

Catholic Education in Southeastern Nigeria and National Educational
Development, 1885-2017

By
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Sister Mary Aloysius Onwuegbuchulam, DDL
MED/CAES, Boston College, 2013
MA, UCL Institute of Education, 2011
BA.ED, University of Abuja, Nigeria, 2002

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Chair: Dr. John Rury

Dr. Peter Ojiambo

Dr. Jennifer Ng

Dr. Suzanne Rice

Dr. Susan Twombly

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The dissertation committee for Sister Mary Aloysius Onwuegbuchulam, DDL

certifies that this is the approved version of the following
dissertation:

**Catholic Education in Southeastern Nigeria and National Educational
Development, 1885-2017**

Chair: Dr. John Rury

Date Approved:

Abstract

This thesis represents historical research on the development of Catholic education in Southeastern Nigeria, in the context of national development, 1885 to the present. Evidence was utilized from both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources included archival documents, state and church records, reports, and newspapers. Additional evidence was drawn from observations, and interviews with seven Catholic priests and educators who witnessed the development of Catholic education in the region. The study found that education in Nigeria was affected by many factors, including the legacy of colonialism. The transition from colonial to post-colonial Nigeria in the 1950s and 1960s gave birth to a new generation of indigenous Catholic educators. In particular, the work and experience of Reverend Charles Ikeme is highlighted. Catholic education made great contributions to the development of Nigeria but was fractured by the civil war. In the wake of government seizure of Catholic institutions in 1970, bishops focused on the removal of religious education, linking it to falling standard of education and lack of moral behavior among students. But Rev Ikeme worked pragmatically to restore discipline, good behavior among students, and academic excellence in the public schools. When Catholic leaders in Southeastern Nigeria regained control of schools, they found that the institutions had changed and there was no going back.

Acknowledgments

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patience. I am also grateful to Rev. Fr. Dr. Nicholas Omenka, professor of history, for mentoring me during my fieldwork in Nigeria.

Above all, I am grateful to God who sustained me throughout my program, as I commend to Him the soul of my beloved father, Chief Clement Onwuegbuchulam Onyenehide, who died in 2015 and the soul of my younger sister, Chisom, who died early this year. I pray that they may have the eternal peace that they deserve in the Lord's bosom.

Thanks to you all and be assured that you will always be in my thoughts and prayers as I look forward to using, in a practical way, the academic knowledge that you have helped me to achieve for a more just and better world.

List of Abbreviations

AG–THE ACTION GROUP

CBCN–CATHOLIC BISHOPS’ CONFERENCE OF NIGERIA

CMS–CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY (ANGLICAN)

CSE-BULLETIN DE LA CONGREGATION DES PERE DU SAINT-ESPIRIT

CSM-CHURCH OF SCOTLAND MISSION (PRESBYTERIAN)

CWO–CATHOLIC WOMEN ORGANIZATION

ECS–EAST CENTRAL STATE

FCT–FEDERAL CAPITAL TERRITORY, ABUJA

NCNC–NATIONAL COUNCIL OF NIGERIA AND CITIZENS

NPC–THE NORTHERN PEOPLES’ CONGRESS

NUT–NIGERIA UNION OF TEACHERS

PRIM METH.–PRIMITIVE METHODIST

RCM–ROMAN CATHOLIC MISSION

UDHR–UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

UN–UNITED NATIONS

**UNESCO–UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL
ORGANIZATION**

UPE–THE UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION

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Introduction

Most studies of the history of Catholicism, whether in Africa, Nigeria, or Southeastern Nigeria, are well documented, but research on the development of Catholic education in Southeastern Nigeria is limited. Even at the international level, research on Catholic education is underdeveloped, as suggested by Grace (2003).

The empirical study of Catholic education internationally is remarkably underdeveloped. With about 120,000 schools (primary and secondary) serving almost 50 million students in a great variety of sociocultural, political, and economic settings, the international world of Catholic schooling remains largely unknown, not only by sociologists of education but also by many educational researchers and scholars. (Grace, 2002, 2003)

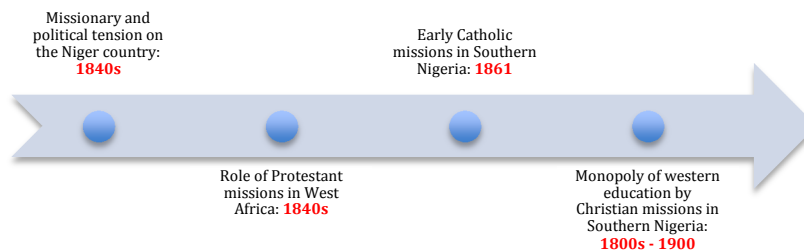
Using an historical approach, it was sought in this study to investigate Catholic education in Southeastern Nigeria and national educational development from 1885 to the present. The period of this study is historically important because it marks: (a) the arrival of colonial Catholic missionaries on the east of the Niger (Southeastern Nigeria) who used education for the spread of Christian evangelization, (b) their connection with the British colonial leaders, (c) their departure from Nigeria, (d) the beginning of the rise of the nationalist movement in Nigeria and that of indigenous Catholic educators, (e) the state control of voluntary agency schools, (f) the struggle by the Catholic mission for the return of these schools, and (g) the actual return of the schools to mission control. Also examined in the study is the influence and impact of British colonialism on the Nigerian education system and its policies. In this study, a narrative analysis is used while focusing on the political history of Catholic schools in Southeastern Nigeria.

The discussion of Catholic education within this context is a part of a larger development of western education in Nigeria. In this discussion, examined is the history of the creation of schools in Southern Nigeria, the story of loss, the struggle by the Catholic Church in the region to regain control of these schools, and the struggle to regain what was in the past. However,

after 40 years of little control of these schools, it became difficult to regain the past. Although the Catholic Bishops in Southeastern Nigeria wanted the schools back, there was a problem.

I was inspired to pursue this study by my previous experience as a school leader and a teacher of English in Catholic schools both in Nigeria and the United Kingdom. I was also influenced by other works that I had read on Catholic education in the United States, beginning from its history and the positive impact it made, and continues to make, in that country.

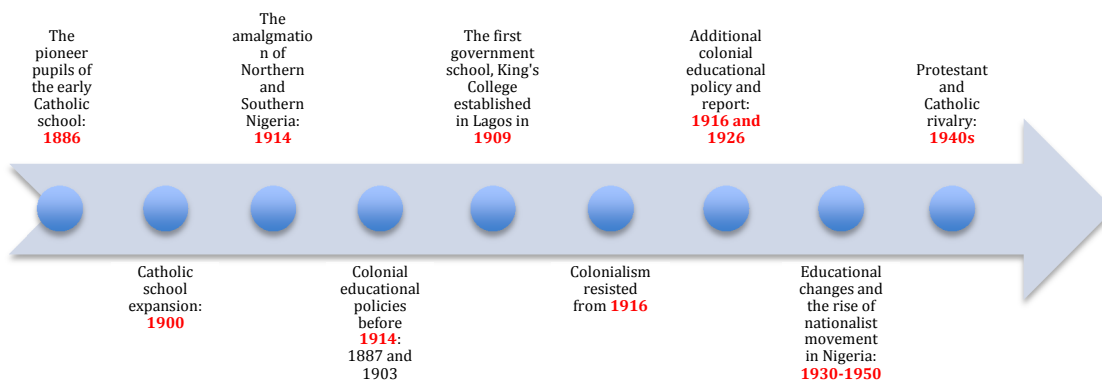
This study is divided into seven chapters. Chapter One provides background to the study, in which the early contacts of Nigerians with Christianity are discussed. Also, as discussed in Chapter One, there were the missionary and political tension in the Niger country (Southeastern Nigeria) in the 1840s, the role of Protestant missions in West Africa in the 1840s, the cordial relationship that existed between the Anglicans (CMS) and the Catholics, and the early Catholic missions in the same region in the 1860s. There also was the monopoly of schools by the missions in the 1800s and its effects throughout the 19th century, the long history of missionary work in the region, and the British colonial government's lack of interest in educating Nigerians.



Timeline of Chapter One: Christian missionary work in the 19th century

Chapter Two contains a review of relevant literature on traditional Catholic education during the pre-Vatican II era, a period between the first Vatican Council (Vatican I, 1869-1870) and the Second Vatican Council (Vatican II, 1962-1965). In this chapter, the strengths and limitations of Catholic education within this era are assessed.

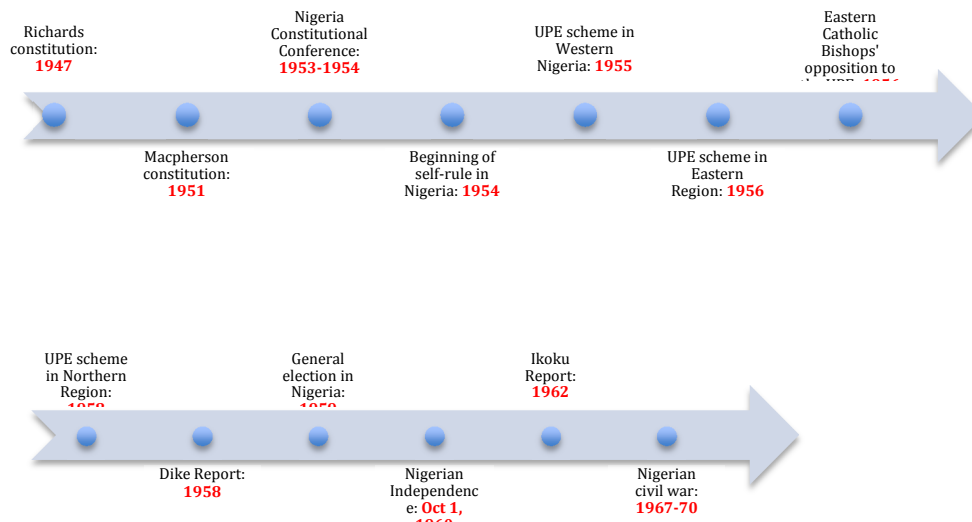
In Chapter Three, the colonial era (1885-1950) is examined, including the beginnings of Christian missionary education in Nigeria from the end of the 19th century to mid-20th century. In particular, the discussion in Chapter Three covers the development of Catholic education in Eastern Nigeria during the colonial period, colonial education and colonialism in Africa and in Nigeria, and colonial government education policies. Also examined are the relationships that existed between the various Christian missions, as well as with other religions, for example, the Muslims in the Northern Nigeria during this era. It concludes with a discussion on the effects and consequences of colonial and missionary education in Nigeria.



Timeline of Chapter Three: Colonial era (1885-1950)

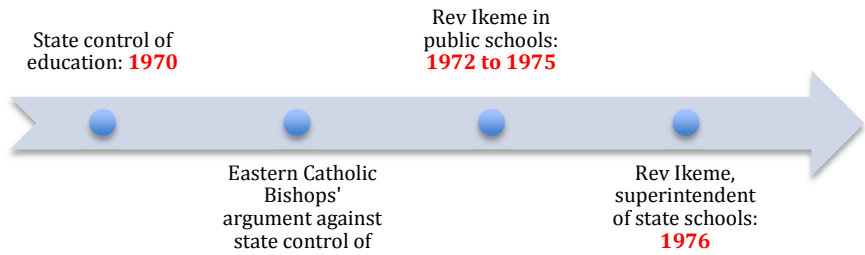
In Chapter Four, the post-colonial era (1950-1970) is introduced, and the colonial legacies in the post-colonial Nigeria are examined. The chapter contains a discussion of the introduction and implementation of a new educational policy, the UPE scheme, in various parts

of the country. Also examined are the UPE's success and related controversy and challenges in the country's different regions, West, East and North; as well as the reactions of some Christian denominations, especially the Catholics in the Eastern region, regarding the scheme. More importantly, Chapter Four contains a discussion of the shortage of trained primary school teachers as one of the major problems that stood in the way of achieving positive results in the UPE scheme. The chapter concludes with a discussion on the Nigerian/Biafran civil war (1967-1970).

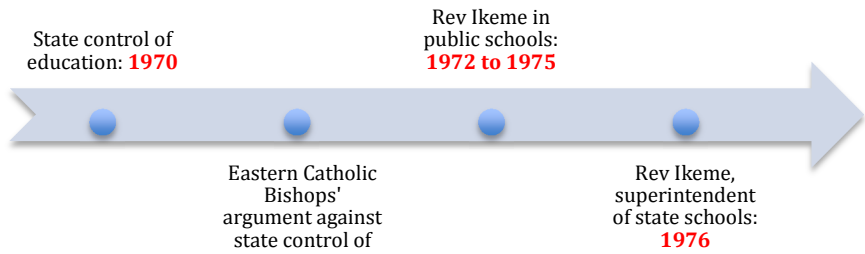


Timeline Of Chapter Four: Post-Colonial Era (1950-1970)

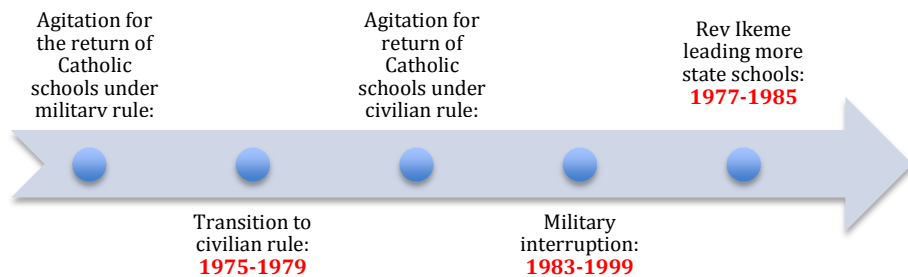
In Chapter Five, the events that occurred within the five years after the Nigerian/Biafran civil war, 1967-1970, and the quest for Catholic control of schools is examined. It was an era that was marked with uncertainty for Catholic education in the wake of war and attempts to assert government control of schools. These issues are discussed under two broad levels, national policy and local developments. At the national level, the problems of state control of education and other sociological issues are examined, as well as arguments regarding state control and its effects on schools. At the local level, the work of Rev. Charles Ikeme, and other Catholic educators who were working hard to bring order to the schools in an era of upheaval and uncertainty is considered.

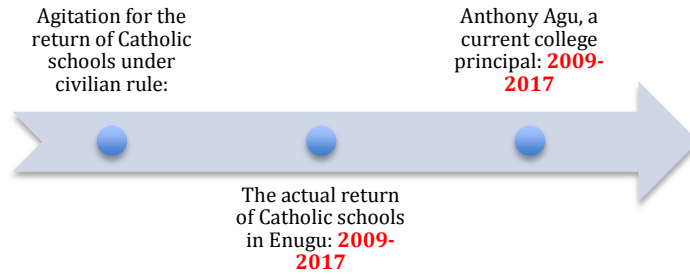


Timeline of Chapter Five: Post-war years (1970-1975)



In Chapter Six, the falling standard of education in Eastern Nigeria as a result of state control of schools in the region is examined. Also discussed is the agitation by the Catholic Church in the Eastern region to regain control of these schools under different political regimes and administrators, Chapter Six also considers the responses and experiences of Rev Ikeme and other Catholic educators in the educational systems in the region. Chapter Six also contains an examination of the rationale and the motivation behind the government decision to return the schools to the missions within the context of neo-liberal policy.





Timeline of Chapter Six: Contemporary era (1975-present)

Chapter Seven is the final chapter, and features discussion of major findings, the conclusions, and suggestions for future research.

The Nigerian Nation: A Brief Profile

Nigeria was a British colony between the late 19th and mid-20th century. It was formerly occupied by different independent self-ruling kingdoms and city states, namely, the Oyo empire in the current Southwest Nigeria, controlled by strong autocratic kings, the Igbo kingdom in the Southeast under no central strong monarchs, and the Bornu kingdom in the North governed by a war lord (Madueke, 2014). The British military and western hegemony of the 19th century led to the disintegration of these autonomous states and kingdoms and the creation of Northern and Southern British protectorates between 1900 and 1914. With the amalgamation of these two protectorates in 1914 under the leadership of British Lord Lugard, a non-unified and fragile political entity called Nigeria was born (Falola & Heaton, 2008). Nigeria is currently made up of 36 states, plus the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja. Figures 1, 2, and 3 show the maps of Nigeria at different developmental stages in history. The era represented in Figure 1 is discussed in detail in Chapters One and Three. A full discussion of the creation of the political organization reflected in Figure 2 is found in Chapter Four.

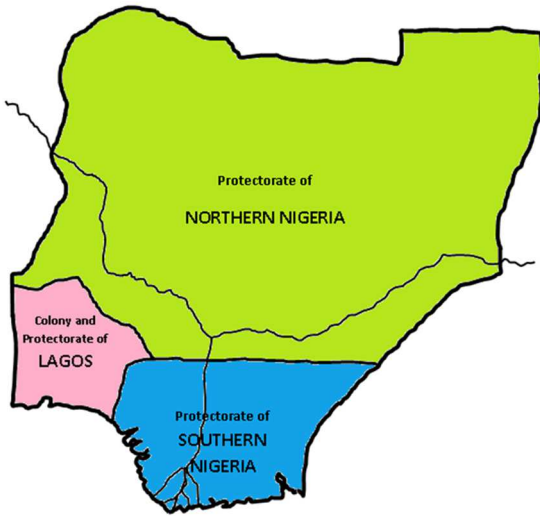


Figure 1. Nigeria before the amalgamation in 1914

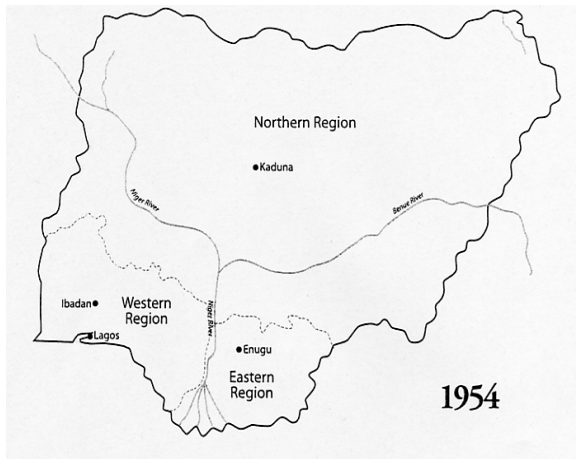


Figure 2. Nigeria after the creation of the three regions: Northern, Western and Eastern Nigeria.in 1954.



Figure 3. Nigeria's current 36 states plus the Federal Capital territory, Abuja.

Figure 3 displays the situation today, as Nigeria has 36 states, plus the Federal Capital territory, Abuja. The country is divided into six geo-political zones, as also shown in figure 3.

Additionally, a closer look at these maps shows that Enugu in the eastern part of the country, the principal setting for this study, has had a prominent geo-political position from the inception of Nigeria as a nation.

Research Setting within Nigeria

Enugu was chosen as the principal setting for the return of the former voluntary agency schools to the Catholic Church for the following obvious reasons. First, the first colonial European settlers, led by British mining engineer Albert Kitson, arrived in Enugu in 1909. In his quest for silver, Kitson discovered coal in the Udi Ridge. Later, the colonial governor general of Nigeria, Lord Lugard, took a particular interest in the discovery, and, by 1914, the first shipment of coal was made to Britain. As mining activities increased in the area, a permanent multinational settlement emerged, supported by a railway system. In 1917, Enugu acquired a township status and became strategic to British interests. The result was that many foreign companies began to move to Enugu, namely, John Holt, Kingsway Stores, the British Bank of West Africa, and the United Africa Company. From being the capital of the Southern Province during the colonial era, Enugu became the capital of the Eastern Region in the 1950s and 1960s, and later the capital of Biafra during the Nigerian civil war, 1967-1970. When the war ended in 1970, Enugu became the capital of the East Central State, later the capital of old Anambra State. Finally, after becoming a State, Enugu city was chosen as the capital of Enugu State.

Following state takeover of their schools in 1970, Catholic Bishops in Enugu State have been forceful in their pronouncements about the falling standard of education in the region and the demand for the return of these schools to the Catholic mission. Additionally, it was in Enugu that all the voluntary agency schools were first returned to the Catholic mission before other

States of the Federation began to make similar moves. Finally, Rev Ikeme spent his entire public life as an educator in Enugu, even though he is from Anambra State. The interviews for this study was conducted mainly in Enugu, and then in Anambra, a nearby State where three participants were interviewed.

