate at the seminary in Santa Fe de Antioquia, and had acted as chaplain of the troops he had mobilized against Bravo.³⁰

To a large extent, religious conflicts in Colombia during the third quarter of the nineteenth century centred on the control of education.

²⁸ See Villegas B., 'La trama de un poder'; also Ortiz, *El Federalismo en Antioquia*, 64-70.

²⁹ Ortiz, *El Federalismo en Antioquia*, 65-6; Mesa, *Iglesia y Antioquia*, 215.

³⁰ Villegas B., 'La trama de un poder', 90-101.

Under Berrío's mandate, education from elementary to university level was entrusted to the Church, and improved a great deal. In 1865 the secretary of government of Antioquia sent a circular to priests requesting them to teach religion and morals in the schools within the limits of their parishes, stressing their positive influence on the formation of the young.³¹

When the Liberal central government issued its Decree on Primary Education on 1 November 1870, introducing free and mandatory secular primary education, another critical period for Church–state relations began. Though the decree allowed the clergy to impart religious instruction in official schools to children whose parents requested it, Conservatives in the states of Antioquia and Cauca nevertheless opposed the decree, perceiving it as a threat to the survival of the Catholic religion. Monseñor Carlos Bermúdez, bishop of Popayán, was the most intransigent, and warned parents not to send children to official schools under pain of excommunication.³²

Arguing for the autonomy of the federal states, Berrío applied a modified version of the decree in Antioquia. In 1871 the *Sínodo de Medellín y Antioquia*, following a call made in Bogotá in 1868 during the *Primer Concilio Provincial de la Nueva Granada*, asked priests to impart religious education in public schools. Where priests were lacking, they were advised to delegate this responsibility to devotional associations, especially to women affiliated to the *Asociación del Sagrado Corazón de Jesús*. Members of these bodies were also asked to help parish priests to guarantee the religious orthodoxy of public school teachers, regardless of the subject they taught.³³

The reaction against anticlerical reforms had evolved in Antioquia, and the protection the Church received under Berrío's government seems to have reinforced the practice of a Catholicism wary of any deviations. Signs of this orthodox sentiment can be seen earlier. For example, Tyrell Moore's frustrated attempt to import a group of English Protestant colonists in the 1840s, and to introduce French weights and measures, finally failed because anything French was considered synonymous with secularism.³⁴ The feeling persisted and even strengthened during the second half of the century. In 1872 the union government

³¹ G. M. Arango, *La mentalidad religiosa en Antioquia, prácticas y discursos, 1828–1885* (Medellín, 1993), 68–72.

³² E. Gutiérrez Cely, 'El Radicalismo', *Gran Enciclopedia de Colombia*, vol. 2 (Bogotá, 1991), 408.

³³ Arango, *La mentalidad religiosa*, 67–9.

³⁴ Brew, 'Aspects of Politics', 45–6.

invited nine professors of education from Germany, aiming to set up Normal Schools for the training of teachers in every state of the country. Gotthold Weiss was dispatched to Antioquia, but he left soon after, unable to stand the local hostility towards him as a Protestant. He was replaced by a Catholic German.³⁵ In his recollection of the civil war years of 1876–7, the Liberal leader Lucio Restrepo was eloquent about the sort of discrimination Liberals had to endure:

The clergy blatantly exerted its influence in elections, where it waged open war on the Liberal party. An intransigent Bishop brought up young priests on principles of rigorous intolerance, and so paved the way for the era of bloodshed and disaster that devastated the country in our days.

He later adds

In a land like Antioquia, where the Masonic tradition is completely unknown, the clergy raged about it every day, painting it in the most hateful colours and declaring that masonry and liberalism were one and the same thing. And so it was that the word 'liberal' came to be despised . . . Teaching establishments became a Conservative monopoly . . . Woe betide anyone who allowed his children to be given a liberal upbringing! Woe betide anyone who failed to flock to church and processions! . . . Pointed out as a heretic from the pulpit, he soon had to choose between abjuring his political opinions or emigrating.³⁶

THE ANTIOQUEÑO CLERGY UNDER LIBERAL OCCUPATION

In 1876 a clique of Conservatives in the state of Cauca ignited a civil war with the aim of gaining control of the national government. The educational reform, which attempted to curtail Church influence, served as an excuse; but the confrontation was also fuelled by disputes over the federal regime and by the economic crisis that was affecting the country. By July 1876 Antioquia had become involved in the war, which also spread to the states of Tolima, Cundinamarca, and Santander.³⁷ The Conservatives were defeated, and on 5 April 1877 Antioquia surrendered to the federal forces.