Sources of Data Collection and Analysis

This is an historical study based upon primary and secondary documents. I also made use of interviews and observations. Documents included archival records, artifacts, reports, and newspapers. Documents can be considered a source of qualitative data because they generally are unobtrusive (Merriam, 2002). Some were obtained at the site of my fieldwork, while others were retrieved electronically. Rev Ikeme provided his published autobiography and many historical materials, as he was unable to sit and talk for a long period. Anthony Agu, a high school principal in Enugu, gave me other archival documents and photos. I also met with the Catholic diocesan archivist and historian in Enugu on a weekly basis, collecting materials on colonial missionary activity in Eastern Nigerian. When I returned to the University of Kansas in May 2017, I collected works written by Nigerians from Watson library. On my return to the United States, I spent three weeks transcribing the interview. Major themes were categorized according to their similarities and differences.

Interviews were conducted in the form both of highly structured questions and unstructured questions, and many questions were not predetermined ahead of time (Merriam, 2002). In this study the initial structured questions guided the interviews, but other questions arose in the course of the interview, in the form of probes and questions for further clarification, as will be seen clearly in the responses of my participants. Before I travelled to Nigeria, I made

contact with Rev Ikeme and other people who could introduce me to possible participants. When I arrived I met each respondent and left a copy of my interview questions for deeper reflection. This was done to give each subject time to think about the questions. It also caused three participants to drop out of the study either because of time constraint or the problem of providing well-informed answers. Each interview lasted for one or two hours a day depending on each person's disposition. With the permission of each respondent, two audiotapes were situated in a strategic position for proper recording. Ritchie (2003) has noted that, logically, the researcher should start the interviews with the oldest person and the most significant players in the study. In my fieldwork, I began with Rev Ikeme, followed by Anthony Agu, another priest and current Catholic high school principal, and other Catholic educators. I was attached to one of my local religious communities throughout my stay in Nigeria, and the local superior provided me with a car and a driver that took me to the different sites.

Another source of data used in this study was observation. Merriam (2002) noted that observational data "represent a firsthand encounter with the phenomenon of interest rather than a secondhand account obtained in interview" (p. 13). Therefore Merriam believed that this is the best technique when "a fresh perspective is desired, or even when participants are not able or willing to discuss the phenomenon under study" (p. 13). Remarkably, it was during my observations that I saw the deplorable conditions of the schools that the government of Enugu handed back to the Catholic mission. Nevertheless, I also observed the various renovations and construction work going on in these schools, without the aid of the State government. I observed the rate of the number of parents coming into the school to ask for an extension in paying their children's tuition. As discussed throughout the study, the Catholic school has always been a fee-

paying institution, yet many parents prefer to send their children there. I also noticed Rev Ikeme as he spoke with considerable pain regarding the fallen standard of education in Nigeria.

Research Participants

Ten people were originally selected for this study, nine Catholic priests from Southeastern Nigeria and one layman, a retired headmaster and a father of one the priests who participated in this study. In the end, however, the layman dropped out of the study and two other priests were unable to participate because of time constraints. Only seven priests fully participated in the study, and they were in their 60s, 70s and 80s. Among them, only the name of Rev Monsignor Charles Ikeme, the central figure in this phase of the research, was revealed. For the sake of confidentiality, pseudonyms were used for the rest of the participants. A profile of Rev Ikeme is helpful at this point, given his role in this study.

Rev Monsignor Charles Ikeme: A Brief Profile

Rev Ikeme was born on November 5, 1931, the second son of the late Sir Alfred Ikeme and the late Madam Margaret Ikeme, both from Nimo, Anambra State of Nigeria. Ikeme was of aristocratic birth and his father was a teacher during the colonial era. In his 2012 autobiography, Ikeme discussed his aristocracy:

I boast of aristocracy by birth. I say, show me the house your father built in 1934, and I will show you what my father built that year—new building Nimo, with three porches described as ‘a solid stone building’ by a teacher in our primary school at Adazi. I attach so much importance to this privilege of birth. That makes me insist on good behavior in all Ikeme’s family.... ‘New building Nimo.’ It is lonely situation—no house in sight for over 18 years... (p. 11).

Despite their father’s high social and economic status, Ikeme states that his father did not pamper them. Instead, they were raised under strict discipline, which conformed to the approach

of the missionary training in those days. Growing up, he was stubborn and bold. Because of that, he stayed longest with his father, while his elder brother, Alfred, left for King's College Lagos in 1942. From there, Alfred secured a scholarship to complete his medical degree at Liverpool in the United Kingdom, and later became the first Nigerian cardiologist and a professor. His youngest brother and last in the family, Maximus, attended Government College Umuahia, and secured a scholarship, and pursued his doctorate at Edinburgh University, United Kingdom. His younger and only, sister, Mrs. Theresa Odigwe, was well educated at Holy Rosary College and later studied in the UK for a postgraduate program in education.

In 1947, Ikeme went to College of Immaculate Conception, Enugu, the college at which he would become the principal many years later. In 1951, he took his final exam, the Senior Cambridge School Certificate Examination, and was given an award as the best boy in manual labor in his school. In 1952, he entered the Bigard Memorial major seminary for training in the priesthood. In the seminary, he reflected on his life there:

I certainly enjoyed entering the seminary. I still remember my first night there. I slept profoundly. I was a very lively youth very good in ballroom dance. This liveliness took some time to cool down. I could do feet-astride jumping exercise in two counts in a classroom, which experienced fellow seminarians frowned at. I was nicknamed 'raw material.' (p. 20)

Although Ikeme was seen as a rascal by his schoolmates in the seminary, he was respected by his teachers. His younger sister wrote about him during the 50th anniversary of his priesthood in 2008: "he was favored not to do the two or three year probation so that he started his theology immediately... and according to him [Ikeme], the seminary authorities said, 'there is no need to delay him, he is too sincere'..." (Ikeme, 2012, pp. 26-27). On July 27, 1958 Ikeme was ordained a Catholic priest at the Holy Trinity Cathedral Onitsha, Nigeria along with two other Nigerians. One year later he left for Kimmage Manor, Dublin, Ireland, for further studies.

He loved everything about the new environment, primarily because of his family background that he often referred to as aristocratic. He reflected on the supremacy of knowing and speaking good English:

The premises were certainly very inviting. I was welcomed and taken to the office of the superior who welcomed me... I certainly spoke English, not only better than my predecessors there but I am sure better than some of their students (scholastics–seminarians). Yes elocution, for I took the trouble to perfect myself as far as possible in it, as some expatriates I met in Lagos when I went for my visa could testify, while I assured them I had not left the shores of Nigeria. I noticed that the pronunciation of some words by their scholastics was not [what] Oxford English would accept. My sense of superiority had more justifiable reasons in its favor. (p. 40).

For Ikeme, his knowledge of the English language as superior to other languages, the local Nigerian languages, was an indication of nobility, but in this study, other scholars (Abernethy, 1969; Carnoy, 1974) viewed the purpose of colonial missionary education as imperialistic in nature. In November 1962, Ikeme returned to Nigeria after his studies and his first appointment was at the Catholic education office in Enugu. In January 1963, he was posted to Corpus Christi College, Achi, as a vice principal and was there for just about a year. He liked it there too:

I stayed only one year 1963 at Corpus Christi College Achi. Rev. Fr. T. Burke was the principal and I was an energetic vice principal. Discipline was in my hands. He [the principal] love Star beer and he would take 2 bottles before the assembly–before classes. I wasn't too strict because I was too English then–just back from the United Kingdom. But mark our upbringing in 'New building Nimo.' It was quite English. All kinds of instructions and motivations were employed by me towards the students rather than force or punishment. I furnished the refectory–ate with the boys; taught them table manners–so cared for the sick that I was nicknamed 'roasted chicken' which I made sure that any sick student ate in order to be fed well (p. 55).

However, Ikeme stated that he had zero tolerance for any act of indiscipline on the part of the students. As will be noted in Chapter Two, this was commonplace in the Catholic schools of the pre-Vatican II era, the colonial era (as noted in Chapter Three) and even beyond that in the post-colonial Nigeria, as seen at Ikeme's schools.

In 1964, Ikeme became the vice-principal of *Igbo Etiti* Grammar School, AdadaRiver. After the principal died that same year, Rev Ikeme took the position, and was proud of the level of excellence in the school, although that did not last long, following the outbreak of the Nigerian civil war in 1967.

Ikeme served in the war, but on the side of Biafra, those seeking secession from Nigeria during the conflict. The war was very devastating, with loss of human life and property. But, by the end of the civil war in 1970, many things had changed. Students became unruly and out of control then, and Ikeme and other Catholic school leaders worked hard to restore discipline in the institutions controlled by the state. The same was true of the teachers, many of whom, by then, had become less committed to their profession. Also, the curriculum continued to evolve, to meet the social, educational, and cultural contexts of the time. Ikeme continued to work primarily as an educator and administrator until his retirement in the 1990s. The climate of change in the Nigerian schools that occurred after the civil war in the 1970s was obvious in Ikeme's recollections and that of other Catholic educators and school leaders.

Other Participants

Other participants in the study included Anthony Agu, a Catholic priest, born in 1958. He was a principal at a Catholic boys' high school in Enugu at the time of this research. Joseph Okoro was also a participant, a Catholic priest born in 1938. He worked in the Catholic education office in the 1960s before the forceful takeover of schools by the military government in the 1970s. Michael Okoro, another Catholic priest, was born in 1948. He is currently a university professor and a historian in one of the Nigerian universities in the Southeastern region. Andrew Osita, a Catholic priest from Enugu, was born in 1944 and has worked in both state and

Catholic education offices. James Onwu was a priest from Anambra state, born in 1969. He was the education secretary of his diocese at the time of this study. Robert Ikedi was born in 1947, and he is currently a Catholic bishop in one of the dioceses in the region. Before entering the major seminary, he was a teacher in two Catholic schools managed by the colonial missionaries in the 1960s.

Guided by the research topic, Catholic education in Southeastern Nigeria and national educational development, 1885-2017, each interview began with the following questions: (a) What were the major challenges of a principal of a Catholic school? How would you compare these challenges with those of the colonial era or the post-colonial up until the contemporary era? (b) How was the relationship between the Catholic Church and the State during the colonial, post-colonial and contemporary era and how has this impacted the work of a Catholic school principal? (c) In what ways would you describe the nature of the Catholic identity of a Catholic school, during the colonial, post-colonial, and the present era? (d) What does the curriculum look like and how would you compare it during the various periods above? and (e) What were the students like in the late 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries? A wide variety of additional questions comprised the remainder of each interview, depending upon the experiences and observations of each participant.

Drawing upon a variety of sources, including historical documents of one form or another, secondary materials and oral history interviews, this thesis describes the historical development of Catholic education in this part of the world, and the many challenges it has faced up to contemporary times.

CHAPTER ONE: CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY WORK IN NIGER COUNTRY (19TH CENTURY)

In this chapter, historical context for the remainder of the study is provided. The early contacts of Nigerians with Christianity are discussed. The missionary and political tension in the Niger country (Southeastern Nigeria) in the 1840s, the role of Protestant missions in West Africa in the 1840s, the cordial relationship that existed between the Anglicans (CMS) and the Catholics, and the early Catholic missions in the same region in the 1860s are examined. Also, it describes the monopoly of schools by the missions in the 1800s and its effects throughout the 19th century. This chapter also shows the long history of Christian missionary work in the region, and the British colonial government's lack of interest in educating Nigerians.

Early Contact of Nigerians with Christianity

The study of Catholic education, of course, must be placed in the context of religion, and Christianity in particular, in Africa. For the early Christians, barbarianism was synonymous with paganism; therefore, pagans were both non-Christians and without civilization. With this assumption, pagans and non-Christians were considered less than human (Pagden, 1995). Within this context, Christian empires felt the responsibility to convert and civilize all people and make them pious and virtuous (Spring, 2010). Pagden (1995) suggested that, among early Christians, *pietas* or being pious meant compliance with religious laws or loyalty to the family. On the other hand, *virtus*, or virtuous meant an eagerness to sacrifice oneself for the good of the Christian community. Therefore virtuous people were willing to sacrifice their lives to convert others to Christianity and to spread civilization (Pagden, 1995).

The Nigerian historian, Nicholas Omenka (1989) noted that the “African continent was sealed off from the Christian religion by the conquests of the Moslems in the 7th and 8th centuries” (p. 15). It was not until the 15th century, at the beginnings of the geographical discoveries during that century, that Christianity was reintroduced in Africa by Portuguese missionaries. More specifically, another Nigerian historian, Casmir Eke and his colleagues, Onyewuenyi and Onyeneke (2006), stated that “from the islands of Sao Tome and Principe discovered by the Portuguese about 1470, contacts were established with the kingdom of Benin (1472-1707) and the kingdom of Itsekiri (Warri) about 1574-1807” (p. 78).

However, Eke and his colleagues (2006) contended that the form of Christianity in Benin and Warri during this period was described as both “court and elite practice that failed to have lasting impact on the common people” (p. 78) until the 19th century, when a new set of missionaries arrived in Nigeria (formerly known as the Niger territories). Eke and colleagues (2006) offered some key reasons why this initial encounter with Christianity was not successful in Africa. First, they asserted that, “European missionaries failed to comprehend the complexities of the African society and the dept[h] of its allegiance to its tradition” (p. 79), because these missionaries seemed to be misguided in their beliefs about the traditional rulers of that era. They observed that such missionaries, “easily overestimated the power of the chiefs and kings, and doggedly held to the misguided notion that once the ruler was won over, the victory over the subjects was *fait accompli*” (p. 79).

Additionally, Eke et al. (2006) maintained that Africans resisted European religion because the people believed that this might undermine the African traditional religion. They noted that “African traditional religion and its practitioners did indeed pose great resistance to Christianity as [they] feared the new religion eroding the power and influence of tradition” (p.

79). Supporting this, Sanneh (1983) suggested that this was a strong factor for the failure of Christianity to take root in the Benin Kingdom: “the *Uwangue* and the palace chiefs who presided over the state religion and its rituals organized a boycott of the religion of the missionaries which the *Oba* and his relatives were favorable to” (pp. 47-48). Other reasons for the failure of Christianity in some parts of Africa before the 19th century included the limited number of European missionaries available for Christian missionary work. Some were too ill to make a significant impact on the people, and no serious efforts were made to open schools and educate the people (Eke et al, 2006).

Missionary and Political Tension on the Niger Country (19th Century)

The British and French were involved in the struggle for influence on the Niger country, but, this thesis will focus on British colonialism in the region, as it was that power which eventually exerted the greatest influence. The Europeans maintained contact for many decades with the West African coast without bothering to move into its hinterlands. Indeed, they depended “exclusively on native middlemen for the smooth running of the infamous slave trade” (Omenka, 1989 p. 11). The main cause of the 19th century political struggle on the Niger between the French and British, as stated above, was the quest for raw materials. Interestingly, the British government did not show apparent territorial ambitions in Africa during the first half of the 19th century. Instead, its primary interest was the extermination of the slave trade in the West African coast. With the help of the Society for the Extinction of the Slave Trade and for the Civilization of Africa, the British supported an expedition to Nigeria in 1841 (Amadi, 1977). The principal aim of the expedition was to abolish the slave trade and to reclaim the region with the help of the “Bible and the plow through the establishment of church and the model farm”

(Walker, 1930 pp. 14-25).

More importantly, it was the 1885 Berlin Conference that led to the definitive partitioning of Africa (Bassey, 1999; Okwu, 2010). Article 26 of its general Act gave freedom of navigation on the Niger and the Congo respectively, and granted the responsibility for protecting subjects and colonial development on the Niger to Britain (Omenka, 1989). The British commercial enterprise there was strengthened when all the participating companies combined to form the Royal Niger Company, which was granted a royal charter in 1886 (Alagoa, 1980). By this act, the British government armed its commercial interests with powers of government and forcible interference in local affairs (Crowther, 1966; Okwu, 2010). The rancor between the French and British, as well as the monopoly of the Royal Niger Company, became a source of debate in the German Parliament in 1889, with von Bismark, the German leader (Awolowo, 1968) promising to intervene in person (*Bulletin de la Congregation des Peres du Saint-Esprit*, 191/A/IV, November 26, 1889, will hereafter be called CSE). It seems the British had an advantage over the French in this case because, with the support of the British government, the Royal Niger Company remained impervious to the agitations against them in Europe. Therefore the French then sold their possessions to the Royal Niger Company and withdrew from the Niger territory (Anyadele, 1979); hence, the era of British hegemony in Nigeria began (Awolowo, 1968). The Nigerian historian, Augustine Okwu (2010) condemned the attitude and actions of the Royal Niger Company regarding the natives:

In general, the Company's regime was synonymous with an administration that depended on the committal of acts of barbarism, illegalities, and inhumanity in the name of maintaining order. Its atrocities against the local communities were so widely known that the communities that were outside of its area of control were apprehensive about having any dealings with the Company. (p. 122; see also Falola, 2009)

Ultimately, the political rivalry between the colonialists in the West African coast was unresolved until much later. A diplomatic convention signed in Paris on June 14, 1898 was the moment when the “delimitation of French and British West Africa was achieved making Britain the sole master of the Niger Countries” (*Ministere des Affaires E’trangere*, 1898). By January 1, 1900, the colonization of Nigeria was almost fully accomplished by the British. On this same date, the Colonial Office took over the Royal Niger Company’s and the Niger Coast Protectorate’s territory (Carland, 1977; 1985). In view of this, the former Premier of Western Nigeria, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, (1968) stated that the country was ruled by the British either directly or indirectly under three separate units:

the Colony and Protectorate of Lagos, which consisted of the areas of authority of the present Western State and Lagos State Governments, excluding the *Egba* Division;(b) the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria which comprised roughly the areas of authority of the present three Eastern States, and of the Midwestern State Government;and (c) the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria which was more or less the same as the present six Northern States. (pp. 15-16)

All three Nigeria colonies were in one place (Carland, 1985). Thereafter, the name “Nigeria” was used officially (Bane, 1956, p. 171).

The Role of the Protestant Missions in West Africa (19th Century)

19th century Christian missionary activity was pioneered by the Protestants. Although studies of the numerous contributions of Protestant missions in many parts of Africa, including Nigeria, abound, any discussion of Catholic education in Southern Nigeria would be incomplete without acknowledging the role of Protestants in bringing Christianity to West Africa. The Wesleyan mission was the first to respond to the evangelizing call to Nigeria (Amadi, 1977). In 1842, the Wesleyans sent Thomas Birch Freeman to establish a mission at Badagry, Lagos

(Walker, 1942). Then, on September 23, 1842, Freeman, along with two other missionary companions, Mr. and Mrs. William DeGraft, arrived at Badagry (Okongwu, 1946). The founding of Wesleyan missions went hand-in-hand with the establishment of elementary schools that became the first formal western education enterprise in Nigeria (Amadi, 1977). In 1843, the Christian Missionary Society (CMS, Anglicans) came to Nigeria, and in 1845 they founded a church and a school. By 1856, the Anglican mission alone had 256 pupils in Lagos and 549 in nine schools in Yorubaland (Fajana, 1970). Shortly afterwards, other missions started arriving, such as the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland, which pioneered its way toward the East of the Niger (current Southeastern Nigeria), when Reverend Hope Wandell arrived in 1846. In 1895, the United Presbyterian Church opened the Hope Wandell Institute, a combination of normal, vocational, and secondary school (Amadi, 1977). In 1850, Thomas Jefferson Bowen, of the Southern Baptist Convention, USA, along with his wife, arrived in Badagry, Lagos, and in 1853 they moved to Abeokuta where they established their first school. The Baptists established other schools in Abeokuta. In 1855, they founded the nucleus of what would become the Lagos Baptist Academy (Okongwu, 1946).

More importantly, Eke et al. (2006) affirmed that the first Anglican mission to Abeokuta was led by Henry Townsend, an English missionary from Sierra Leone, Ajayi Crowther and a German missionary, C.A. Gollmer, with a host of other Sierra Leoneans or “Saros” as they were formally called (Abernethy 1969, p. 30). The latter were from the liberated Yoruba community, among whom were carpenters and builders, both teachers and Catechists. This Anglican mission was expected to assume and demonstrate a new way of life in which the school and the church were all in one place. Consequently, while applying the principle that the Bible and the plough should go together, as earlier stated, the Yoruba from Sierra Leone began the growing and

processing of cotton and its export.