The war had a religious connotation from the beginning. Liberals argued that religion should be restricted to the private sphere, but Conservatives believed that the Church had an obligation to intervene

³⁵ Arango, *La mentalidad religiosa*, 71–2.

³⁶ L. Restrepo, *Apreciaciones históricas sobre la última guerra en el Estado de Antioquia* (Bogotá, 1879), 3–4, 9–10.

³⁷ Mesa, *Iglesia y Antioquia*, 253–5.

in politics to preserve social order, and that it was inevitably concerned with issues such as education, marriages, and burials. José Ignacio Montoya and Joaquín Guillermo González, the bishops of Medellín and Santa Fe de Antioquia, urged priests to get involved:

War concerns all of us, is against all of us, and the people should vigorously rise up en masse and deter and confuse the common enemy . . . Without any distinctions whatsoever, and with aims set solely on the salvation of the country, [you should] sacrifice your rest, your amenities, your riches and even your own life for the defence of religious and social interests.³⁸

Many felt compelled to participate. Pedro Antonio Restrepo Escovar, a member of the state legislature, was not only moved by his own convictions but was also influenced by Bishop Montoya, who had been appointed a few months before the war broke out and who was both his friend and his commercial partner. Referring to the bishop's message he wrote in his diary:

The religious question in this country has never been presented in a manner so clear, so forceful, so conclusive. He who reads this pastoral and does not take up arms to defend his religion, clearly and infamously attacked by the atheists who currently debase and degrade this suffering land, has no honour, no religion, no blood in his veins.³⁹

In September 1876 the Bishop of Medellín called for a pilgrimage to the Virgin of Chiquinquirá in La Estrella, a town in the southern Aburrá valley, to implore divine help for the Church's cause.⁴⁰ The medical doctor Jaime Mejía Mejía in his autobiography caricatures the religious aspects of the war, describing one of the final battles fought near Manizales in November of 1876, in the following words:

Before the 'saving hosts' of Don Recaredo [de Villa, governor of Antioquia, 1873–6] went sky blue flags bearing these inscriptions: Long Live Religion! Long Live Pío Nono! . . . His Holiness had sent his papal blessing for the scapulars that every soldier had to wear like a badge over his battle dress. The fronts of these had to say 'Pío', and the backs 'Nono'. The aggressive priests exhorted the troops, telling them that these insignia made their wearers invulnerable, for they would work the miracle of turning the enemy's bullets into balls of cotton. Trusting in these words, many young recruits were seen standing in defiance in the face of charges by central government soldiers . . . many dead bodies were

³⁸ Quoted by Gutiérrez Cely, 'El Radicalismo', 411.

³⁹ Restrepo, *Retrato de un patriarca antioqueño*, 308.

⁴⁰ Londoño, 'Mosaico de antioqueñas en el siglo XIX', *Estudios Colombianos*, 5 (Bogotá, 1988), 26.

seen where the bullet had gone in through the 'Pío' and out through the 'Nono'.⁴¹

After their victory in May 1877, General Julián Trujillo and his troops entered Medellín. A new period of conflict with the Church began under his rule. In that same month, the National Congress issued the law of *inspección de cultos*, which banned the Church from obeying any Papal dispositions that had not been previously approved by the government. Furthermore, the law suspended ecclesiastical jurisdiction over the clergy, and restored the requisite of a *pase* or government permission to conduct religious services, which the bishops of Medellín and Santa Fe de Antioquia refused to obey, arguing they were not authorized by the Vatican.⁴² On 12 May 1877 the Congress exiled both prelates for ten years. To avoid capture, they hid in the mountains north of Medellín.⁴³ To prevent schism among the clergy, they sent letters from their hideouts to priests, authorizing special measures to guarantee the continuity of religious services. Mass and sacraments could be provided at private homes; after the drawing up of an inventory, Church vases and ornaments were to be placed in the hands of *mayordomos de fábricas* (parish treasurers), the sacristans, or any other persons of trust. Through private conversations or the confessional, priests were to advise parents not to send their children to secular schools, where they might lose their faith and learn bad behaviour.⁴⁴ In August 1877 the bishop of Medellín ordered priests in his diocese to continue to oppose the official schools, and reinforced the prohibition of priests giving religious instruction in them, encouraging instead the creation of Catholic schools. He emphasized that collaboration in this matter, 'will be looked on as one of the main and most relevant merits of candidates when the provision of curacies is being discussed'.⁴⁵ Disobedience would damage chances of promotion.

The firm stand adopted by the ecclesiastical authorities seems to have been successful. In contrast with the response to the earlier measure in 1862–3, on this occasion only a few clerics obeyed the government order and obtained a *pase*.⁴⁶ Furthermore, in protest against the exile of the

⁴¹ J. Mejía Mejía, *Historias médicas de una vida y de una región* (Medellín, 1960), 50.

⁴² Gutiérrez Cely, 'El Radicalismo', 413.

⁴³ Until Law 37 of 1877 was derogated on 14 June 1880.

⁴⁴ Mesa, *Iglesia y Antioquia*, 255–6; U. Ramírez Urrea, Pbro., *Apuntes para la historia del clero. Persecución religiosa en 1877* (Medellín, 1917), 35–8.

⁴⁵ Quoted by Gutiérrez Cely, 'El Radicalismo', 414.

⁴⁶ Mesa, *Iglesia y Antioquia*, 252.

bishops of Medellín and Antioquia, as well as those of Pamplona in Santander, and Popayán and Pasto in Cauca, churches were temporarily closed, their bells were silenced, and priests refused to administer the Sacraments.

Another point of contention between the Radicals and the Church in Antioquia touched on the validity of Catholic marriages for civil effects. Since 1864, when for the first time civil marriage had become obligatory after the adoption by Antioquia of the Cundinamarca Civil Code, a series of contradictory measures had been alternately passed by the union and by the state of Antioquia. Civil marriage was again made compulsory in May 1877. The debate over the control of cemeteries, by the Church or by the secular districts, also aroused discord in Antioquia.⁴⁷

During Daniel Aldana's administration from 1877 to 1878, tensions were eased by his conciliatory posture towards the clergy. But his successor, Tomás Rengifo, 1878–80, strained relations once more. Rengifo at length captured and banished the bishop of Medellín, imprisoned or exiled other priests, and even put restrictions on bell-tolling, processions, and other public manifestations of faith. His troops committed the sacrilege of occupying several churches.⁴⁸

The polarization and emotionalism provoked by the conflict during these years helped to deepen the intransigent religious feelings of the Conservatives of Antioquia. Deviating points of view were immediately labelled 'red', or indiscriminately accused of being Masonic or diabolical. In his short story *Padre Casafús*—in some later editions titled *Luterito*—Tomás Carrasquilla offers a picture of the atmosphere and the extremes reached before, during, and after the 1876–7 civil war in his small fictional town of San Juan de Piedragorda, located somewhere in the mountains around Medellín.⁴⁹ Rumours started by envious neighbours led the naïve curate to suspect the orthodoxy of the protagonist Father Casafús, an intellectually curious man who tried not to get involved in the preparations for the war. On the eve of the departure of the local volunteers to join the Conservative army Father Casafús had not preached against the Liberals. In the reigning milieu of hatred and hypocrisy, his silence is misinterpreted and people see it as irrefutable proof that indeed, he is a 'red'; that he must have been one of the 'submitted clerics' under the Mosquera regime; and that he has surely read

⁴⁷ Arango, *La mentalidad religiosa*, 85–6.

⁴⁸ Ortiz, *El Federalismo en Antioquia*, 111–12; Mesa, *Iglesia y Antioquia*, 257.

⁴⁹ First published in Medellín in 1914.

Bentham and Víctor Hugo and the liberal *Diario de Cundinamarca*. The bishop of Medellín is notified, and he suspends Casafús.⁵⁰ From then on, his neighbours in Piedragorda are convinced that anyone who helps him will also be committing sacrilege: they ostracize him and he starves to death.