Eke et al. (2006) also acknowledged other significant contributions of these early Anglican missionaries in their efforts to use the Yoruba language, a local language in Nigeria, both in the development of a Yoruba dictionary and a translation of the Bible. Confirming this, Walls (1992) stated:

Another admirable character of the CMS mission was that it worked in the Yoruba language, with the advantage of native speakers in Crowther and most of his auxiliaries and Crowther's book [Yoruba dictionary] to assist the Europeans. With the combined efforts of Townsend, a practical linguist, who even edited a Yoruba newspaper, and Crowther as the leading influence, the mission was able to produce a Yoruba translation of the Bible (p. 135).

Furthermore, Eke et al. (2006) observed that, "written Yoruba was a product of missionary committee work, Crowther interacting with his European colleagues on matters of orthography" (p. 80). The Anglican approach in the use of local language was in sharp contrast with the approach used by other denominations, such as the Catholics, who leaned towards the use of the English language, which many scholars (e.g. Abernethy, 1969; Bassey 1999; Carnoy, 1974) have come to see as an aspect of cultural imperialism.

Furthermore, Anglican missionary work also penetrated into the Igbo land in Southeast Nigeria, Nupe in the middle-belt region, and the Hausa people in Northern Nigeria. In this regard, Eke and colleagues stated:

The 1854 Niger expedition, sponsored by the merchant McGregor Laird, included Samuel Ajayi Crowther, and with this the CMS prepared to launch their mission to the Igbo territory. In 1857, when McGregor Laird embarked on his next expedition to the Niger, J.C. Taylor, a Sierra Leonean clergyman of liberated Igbo parentage joined the CMS team with Crowther. Taylor has the credit of opening the first CMS Igbo mission at Onitsha. Crowther travelled upriver, got shipwrecked and, stranded for months, began to study the Nupe language and surveyed openings to the Nupe and Hausa peoples. The CMS Niger mission had begun. Crowther was at the head of a mission-force consisting entirely of Africans (pp. 80-81).

Crowther's report of October 8, 1885, showed the various locations where the CMS had made its presence known, such as: "Akasa (1860) but vacated 1885 for want of an agent, Ida (1865) abandoned later; Lokoja (1865), Bonny (1866), Nembe and Tuwon (1868), Osamare (1873), Okirika (1874), Asaba (1875) and Obosi (1882) as an out-station of Onitsha" (Nnabuike, 1983). For nearly half a century, Sierra Leone remained the prime location from which missionaries came to the Niger territories, including the Muslim emirates in the North, ocean trading cities in the Delta, and the Eastern region.

However, Eke et al. (2006) pointed out that these missions were established at the same locations as the British trading companies. Citing Robinson, Gallagher, and Denny (1961), Carnoy (1974) wrote:

Crowther's 1854 expedition up the Niger established that, with the help of newly discovered quinine, the white man could live on the Niger. It also opened the country to trade and made it clear that the interior could be reached by way of the Niger. Crowther's Niger missions were particularly important because they, along with the West Africa Company he helped form (1863) kept the British involved commercially in Nigeria during a period when there was pressure from the House of Commons to withdraw from all the West Coast except Sierra Leone (Robinson, et al., 1961, as cited in Carnoy, 1974, p. 128).

Carnoy further elaborated the nature of missionary work in Africa from its inception as having imperialistic undertones, particularly during this era:

Missionary work in Africa and the schools connected with the missions were therefore born of a civilizing purpose, a purpose that not only involved religious conversion but the acceptance of new economic and social organizations. The origin of these organizations was, of course, European, primarily British. The missions tried to stop a European-induced slave trade by replacing it with agricultural products. The agricultural products to be produced by Africans were to serve European needs, just as the slave trade has served European needs (p. 128).

Eke et al. (2006) suggested that the story of Crowther's mission has been repeatedly told and differently interpreted. They surmised that, "it still raises passions and causes bitterness"

(Eke et al, p. 81). For instance, Crowther wrote the first book in Igbo and completed his Hausa dictionary with the help of J.F. Schon, a German missionary and linguist who studied languages of the Niger. Again, Eke et al. noted that the Anglican CMS trained the Igbo Catechists who became of immense help to the Catholic missionaries, the Spiritans who later settled at Onitsha, in 1885. Omenka (1989) also affirmed that most of the pioneer Catholic catechists and interpreters were people who were educated in Protestant schools at Onitsha. According to Walls (1998), Crowther's mission still "represents the first sustained missionary engagement with African Islam in modern times" (p. 136).

The beginnings of the Catholic missionary work in Southern Nigeria, was aided by the missionary presence of the Protestants, especially the Anglicans. The level of cordiality between the early 19th century Catholics and Anglicans was such that the Anglicans donated a piece of land to the Catholic mission. As Abernethy (1969) noted,

In the 19th century, relations between the Church Missionary Society and the Roman Catholic Mission were fairly cordial; in fact, the Catholics' first mission site was on land donated by the Obi of Onitsha to Bishop Crowther, who in turn gave it to the Holy Ghost Fathers (p. 49).

Early Catholic Missionary Activity in Southern Nigeria

Although many Catholic missionaries came to work in colonial Nigeria in the early 19th century, the pioneer Catholic missionaries were Fathers of the Society of African Missions (SMA). This group was founded in Lyon in 1856 and began the mission of evangelization at Dahomey in 1861. Then, the superior of the Dahomey mission made a visitation to Lagos, Nigeria in March 1861. According to Omenka (1989), he was given a warm reception by a group of about 200 Catholics who were predominantly ex-slaves from Brazil. Among the fruitful results of his visit was the generosity with which the British welcomed the possibility of

a future Catholic mission in Lagos. Land was acquired for both a Church and a school, but it was not until 1868 that a Mission was finally established in Lagos. By 1872, the existence of an active Catholic community conducting services in the Portuguese language became “a source of consolation and a cause of optimism for the missionaries” (*Les Missions Catholiques*, July 1872, as cited in Omenka, 1989, p. 18). Omenka remarked that, “the success of the Society of African Missions in Lagos was a source of great inspiration for future missionary endeavours in the whole of Nigeria” (p. 19).

One major factor in this regard was the variety of language use, which came about as a result of the political and social arrangements of the Lagos colony. Omenka (1989) succinctly captured it:

By the close of the eighteenth century, Portuguese influence in West Africa was already on the wane. Nevertheless, the Portuguese language continued to be a lingua franca, as it has been since the fifteenth century. It is no wonder, therefore, that the first Catholic community in Lagos conducted its religious services in that language. What may cause eyebrows to be raised is the fact that under the guidance of French missionaries, Brazilian Catholics were conducting services in the Portuguese language in an English colony where Yoruba was spoken. This perfect confusion was to be assuaged in later years following the triumph of English as the language of commerce, but throughout the 1870's, the language problem was as acute as it was frustrating, especially with regard to the establishment of Catholic schools in Lagos (p. 19).

The first Catholic school in Lagos was founded on February 15, 1869, with 30 pupils, 16 boys and 14 girls. By 1872, there were two different schools, one English and the other Portuguese (Omenka, 1989). More importantly, because of the inability of the French Fathers to speak English, they resorted to the use of Protestant teachers to maintain their English schools. With the realization of the importance of English language for the success of the French missionary work, the SMA in 1876 started seeking to give its school an English character. To this effect, an Apostolic College for African Missions was established in Cork, Ireland in 1878. In the same year, an Irish Brother, Timothy Doyle, was sent to Lagos to take charge of the

Catholic English school. In the end, the Fathers of the Society of African Missions set a precedent by bringing English-speaking missionaries to direct the affairs of their educational work, an approach later adopted by other Catholic colonial missionaries, such as the Holy Ghost Fathers who came to work in Eastern Nigeria.

Monopoly of Education by the Christian Missions

Throughout the 1800s, western education in Southern Nigeria was solely in the hands of the Christian missionaries. Afigbo (1968) noted, “formal western education in the 19th century Southern Nigeria was entirely the monopoly of the missionary societies” (p. 198). There were several reasons why the missionaries controlled education during this era. First, the missionaries preceded the colonial government in the area of education as they did in health and social services, as noted by Sir James Robertson:

The growth of social services in the under-developed territories of Asia and Africa has been due in a large measure to the devotion and endeavor of Christian missionaries. This is very true of Nigeria which is greatly indebted to missionary effort for the foundation of its medical and educational services. The state was at first slow to assume responsibilities in this sphere (as cited in Macrae, 1956, p. 3).

Second, the missionaries in many ways were closer to the local people and, for that reason, they could identify the social needs of the people. The Nigerian historian, Lawrence Amadi (1977) added, “since these were means of reaching the general public, the missionaries utilized them to accomplish their primary objective, evangelism” (p. 486). Essentially, the missionaries had a higher vision of the role of education in evangelical work. In addition, the memory of the failure of the first missionaries and the fear of the high rate of mortality and illness among the Europeans who came to West Africa impelled the missionaries’ determination to firmly establish Christianity (Ajayi, 1965). In 1857, Thomas Jefferson Bowen (as cited in

Afigbo, 1968, p. 199) stated the purpose of missionary work in Africa as evangelization and the approach to be used:

Our designs and hopes in regard to Africa are not simply to bring as many individuals as possible to the knowledge of Christ. We desire to establish the Gospel in the hearts and minds and social life of the people, so that truth and righteousness may remain and flourish among them, without the instrumentality of foreign missionaries. This cannot be done without civilization. To establish the Gospel among any people, they must have Bibles, and therefore must have the art to make them, or the money to buy them. They must read the Bible, and this implies instruction

Ajayi (1965) observed three important facets of Bowen's program, "the introduction of literacy, the training of missionary agents, and the fostering through technical education of a class of people with the art to make Bibles or the money to buy them" (p. 126). Afigbo (1968) added that, since the missionaries saw education as an important aspect of evangelism and the ultimate guarantee of the permanence of their work, it was not surprising then that the first missionaries who arrived in Southern Nigeria established schools along with the churches.

Affirming this, R. H. Stone (1858) wrote:

I am fast coming to the conviction that schools for the rising generation must be the basis of all missions among barbarous and savage heathen. The gospel should be preached regularly and steadily, faithfully and prayerfully; but through children we get at the root of idolatry and leaven the whole lump (Stone to Culpepper, July 9 1858).

The Nigerian historian, Babs Fafunwa (1974) noted that many of these schools were located within the church compounds, and as the number of children grew, new schools were established and built within the church missions or outside them. He observed that the classroom settings consisted of a "bespectacled missionary, sometimes White, sometimes Black, often a priest, with rod in his hand and a row or two of children... repeating in unison either the catechism or the alphabet. Rote-learning predominated" (p. 88).

Third, the colonial government placed education as a lower priority. Governor Henry Stanhope Freeman (1862-1863) listed the top government priorities in this order:

Roads must be made, swamps filled up, the river bank properly staked and supported to prevent its being washed away... A good prison must be commenced without delay as the present one is falling down and it is difficult to guard the prisoners escaping. A hospital must be erected and a powder magazine built and eventually we shall need some barracks for the police. Nothing has yet been undertaken by the government in the way of education owing to the want of necessary funds (Colonial Office, July 4, 1864).

Fourth, owing to the limited number of colonial officials available in Southern Nigeria, the colonial government concentrated on gaining military installations in the region first. Therefore the few officers available fought wars of pacification to justify their presence (Amadi, 1977). Finally, the positive relationship between the missionaries and the traditional rulers and the communities was another advantage for the missionaries. Ajayi (1965) noted that, “the missionaries began in Badagri and Calabar by trying to strengthen the hands of the traditional rulers and using their power to protect and to further the cause of the missions (p. 99). Thus, the missionaries were left unchallenged in their monopoly of education in Nigeria. But all that changed toward the end of the century when the British colonial government assumed a more direct role in education through various policies. These are discussed in Chapter Three.

Effects of Missionary Monopoly of Education in Nigeria

There were many effects of the missionary monopoly of education in Southern Nigeria, both negative and positive. First, there was no organized structure in the educational program of this era, as noted by Ajayi (1965): “there was no system in the pattern that merged, no common syllabus, no general inspectorate... Everything depended on the ability and zeal and personal whims of the individual missionary or teacher” (p. 138). The differences of educational programs in many of these schools therefore ranged from formal instructions to story-telling groups (Amadi, 1977). Second, a common feature of the schools was the propagation of the

ideals of Christianity and the curriculum consisted of the four R's: religion, reading, writing, and arithmetic and sometimes sewing for girls if there was a female teacher (Ajayi, 1965).

Again, there was a neglect of development of secondary and higher education throughout this era. However, through the influence of some rich merchants, influential church members, and emigrants, secondary schools were established (Amadi, 1977). For instance, J. P. L. Davis organized a fundraising that supported the building and establishment of the Anglican Grammar School in Lagos, in 1859 (Fajana, 1970). On the other hand, some scholars (Amadi, 1977) argued that missionary education of this era did not encourage teacher education, and a teacher-training institution was not considered an essential part of their missionary work. Instead, the missionaries were satisfied with using the top classes of elementary school as teachers. As noted by Ajayi (1965), the initial missionary leadership had worried that "formal institutions produced academic training and were dangerous" (p. 147).

Another feature of education within this era was an emphasis on character training. The missionaries were very preoccupied with keeping the morality of their pupils high and, therefore, rules of conduct were an essential part of the school curriculum. Thus, Fajana (1970) stated that, "to many missions, the moral purpose of a school was its highest purpose, and the secret spring of vital energy in a people was the morality which underlines the intelligence" (p. 104). On the other hand, industrial education was a major preoccupation of missionary education in Southern Nigeria. Amadi (1977) noted that it was the desire of the missionaries to train "carpenters, masons, and tailors who would be independent churchmen" (p. 489). But, a shift in emphasis came as a result of the desire of many Nigerians for literary education, since attaining many positions such as teachers, interpreters, or orderlies required some level of literary skills. Finally,

the major factor that affected education of the 19th century was the missionaries themselves as Oldham (1934) expressed:

It must be recognized, on the other hand, that the missionary forces, both Protestant and Roman Catholic, include a considerable number of missionaries of limited outlook, insufficient education, and narrow intellectual views. These can contribute little to educational advancement as we understand it. (p. 49)

As can be seen, the overall 19th century missionary enterprise in Nigeria, whether Protestant or Catholic, had its own shortcomings and limitations. Carnoy (1974) stated clearly the planned outcomes of the European civilization and education in Africa:

The intended function of education was to help Europeans transform the local and social structure in ways which strengthened European commercial and political control over the region. Education was used to develop regions to meet European needs. The pattern of modernization evolved in this dependent context, and benefited few Indians and Africans (p. 82).

In addition, Abernethy (1969) was critical of the imperialistic nature of the missionary work that was carried out within the early 19th century:

Although it would be an oversimplification to describe them as agents of British (or French) imperialism, the missionaries were linked in many ways to the traders and officials who came in increasing numbers to Nigeria. Most of the leading missionaries were Europeans, of the same color and speaking the same language as those who came to Africa for profit or power. The missionaries' vision of civilization incorporated European cultural elements that were not connected with Christianity, and the 'Bible and the Plough' theory gave prominence to the role that commerce, presumably involving European traders could play in the uplifting of Africa. (p. 32)

Further, Abernethy contended that the political and the economic situation of the 19th century thwarted the spread of mission work in Nigeria in many respects. Supporting this, he provided some examples that were linked to some civil unrest in parts of Southern Nigeria:

From 1820 to 1893 Yorubaland was racked by civil war, as the hegemony of Oyo was destroyed and new city-states, such as Ibadan and Abeokuta, fought among themselves to fill the power vacuum and to control trade routes to the coast. Along the 'Oil Rivers' east of the Niger lay another group of city-states (Bonny, Nembe, Kalabari, Opobo, and Calabar were the most prominent) whose inhabitants served as middlemen between European traders and the hinterland, at first in the slave and then in the palm oil. These

Africans knew their economic position would be undercut if the Europeans were able to gain direct access to the source of supply. The general instability of Yorubaland and the often inhospitable response of the Oil River trading states to the Europeans convinced many missionaries that the imposition of law and order from the outside was prerequisite to the growth of Christian civilization, and some of them even became politically involved in advancing the imperial cause. (pp. 32-33)

For these reasons, many Africans became very suspicious of missionaries. By the 1860s and 1870s, their hostility became more intense, and it led to many incidents of general persecution of Christians in areas such as Bonny, Nembe, and Abeokuta (Abernethy, 1969). In order to regain the confidence of Africans, the colonial missionaries had to start programs that would appeal to the local people, and they made sure that such programs were not directly connected to “European imperial interests” (Abernethy, p. 33). The principal program that could suit this situation was education and, in many areas, schooling became very popular as Abernethy noted:

Literacy was for the African a tool by which he could cope with the European presence; in this sense the school became the African’s self-defense against the momentous changes being imposed on him from outside. By providing, through the school, what the African desired and could use, the missionaries managed to calm somewhat the suspicions incurred by their own presence (p. 35).

This new pattern and approach used by the missionaries will be examined in greater depth in the chapters that follow, along with their implications for contemporary education systems in Nigeria whether Catholic, private, or public.

Conclusion

This chapter provided a background to the principal topical focus of this study. It discussed the early contacts of Nigerians with Christianity in the 19th century. It examined the missionary and political tension on the Niger country (Southeastern Nigeria) in the 1840s, the role of Protestant missions in West Africa in the 1840s, the cordial relationship that existed

between the Anglicans (CMS) and the Catholics, and the early Catholic missions in the same region in the 1860s. It also examined the monopoly of schools by the missions in the 1800s and its effects throughout the 19th century. The chapter discussed the lack of interest of the British colonial rulers in the field of education, an indication that the British were in Nigeria solely for economic reasons and exploitation. Even when they showed any interest, as will be seen in the chapters that follow, it was for convenience and imperial control.

CHAPTER TWO: TRADITIONAL CATHOLIC EDUCATION IN THE PRE-VATICAN II ERA

Using concepts drawn from the work of Gerald Grace's (2002) *Catholic Schools: Mission, Markets and Morality*, a critical overview of the character of Catholic education and its doctrine during the pre-Vatican Council II era is presented in this chapter. A period that lasted for nearly a century began at the beginning of the Vatican I era (1870) but ended in the middle of the 20th century, just before the convocation of the Second Vatican Council in 1962. Incidentally, this period coincided with the colonial era (1885-1950) when the colonial Catholic missionaries worked in Eastern Nigeria. This chapter also helps to explain how the traditional Catholic education of this era prepared students for life in the world and in association with other religions.

Grace (2002) discussed the character of Catholic education during the pre-Vatican II era with various themes, in the form of images or metaphors as they were used within this context. He suggests, however, that one major limitation of imageries of schooling is that they are subjective and partial accounts since they are not constructed within the disciplines of social science enquiry. Though imageries may have some limitations, he noted that they still "have an enduring power to affect both consciousness and behavior" (p. 56). Consequently, for many people, images become a reality and have "continuing effects in contemporary situations" (p. 56). Thus, the use of imagery in Catholic education is presented by Grace:

The richness and widely disseminated nature of images of Catholic schooling provides not only an enduring element in what many people believe a Catholic education is but also a useful background against which some sense of change in Catholic education can be constructed. (p. 56)

Based on these assumptions, Grace (2002) presented some partial descriptions of traditional Catholic schooling of the pre-Vatican Council II era that are contained in some published texts but cautions that these descriptions are “intended to be an indicative rather than a definitive account of some forms of traditional Catholic schooling” (p. 56). The themes included (a) strong discipline; (b) faith of our fathers—the catechism of Catholic doctrine; (c) encountering the sacred—the sacraments, rituals and devotions; (d) Catholic knowledge and Catholic learning; (e) purity and danger; (f) charity, service and good works; and finally, (g) Catholic identity and a sense of ‘the other’. These themes are discussed herein.

Strong Discipline

According to Grace (2002), a widely disseminated contradiction in traditional Catholic schools might be found between a formal teaching of love, compassion, and forgiveness as originating from the nature of Christ, and educational practices that involve, in some cases, “brutal beating and sadistic psychological domination” (Grace, p. 57). In effect, Grace surmises that in some traditional Catholic schooling settings, the message of love from the New Testament seemed to be contradicted in reality by the messages of punishment and retribution from the Old Testament. In order to drive home this point, an example of such a contradiction can be seen in the work of Joyce (1985):

The door opened quietly and closed. A quick whisper ran through the class: the prefect of studies. There was an instant of dead silence and then the loud crack of a pandy bat on the last desk. Stephen’s heart leapt up in fear. ‘Any boys want flogging here, Father Arnall?’ cried the prefect of studies. ‘Any lazy idle loafers that want flogging in this class?’ (p. 49)

From the above historic account, Grace (2002) suggested that the experience of discipline in a Catholic school for boys during the pre-Vatican II era might be replicated in other schools,

both Catholic and non-Catholic. He maintained that the traditional Catholic schools made use of outdated methods of school discipline that were taken for granted as part of institutional life, particularly in the United Kingdom and Ireland during this era. Such methods of discipline were a common phenomenon across many religious congregations including the “Jesuits, Christian Brothers, De La Salle Brothers, Marists’ Sisters of Mercy or lay Catholic head teachers and teachers” (Grace p. 57). According to Grace (2002), such regimes were usually justified by the Old Testament mandate that “the pursuit of knowledge and wisdom frequently involved the experience of ordeal and pain” (p. 57). Also, the form of formal curriculum experienced by many young people was seen as arid, with some sort of strong discipline in order to maintain order and attention in the classroom. Many critics of Catholic education have considered this approach to teaching, with the use of physical and psychological violence in what ought to be seen as a truly Christian approach to education as hypocritical and undermining the integrity of its claimed distinctive mission.

There is yet another example of the effects of strong discipline in a traditional Catholic schooling in the New Zealand Catholic Boys’ Oral History project of 1996. One of the old boys wrote, “it was one of the few unhappy experiences I had in the Catholic school system and it may have been what decided me to become a lawyer and an opponent of corporal punishment” (Sullivan, 1996, pp. 135-136). This criticism of the Catholic schooling of pre-Vatican II era was not only found among boys but also among girls especially in schools that were managed by religious sisters and nuns. Such instances of psychological violence led some of these students to later found a modern Classics school and to write books to condemn or counter the approach of education found in convent schools (Grace, 2002).

As can be seen, the examples above highlighted some of the negative methods of the pre-Vatican II traditional Catholic education and they raised questions about the level of transformation that had occurred later regarding disciplinary measures. However, these represent only a partial sampling of the oral accounts of traditional Catholic education, and need to be balanced with other types of images, experiences and representations (Grace, 2002). Grace argued that such accounts did not represent a complete account of experiences of the majority of the students during this era as can be seen in the following sections.

Faith of our Fathers: The catechism of Catholic doctrine

An image of traditional Catholic schooling of the pre-Vatican II era had little connection with education, in regard to intellectual development, questioning, and enquiry. In this regard, schooling during this period was more an indoctrination into the teachings of the Catholic Church. According to Grace (2002), this came about as a result of the popular notion of priestly domination, where the main focus of the pedagogy was not on the work of God as found in the Holy Bible but on the word of the Catholic Church as contained in the “Penny Catechism” (Grace, 2002, p. 59). He affirmed that some academic critics, such as the philosopher Paul Hirst, once argued that traditional Catholic schooling had a major flaw or structural contradiction between its formal commitment to the development of logic and intellectual enquiry and its commitment to the transmission of faith and doctrine by means of catechism. By implication, this argument held that the teaching of catechism should not be an acceptable part of an educational process but should take place in other contexts outside the school, such as the parish or the home. The centrality of the learning of catechism and other types of teaching connected

with Catholic doctrine has been circulated in personal accounts. One such example is found in Joyce (1985) in his description of the experience of Stephen Dedalus at a retreat:

A retreat, my dear boys, signifies a withdrawal for a while from the cares of our life, the cares of this workday world, in order to examine the state of our conscience, to reflect on the mysteries of the holy religion and to understand better why we are here in this world. During these few days, I intend to put before you some thoughts concerning the four last things. They are, as you know from your catechism, death, judgment, hell and heaven. (p. 113)

Catechetical teaching about death, judgment, Hell, and Heaven was the dominant message of traditional Catholic teaching of this era. It was designed to focus the mind of the learner on the question “what doth it profit a man to gain the whole world if he suffers the loss of his immortal soul?” (Grace 2002, p. 60). But, at the same time, after having instilled fear and guilt in the mind of Stephen Dedalus, the central figure in the above quotation, it was also intended to hold out “a message of hope and forgiveness, to be found in the sacraments of the Catholic Church” (Grace, 2002, p. 61).

More importantly, the design of the catechism of Catholic Doctrine in the form of question and answer was a distinctive and major part of the pre-Vatican II pedagogy of Catholic schooling, and one in which pedagogy was predominantly rote learning and repetitive in nature rather than discussion and dialogue. Giving an example of the 1951 version of the Catholic catechism issued by the Irish bishops, Grace (2002) noted that it had in it 443 questions and answers to be memorized and mastered, a major exercise involving rote learning with little or no space for discussion. The difficulties and frustrations in learning the Catholic catechism are found in McCourt’s (1997) novel *Angela’s ashes: A memoir of a childhood*. McCourt narrated his experience in an Irish parish school:

The master tells us we have to know the catechism backwards, forwards and sideways. We have to know the Ten Commandments, the seven virtues, divine and moral, the seven sacraments, the seven deadly sins. We have to know by heart all the prayers, the Hail

Mary, the Our Father, the Confiteor, the Apostles' Creed, the Act of Contrition, the Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary... He tells us we're hopeless, the worst class he ever had for First Communion but as sure as God made little apples, he'll make Catholics of us, he'll beat the idler out of us and the Sanctifying Grace into us. Brendan Quigley raises his hand... Sir, he says, what's Sanctifying Grace? The master rolls his eyes to heaven. He's going to kill Quigley. Instead he barks at him. 'Never mind what's Sanctifying Grace, Quigley. That's none of your business. You're here to learn the Catechism and do what you're told. You're not here to be asking questions. There are too many people wandering the world asking questions and that's what has us in the state we're in and if I find any boy in this class asking questions, I won't be responsible for what happens. (pp. 129-130)

The lack of questioning during classroom work as seen above was a common feature of the culture of Catholic schooling during this period. Additionally, what was more peculiar was "the nature of the knowledge that had to be learned and the assumption that Catholics could be 'made' by the learning of catechism" (Grace (2002, p. 61). There were other examples of passivity found in Ikeme's class as a senior seminarian in 1952. He was teaching young adults baptism in a catechism class and he noticed an absent-minded candidate sitting in the class:

I was teaching the definition of baptism, making the children repeat it after me. In the end, I asked a stupid looking boy, 'what is baptism?' he was moping at me. I asked him the same question several times but he continued to mope at me. Then I asked: 'you are moping at me, don't you know if baptism is a rabbit or a lizard or a snake?' He told me 'baptism is a rabbit' (I don't know the exact word for *nchi*, a bush animal, for he actually said 'baptism *bu nchi*'. (Ikeme, 2012, pp. 7-8)

Apart from the examples above, there are others that affirm the Catholic tradition of rote learning as having a seemingly good impact on the pupils who underwent it. Warner (1990) acknowledged the positive impact of her experience of Catholic education during this period as offering a sense of security in students knowing the faith through the mastery of the Catholic catechism. Warner also suggested that through this process, a strong sense of Catholic identity was built throughout the period of adolescence. She stated that in this way "our religion was certainly untroublesome, because it consisted of simple certainties, outlined in the crisp rhetoric

of the catechism we learned by heart. And the Virgin was the chief of these certainties”
(Warner, 1990, p. xx).

While this might have been true, rote learning had more negative consequences for many Catholic students, pushing some to crisis as they moved on to higher education. Hastings (1996, as cited in Grace, p. 61) argued that, “the traditional Catholic pedagogy of catechesis produced, in practice, both spiritual and moral immaturity that could not withstand the pluralistic, questioning rationality of higher education institutions.” For the many Catholic women who proceeded to higher education, their encounter with feminist theory highlighted the patriarchal patterns of the faith under discussion, which led to more painful reappraisals of childhood faith and beliefs. Warner (1990) recounted the effect of loss of faith and iconic imagery as a result of the new understanding of Catholicism:

The Virgin, sublime model of chastity, nevertheless remained for me the most holy being I could ever contemplate, and so potent was her spell that for years I could not enter a church without pain at all the safety and beauty of the salvation I had forsaken. I remember visiting Notre Dame in Paris and standing in the nave, tears starting in my eyes, furious at that old love’s enduring power to move me. But though my hearts rebelled, I held fast to my new intimation that in the very celebration of the perfect human woman, both humanity and women were subtly denigrated. (p. xxi)

More critically, these concerns have ignited a contemporary debate in the Catholic communities of some countries like the United Kingdom and Ireland about the types and the nature of catechetical instructions, and the religious education that should form part of Catholic education in the 21st century (Grace, 2002). On the one hand, some traditionalists strongly complained about the loss of Catholic identity and knowledge of the faith that have occurred over time due to the abandonment of the old tradition following Vatican II reforms. This group also believed that Catholicity has been weakened by these changes and, therefore, felt a need to return to the old order, especially “the catechetical certainties and the ritual practices of the past”

(Grace 2002, p. 62). On the other hand, the supporters of the Vatican II Council, who believed in the spirit of renewal brought about by Vatican II, held a different view. They thought that the “new forms of catechetical understanding and new forms of religious education must be found to meet the challenges of a more secular and a more questioning social context for schooling” (Grace 2002, p. 62). This debate and the tensions that have arisen hereafter have precipitated further discussion on the mission of the contemporary Catholic schools, as earlier stated.

Encountering the Sacred: the Sacraments, Rituals and Devotions

Traditional Catholic schooling of the pre-Vatican II era was intended to provide an atmosphere in which the students had a sense of transcendence, a sense of the sacred and a sense of the mystery of God (Grace 2002). To affirm this, Hume (1997) emphasized the mission of the Catholic Church in education and the importance of creating a sense of transcendence in the educational process: “to acknowledge this transcendence is to recognize that at the heart of our experience of the world and of ourselves, lies a Mystery. In fact to speak of God is to encounter a Mystery” (pp. 30-31).

This atmosphere of the transcendence, the sacred, and the mystery of God were largely found in the “protected habitus of the convent school” (Grace 2002, p. 62). White (1999) presented the encounter of Nanda Grey’s sense of the sacred in the imagery below:

She really did begin to live all day long in the presence of the court of heaven. God the Father and God the Holy Ghost remained awe-inspiring conceptions, Presences who could only be addressed in set words and with one’s mind, as it were, properly gloved and veiled. But to Our Lady and the Holy Child and the saints she spoke as naturally as to her friends. (pp. 45-46)

The rituals of Catholic liturgy and devotions as a sign of an encounter with the sacred have had other effects on people, both in a positive and a negative way. Some examples of

different reflections were found in Bennett and Forgan's (1991) oral history collections. In these collections, Clare Boylan reflected on Catholic practices and feastdays:

I loved Benediction... That theatrical swinging of the thurible with its clouds of scented smoke. I loved the feast of Corpus Christi when we dressed up in our old Communion dresses for the procession... We walked through the streets, singing hymns and scattering flowers, with huge banners carried overhead. (as cited in Bennett & Forgan, 1991, pp. 38-39)

In Bennett and Forgan's (1991) oral history collection, there were other instances where it was argued that the rich liturgical culture of the pre-Vatican II convent schools had a very captivating appeal to many girls of the era. As such, it resulted not only in a sense of spirituality for them but also of imagination and creativity, as seen in Mary Kenny's reflection, "all this is excellent for the imagination and I think this is why Catholicism tends to produce writers" (Bennett & Forgan, 1991, p. 127).

Nonetheless, for the boys and young men, the "aesthetics and sensitivities of traditional Catholic schooling were not as finely drawn as in the convent school" (Grace, 2002, p. 63). However, given the fact that the next generation of priests and teaching brothers were expected to emerge from these secondary schools and colleges, the presence of the sacred became an important consideration for Catholic education. This is reflected in the behavior of the boys, when one of the students was asked by the rector if he felt called to the religious life. This question immediately evoked imagery of the priesthood that could have been found in many studious and pious young men then, as suggested by Joyce (1985):

How often had he seen himself as a priest wielding calmly and humbly the awful power of which angels and saints stood in reverence! His soul had loved to muse in secret on this desire. He had seen himself, a young and silent mannered priest, entering a confessional swiftly, ascending the altar-steps, incensing, genuflecting, accomplishing the vague acts of the priesthood which pleased him by reason of their semblance of reality and of their distance from it. (p. 161)

During this era, a typical traditional Catholic liturgy and an awareness of the chances of having a calling to the priesthood or religious life were an essential part of Catholic schooling, especially in schools managed by nuns and religious brothers. Rev Ikeme, whose father taught in a colonial Catholic school was influenced to become a priest by the presence of the missionaries:

In 1943, my father was transferred from St. Andrew's Adazi to St. Theresa's Catholic School Olokoro Umuahia. The white priests there often paced up and down quiet places in white soutanes and black shoes saying the divine office [prayers]. I so liked it that I always desired to be like they were. That was all I could see about the priesthood then. (p. 14)

Grace (2002) noted that the rituals and devotions found in these schools may contribute to “a school ethos in which mystery, sacredness, power, symbolism, and dramatic theater could be realized over and against the prosaic routines of everyday life and in the most unpromising settings and locations” (Grace, p. 64). For some boys and girls of the pre-Vatican II era, the experience of the sacred in the Catholic school often was very compelling. John Walsh, in Bennett and Forgan (1991), reflected on the power of such symbolism:

What appealed to me was the theatricality of the Church. It comes into its own at Christmas and Easter, but every week there were a certain number of theatrical frissons available to you if you did the Stations of the Cross. The stripping of Christ and the scourging and crowning of thorns and the crucifixion... Naturally, in the way of teenage self-projection, you were putting yourself into it as well – you were being that hero that would somehow spring Christ, and help him escape... The exposition of the Blessed Sacrament which lasted for three days... was riveting because you were for the first time being brought face to face with the thing itself, the closest you would get to a reified God. (as cited in Bennett & Forgan, 1991, p. 162)

However, for other boys and girls, this encounter with the sacred in traditional Catholic education was not inspiring; instead it was seen as oppressive. Hastings (1970) noted how oppressive the experience was:

The round of daily mass and daily prayers in the school chapel was hateful to me. I was never one of the elect... Erratically, I was religious. I parroted the words, I fingered the

rosary. But deep down inside, even then, I was wondering what it was all about. (pp. 17-18)

In the end, it may be surmised that the culture of traditional Catholic schooling was, on the one hand, associated with a sense of the beauty of holiness found in the celebration of the Mass and other devotions. On the other hand, the experience for other students was one of “mechanical and uncomprehending compliance, which resulted in a final adult status of lapsed Catholic or ex-Catholic” (Grace (2002, p. 64). The liturgical expressions of Catholicity found within this era varied greatly according to school category and location. For example, parish or diocesan schools had different school cultures or different forms of the habitus of the sacred in comparison with Catholic schools run by religious brothers and sisters. Grace (2002) emphasized that such parish schools did not pay the same attention to spiritual and cultural capital driven by the presence of a school chapel, or having a vowed religious living on campus with absorption in other major liturgical and ritual celebrations. Such presence of the sacred was largely found in schools run by nuns and brothers. However, following the reforms of the Second Vatican Council in the early and mid-1960s, traditional Catholic rituals became less frequent in all these categories of schools.

Catholic Knowledge and Catholic Learning

Catholic knowledge and Catholic learning as one of the themes of traditional Catholic education of the pre-conciliar times was connected with a popular Catholic imagery that it can produce “good Catholics” (Grace, 2002, p. 65); one that is characterized by “faith, deference, and a Church-approved knowledge, and understanding of the world and of the world to come” (p. 65). Grace (2002) suggested that, to some extent, such an assumption has validity:

Catholic pupils, of certain disposition, in pedagogic conditions in which the catechism and sanctified knowledge were given high salience, could emerge from Catholic education as exemplars of faithful members of the Church and possessors of true wisdom (p. 65).

The lasting power of phrases like “give me a child until he is seven” and “once a Catholic always a Catholic,” seems to have given some level of impetus to the mission of Catholic schooling and image of “ideological determinism, cultural conditioning and of virtually guaranteed personal and intellectual outcomes” (Grace, 2002, p. 65). Parents would be willing to commit their children to Catholic schooling with the expectation of receiving good and predictable outcomes in academic achievements and Catholic faith. However, a closer look at the personal accounts of those who experienced Catholic education showed that this assumption was an oversimplification. For example, Grace (2002) stated that, “traditional Catholic schooling produced its saints and its sinners, its conformists and its rebels, its believers and its atheists, and its conservatives and radicals” (p. 65). Therefore, despite the dominant examples of conformity, there was some form of a “rich imagery of rebellion, resistance and unpredictable personal and intellectual outcomes” (p. 65). John Walsh in Bennett and Forgan (1991) described how Catholic education can generate rebellion:

But really what a Catholic education gives you is something to fight against. It doesn't set out to, of course, but it gives you something whereby you will have to become a hero unto yourself, or else cave in and become your parents' good little boy or girl. Confronting it makes you a fighter. (as cited in Bennett & Forgan, 1991, p. 168)

More critically, in pre-Vatican II traditional convent education there could be a possibility of the production of polarized outcomes, such as vocations to the religious life on the one hand and feminists in the making on the other hand (Grace, 2002). The unexpected feminist perspective seems to have occurred partly as a result of the modeling the nuns managing these schools provided. The girls saw these nuns as intelligent, capable, and inspiring, and yet

subjected to the limitations of bigger patriarchal structures and authority. Reflecting on this contradiction, some of these smart, intelligent young women came to the conclusion that “patriarchy in the external world and sexism in the Catholic Church had to be challenged” (Grace, 2002, p. 66). One unintended effect of convent schooling was the formation of “feminists radicals as well as of good Catholic mothers and novices for the religious orders” (Grace p. 66).

Another unexpected consequence of traditional Catholic schooling was the formation of political radicals. According to Grace, the creation of a social conscience and individual conscience was largely a part of Catholic schooling, and along with it was also a sense of social justice. A lot of the Catholic social teaching, published in the form of papal encyclicals, was intended to shape the actions of responsible Catholics around the world. However, once such ideas were presented to the intelligent young people in Catholic schools, the result could be unpredictable. They might take such ideas very seriously “as a means of transforming social, economic and political relations now and not in some distant utopia” (p. 67). Such reactions to Catholic social teaching have been recorded in Tolerton (1994) concerning the popular New Zealand Maori liberation movement:

I discovered that a lot of other radical women (and I was branded a radical), like Donna Awetere, Pauline Kingi and Nga-huia Te Awekotuku came from Catholic backgrounds. It seemed that a lot of women who were breaking out came from Catholic backgrounds... The Church teaches you about injustice. It gives you a social conscience and an awareness. I think we break out because of that strong sense of justice and looking for truth. And we go overboard. (p. 65)

However, Grace (2002) discussed what traditional Catholic education was and what it was not:

It would be wrong of course to suggest that traditional Catholic education was radical in content and in pedagogy. On the contrary, it was conservative in content and in pedagogy and traditional in its stances on socialism and communism, the role of women,

gender relations, sexual relations, abortion, divorce and social and political order in society (p. 67).

Grace (2002) maintained that pre-Vatican II Catholic education formed responsible and good Catholics with conservative attitudes on all of these issues discussed above, and he insists that it is this description of Catholic education that has dominated the popular imagery of Catholic schooling of the era. However, as clearly shown in the oral accounts and personal experiences discussed above, traditional Catholic schooling has unintended outcomes, such as resistance among students toward Catholic education. For some, this resistance grew with adulthood and presented itself in “various forms of radical commitment to social justice, while distancing itself from the practice of the Catholic institutional faith” (p. 68).