THE *REGENERACIÓN* AND THE CONCORDAT:
A NEW 'GOLDEN AGE' FOR THE CHURCH

Conflicts between Church and state in Colombia were much lessened during Rafael Núñez's first presidency, 1880–2. Congress abolished the *inspección de cultos* law and ended the exile of the bishops.⁵¹ However, in Antioquia the Radicals remained in power until their defeat in the general civil war of 1885, begun by their colleagues in the state of Santander to overthrow Núñez. The victorious alliance of Conservatives with the moderate or Independent Liberals ratified Núñez in power.

Most Antioqueños supported the Conservatives during the war. In her reminiscences, Concepción Ospina Vásquez, one of the daughters of Mariano Ospina Rodríguez, describes how her mother helped the Conservative leaders who set off from her house to engage in one of the battles. All classes appear to collaborate in the effort:

Despite the sentries guarding the door, weapons still got through to our house for sending on to the army, which was very short of them. Ladies and young girls would turn up to pay condolences and under their dresses they would be carrying a gun or a rifle; the same was true with the women selling sweets from Caldas or Envigado or bread and sweets from other places: they would go up to the house and pass right beside the sentry without him suspecting a thing; in exactly the same way weapons and munitions for the army left grandmother's house . . .⁵²

Núñez's programme, the *Regeneración*, emphasized order and economic progress and introduced a series of reforms. Though originally a Liberal, his pragmatism led him to consider the Church as an organic part of Colombian society important for achieving social stability. He used religion to promote social discipline. The Constitution of 1886

⁵⁰ *Padre Casafús* was first edited in Medellín in 1914.

⁵¹ L. J. Ortiz, 'La Regeneración en Antioquia, Colombia, 1880–1903', Master's thesis, Historia Andina, Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales, Flacso (Quito, 1986), 85–92.

⁵² 'Reminiscencias de Concha Ospina Vásquez, Sor Concepción', AMOR/E, doc, 2, FAES.

recognized the power and influence of the Church, and the Concordat signed a year later with the Papacy granted ecclesiastical institutions a series of long-standing privileges.⁵³

Both the Constitution and the Concordat reflect the influence of the Conservative Miguel Antonio Caro, the Jesuit Juan Telésforo Paúl, and of Pope Leo XIII. The state proclaimed the Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman religion as the national creed, and would protect it as an essential element of social order. Both documents recognized the right of the Church to acquire and administer real property and other assets, to establish religious orders and associations, and to guide public instruction in schools and universities. Yet there were limits to ecclesiastical power: the Church would autonomously manage its internal affairs, but clergy could not be appointed to public offices, excepting those concerned with charity and education. Canonical legislation was detached from civil legislation; churches, seminaries, parish houses, and episcopal palaces were exempted from taxes; and Catholic marriage automatically produced civil effects. The registration of births, marriages, and deaths was again placed under the care of the parishes.⁵⁴

From 1887 to 1930 the Conservatives remained in power, and the Church consolidated its position in Colombian society.

ORTHODOXY AND CATHOLIC SOCIAL DOCTRINE: 1900–1930

In Colombia the Church's influence emerged stronger as a result of the Thousand Days' war of 1899–1902. Bernardo Herrera Restrepo, archbishop of Bogotá, 1891–1928, and primate of Colombia after 1902, used a succession of Episcopal Conferences in 1908, 1912, 1916, 1919, 1924, and 1927 to impose greater control over the clergy. He was close to the secular power, and highly influential during all these years, especially with President José Vicente Concha, 1914–18. In May 1902 President José Manuel Marroquín approved Archbishop Herrera Restrepo's suggestion that the warring parties make a vow to the Sacred Heart of Jesus for the restoration of peace. In contrast with the previous Liberal epoch, now presidents presided over the solemn annual Corpus Christi proces-

⁵³ D. Bushnell, *The Making of Modern Colombia. A Nation in Spite of Itself* (Berkeley, 1993), 140–1; M. A. Urrego, 'La Regeneración (1878–1898)', *Gran Enciclopedia de Colombia*, vol. 2 (Bogotá, 1991), 421–3.