More critically, Grace (2002) made a distinction between the various school contexts of the pre-Vatican II era, in terms of intellectual and academic quality of Catholic knowledge and learning:

At its worst, such knowledge and pedagogy could be classical, formal, arid and oppressive with little space for creativity, dialogue and the enjoyment of learning. At its best, it could be an intellectually stimulating engagement with the classics, with theology and philosophy, with history and literature and with music, art and drama. (p. 68)

Illustrating further, Durkheim (1977) commenting on the historical roots of Catholic education in Europe stated the important role of bookishness and of dialectic and debate in the constitution of Catholic knowledge and pedagogy as suggested below:

With the sole exception of mathematical problems, argument inevitably appeared to be the only way in which the human mind could distinguish between truth and falsehood... Disputation in the strict sense of the word was considered as the queen of sciences... At this moment of history, learning how to think consisted of learning how to debate. (p. 152)

It is further argued that if learning how to think was dependent upon how to debate, then Durkheim (1977) believed that this approach to learning also depended on the availability of resources fostered by the school, that is, bookishness:

We should be wary of thinking that a bookish education as such is somehow outrageous... On the contrary, it was precisely this concept of education which was... to appear most natural to the human mind... it is in books that the intellectual civilization of different peoples is to be found preserved and condensed; it was thus quite natural that books were seen as the supreme medium for education. (p. 153)

Consequently, modern methods of Catholic education have been influenced by this pedagogical tradition of the pre-Vatican II era as can be seen, for example, by the Jesuits' style since the 16th century. According to Grace (2002), work done by the Jesuits in shaping the Catholic curriculum and pedagogy in Europe has been recognized by some authors, such as Durkheim (1977), who devoted two chapters of his book, *The Evolution Of Educational Thought*, discussing the relevance of the Jesuit educational approach. Particular attention was given to the teaching of theology, philosophy, rhetoric, and dialectic, with an emphasis on piety and literature. In addition, the literary culture, that is, the study of classical language and literature became a central point while at the same time making sure that these cultural forms became an avenue that would help in the development of piety. Grace asserted that those who had the privilege of experiencing Catholic secondary education managed by religious communities of the pre-conciliar era probably would know that this type of teaching approach had many intellectual benefits even if the creation of piety was less guaranteed.

However, the accounts described thus far were only from the privileged and elite type of Catholic education, and as earlier stated, these examples came from published sources and, therefore, from people who were successful in the literary culture as writers, academics and teachers. However, the majority of Catholic students, especially those on the margins of the

society who attended parish or diocesan schools, had a different experience and story. Some would have been prohibited from asking questions, let alone get involved with activities like debate, as shown in the Brendan Quigley account. Ultimately, Grace suggested that, “Catholic schooling was as much stratified by distorted geneticist and psychometric assumptions about the abilities of pupils in England and Wales as was the state schooling system in the pre-Vatican II period” (p. 69). According to Grace, the Catholic system of subscribing to the limited pool of “talent” theories was very dominant in the 1940s, 1950s, and early 1960s in the United Kingdom. Grace asserted that such theories had implications for the standard and quality of teaching and curricula made available to students in non-elite schools. Consequently, there were critics who contended that Catholic schooling seemed to reproduce “the contours of class and of intellectual advantage” (Grace, p. 70). For such critics, Grace remarked, “a Catholic schooling system could only be comprehensive in nature, comprehensive by class and ethnic intake, comprehensive by ability range, and comprehensive in terms of its curriculum and pedagogic provision for all pupils” (p. 70). Even though the post-Vatican II Catholic schooling in England and Wales became more comprehensive in nature, there still exists some elements of elite schooling that are present in the form of independent schools, that is, the fee-paying schools and in some Catholic grammar schools that are selective (Grace, 2002). In the chapters that follow, it will be evident that many of these traits of Catholic traditional education were found in the various stages of the history of Catholic education in Nigeria.

Purity and Danger

Within the traditional Catholic education, a central notion was that of sexual purity constructed against many assumptions associated with danger, pollution, and the sin of the flesh.

Within this premise, the main objective of the institutional Catholic Church and its school systems was to ensure that a habitus was formed to help young people to appreciate the beauty of purity in the example of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Grace, 2002). This notion was to help young people to shun all sexual behavior before marriage because this was found illicit and polluting. Consequently, in an attempt to maintain standards for sexual purity, an important part of traditional Catholic culture featured regulation of sexual behavior and a well spelled out description of the sexual sins to be avoided, not only by the young people but also by married couples. Thus, in a review of the approach taken by the Catholic Church toward this, Marshall (1999) argued that Catholic culture suffered from the puritanical legacy of St Augustine's teaching:

The Roman Catholic Church has prescribed the sexual behavior of its members in a way that no other religious group has ever attempted. In traditional textbooks of moral theology, for every page with sins against social justice as many as one hundred were devoted to sexual sins. (p. 67)

The battle against potential sexual sin became a defining characteristic of pre-Vatican II Catholic education, and this feature established some enduring imageries found in this statement: "it is almost impossible to talk to 'old convent girls' ... without sex coming into the conversation... The constant admonition 'not to' seems to have worked in reverse, turning it into a major preoccupation" (Bennett & Forgan, 1991, p. 5). In this same account, Bennett and Forgan added that, "for all convent girls sex is hugely attractive, dark, mysterious and very powerful" (p. 90), yet this same dark mystery was considered as a source of sin, guilt, and of uncleanness (Grace, 2002). Bennett and Forgan (1991), in their recorded oral account viewed these contradictions of pre-Vatican II Catholic education on issues related to body and sexual relations as manifestations of even much wider contradictions within Catholic religion and culture:

There is indeed a worship of the body, if you look at the statues of Bernini and Michelangelo... 'and the Word was made flesh', at the center of it all is the Incarnation. However, Catholicism can give contradictory messages in its appreciation of the body: there is the celebration of the body in every church painting and yet there is the mortification of the body's desires both through martyrdom and through chastity and celibacy. (p. 127)

From the foregoing, and responding to the outcomes of traditional convent school, Grace wondered whether a convent school habitus resulted in a responsible and Catholic attitude to sexual relations or if it had a counter effect, for example, a wild rebellious behavior or guilt. Therefore, whatever these outcomes may be, "there can be no doubting the social fact that an indelible image of traditional Catholic schooling is of the attempted control and regulation of the sexual behavior of young people" (Grace, 2002, p. 72). On another note, there exist some significant differences in the accounts of men and women on this particular aspect of Catholic schooling. For many young women, the impression was formed that they have a responsibility to preserve their sexual purity in any encounter with young men, evident in their modest dressing and comportment. Sullivan (1996) wrote about the type of religious instructions given to young women:

The message we were getting at school was definitely 'no sex before marriage', and that message was stronger at a Catholic school than anywhere else. Sexual purity was it. Sex was for marriage, for having children and expressing love. That message was given great prominence. Sex was something that married couples did, but fornication before marriage was something that could be forgiven. There was always confession. (p. 29)

However, for the Catholic young men, sex education seems to have been either "clear cut and functional or virtually non-existent" (Grace, p. 72). Below is an example of this minimalist approach:

At school, sex education and preparation for relations were totally non-existent... The only sense in which the other sex was put to us was that we had to respect them and open doors for them. That was the extent of sex education... Except for the big, heavy message that sex outside marriage incurs eternal damnation (Sullivan, 1996, p. 42).

In the end, Grace suggested that it was clear that the battle for the preservation of sexual purity among the young people resulted in heavy personal costs. However, whether these are the costs that have to be paid for the conservation of the Christian notion of sexuality or whether they were the oppressive legacy of Augustinian Puritanism, as stated earlier, remains the subject of serious contemporary debate within the Catholic Church (Grace, 2002). It might be useful to add that this approach to sexual purity in the traditional Catholic schooling may have implications for Catholic schooling in Nigeria, both in the colonial and post-colonial eras.

Charity, Service and Good Works

In a distinction between social charity and social justice according to the teachings of the Catholic Church, Grace (2002) explained that social charity has a long and credible history in the Church while social justice is a modern concept that entered into the formal discourse when it was first used in Pius XI's (1931) encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno*. For modern popes, the condition of capitalism of the 19th and early 20th centuries made it a prime duty for the Catholic Church to make a statement on the distinction between social charity and social justice (Grace 2002). In this regard, therefore, Calvez and Perrin (1961) contended that Pius XI was very unequivocal about these distinctions:

A charity which defrauds the worker of his just wage is not true charity but a hollow name and a pretence... Doles given out of pity will not exempt a man from his obligations of justice... Pius XI said with some bitterness that the late 19th century division of society into two opposing classes 'was quite satisfactory to the wealthy who looked upon it as the consequence of inevitable economic laws and who therefore were content to leave to charity alone the full care of helping the unfortunate; as though it were the task of charity to make amends for the open violation of justice... True charity, on the contrary, is the virtue which makes men try to improve the distribution of goods as justice requires. (p. 164; see also Pius XI's (1931) *Quadragesimo*: the reconstruction of the social order)

Consequently, Grace (2002) affirmed that the habitus of the traditional Catholic education of the pre-Vatican II era was inspired by this core belief about the need for works of charity for those on the margins of the society; and then in its more progressive sections, by the knowledge that Catholicism was all about work for social justice in the world. Illustrating further, with an example of oral accounts of those who realized how their understanding of social justice was greatly enhanced by their Catholic education of the pre-Vatican II era, Sullivan (1996) noted:

My years as a Catholic boy taught me about valuing people and seeing the good in everyone. I've come out of it with a very strong sense of social justice. I'm not surprised that research into a non-religious agency which dealt with street kids ... showed that the key workers were almost always Catholic. (p. 145)

Furthermore, other reflective accounts of traditional Catholic education in some parts of Europe, for example, England and Ireland, underscored more general acts of charity for the poor and orphans and for the support of missionary work in Africa. Within these contexts, "ideas of charity, service and good works were still expressed in traditional forms, rather than in explicit social justice terms" (Grace, p. 74). Maeve Binchy reflected on the charity/missionary work in Bennett and Forgan's (1991) oral history collection:

We gave a lot of money and saw nothing odd in going out to another country and changing its way of life because we thought it was a good thing. If they had no clothes, they must have clothes and then of course they must have faith... so we supported the mission like mad. (as cited in Bennett & Forgan, 1991, p. 32)

More important, traditional Catholic schooling was intended to implant a "Good Samaritan" (Grace, 2002, p. 74) ethic in the spirituality and moral formation of young people because any association with works of charity and mercy were taken to be visible outcomes of a lively and active faith. Illustrating further how seriously acts of charity and mercy have gained more recognition in the Catholic social teaching, Grace (2002) added:

The formation of modern Catholic social teaching, beginning with the encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (1891) of Leo XIII and Pius XI's *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931), was designed to show that social charity and social justice were two parts of the same impetus to build a better world (p. 74).

But Grace warned that charity should not be seen as a substitute for social justice but, instead, “the animating spirit and dynamic for social justice reforms” (p. 74).

Catholic Identity and a Sense of ‘The Other’

Catholic identity of the pre-Vatican II era was a typical example of what Bernstein (1996, as cited in Grace, p. 75) described as retrospective identities, since “these identities use as resources narratives of the past which provide exemplars and criteria.” These narratives of the past that offered the exemplars during the pre-Vatican II era were mainly in story form. These were stories of the “saints and martyrs and the history of the struggles of the Church against various forms of persecution, oppression and bigotry” (Grace, p. 75). In so doing, a sense of Catholic identity was then constructed within “a grand narrative of an endless struggle between the forces of good (all things Catholic) and the forces of evil (all things hostile to Catholicism)” (p. 75).

These identities differed from one context to the other and from one individual to the other. For instance, the formation of Catholic identity was very strong in the schools managed by religious orders, as would be seen in some of the reflective oral accounts of the socialization experience of some of the students of the pre-Vatican II era (Grace, 2002). Hastings (1970) recounted the effect of storytelling that occurred about the Jesuit martyrs in America, Japan, and England and some others who were prepared to undergo terrible torture and death for the Catholic faith. In another account, Tolerton (1994) recorded another female student's experience, Stephanie Dowrick, who attended Sacred Heart Convent school in New Zealand, in

this way: “we were taught about the lives of the saints. The virgin martyrs were the favorites, those who died in defense of their virginity. Our minds were constantly turned to the girls who died in defense of their purity” (as cited in Tolerton, 1994, p. 87). For the most part, the pre-Vatican II school system was able to form a sense of Catholic identity in the students by immersing them “in a richness of history, narrative and language” (Grace p. 76).

However, Catholic identity was not only formed by the retrospective resources of the Catholic Church but also by a strong awareness of the oppositional other. The main example of this was the different manifestations of Protestantism. The Catholic identity of the young people then was geared toward guarding against all potential dangers of ascendant Protestant culture in England, Ireland, the United States, Australia, and New Zealand (Grace, 2002). There was much emphasis on the rightness of Catholicism and the wrongness of other religions. Much later, one of the students of the era who found this teaching very oppressive reflected in a very satirical way:

I was an expert in bigotry. That was what they taught us although at the time I didn't even know the word. The Catholic Church was all that mattered; anybody else could go to hell – or limbo – literally. I was just full of it. It was coming out of my ears, bigotry, bigotry, bigotry. That's what *Once a Catholic* is about. (as cited in Bennett & Forgan, 1991, p. 149)

Also, the pre-Vatican II Catholic schooling tried to implant the idea that Catholicism was the repository of absolute truth and that all other religions and faiths were in error (Grace 2002). Then, where Protestantism was involved, young Catholics were taught to be defenders of the Catholic faith in the world, as noted in Sullivan's (1996) oral history of New Zealand Catholic education:

It was conveyed to us that being Catholic in a largely non-Catholic country was not going to help our progress and that Catholics were likely to be victimized... If we wanted to get a job, we had to go for good education, and go for success in sport so we would be socially accepted. (p. 157)

Also within the context of traditional Catholic education, after teaching young Catholic students how to guard against the threat of Protestantism, another big rival of Catholicism in this era was communism. According to Grace, all the papal encyclicals starting from Popes Leo XIII, Pius XI, and Pius XII all condemned communist atheism and materialism as something in opposition to Catholic theology, and the communist teaching on class warfare and the abolition of private property as in great opposition to Catholic social teaching. For instance, during this era, Soviet communism was regarded as a modern form of anti-Christ and, as such, young Catholic students were encouraged to be crusaders against such evil doctrines. Deane (1997) wrote about this type of traditional teaching of “the other”:

McShane then asked if the man was a Catholic priest. Certainly not, answered McAuley, the man was an Anglican or what was called an Anglo-Catholic priest... Although as far as he was concerned there was no kind of Catholic, other than the Roman Catholic... This distinction left us awash. So which was worse, I asked, Communism or the Reformation? Both were bad, but the Reformation was history. Communism was the living threat... There was a family quarrel within the Christian family. It would work itself out. When that had all been resolved, Communism would still be there, threatening anyone who believed in God. (p. 199)

Catholic teaching was also critical of communism because it was seen not only as an economic ideology but also an atheist one. Therefore, it “threatened more directly the very existence of the Catholic Church and of the Catholic schooling system than was the case in capitalist societies” (Grace, p. 77), though Catholic social teaching was also critical of capitalism. Sullivan (1996) noted that the young students of this era were learning a “version of international politics in which the key issue was a battle between the Catholic Church and the communists” (p. 97).

Finally, the traditional Catholic education was, in part, a preservation of a national and ethnic identity as seen in the case studies and examples provided so far, and also about the

formation of a religious identity. More important, throughout this discussion, the themes and the characteristics of “pre-Vatican II Catholic schooling live on, in various ways, and influence contemporary popular consciousness of what a Catholic education is and what it does to young people” (Grace p. 79). Such imageries also provide “an evaluative background for those critics of contemporary Catholic schooling who want to argue that its religious, moral, and cultural distinctiveness is weakening over time” (p. 79).

Conclusion

This chapter examined the nature and characteristics of traditional Catholic schooling and its doctrine in the pre-Vatican II era, using several examples of imageries from previous published studies and some from the lived experiences of Rev Charles Ikeme. It also explored many of the challenges, limitations, and strengths of traditional Catholic education and the educational outcomes, both negative and positive, and their impact on the students many years after leaving school. Traditional Catholic schooling has implications for the contemporary Catholic education in the modern world and, as is demonstrated in this project, in the case of Nigeria.

CHAPTER THREE: COLONIAL ERA (1885-1950)

In this chapter, the early beginnings of Christian missionary education in Nigeria from the end of the 19th century to mid-20th century is examined. In particular, the development of Catholic education in Eastern Nigeria within the colonial period, colonial education and colonialism in Africa and in Nigeria, and colonial government education policies are discussed. Also considered are the relationships that existed between the various Christian missions, as well as with other religions, for example, the Muslims in Northern Nigeria during this era. The chapter concludes with a discussion on the effects and consequences of colonial and missionary education in Nigeria.

Although the early history of western education in Nigeria started with the Christian missions, the overall account of this history is incomplete without making additional reference to colonialism. This includes the colonial government, the impact of which on the education endeavors increased over time, though mainly through an indirect form of rule. The British colonial regime in Nigeria also affected education through direct rule in terms of educational policies that were formulated in matters that dealt with the establishment of government schools. Colonial authorities also expressed a desire to expand voluntary agency schools run by missionaries, along with regulating the content and the quality of the curriculum. They also controlled the process for determining qualification for government funding for the mission schools through a grant-in-aid system (Abernethy, 1969). However, Amadi (1977) suggested that the colonial government intervention was as a result of necessity, and that its regulations were also quite practical. Bassey (1999) put it aptly when he said: “the colonialists, whenever they encouraged the education of Africans did so for pragmatic reasons in anticipation of a quid

pro quo” (p. 37). He further enunciated that most colonial officials criticized some of the Christian missionaries for devoting serious attention to education in Africa, because they believed that it was going to be a wasted effort. Affirming this, Ekechi (1972) noted that skilled labor also became a priority:

The colonial administration, pressed by shortage of skilled manpower (clerks, artisans, e.t.c.), and the ever-increasing financial burden of having to recruit ‘foreign natives’ (i.e. Africans from the other West African territories), felt that the time had come to include education in the scheme of the administration’s priorities. (p. 182)

As stated in Chapter One, the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885 saw to the partitioning of Africa. This same year, 1885, marked the beginning of “intense missionary scramble for the souls of Africans” (Bassey, 1999, p. 29). After the Berlin Conference, European nations were expected to show some tangible outcomes of effective occupation of any territory which they claimed to possess. Great efforts were put in place by the imperial government of these European nations to achieve this aim by sending soldiers, merchants, and “particularly missionaries to satisfy this clause of the treaty” (Bassey, 1999, p. 29). Then, the result was the establishment of many schools by the different Christian missions in Africa because schools, as would be seen later, became an important avenue for evangelization or “proselytization” (Bassey, p. 29). In addition, Carnoy (1974) succinctly stated that, “by the 1880s the ‘scramble for Africa’ had begun, both for security and commercial reasons; the laissez faire era had ended” (p. 133). Ayandele (1967) contended that, “missionary propaganda from its inception was inextricably bound up with political consideration” (p. 5). He added that, “from the start, missionary propaganda was not just a religious invasion, in effect, it was associated with a political invasion as well” (Ayandele, 1967, p. 8). Affirming this, Professor Du Plessis (as cited in Ekechi, 1972, p. 1) wrote in 1929 that, “missionary enterprise is so intimately related to the political movement on the one hand and to the commercial undertaking on the other, that its history cannot be

accurately traced without continued reference to both.” On another note however, Abernethy (1969) noted, with regard to the Catholic missionaries of the colonial era, that “all the mission groups in Southern Nigeria were interested in educating the common people, but none served this cause more energetically than the Roman Catholics of the Eastern Region” (p. 39).

The Beginnings of Catholic Education in Southeastern Nigeria

Pope Leo XIII’s Encyclical *In Plurimis* (on abolition of slavery) of 1888 reinforced the Missionary of the Holy Ghost Fathers’ (Spiritans) repurchase of slaves. Part of the encyclical read:

In the presence of so much suffering, the condition of slavery, in which a considerable part of the great human family has been sunk in squalor and affliction now for many centuries, is deeply to be deplored; for the system is one which is wholly opposed to that which was originally ordained by God and nature (Pope Leo XIII’s Encyclical *In Plurimis*, 1888, para. 3).

The freed slaves were not only to be ransomed from their owners but to be educated in order to begin a new life of freedom. The Nigerian historian, Augustine Okwu, (2010) stated that the presence of the European companies at Onitsha was not only a source of security to the Spiritans as missionaries but provided an environment that would facilitate the retraining of the redeemed slaves for their reabsorption as useful members of the larger society.