⁵⁴ F. González, 'El Concordato de 1887', *Credencial Historia*, 41 (Bogotá, May 1993), 4–9.

sion and over other religious events, the first *Congreso Eucarístico Nacional* of 1913, and the first *Congreso Nacional de Misiones* of 1924.⁵⁵

The privileged status enjoyed by the Colombian Church was particularly visible in Antioquia, the department with the largest Conservative electorate and with the most deeply rooted Church. Conservatism had overwhelming support, especially in the rural areas in the highlands to the east, around Santa Rosa de Osos to the north, and in Abejorral and Sonsón to the south, where peasants, shopkeepers, merchants, day labourers, and local political bosses all numbered themselves among the faithful. Parish priests also favoured this party.⁵⁶ Due to the tacit alliance between the Church and the Conservative party, and the relatively good local understanding between Conservatives and Liberals—both parties had decided to face together the threat of external political interference and the inefficiencies of centralism—the issue of Church–state relations in Antioquia played a secondary role in politics.⁵⁷

In 1902 the diocese of Medellín became an archdiocese. Manuel José Caycedo, the long-reigning archbishop of Medellín, 1906–34, exerted a profound influence on the social, political, and cultural life of the department. Born in Bogotá, in his youth he had been a member of the *Juventud Católica* and of the Saint Vincent de Paul Society. Once ordained, he was sent to Rome for further studies. Caycedo was appointed bishop of Pasto in 1891, and of Popayán in 1900. His work as archbishop of Medellín was characterized by his zeal and support of orthodoxy against the dangers of modernism.

Caycedo condemned the local journals *Panida* and *Acción Cultural*; and the newspapers *El Escorpión*, *La Fragua*, *El Combate*, *El Bateo*, and *La Organización*; and several books, for example *Colombia Constitucional*, published in 1915 by Antonio de J. Cano. If a book or item of printed matter was vetoed by Church authorities, it meant that no Catholic could read, keep, sell, disseminate, or defend it. Approval of texts was sanctioned by the traditional *nihil obstat* printed in the opening pages. Works condemned were announced at Sunday masses.

⁵⁵ C. Abel, *Política, Iglesia y partidos en Colombia* (Medellín, 1987), 33–5.

⁵⁶ J. O. Melo, 'La política de 1904 a 1946', in *Historia de Antioquia* (Bogotá, 1988), 111–13. See also M. Deas, 'The Role of the Church, the Army and the Police in Colombian Elections, c. 1850–1930', *Elections Before Democracy. The History of Elections in Europe and Latin America*, ed. by E. Posada-Carbó, ILAS (London, 1996), 163–76.

⁵⁷ Abel, *Política, Iglesia*, 79–80; M. Roldán, 'La política de 1946 a 1958', in *Historia de Antioquia* (Bogotá, 1988), 164; C. Henríquez, 'El Sagrado Corazón: Fantasía o realidad en la Historia de Colombia', Master's thesis, Facultad de Ciencias Humanas, Universidad Nacional (Bogotá, 1995), 85–94.

Caycedo also scrutinized the education imparted in his see. In 1911 he challenged a permit issued by the Departmental Assembly to revise the content of school textbooks, quoting article thirteen of the Concordat, which stated that such decisions had to be approved by the ecclesiastical authority. The archbishop censured *Una tesis* by Fernando González, and *Notas feministas*, a thesis by Ricardo Uribe Escobar, graduates in law from the University of Antioquia. He also sought to bar Protestants from evangelizing in Antioquia. In 1912 he banned *De cómo el Liberalismo colombiano no es pecado*, the tract written by the nationally prominent Antioqueño Liberal Rafael Uribe Uribe, on the ground that it had not received the Church's approval in advance, as decreed by Leo XIII.⁵⁸ Besides, the booklet had also been condemned by Archbishop of Bogotá Bernardo Herrera Restrepo.⁵⁹ In 1920 Caycedo attacked the Adventists and their book *Heraldos del porvenir*, and sought to prevent the *Primera Convención Evangélica Nacional*, to be held in Medellín on July 1926, on the ground that it was unconstitutional and violated the Concordat, which ordered public authorities to protect the Catholic religion.⁶⁰

Another side of Monseñor Caycedo's activism was the promotion of social works and the creation of programmes such as the *Sopa Escolar*, the *Gota de Leche*, and of day-care centres for the children of working women. He welcomed the arrival of several Catholic religious communities, and the creation of devotional associations. His preaching reached the hearts of his numerous flock in Antioquia, as witnessed by the multitude who attended his funeral in 1937.⁶¹ After listening to one of his sermons, Tomás Carrasquilla wrote in a letter to a friend:

If the Honourable Señor Caycedo talks to those complicated souls as he spoke here to the soul of the mountain [i.e. Antioquia], I'm telling you, my dear

⁵⁸ Prominent lawyer, soldier, orator, mason, and diplomat, Uribe Uribe was born in Valparaiso, Antioquia on 12 April 1859. He fought with Liberal armies during the wars of 1876, 1885, and 1895. After playing an important role during the Thousand Days' war, he settled in Bogotá. There he founded and directed several journals where he preached a leftist Liberalism. As a Member of Congress he argued for agrarian and labour reforms. He was assassinated in Bogotá on 15 October 1914. *Gran Enciclopedia de Colombia*, vol. 10: *Biografías* (Bogotá, 1994), 600–2. For a more complete biography see E. Santa, *Rafael Uribe Uribe* (Medellín, 1973).

⁵⁹ 'Decreto Nos Manuel José Caycedo, por la gracia de Dios y de la Santa Sede Apostólica Arzobispo de Medellín', FAES, Poster collection, D6.

⁶⁰ E. Robledo, *La vida ejemplar de Monseñor Manuel J. Caycedo* (Medellín, 1952), 119, 127, 134–9, 186, 206–7.

⁶¹ There is a series of photographs of the event taken by Jorge Obando, kept in CMV/FAES.

woman, our Archbishop has really got the knack. I was enthralled as I listened to the four sermons he preached. What a voice! What a noble way of speaking! And most of all, how easy he makes difficult things sound, with such a solid doctrine! It seems impossible that anyone could speak so beautifully, so correctly, with such elegance and depth, and yet still be able to get through to the country folk. This is the holy oratory I have dreamed of, that I had barely glimpsed in Herrera Restrepo and that I've now seen fulfilled in Caicedito. What a tremendous archbishop he is!⁶²

During the Caycedo period the Church in Antioquia was open in its disapproval of political groups other than the Conservatives. The *Catecismo político social*, published in 1915 with the same question-and-answer scheme as the classic catechism of Father Astete, a text which generations of children memorized, depicted the Conservative and the Liberal party in the following terms:

Q. Which party in Colombia stands for good politics?

A. The Conservative party.

Q. Why?

A. Because the Conservative party does not have in its political creed a single principle condemned by the Church; because by repressing the press it protects the honour and religious beliefs of the citizens, and does not allow Religion to be insulted . . .

Q. Which party in Colombia stands for bad politics?

A. The Liberal party.

Q. Why?

A. Because the Liberal party has in its political creed several canons or principles that are reprovved and condemned by the Church, that is, by the Pope, who is the head of the Church, teacher and guide of all Catholics.⁶³

Another episode which illustrates the spirit of confrontation between clerical groups and other more liberal sectors, was the fist fight waged in May 1915 in the Plazuela San Ignacio by some 'ignacianos' (students of the prestigious upper class school founded by the Jesuits), against contributors to a Liberal paper and some local writers, among them the poet León de Greiff, backed by students from the University of Antioquia and the Liceo Antioqueño.⁶⁴

⁶² Quoted by Mesa, *Iglesia y Antioquia*, 275.

⁶³ A. Botero L., *Catecismo político y social* (Medellín, 1915), quoted by C. A. Payne, 'Crecimiento y cambio social en Medellín, 1900-1930', *Estudios Sociales*, 1 (Medellín, September 1986), 154-5.

⁶⁴ A caricature by Luis Eduardo Vieco showing the police arresting some members of the 'bando rojo' was published in *La Semana*, suplement to *El Espectador* (Medellín, 31 October 1916).