On the other hand, the Congregation of the Holy Ghost Fathers (Spiritans) was founded with the sole mission to give support and devoted service to the abandoned of the society (CSSp General Chapter, 1968-1969, pp. 13-18). Father Lutz and colleagues accordingly started the repurchase of slaves and began preaching to them and other outcasts of the society in line with their congregational commitments and in compliance with the wishes of their donors in Europe. These included the Society of the Holy Childhood, the Anti-Slavery Society, and the

Propaganda (Okwu, 2010.) In addition, the founder of this religious order had given instructions to its members to be the protectors, supporters, and defenders of the weak and the humble against their oppressors. Therefore, Father Lutz and other priests adopted a conversion method that involved the charitable dispensation of medicine, food, and clothing to the local community. This was to serve as an incentive to the natives, but the Protestants saw this as a threat to their missionary work. In 1886, Reverend A. C. Strong, the Anglican (CMS) School Master, a Sierra Leonean of Igbo heritage, wrote about the intrusion and the influence of the Roman Catholic mission at Onitsha:

They have taken from our school about a dozen children over whose parents they had exercised some influence. Medicines and presents of various kinds were liberally given... The parents did not take their children to them for baptism but for medical aid and the priest seized the opportunity of administering holy baptism first and the medicines afterwards... They have in all about (20) twenty boarders. (CMS: G3/A3/0, 1886: Strong's annual report of Onitsha Station)

The 20 boarders were redeemed slaves, and together with 20 other boys, the first Catholic mission school was established in Igbo land in April 1886 with Father Lutz as its English teacher (CSSp: Bulletin de la Congregation 4: 1887-1888, p. 462). Omenka (1989) wrote about the basic quality of the curriculum:

It is true that the school was of a very rudimentary character, being largely a quasi catechism class in which one Father or Brother did his utmost best to communicate strange ideas to excited children in a language the latter could hardly understand. Nevertheless, the basic instructions that are given to infants in any normal school – reading, writing and arithmetic – were offered in 1886 in the Onitsha-Wharf school from the onset. (p. 29)

Arinze (1965) affirmed that the growth of education in Nigeria from the early beginnings was, indeed, a difficult one. In addition, Onwubiko (1985) acknowledged the troubles that early missionaries went through and cautioned that, “this tremendous achievement in education should not blind us to the fact that the beginnings were far from being easy” (p. 225).

Further, the early educational endeavors of the Catholic mission at Onitsha were significant for the following reasons. For Fathers Lutz and Horne, the key function of the school as a means of propaganda became more obvious during their first meeting with the Obi of Onitsha and his cabinet on December 6, 1885. In fact, that memorable encounter with the leaders of Onitsha was primarily to obtain permission to start a mission in that locality (Omenka 1989). Obi (1985) noted that the King (Obi) of Onitsha received the Catholic missionaries very warmly. In his own words, Father Lutz wrote about this in his account of the King:

His Majesty appeared before us wearing a beautiful gold crown on his head, he shook hands with us in most cordial welcome and made us sit down by his side... All the chiefs were convoked. The King's brother, the King's eldest son, the first class and second class chiefs and many notables of the place were assembled... Now seated in the assembly, we related the object of our visit: it was to get permission to set up a mission. The King showed himself very well disposed towards our request to be allowed to settle in his domain. (CSE: Journal December 29, 1885 to January 10, 1886)

In a transaction typical of the time, 20 hectares of land eventually was given to the Catholic mission, after which Father Lutz and his colleagues signed a land contract with the leaders of Onitsha on January 6, 1886 (Obi, 1985). The Obi and his men offered the land to the Catholic mission with this declaration: "I, Obi, Anazonwu, King, and Chiefs of Onitsha, do of our own free will, grant unto the Roman Catholic missionaries of the Holy Ghost the ground chosen by them in perpetuity free of all tribute and dues" (CSE: Journal, January 1 to 6, 1886). However, in return for this gesture, the Catholic missionaries undertook to provide formal education for the children of the local community (Obi, 1985) and the fostering care of children, their tuition, and secular teaching with the consent of their parents or guardians (CSE: 192/A/VIII 1886).

As mentioned in Chapter One, Eke, Onyewuenyi and Onyeneke (2006) emphasized the misconceptions of the 19th century missionaries about the powers of the local chiefs, hence they

depended on and trusted the chiefs' abilities to convince the local people on many decisions, which did not work. Omenka (1989) underscored this by presenting the unwillingness of the Onitsha people to send their children to the western-style schools:

To all appearances, the people of Onitsha were not enthusiastic as their Obi to avail themselves of the educational services of the Catholics. The first signal to this attitude was given in that curious clause of the land contract which made the religious and secular education of the children dependent on the consent of their parents and guardians. As Father Lutz and his co-workers were to discover afterwards, this consent was not always easy to obtain. (p. 32)

Omenka (2012) discussed two factors responsible for the parents' reluctance to release their children to the school. First, Onitsha town and the whole of Anambra valley were predominantly an agricultural country where children were traditionally expected to support their parents on the farms. When the boys were not engaged on the farm, they turned to other activities that kept them busy, such as hunting or making handicrafts. It was for this reason that the first Anglican school at Onitsha was for girls and not for the boys. Second, the local people were suspicious of the White man's religion that has the power to make their children renounce their African traditional religion and be baptized as Christians. Consequently, when the missionaries discovered that the use of the school as a means of evangelization was not working out, they opted for a more charity-oriented evangelism in which the school occupied a more prominent position, so the Catholic mission hoped to find a foothold in the otherwise impenetrable pagan stronghold. Even with this strategy, the missionaries still felt frustrated with the attitude of the people towards their programs as noted by one of the colonial missionaries, Sister Marie Claver of the Onitsha convent:

One thing...which causes us much pain is ingratitude. Parents in extreme anguish bring their children...[with the promise to leave them] with us once they regained their health. But was such a promise kept?... We now make them sign an agreement to leave the children with us till they reach the age of marriage, in the hope of making them good

Christians, who will in turn raise Christian families... (Claver, 1891, as cited in Obi, 1985, p. 40)

Given the foregoing, it apparently was a generally agreed opinion of the early Catholic missionaries that a total separation of the neophytes from their so called pagan parents, families, and friends would enable the new converts to safeguard their Christian faith and way of life. This was the reason why special treatment was given to students in the boarding house. For the missionaries it was an act of thanklessness for the parents to desire reunification with their children after a long absence from home.

In view of the above, the make up or constitution of the Catholic school of this era is an open question. Fortunately, there is evidence in the historical record that provides some answers.

The Pioneer Pupils of the Early Catholic Schools

There were primarily three groups of students in the Catholic mission schools at this early time: (a) children ransomed from slavery, (b) children entrusted to the care of the Missions by their parents and guardians; and (c) abandoned children, orphans, and refugees (Omenka, 1989). These pioneer students were a very vital element of the early beginning of Catholicism in Eastern Nigeria, hence the discussion about them in this chapter.

Children Ransomed From Slavery

As earlier stated, there were 20 students in the boarding house at the Onitsha school in 1886, and all these were children ransomed from slavery. But, unlike the school in Lagos, where Father Borghero started a mission with a good number of former slaves who had already gained their freedom, Father Lutz had to buy, house, and cater to the first converts to Catholicism at

Onitsha. By and large, Omenka (1989) noted that buying of slaves by the missionaries was a common practice during this era:

The slave method was a celebrated missionary strategy in the 19th and early 20th centuries. It involved the practice of freeing slaves by purchase and confining them in quasi-Christian ghettos where they were systematically trained in the truths of the Christian faith. (p. 34)

Drawing on historical archives, Omenka (1989) noted that the slave method practice was initiated in Africa by Cardinal Lavigerie, the founder of the Congregation of the White Fathers when there was an outbreak of famine in Algiers. During this difficult time, Cardinal Lavigerie had to take care of about 1,800 orphans who otherwise could have died during the catastrophe. The Cardinal later obtained the permission of the French colonial rulers to raise those children as Christians, but much later he was forced by circumstances beyond his control to settle the orphans in what would become “Christian villages” (Omenka, p. 34). After succeeding in the experiment with the orphans, Cardinal Lavigerie decided to try a similar approach to the redeemed slaves and then encouraged other missionaries to do the same. Hence, the Cardinal wrote, “slaves especially children could be bought and gathered in Christian settlements; these would form the nucleus of a growing Christian Church” (as cited in Neil, 1964, p. 428).

For a long time, the slave method that was associated with the Christian village was regarded as the right missionary strategy for Africa because slavery was deeply rooted in the social lives of the local people (Obi, 1985). Even though at the international level, slavery had been abolished for the most part of the second half of the 19th century, “domestic slavery was carried out with unbroken regularity especially in West Africa, the great slave coast” (Omenka, 1989, p. 35). It was common to see a wealthy man in West Africa count his riches in terms of the number of wives, children, and slaves he had in his possession. Then at Onitsha,

where the Catholic mission in Southeastern Nigeria began, Shanahan (1912) observed that slaves were sold publicly both on regular market days and in the makeshift markets:

On the sandbank before our eyes, in Onitsha, slaves were publicly marketed, and our Fathers redeemed them daily to the extent their meager resources permitted. Soon hundreds of these unfortunates were living in the Mission, and it was no small task to feed, clothe and house them; no easy task to dress their hideous wounds and gradually to instruct them and change them to a Christian way of life. (p. 89)

The redemption of slaves was one of the main objectives of many charitable organizations of the 19th and early 20th centuries. Also, the office for the propagation of faith in Rome demonstrated support to the various missions with regard to this question. For example, it sent over 20,000 Francs per annum to each of the Catholic missions in the Niger countries for anti-slavery work (Okwu, 2010). Even though this fund was not satisfactory, the money was of great help to the early Catholic missionaries in Eastern Nigeria when the slaves were among the only converts to the Catholic faith. As clearly stated earlier, the Fathers would go to the slave bank at Onitsha to ransom those who would become their future neophytes in proportion to the funds at their disposal.

More interestingly, the pioneer Catholic missionaries preferred to redeem little children, the sick, and the aged, because this vulnerable group most attracted the sympathy of their supporters, and they were less expensive. The fact that the Catholic missionaries were more interested in rescuing the most vulnerable group of the slaves appeared to be indicative of the genuine sentiments of the missionaries regarding anti-slavery activities (Omenka, 1989). Importantly, the missionaries' priority was on the redemption of children from slavery who eventually became the pioneer students at the Catholic school at Onitsha. Also, the slave redemption method became very convenient for the evangelization activity of this era, so much so that in 1899, one of the missionaries, Father Pawlas, found strong support to start a new

mission at Brass because of the availability of a large number of slaves. In 1888 the dependence of the missionaries on the slaves had become so substantial that the Fathers expressed great concern when British officials forbade the sale of slaves at Onitsha (Omenka 2007).

However, as time went on, slavery as a major aspect of evangelization became less significant, especially in the last decade of the 19th century. Mission records suggest that fewer slaves were bought in the 1890s than earlier. For example, one account showed that no slave was bought in a year even though a total of 50,000 francs was received from the *Sainte-Enfance and Propaganda Fide* (otherwise known as the office of the propagation of faith) specifically for that purpose (Okwu, 2010). Additionally, another reason why this source of new students began to wane was because “the slave method of evangelization lost its importance as soon as the people began to soften their prejudice over the school and the Christian religion” (Omenka, 1989, p. 36). As a result, the children of the free-born citizens started enrolling in the mission boarding school in such large numbers that it made the purchase of slaves unnecessary and inexpedient, since slavery gradually declined. Out of the total number of 95 students in the boarding house of Onitsha Catholic schools in 1899, only 15 were redeemed slaves; the rest were children who came to school out of the wishes of their parents (Omenka, 1989). By the close of the century, the slavery method of evangelization had disappeared. In 1900, Father Lejeune, the successor to Father Lutz, opposed this method of evangelization strongly, even though, it was still supported by many church leaders (Okwu, 2010).

Children Entrusted to the Care of the Mission by Their Parents and Guardians

In 1899, 85 pupils were commended to the care of the mission by parents and guardians in the two schools managed by the Fathers and Sisters at Onitsha, 52 boys and 33 girls.

Importantly, these children came from surrounding towns and villages of Onitsha where the Fathers had visited earlier but were unable to start a mission or a school. Interestingly, school children in those days used to accompany the Fathers during their visitations to the various towns and villages. The knowledge and the good physical appearance of the school boys seen as “the privileged mission boys” (Omenka, 1989, p. 37) impressed many adults and, as such, influenced the decisions of parents to send their sons to Onitsha to be educated by the Fathers. In November 1890, children from nearby towns and villages such as “Adekwe and Atani” were enrolled at the Onitsha school (CSE: 1891-1893). As a consequence, the Onitsha mission schools continued to gain more popularity. In February 1890, when Father Beendorf visited Aguleri for the first time, the traditional ruler of the village, Chief Idigo, handed over one of his sons to be educated at Onitsha (Obi, 1985). Also, as time went on, other ambitious parents in faraway towns and villages like Brass and Oguta, took the bold step of sending their boys to Onitsha to be educated by the Catholic missionaries, and the Fathers welcomed these children without any fee.

There were two major reasons for this type of gesture from the missionary Fathers. First, these pioneer Catholic students at Onitsha would, in turn, form the nucleus of the Christian communities that the missionaries had hoped for in their villages. Many of these pupils were eventually trained as catechists and student teachers, and it was this group of pupils who laid the foundation of Christian belief in many towns and villages of Eastern Nigeria. As Omenka noted, “This was by far the greatest fruit of the Catholic educational program in the early years” (p. 37). Second, the charity of the early missionaries towards the children in their charge had important social implication. For example, the idea of building the foundation of the Christian community with the dregs of the society, like the redeemed slaves and outcasts, was not favorably received

by many mission leaders. The missionaries had always hoped to have among their converts the free-born citizens, so they were very delighted to see that these children eventually were included in their institutions. Therefore, the missionaries “were only too glad, therefore, to see children of the middle and upper classes entrusted to their care” (Omenka, 1989, p. 37).

Abandoned Children, Orphans and Refugees

The last group of pioneer students were those who were orphaned, and those infants abandoned by their parents because they were twins or had a physical deformity. Father Pawlas reported that between 15 and 20 of such infants were adopted by the Fathers and nuns each year and only a small number from this group survived to become students in the schools. As for the refugees, they were women condemned to death by the local society on charges of witchcraft. About 12 of them and nine sick adults took refuge at the mission house in 1899.

The daily activities and the teaching methods of these early colonial Catholic schools could be quite regimented: “a day in the life of a boarder was a bundle of activities comprising, more or less, five hours of classes, five hours of manual labor, five hours of recreation and prayer, and nine hours of sleep” (CSE: Bulletin 22, 1903-1904). Both catechism classes and schoolwork took place mainly in the afternoons, but industrial work, the cultivation of the land, and work in the garden for fruits and vegetables were reserved for the mornings and evenings (Omenka, 1989). During the time of Father Lejeune, pupils in the boarding house were expected to work for the mission in exchange for the expense of their education, housing, clothing, and feeding (CSE: Bulletin 21, 1901-1902).

More critically, it seems that the teaching approach used by the colonial Catholic missionaries was influenced by the children's status. As seen in the archival records, the type of work performed was often a reflection of their social background.

According to Father Pawlas, the pupils who were taught various trades, such as tailoring, carpentry, and shoemaking, were usually the boys who had been entrusted to the care of the mission by their parents and guardians. The freed slaves and orphans were employed in the farms and gardens. (Africa: Angola, Congo, Senegal, 1899, p. 160)

However, Omenka (2012) provided a rationale for such assignments. First, he stated that the latter group must have been both emotionally and intellectually inferior to the former group. Second, there seemed to be a strong assumption and a possibility that the Fathers felt some type of compulsion to give their best to the boys of free born citizens in whom the missionaries had placed their hope for a growing Christian community. Finally, the parents and the guardians themselves who were ambitious had sent their children to the Onitsha school for the sole reason of learning these trades and skills, and the Fathers knew that too.

Even so, some scholars and historians were skeptical of the colonial legacy that the mission schools represented, and could have implications for education in Africa. Bassey (1999) noted that African rulers were concerned about the corrupting influence Christianity would have on African traditions. For instance, King Jaja of Opobo of Nigeria believed that African traditional religion held the society together, and that the introduction of Christianity would tear it apart. Given the colonial missionary educational approach, Bassey argued further that educated Africans were denationalized because they, as converts, were separated from the rest of their kinsmen, contributing to a sense of European superiority. Similarly, Oginga Odinga, a former vice president of Kenya, once noted that the missionaries preached love and unity but "lived aloof from the people to whom they preached" (cited in Berman, 1975, pp. 31-32). Welbourn (1961) recounted that "while the African clergy lived in primitive housing and

depended on bicycles for transportation, European missionaries lived in large well-equipped houses and drove cars” (pp. 171-172). Furthermore, Berman (1975) pointed out that the practice of segregating Christians was resented by the African chiefs who claimed their hereditary rights to “make the converts in common with their fellow tribesmen obey such laws and orders as are in accordance with native custom” (p. 31). Missionaries were also accused of causing divisions in families between children and parents. As noted by Bassey (1999), “missionaries were able to pitch children against their parents thereby causing a splinter in African families” (p. 42). He also noted that, “missionaries were collaborators who, through the kind of education they offered to Africans, had helped in promoting the stability of the colonial regimes” (Bassey, p. 43). Even more critically, Oginga Odinga proclaimed that the missionaries “were not satisfied to concentrate on the word of the Bible; they tried to use the word of God to judge African traditions: an African who followed his people’s customs was condemned as heathen and anti-Christian” (cited in Berman, 1975 p. 32). Given the historical narrative of the early contacts of Nigerians with Christianity discussed in Chapter One, it is not surprising that the missionary endeavors in Africa were seen in these perspectives, since the ultimate goal of the Christian empires was to convert and civilize all people.

Catholic Education Expansion (Early 20th Century)

The beginnings of Catholic education in Eastern Nigeria were marked by its charity approach, but it took a different approach at the turn of the 20th century. The year 1900 was a remarkable one, both for the Catholic Church and the political history of Eastern Nigeria, when Father Leon Lejeune, a French missionary, was appointed the Apostolic Prefect of the lower Niger mission on May 23, 1900 (Obi, 1985). According to Okwu (2010), Father Lejeune

introduced in Igbo land the new evangelization approach of Christianization through the establishment of schools and self-reliance, to replace the former charity-oriented strategy of slave ransoming. In his radical missionary vision, Lejeune put it thus, “it is perilous to hesitate; the Christian village must go and all our concentration must be on schools otherwise our enemy the Protestants will capture all our youth” (CSSp: 190/A/1, Lejeune to LeRoy 1900-1920). As may be recalled, this approach was typical of the pre-Vatican II Catholic education discussed in Chapter Two, in which Catholics and Protestants continued to see themselves as rivals. This attitude was introduced in Nigeria in the name of religion and conversion, and would have enduring effects on the Nigerian school systems.

Omenka (2007) commended the astuteness of Lejeune, whose vision of Catholic education in Nigeria seemed very unprecedented. This was due to the collaboration with the government that he introduced in the running of the Catholic missions in the Eastern Nigeria. As a result of this, Lejeune was able to propose the building of more Catholic schools in newly founded Catholic missions in the central northern part of Nigeria, although this did not last long because of the deep-rooted presence of the Muslims (Omenka, 2007). Not long after its founding on October 14, 1903, for instance, the mission in Dekina was destroyed by fire (Omenka, 1989). But he also introduced curricular reform, and with support of the colonial government, certain subjects other than religion were introduced in the Catholic schools, including English and mathematics. Others introduced included industrial and technical education, arts and crafts-woodwork, tailoring, shoe-making, carpentry, and brick-making. Also added to the curriculum were elementary algebra, geometry, bookkeeping and foreign languages—Latin and French (Okwu, 2010), which Anglicans viewed as secular and ambitious (Omenka, 2007; see Appendix One for a full schedule of daily classes during this era). Affirming

the addition of non- religious subjects taught by the early missionaries, a Nigerian at the time appreciated the changes:

During my school days, the subjects presented in the primary schools were religion reading and writing, arithmetic, English, Igbo, hygiene and nature study, physical training (which included different types of sports), gardening (agriculture), hand craft and story telling. In the secondary school, the following were added: European history, Church history, geography, Latin, mathematics (which included algebra and geometry). For girls' secondary schools, domestic science was added. (Joseph, Okoro Nnewi Nigeria, December, 2015)

Rev Ikeme also noted that during this era, “the school curriculum has in it a totality of physical, moral, spiritual and intellectual development according to the mind of the Church without compulsion” (Enugu Nigeria December 2015).