In January 1922, in a circular posted around the archdiocese of Medellín, Caycedo openly supported the involvement of the clergy in politics, to guard the Church against the evil posed by the Liberal party:

Much has been said and repeated that the clergy should not take part in politics . . . if by politics we meant those manœuvres and intrigues . . . but in true politics, which is the art of governing . . . to maintain public security and peace and preserve order and morals, the clergy is not only allowed to intervene, but to do so is their strict obligation.⁶⁵

It is not surprising that the parish priest of Concordia telegraphed the results of the 1913 elections in the following terms: Catholics 240; Luciferianists 83.⁶⁶ He was not alone: Miguel-Ángel Builes, bishop of Santa Rosa de Osos from 1924, together with the Spaniard Ezequiel Moreno Díaz, bishop of Pasto, 1896–1905—canonized in 1992—were the two best known for their anti-Liberal fervour.⁶⁷

From the 1920s onwards, besides Liberalism, the local ecclesiastical authorities combated the Socialist and Communist ideas that had recently succeeded in the Soviet revolution. They must frequently have disseminated ideas the majority of the Antioqueños had never heard of before. They also opposed some of the novelties brought by modern life, such as motion pictures, radio dramas, sports, fashions, and activities that opened up alternative ways of socializing and which risked cooling religious fervour.⁶⁸

Clerics in Antioquia, particularly the Jesuits, were responsive to the calls issued by the Colombian Episcopal Conferences to create lay organizations for the dissemination of Catholic Social Doctrine, which preached collaboration between the different Social Classes to counteract the influence of the new ‘pernicious’ ideologies prevalent among urban workers. In 1919 *Acción Social Católica*, together with the *Patronato de Obreras*, both backed in Medellín by the Jesuits, led a cam-

⁶⁵ ‘El Arzobispo de Medellín al clero y los fieles’, FAES, Poster collection, D8.

⁶⁶ Quoted by C. Abel, *Política, Iglesia*, 83.

⁶⁷ For Builes, see: M. Zapata Restrepo, *La mitra azul* (Medellín 1973). M. Deas, ‘San Ezequiel Moreno or “El liberalismo es pecado”’, *Credencial Historia*, 46 (Bogotá, 1993), 8–12.

⁶⁸ Darío Jaramillo Agudelo recalls from his childhood in Santa Rosa de Osos the list of usual prohibitions—dances, movies, cafés, and *paseos*, or day excursions where both sexes mingled—to which *Monseñor* Miguel Ángel Builes added: reading the Liberal newspaper *El Tiempo*, ‘mambo, that diabolic rhythm invented by Pérez Prado’, and listening to ‘*El derecho de nacer*’, a popular Cuban radio drama written by Félix B. Caignet. See his ‘Algunos comentarios sobre la cultura antioqueña’, unpublished paper, Simposio Mundo Rural Colombiano, FAES (Medellín, 1980), 6.

paing to stop the celebration of the First of May, planned by a few small Socialist-leaning groups in the city, who demanded the closing of factories on that day. Supporters of the Jesuits distributed some 1,300 leaflets, exposing the dangers of such a celebration and exhorting workers to go to their workplaces and to attend a special Mass that would be said for them.⁶⁹

The local opposition, which could not count on resources comparable with those of the Church nor with the educational system to propagate its point of view, usually resorted to the press. Among those branded 'dissidents' were the younger writers Roberto Botero Saldarriaga, Luis de Greiff, Libardo López, Eduardo and Ricardo Uribe Escobar, Alejandro López, and the Socialist leader María Cano; as well as some intellectuals and public figures of an earlier generation, Fidel Cano, editor of *El Espectador*, and Carlos E. Restrepo, president of Colombia, 1910–14. All of them at one point or another were targets of the censures of the Catholic authorities in Antioquia, which also vetoed the newspaper *El Espectador*, and the *Revista Colombia* and *El Correo Liberal*, three important periodical publications.⁷⁰ There was a latent conflict between intransigent sectors of the clergy, headed by the archbishop of Medellín, and some prominent political figures who wanted a more flexible Catholicism to assure social tranquillity. In 1916 Archbishop Caycedo accused Carlos E. Restrepo of spreading the principles of materialistic evolution and determinism in his writings on constitutional law. Restrepo replied that he was merely following Leo XIII, and referred to the opposition the Pope faced from part of the French clergy.

Differences arose not only among public servants and politicians, but among other Antioqueños as well. A letter written by Sister Concepción Ospina Vásquez, a well-connected nun, to Luis Navarro Ospina in November 1932 commenting on his religious vocation, reflects the interest in Catholic Social Action felt by some of the intellectually curious. Luis Navarro had decided to join a Carthusian convent in Spain. Sister Concepción asks him to consider Catholic Social Action instead, arguing that with his character and his inclination to lead an active life, this option might better suit his desire to serve God. She recommends a new European lay congregation for both sexes that was opening in December of that year in Bogotá; the son of the eminent Antioqueño physician Emilio Robledo had already joined them. She insists that

⁶⁹ Payne, 'Crecimiento y cambio social', 146.