On the other hand, Abernethy (1969) suggested that the history of Catholic education in Eastern Nigeria also found expression in the words and works of a popular missionary. This was evident in the work of Bishop Joseph Shanahan, who served as Prefect Apostolic in Southern and later Eastern Nigeria from 1905 until his retirement in 1932. Bishop Shanahan's choice of mission sites was a demonstration of his ability to understand the Igbo society and its local customs. For example, during his visits he would make efforts to find villages that were friendly with each other, so that they might jointly build a school. It was during one such visit that Shanahan decided that, “a town with indigenous religious significance, such as Nri, would be chosen as a mission site both to undercut paganism at its source and to endow the new religion with an aura of traditional eminence” (Abernethy, p. 41). Once a mission was created, Shanahan ensured that great care was taken before establishing a local church committee who were charged with the responsibility of raising funds to build the church, pay the teachers, and other similar local church projects. Additionally, Shanahan always explained to the local communities the need to pay for its own school so that education would be seen as a privilege and not something

to be taken for granted. By 1920, the effectiveness of the school as a gateway to the church was evident because “only one-fourth of the twenty thousand baptized Catholics had been baptized outside the school” (Abernethy, p. 42). Finally, Shanahan was credited for his missionary approach in Eastern Nigeria in reaching out to the countryside:

Bishop Shanahan was one of many missionaries who were concerned with educating the people where the great majority of them lived, not simply in the Europeanized towns of the coast. One result of this approach to education was a relatively high degree of social mobility: the children of rural peasants were given the opportunity, and the desire, to make good in the modern world. (Abernethy, p. 42)

However, other scholars were critical of Shanahan’s approach. Eke, Onyewuenyi and Onyeneke (2006) stated that despite Shanahan’s clever approach toward some of the Igbo traditional beliefs, he still lacked understanding of other customs that were important to local communities. Uzukwu (1999) pointed to Shanahan’s lack of dialogue with the natives during the 1915 first Catholic Congress at Onitsha, in which he was the main celebrant. This congress took a more critical position on certain social and religious practices of the indigenous society, such as traditional marriage, title-taking, and *muo*, *ekpe* or *ekpo* otherwise known as masquerades (Eke et al., 2006). Obi (1985) discussed these features of the congress, which forbade Christians from participating in any traditional ceremony, such as the masquerade dances, the *Ozo* title, and the traditional marriage ceremony:

No Christian should be initiated into the *Muo* masqueraders’ secret society nor participate in *muo* public dances and processions. No Christian make take the *Ozo* and other titles since these tended to promote division between the slave and the free-born and keep alive oppression of the poor. No Christian should contract marriage in the traditional fashion (p. 147).

The congress did not solve any problem for the people, and thus did not advance the cause of Catholic schooling. For example, Catholics at St. Mary’s Church Onitsha rejected the proposal of the Congress and, as a result, Shanahan sanctioned this group and transferred their

pastors to Holy Trinity Church Onitsha (Eke et. al., 2006). On the other hand, the controversy over the *Ozo* title, one of the traditional titles of the era, was never resolved until the intervention of Rome in 1957. Later, Archbishop Heerey temporarily allowed Catholics to take traditional titles (Ozigbo, 1988). Also, the Protestant missionaries were utilizing the local language and promoting the use of vernacular in many of their publications, while the Catholic missionaries preferred the use of English.

In 1908, Shanahan opposed a government proposal to make the use of vernacular compulsory in all primary schools, and attempted to take a step further by trying to limit Protestant publications that were in circulation. Omenka (1989) summed up Shanahan's approach to the use of local language:

From a missionary point of view, Shanahan's antipathy towards vernacular was an attitude with a sardonic twist. He was the Prefect who fought hardest to win approval for the school in Eastern Nigeria. But by moving squarely against the vernacular, he unfortunately missed the most important issue in any balanced education. (p. 191)

This attitude was symptomatic of a colonial mindset. As Freire and Macedo (1998) argued in a somewhat different context, the colonialists' involvement in education was primarily for the purpose of deculturating colonized people. Colonial schools, according to them, functioned as part of an ideological state apparatus designed to secure the ideological and social reproduction of capital and institutions, whose interests are rooted in the dynamics of capital accumulation and the reproduction of the labor force (Freire & Macedo, 1998). But then, this educated labor force in Africa, Basse (1999) noted, "consisted of only low-level functionaries whose assigned tasks were to promote and maintain the status quo... they were used as intermediaries to further colonial interests in Africa" (p. 36). The western model of schools, staffed by teachers trained in progressive pedagogy and committed to its value system, was not

expected to leave untouched the indigenous character of colonial students (MacKenzie, 1993). Mbonu Ojike of Nigeria confessed that he “mocked his father’s religion as ‘heathen’ thinking his inferior to white [*sic*] man’s” (as cited in Berman, 1975 p. 32). The traditional Catholic education of the pre-Vatican II era had a goal of maintaining the status quo, especially regarding Catholic knowledge and learning, as discussed in Chapter Two. However, some critics had hoped that “a Catholic schooling system could only be comprehensive in nature, comprehensive by class and ethnic intake, comprehensive by ability range and comprehensive in terms of its curriculum and pedagogic provision for all pupils” (Grace, 2002 p. 70). This seemingly was not a possibility during the colonial era in Nigeria.

Colonial Government Early Involvement in Education and Other Bureaucracies

The colonial government influenced education with respect to the timing of policies and the establishment of public schools. It also endorsed the expansion of voluntary agency schools, the changing content and quality of curriculum, and the funding of these voluntary agency schools through grant-in-aid. Abernethy (1969) first discussed the nature and different types of bureaucracies concerned with education that existed between the Northern and Southern Nigeria during the colonial era. According to him, this organization varied according to the type of traditional structure that the British colonial government encountered. For example, the existence of a very sophisticated administrative organization among the Muslim emirates in Northern Nigeria, coupled with a lack of British officials, led the North’s first governor general, Sir Fredrick Lugard, to introduce a policy of indirect rule in which many government activities were delegated and performed by the traditional or local authority. However, such a policy was less viable in Southern Nigeria before the 1914 amalgamation of the North and South regions. In

the Eastern region, traditional sources of authority was more decentralized, and often weaker than what obtained in Northern Nigeria. In addition, as the colonial government continued to assume responsibilities beyond simply maintaining law and order, the local authority in the North was invigorated by being assigned new responsibilities. Elsewhere the situation was very different. As Abernethy pointed out, “in the South a bureaucracy emerged that was directly accountable to British officials that clearly excelled, in power and prestige...” (p. 76).

There was one consequence of the system of indirect rule in the Northern Nigeria, as Abernethy noted, the local language became very important:

The recruitment of Africans to administrative positions was only indirectly linked to their knowledge of English. Hausa-Fulani officials who determined entry into key native authority positions were highly concerned with the ascriptive status of applicants – a status that personal achievement in a European-oriented school could do nothing to change. Hausa was the language of administration in many areas of the North, moreover, and British officials were expected to use it in dealing with Africans. (pp. 76-77)

As a result, the British colonial officials did their best to provide education in English for the leading Hausa-Fulani families. The case was different in Southern Nigeria. There, the link that existed between bureaucracy and western education was very strong and more explicit since the British officials were responsible for setting standards and goals for the recruitment into the bureaucratic system that they directly controlled. Abernethy suggested certain reasons why the British officials took the role of setting standards and goals:

Since the new jobs open to Africans were often as nontraditional as the bureaucracy that generated them, it made little sense to consider traditional status of an African applying, for example, to become an inspector, accountant, court clerk, sanitation inspector, surveyor, or stationmaster. What mattered was not a person’s ascriptive status but his potential for effective performance in institutions employing English as the official medium of communication. (p. 77)

Consequently, educational achievements became a gateway for entering the British government job opportunities for many Africans. Therefore, in schools, young people acquired

the new skills of English literacy that was directly linked to certain jobs, such as clerical duties. On the other hand, the British rulers in Southern Nigeria became aware that the success of their efforts was more dependent on the strength of the schools to produce a number of Africans who were literate, disciplined, and co-operative (Abernethy, 1969). Understandably, the absence of such literate Africans was a constant complaint of early British colonial rulers, such as Lord Lugard at the end of his tenure in 1919. Lugard declared that, “there were an estimated 5,500 posts in government and business requiring Africans with a good command of English...” (Lugard, 1905, as cited in Abernethy, 1969, p. 77). Nonetheless, as noted by Graham (1966), it was Lugard whose influence was part of the reason the missionaries were unable to establish schools in Northern Nigeria:

Governor Lugard refused to jeopardize the success of political and commercial agents in Northern Nigeria by allowing missionaries in to propagandize against the Moslem faith. Lugard made agreements with the emirs to obey the laws of the protectorate, to aid British political representatives, to place no restrictions on traders, to impose no taxes without British consent, to assist in the construction of roads and barracks, to cede all mineral and uninhabited land rights in the Crown, all in return for military protection and no interference in religion. (as cited in Carnoy, 1974, pp. 133-134)

As a consequence, the recruitment into the existing ruling bureaucracy was far more common in Southern than in Northern Nigeria. This may have been due to performance in the European schools. Additionally, the difficulty encountered by the early missionaries to establish schools in Northern Nigeria led to educational gaps between the two parts of the country. Without doubt, the educational opportunities provided many benefits for those who were able to acquire it. Consequently, employment into government jobs resulted in “high income, high security, high social status, and an opportunity to escape from the tiresome and tedious agricultural work” (Abernethy, 1969, p. 78). The best way to gain such employment was by attending schools that emphasized literary skills over manual skills, as documented in Foster

(1960): “academic education has been the most vocational type of education in West Africa” (p. 108).

Colonial Educational Policies: Before 1914

As the British colonial government continued to gain more strongholds in Southern Nigeria, it began to develop educational policies for the region. At first, a handful of British officials took up certain responsibilities pertaining to education, such as the inspection of voluntary agency schools, the allocation of public funds in the form of grant-in-aid to the various mission schools, the formulation of an approved syllabus, and the establishment of government schools (Abernethy, 1969). Then in 1882, an education ordinance was passed that authorized the appointment of the inspector of schools for all British West African colonies, including Lagos in Nigeria. According to Fafunwa (1974), the 1882 education ordinance was based on the 1844 British Education Act. Fafunwa noted that this Act established a set of criteria for grants for teachers’ salaries:

Grants for organization and discipline, with special grants to schools which obtained a large percentage of passes and reached high standards of general excellence; 2) a capitation pass grant for each subject; 3) a capitation grant in proportion to the average attendance at the school. (p. 94)

Soon afterwards, an 1887 ordinance created a Board of Education headed by a governor, though applying only to Lagos, Nigeria. By 1892, renowned Nigerian educator Henry Carr was named an inspector of schools for Lagos, a responsibility he carried out with excellence for years. Henry Carr became a famous critic of the quality of mission schools (Omenka, 1989). For instance, after Carr’s inspection of mission schools in Bonny and Calabar between 1899 and 1900, he highlighted the inferiority of mission schools, noting that “the missionaries look upon schools as instruments for making converts, other men view them as instruments for making useful citizens” (Annual report on Southern Nigeria, 1899-1900).

In 1903, a department of education was created for Southern Nigeria and an education code was promulgated (Menakaya, 1980). The code laid down rules for the provision of primary and secondary education in the region. It also made provisions for the payment of grant-in-aid to all schools with regard to average attendance and annual examination and inspection (Fafunwa, 1974). In 1906, the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria and Lagos were merged by the British government to form a single administrative and political unit; and that became the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria. By 1908 another ordinance was promulgated that made provisions for education boards in the then Western, Central and Eastern provinces of Southern Nigeria. These boards were given flexibility for certain regulations according to local situations. The board was strengthened with a director of education, four superintendents of schools and three European schoolmasters (Fafunwa, 1974). From then on, “an administrative apparatus gradually emerged with at least nominal responsibility for the Southern Nigerian education” (Abernethy, 1969, p. 78).

Government schools were established in areas that the colonial missionaries had not reached. By 1908, over 50 government primary schools were established in Southern Nigeria. In 1909, King’s College, the first government secondary school was established in Lagos (Abernethy 1969; Fafunwa, 1974; Menakaya, 1980). Throughout this period, the government made extensive use of an indirect rule in education by giving financial assistance to the different missions for the running of voluntary agency schools, as observed by Abernethy (1969):

The grant-in-aid system which originated in 1872 with an allocation of thirty pounds distributed equally among the Church Missionary Society, Methodist, and the Roman Catholic missions expanded greatly in scope and complexity over years. By 1912 every mission school that attained certain standards was assisted on the basis of its examination results, the unit of average attendance and the organization and efficiency. (p. 79)

Essentially, the grants were made for specific purposes and were given directly to the missions or their education secretary to subsidize the payment of teachers' salaries, and sometimes for maintenance or building of structures. As Abernethy stated. "the grant-in-aid system enabled the government to maintain a kind of indirect rule over the educational process by applying financial pressure to the best voluntary agency schools" (p. 79).

There were reasons why the colonial government allowed the various missions to take up the responsibility of educating the local populace in Africa. Abernethy (1969) identified six of these: (a) the British colonial government had no reason to oppose the work of the missionaries because anti-clericalism had not made much headway in England; (b) the Church-State relationship was still relatively smooth at the turn of the 20th century; (c) because Southern Nigeria was predominantly traditionalist, the British did not have to worry about the local people rebelling against the missionaries as could be found in the predominantly Muslim North; (d) the missionaries had an upper hand in the field of education since they were the first to introduce western education in most African nations; (e) the system of indirect rule by the government in colonial education was far cheaper and cost effective; (f) unlike the French imperialism whose primary aim in Africa was the spread of French culture, the British were less explicit in their own approach and were more interested in exporting political institutions their culture.

Colonialism Resisted

World War 1 marked a new phase for most Africans during the colonial era. Before the war, Africans were more or less completely under the control of colonial powers (Sifuna & Otiende, 1994). As some authors suggested (Isichei, 1983), the story of colonialism in Africa

itself reflected only a single reality except when told by those who experienced it. Then there was a far different view. As one Nigerian noted:

Before the arrival of the Europeans we used to help the chief on his farm, if he needs our help... He may give them native beer or even food in appreciation... But when the Europeans came, they carried people by force to work for them, wash their clothes, cook for them and even some to carry their load on their head when they are traveling. (Mwadkon from Birom Nigeria, July 1977, as cited in Isichei 1983, p. 386)

Other examples highlight a loss of brotherhood and sense of community co-operation, as observed by another Nigerian:

Before, we were living peacefully with our brothers and always willing to share with our brothers, however small a thing may be, but when the European introduced money, our people became greedy for money. Some left for the towns to look for money and never returned. (Dang, Birom Nigeria July 1977, as cited in Isichei, pp. 386-387)

In 1912 Sir Fredrick Lugard became the Governor General of both Southern and Northern Nigeria. By 1914, he recommended the amalgamation of both provinces under one administration in order to provide the North with some revenues from the South. Lugard introduced the local government system in the South, similar to that of the North. To achieve this aim “Lugard resolved to build up a strong native authority system such as the one he had found, and strengthened in the North” (Abernethy, 1969, p. 82). However, doing this required extra effort, such as “recognizing the natural rulers of each tribal group, investing important rulers with considerable administrative and judicial power as sole native authorities, and financing the native authorities through direct taxation of the populace” (p. 82).

The new arrangement and the taxation that Lugard introduced created a problematic reaction, and the local people resisted it in a variety of ways. For example, in Eastern Nigeria the people who were never used to having titles such as chief were forced to choose one, and the result was “the appointment of Warrant Chiefs who frequently lacked popular support for their authority, and the growing influence of semiliterate native court clerks who took advantage of

the virtual vacuum of authority in Iboland” (p. 83). In Southwestern Nigeria, the situation was similar. For example, the Iseyin rebellion of 1916 and the Abeokuta riot of 1918 occurred because of resistance to direct taxation of the Yoruba people. Additionally, there were other examples of riots and demonstrations in Sapele and Warri, South-south of Nigeria, when direct taxation was imposed in 1927. Perhaps the most famous was the Aba women’s riot of 1929 around the provinces of Owerri and Calabar, a year after the imposition of taxation in Eastern Nigeria. In this case, women protested not only the direct tax but also the excesses of so-called Warrant Chiefs (Abernethy, 1969).

Even in Northern Nigeria, where taxation was practiced long before it was introduced in the Southern region, the local people experienced their own hardship as a result of taxation and the way it was carried out. Olusanya (1973) wrote about the adversity experienced in the North:

When we were forced to pay tax, most of us learnt how to sell things and get money. Some sold firewood, and some even part of their food to get the money. As a result many families starved. So when we heard that people were working on the tin mines and paid, most of us rushed there to look for employment... The work was very tedious and we were paid very little but it was enough to pay our tax... We usually went back home during the rainy season to work on our farms because the money we were paid was not enough to pay our tax and also feed ourselves, and we who were working in the mines used to carry our own food from the house. (as cited in Isichei 1983, p. 387)

In 1924, it was recorded that another resident from Bauchi also expressed his anger and frustrations about being forced to pay taxes: “the system of forcing payment of tax by the annual means of an armed patrol...No confidence can be gained so long as the political officer travels around with twenty-five or more police chiefly in search of tax” (Marshall, July 10, 1950, as cited in Isichei, 1983, p. 387). In Katsina in farther away Northern Nigeria, “tax was collected with an escort of several hundred-armed men” (Isichei, 1983, p. 387). Sometimes, as a result of poor crops or the misfortune of the Great Depression during this era, it meant that local peasants paid their taxes with borrowed money (Isichei, 1983).

On the other hand, a few educated Africans also posed a threat to the British colonial officials, as recounted by Abernethy (1969):

Well-educated Africans, the polished graduates of grammar schools and perhaps even of universities, were difficult to accommodate within the colonial regime. The British could not realistically expect a highly trained African to work contentedly under the native authorities when so many of the traditional rulers were illiterate and unprogressive; the educated elite would probably either usurp the traditional ruler's rights or sabotage the native authority system itself. Nor could the British envisage employing a substantial number of well-trained Africans in the central administration. Such a practice would threaten the job security of British administrators and undermine the prestige of the white man in general. (p. 84)

Apart from the threat of educational background, educated Africans often opposed the British rulers and their policies, as also suggested by Abernethy: "Lugard and the educated elite of Lagos were in continual disagreement over such matters as the status of the local traditional dynasty, the imposition of a water rate, and the British efforts to curb the indigenous press" (p. 85). From then on, there was little an educated African could do that did not represent a threat to the established order. Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, the former Premier of Eastern Nigeria observed the economic hardships Africans underwent due to unjust wages that were part of colonial policy exploitation. He wrote in 1970 that:

As a young clerk, I was trapped in the vortex of economic insecurity, which was the experience of most junior clerks in those days. Earning from three to five pounds monthly, I found myself month after month unable to balance my budget, and obliged to live beyond my means, not because I was extravagant, but simply because I was underpaid and therefore could not maintain a decent living standard. (p. 44)

Nnamdi Azikiwe saw colonialism and British imperialism as bulwarks of duplicity and hypocrisy. In order to extricate himself from the clutches of colonial exploitation, Azikiwe chose to travel to the United States of America to be educated. He noted, "as soon as I was re-educated, I would try to discover the secret which made successful people to be self-employed and to better the conditions of mankind" (Azikiwe, 1970, p. 45). Azikiwe also discovered that

discrimination was not only found in the colonial civil service against Africans, but also among missionaries against their African colleagues, and he once again questioned the status quo:

Why was no African thought fit by the missionaries to be full-fledged bishop with European priests under him? Why were Bishops Crowther, Philips, Oluwole, Howels and others suffragan bishops? Why was no African appointed Principal of the Wesleyan Boys' School and the CMS Grammar School? I wanted to know why there were no African Catholic priests, or reverend mothers and sisters? (p. 65)

Despite these and other problems, there were signs of progress. It seems that the indigenous colonial resistance had mixed results; some managed to achieve positive outcomes while others did not. Regarding taxes and administrative changes, Falola and Heaton (2008) note that changes did occur:

Protests against taxation did not result in the repeal of taxation policies; in the case of the Women's War, however, the widespread resistance to the poll tax prompted an inquiry into the legitimacy of indirect rule in the region. The result was a government report condemning the warrant chief system as illegitimate. (p. 133)

Also around Lagos, the constant criticisms from the educated African elites and the mass mobilization of the local people led to other changes in the political organization of Southern Nigeria (Falola & Heaton, 2008). As a result, in 1922 the colonial government formulated a new constitution, in which a 46-member Legislative Council was created. It consisted of 27 official and 19 non-official members, three of whom were to be elected by adult males in Lagos and one in Calabar (Falola & Heaton, 2008). These individuals became the first elected African representatives in the British African Legislative Council. As the educated African dissatisfaction with the British rule continued, it eventually led to replacement of British administrators by educated Africans (Abernethy, 1969). Nonetheless, the British colonial government did not back down from its commitment to education in Africa, which led to the formulation of further education codes.