⁷⁰ N. Vallecilla López, 'Periodismo panfletario y excomuniación en el suroccidente colombiano', *Historia y Espacio*, 14 (Calí, June 1991), 130.

By writing, struggling, working, you can keep your mind and your imagination occupied and you won't be so secluded all the time, something that could be dangerous for someone as nervous and conscientious as you . . . As for the state of the country, like you I think we are sliding towards the abyss and that only the Sacred Heart of Jesus, our King, can save us [. . .] There, you can write and fight, if not in politics then at least in Catholic Social Action, which is the primary need today because unfortunately our society is heading towards paganism or even something worse.⁷¹

More than in any other region in Colombia, the Church in Antioquia supervised people's behaviour and the content of education. The old conflict between Church and state about the orientation of instruction imparted in schools and universities had been settled when the Liberals lost power. From time to time, a few groups and individuals still questioned ecclesiastic omnipotence. In 1920 a number of students from the University of Antioquia protested because the portrait of the recently deceased Fidel Cano had not been exhibited in the Paraninfo, the university's auditorium, as decreed by the Departmental Assembly. Students marched to the hall, removed the image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and replaced it with Cano's portrait. The university authorities considered this act blasphemous and sent for the police to disperse the students. The police at one point fired on them and killed one of the students. Disturbances followed for several days and the Minister of Education was sent from Bogotá to restore calm. Finally, the university set up a portrait gallery and moved Cano's picture there.⁷²

Some lay educational institutions, usually the most progressive in terms of pedagogical method, were also subject to direct or indirect ecclesiastical censure. This is illustrated in the experience of Luis Tejada, who grew up in a Liberal family interested in philosophy and education and went on to become a respected journalist. He studied in the *Escuela Normal de Instructores*, directed by Pedro Pablo Betancourt, an open-minded teacher who included in the school library Rousseau, Nietzsche, Baudelaire, and José Enrique Rodó. In 1915 Tejada joined a group of young intellectuals who published *Panida*, which soon became one of the most important literary journals in the country. In its pages authors mocked the bourgeois ideals held by Medellín's upper crust. The archbishop did not take long to forbid Catholics to read it. In 1916 Tejada paid the price. The Normal School was now in the hands of a new headmaster who purged the library and exerted strict control over

⁷¹ FAES, ARN y E /C/11/f. 18–20.

⁷² Payne, 'Crecimiento y cambio social', 160–1.

the students' reading. Later that year Tejada was expelled on the grounds that his conduct grades were too low. Fidel Cano, Carlos E. Restrepo, and Pedro Pablo Betancourt protested in vain.⁷³ Archbishop Caycedo also banned the journal *Acción Cultural*, edited by the *Sociedad Pedagógica* for the divulgation of modern pedagogical methods. The founders of the *Sociedad* were teachers of the *Instituto Caldas*, another lay secondary school in Medellín which drew students from all over the department.⁷⁴

To conclude, in Colombia the years between 1848 and 1880 were characterized by Church–state conflicts. There arose tensions and even some violence, out of which the Church eventually emerged triumphant. In Antioquia, by Colombian standards, conflicts between the clergy and the civil authorities were relatively mild as the region had not inherited from the colony a rich and powerful Church, the anticlerical feelings were weak; and the Church was defended even by many Liberals, partly due to family interests. Even under the Radical regimes of the 1860s and 1870s when the country went through some of the most acute clashes between Church and state, Antioquia managed to become what some appropriately labelled a '*República de curas*' or 'priestly republic'.⁷⁵

⁷³ G. Loaiza Cano, 'Luis Tejada, el estudiante expulsado', *Estudios Sociales*, 7 (Medellín, June 1994), 87–98.

⁷⁴ M. B. Rojas López, 'El viajero de los tiempos', en *Doce testimonios colombianos sobre una vida sin reglas*, ed. by H. Sandoval (Bogotá, 1995), 54–7.

⁷⁵ Mesa, *La Iglesia y Antioquia*, 255.