Additional Educational Policy and Report: 1916 and 1926

For more control over education in Africa, the British colonial rulers set out to create an additional education code and report in 1916 and 1926, respectively. On the one hand, the 1916 code, formulated under Lugard, was meant for the enhancement of the “formation of character and the habits of discipline” (Abernethy, 1969, p. 86) among pupils in Africa, and this was achieved through the revision of the formula for the grant-in-aid given to mission schools. After that, any continued support to be given to these schools was to be based on a formula, that is, “30% on tone, discipline, organization, and moral instruction” (p. 86), 20% on adequacy and efficiency of teaching staff, 40% on periodical examination and general progress, and 10% on buildings, equipment and sanitation (Fafunwa, 1974). Lugard also pressed for an inclusion of moral instruction as a separate subject from the teaching of religious studies in the curriculum and for more control over the schools run by the missions (Abernethy, 1969). “The code provided for more of them to receive government assistance” (Walsh, 1951, as cited in Abernethy, p. 86).

On the other hand, the 1926 education document popularly known as the “Phelps-Stokes Report on Education in Africa” (Abernethy, 1969; Fafunwa, 1974; Sifuna & Otiende, 1994), promulgated under Sir Hugh Clifford, recommended policies that were more far-reaching than the earlier ones. It stipulated the registration of all teachers, gave the governor general permission to either close any school that was considered inefficient for the community, and increased grant-in-aid for schools in order to bring many more under the supervision of the government. It also created mission supervisors of schools who oversaw the use of grant-in-aid received for services in the assisted schools and the assurance of mission representation on the Board of Education (Abernethy, 1969; Omenka, 1989). The missions were also encouraged to

strengthen their educational program by establishing central schools that would offer an 8-year primary school system.

These reforms were urged by the Phelps-Stokes Fund, an American philanthropic organization interested in Africa, particularly in its religious educational program. In Africa, the Phelps-Stokes commission was led by Thomas Jesse Jones, a white American educator at the American Negro college, Hampton Institute. The other members were Dr. James Kwegyir Aggrey of Ghana, Henry Stanley Hollenbeck, and Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Wilkie of the Church of Scotland Mission, Calabar Nigeria (Fafunwa, 1974). The final report and official recommendations of the commission was published in 1925 as “Education Policy in British Tropical Africa” (Abernethy, p. 89; Omenka, 1989; Sifuna & Otiende, 1994). Among other things, the commission encouraged the colonial government and missionaries engaged in the work of education “to aspire towards a correct appreciation of Africa and the Africans” (Omenka, 1989, p. 218). The commission also stated the need to adapt education to the needs of the people, as suggested by Oldham (1925): “The nature of education to be given to the Africans should be determined not by the needs of the traders, settlers, administrators, and missionaries, but the welfare of the natives” (Oldham, 1925, as cited in Omenka, 1989, pp. 218-219). The commission attributed the failure of educational program in Africa to lack of organization and supervision because the governments and missions in Africa failed to apply sound principles of administration to their educational work (Fafunwa, 1974).

While it was necessary to have control over the schools, the limitation of the colonial government often made the implementation of these policies at the local levels impracticable. Therefore, the only effective way to improve the quality of education was to formulate a system

that was capable of closing inefficient schools and keeping them closed, but this was not possible for reasons suggested by Abernethy (1969):

A bureaucracy that prevented schools from operating would have been highly unpopular and quite expensive to maintain; it would also have required the recruitment of many more educated Nigerians into the lower ranks of civil service, thus actually reinforcing the link between education and employment. To destroy this link, on the other hand, would undermine the effectiveness of the colonial bureaucracy itself, which depended on literate Nigerians to fill subaltern positions. (p. 87)

British colonial officials were met with challenges in the implementation of their policies in most African countries. For instance, a pilot project based upon the 1926 education report that was attempted in various places was unable to succeed due to a lack of funds and personnel. More critically, there were conceptual challenges inherent in the policy itself, including the misconstrued idea that a mixture of European and traditional African culture might work out fine in the colonies. Abernethy wrote about the problematic ideas of the British about the changes then occurring:

The theory placed far too much faith in curriculum change as the basis for attitude change; it underestimated the aspirations for academic success that impelled local communities to build schools and parents to enroll their children in them... The theory analyzed African society in relative static terms, failing to appreciate the revolutionary impact of British rule: the creation of new high paying jobs within the colonial bureaucracy, the demonstration effect of the British presence on African aspirations, the increased importance of cities, the rise of new economic interests, the recruitment through education of a new stratum of potential political leaders (p. 90).

In conclusion, it eventually became clear that the Phelps-Stokes report contained limitations that led to its failure to have a serious effect on the education system of the era. Also, the report ultimately was seen as way of keeping the status of Africans inferior, as suggested by Murray (1929): “the Phelps-Stokes reports emphasize differentiation [along racial lines] before there has been attained equality. Differentiation without equality means the permanent inferiority of the black [*sic*]man” (p. 309). It was also reported that many educated Africans

became very critical of “the new idealization of traditional Africa by the British as a device to keep Africans from coveting the goods and services and pursuing the ideals of modern life” (Kimble, 1963, p. 114).

Education Changes and the Rise of the Nationalist Movement in Nigeria: 1930-1950

The period between 1930 and 1950 was an historic era in Nigeria. It was marked by a worldwide depression (1929-1935), World War II (1939-1945), the rise of a Nigerian nationalist movement (1930-1950) that eventually led to self-government (1952-1959), and independence in 1960. It was also during this period that various Nigerian educational policies were launched (1930s, 1948, 1952 and 1960). All these events heightened popular demand for more educational opportunities (Fafunwa, 1974).

Despite these developments, the British colonial rulers did not experience much difficulty in maintaining their rule through the first half of the twentieth century. As Abernethy (1969) noted: “a growing economy financed a growing bureaucracy, and the African populace was still so inert and unorganized that it posed no serious threat to British hegemony” (p. 92; see also Falola & Heaton, 2008). While the colonial regime before 1930 brought certain economic benefits to certain African educated elites, the regime also alienated others and frustrated many who were strong believers in African traditional cultures and institutions (Falola & Heaton, 2008). Colonial rule also exploited the Nigerian workforce, both physically and intellectually, to the extent that it benefited the British firms more than the Nigerians. But political change was slow in coming.

Although it was not organized around the idea of an African consciousness until the 1930s, a new generation of anti-colonial activists emerged in Nigeria and began to call for more

involvement of Nigerians in the political affairs of the country (Falola & Heaton, 2008). The period from 1930-1950 has been characterized as an era of “troubled colonialism” (Abernethy, 1969, p. 93). External events on the world stage affected this: the Great Depression affected the resources available to the colonial masters in many respects, and the Second World War prevented the British colonial rulers from carrying out, financing, and providing the manpower for many proposed projects in Nigeria and other parts of Africa. At the same time, it increased an active anti-colonial movement among Nigerians.

With respect to schooling, the 1930s brought major education changes in Nigeria. Many attempts made by Lugard to unify the education systems of both Northern and Southern Nigeria proved abortive, but 15 years later his dream was realized (Fafunwa, 1974). In July 1929, the education departments of Northern and Southern Nigeria were merged under a new Director of Education, Mr. E.R.J. Hussey (Legislative Council of Nigeria, 1930). This led to a government policy to restrict education opportunities in Nigeria, championed by Hussey, who held the position from 1929-1936 (Abernethy, 1969; Omenka, 1989). In his restrictive education policy, Hussey suggested changes that would affect the type and quality of education in Nigeria. In particular, he proposed three major levels of education, the first of which was a six-year primary education, replacing the former eight-year program, comprising a two-year infancy program and a four-year primary education. The curriculum at this stage was supposed to emphasize vocational courses, such as agriculture, handicrafts, and hygiene, for the improvement and arousal of interest in the local environment (Abernethy, 1969; Omenka, 1989). The second stage was an intermediate program of six years duration for both the lower and higher middle schools, the lower middle school being the former Standards V and VI of the old 8-year primary school system. Then the third and, perhaps, the final stage was to be offered in vocational or higher

colleges, to train qualified medical and engineering assistants, teachers of higher middle schools, and staff of other vocations. In the end, Hussey published his proposals as a Memorandum on Educational Policy in Nigeria in 1930 (Legislative Council of Nigeria, 1930). While these changes were not meant to restrict enrollments at any level, the curriculum reforms at both the primary and secondary level were intended to limit employment opportunities for educated Nigerians (Abernethy, 1969). Also in line with the adaptationist theory reflected in the Phelps-Stokes report of the 1920s, Hussey had hoped that a good number of pupils would return to their family farms after completion of the shorter and practical primary course. However, before long, many educated Nigerians came to believe that the new education system was designed to perpetuate the British presence and regime in Nigeria (Abernethy, 1969). As such, the new policy was met with strong opposition not only from the Nigerian educated elites but also from the Christian missions (Omenka, 1989).

In the wake of this opposition, British policies eventually shifted once again. By the 1940s there was a reorientation in the colonial education policy that gave birth to a “Colonial Development and Welfare Fund” (Omenka, 1989, p. 228; see also Abernethy, 1969). This agency provided resources that were sent to the colonial office in Nigeria for the sole purpose of education matters. Motivated by this development, the colonial administration headed by Governor B.H. Bourdillon designed a very ambitious strategic proposal entitled “Ten-Year Education Plan” (Omenka, 1989, p. 229) in 1942. Its primary objectives included education relevant to the country, better financial support and service for the teachers:

A type of education more suitable for the needs of the country. b) better conditions of service for teachers employed by the missions and other voluntary bodies, in order to provide a better trained and more contented staff. c) more adequate financial assistance to missions and other voluntary educational bodies. d) financial assistance to native administrations in order to assist them to maintain an efficient staff of teachers and

expand education in their areas. e) controlled expansion within financial limits. (Public Record Office: Sessional Paper No. 6 of 1944)

The British intended to implement a long-range education plan in their colonies even before carrying out a pilot study of the strategic plan in their homeland. However, the destructive impact of the Second World War on Europe, the promises of self-determination contained in the Atlantic Charter, and the attainment of independence by several British colonies created a climate of world opinion that was clearly hostile to the continued rule of Europeans over Africans (Abernethy, 1969). From then on, as noted by Abernethy, “colonialism was to be atoned for, if at all, by the rapid transfer of power from the European bureaucrats to indigenous political leaders” (p. 96). As a result, the colonial government decided to share more direct responsibility in education. The success of decolonization was dependent on the ability and the number of educated people who would later take over the power in government. Following this was an effort not only to increase enrollments but also a creation of new positions of responsibility that university graduates were needed to occupy. Consequently, to perform both political and bureaucratic functions, a large group of literate Nigerians was needed (Abernethy, 1969). In other words, there was an urgent need for training at all levels for an active and more democratic leadership.

As the British colonial officials continued to find themselves under pressure from the emerging nationalist movement in Nigeria, there was greater emphasis on education to prepare the country to participate in politics. Abernethy observed that the colonial government therefore took more responsibility in supporting the education of the natives:

The government assumed increased responsibility for subsidizing voluntary agency work in primary and secondary education... the phenomenal increase in total government expenditure for education can be accounted for largely by the rise in grants-in-aid, from 28 percent of the total education expenditure in 1930-31, to 38 percent ten years later, and then 74 percent by 1950-51. Between 1941 and 1947 a series of *ad hoc* concessions

was made granting government payments to a large numbers of voluntary agency teachers... Higher salary scales for teachers, arranged in 1947 under threat of a teachers' strike further raised the official subsidy of the voluntary agencies. (p. 96)

In 1948, concerned about this trend and the impact of rising costs, the colonial government appointed Sir Sidney Phillipson to work out a new scheme of grants-in-aid to officially extend the responsibilities of paying for schooling to local communities (Abernethy, 1969; Omenka, 1989; 2007). His report, "Grants In Aid of Education in Nigeria," promulgated in connection with the Education Ordinance of 1948, included certain standards and provisions for the new scheme that would allow for an active participation of local communities in the running of the schools:

The establishment of Central and Regional Boards of Education with advisory and executive powers. b) provision for the establishment of local education authorities or local education committees in suitable circumstances. c) that the amount of the grant-in-aid payable in respect of a recognized school should consist of the recognized expenses, less an assumed local contribution. d) that there should be uniformity in the salary paid to each category of teachers. (Eastern Nigeria, Ministry of Education, 1962, p. 7)

Interestingly, following Phillipson's proposal, a new role was assigned to the local communities in establishing their own schools. In most cases charging fees became the only sure way of raising funds for them. In 1950, the Native Authority Ordinance was amended to grant the local authorities powers to collect education fees or taxes (Abernethy, 1969). In addition, Phillipson's assurance of grants-in-aid subsidies to the various missions helped in the expansion of education. Also, the presence of religious education advisers, one Protestant and one Catholic, on the Nigerian Board of Education, helped to direct resources from the colonial office to the voluntary agencies for the purposes of education.

Protestant and Catholic Rivalry

Throughout the 1940s, the missions continued to establish long and cordial relationships with the local communities for the smooth running of the schools, but not without rancor, division, and rivalry among themselves. Abernethy (1969) noted that, “the rivalry between Protestants and Catholics, particularly in the Eastern region increased markedly in extent and intensity during the 1940s, mainly because the Roman Catholic Mission was able to expand its activities faster than the Protestant missions” (p. 102). Apart from faith differences, there were instances of both political and nationality differences, as most of the Protestant missionaries were largely from England and Scotland and many Catholic missionaries came from Ireland or France (Bassey, 1999). During this era, “France was Britain’s greatest rival for colonies in Africa... and Ireland was Britain’s unruly colony” (Bassey, p. 30). In other African countries like Sudan, the division between the Catholics and the Anglicans warranted the intervention of the Governor General, Sir Stewart Symes, in 1935. Then, in the Belgian Congo (currently Zaire), Catholic missionaries stalked the Protestants to ensure that they were not outplayed by the latter (Berman, 1975). More than faith differences, these nationality and political differences intensified the division among Christians of the late 19th and early 20th centuries in many African countries. Given the nature of Catholic education during the pre-Vatican II era, it is likely that the Catholic Church contributed much to the acrimony during this era. The active cultivation of a Catholic identity, featuring a depiction of other Christian denominations as rivals, certainly contributed to this.

Nonetheless, many Nigerians were not aware of these unfriendly superfluities in the faith that was brought to them by the colonial missionaries. Instead, Nigerians saw the missionaries

as having a common purpose to conquer what was otherwise seen as paganism in the African soil and to replace it with European customs and traditions.

Effects and Consequences of Missionary/Colonial Education in Nigeria

No doubt, there were tangible gains of missionary and colonial education in Nigeria and Africa in general, as already stated throughout this chapter. However, some African scholars contend that the effects and consequences of the missionary/colonial experience in Nigeria left damaging legacies in Nigeria (Achebe, 1959; Ajayi, 1965; Ayandele, 1966; Bassey, 1999; Isichei, 1983; Okure, 2009). The uneven spread of mission schools during the colonial era had its own consequences and effects. For the most part, it stimulated rivalry between ethnic groups; for example, the 1921 census recorded some 14,000 Yorubas and only 4,900 Igbos in the educated category (Abernethy, 1969). As shown in Table 1, among the 26 post-primary schools listed, 17 were located in the Yoruba area of the Western region, such as Lagos, Oyo, Ogbomosho, Abeokuta, Ibadan, Igebu-Ode, Ondo, and Asaba; while only six were found in Igboland of the Eastern Nigeria and its environs. This became an incentive for the Igbos to catch up with the others and thus “began an educational race that was to have highly significant political consequences” (Abernethy, 1969 p. 38).

Table 1

Secondary and Teacher Training Institutions founded in Southern Nigeria, 1859-1930

	Schools	Location	Date	Agency
1.	C.M.S. Grammar School	Lagos	1859	C.M.S.
2.	St. Gregory's College	Lagos	1876	R.C.M.
3.	Methodist Boys' High School	Lagos	1878	Methodist
4.	Methodist's Girls' High School	Lagos	1879	Methodist
5.	Baptist Boys' High School	Lagos	1885	Baptist
6.	Hope Waddell Training Institute	Calabar	1895	C.S.M.
7.	St. Andrew's College	Oyo	1896	C.M.S.
8.	Baptist Training College	Ogbomosho	1897	Baptist
9.	St. Paul's Training College	Awka	1904	C.M.S.
10.	Oron Training Institute	Oron	1905	Prim. Meth.
11.	Wesleyan Training Institute	Ibadan	1905	Methodist
12.	Abeokuta Grammar School	Abeokuta	1908	C.M.S.
13.	King's College	Lagos	1909	Government

14.	Eko Boys' High School	Lagos	1913	Private
15.	Ibadan Grammar School	Ibadan	1913	C.M.S.
16.	Ijebu-Ode Grammar School	Ijebu-Ode	1913	C.M.S.

(continued)

Table 1 *Secondary and Teacher Training Institutions founded in Southern Nigeria, 1859-1930*

(continued)

	Schools	Location	Date	Agency
17.	Duke Town Secondary School	Calabar	1919	C.S.M.
18.	Ondo Boys' High School	Ondo	1919	C.M.S.
19.	Ibo Boys' Institute	Uzuakoli	1923	Prim. Meth.
20.	Baptist Boys' High School	Abeokuta	1923	Baptist
21.	Dennis Memorial Grammar School	Onitsha	1928	C.M.S.
22.	United Missionary College	Ibadan	1928	C.M.S.-Meth.
23.	St. Thomas College	Asaba	1928	R.C.M.
24.	St. Charles' Training College	Onitsha	1929	R.C.M.
25.	Government College	Umuahia	1929	Government
26.	Government College	Ibadan	1929	Government

Note: Abbreviations: C.M.S.: Church Missionary Society (Anglican). C.S.M.: Church of Scotland Mission (Presbyterian). Prim. Meth.: Primitive Methodist. R.C.M.: Roman Catholic Mission. Source: Abernethy (1969, p. 36).

There also were disproportionately high enrollment rates in some areas of Yoruba land in Western Nigeria and among the Efiks, and other related tribes from Calabar province in Eastern Nigeria. This is seen in Table 2, which also demonstrates gaps between the regions that were setting a pace in education in Nigeria, such as Lagos, Ijebu, Calabar and other provinces

including Oyo or Ogoja (Abernethy, 1969). There were low enrollment rates in the 1920s in both the Western and Eastern Regions of the country, but a gradual increase by the 1930s. Table 2 indicates that the presence of the colonial missionaries was felt more in these two regions than in other parts of the country. For example, the Northern Region was not represented in the table, an indication that western education was not prevalent in that region during this period.

Table 2:

Enrollment as a percentage of school-age population by Province, 1921-1931

Province	1921	1931
Western Region		
Lagos and Colony	24.4%	39.5%
Abeokuta	6.3	7.4
Benin	4.0	10.3
Ijebu	16.7	13.0
Ondo	4.8	7.3
Oyo	2.3	4.4
Warri	6.2	10.4
Eastern Region		
Calabar	20.4	30.2
Ogoja	2.3	1.5
Onitsha	9.3	11.8

Owerri	5.5	13.5
British Cameroons	1.8	10.4
All provinces	9.2	12.5

Sources: Talbot, (1926); Nigeria Census Office (1932).

Reflecting these educational gaps between provinces, certain minority groups in both Western and Eastern Nigeria began to demand separate states within the Nigerian Federation in the 1950s. For example, the Benin and the Delta regions began a campaign for a mid-west state, partly because they had been educationally deprived. However, their claims were directed to the Yoruba, rather than the missionaries who chose to work in Yoruba land. In the Eastern region, the movement for a separate state by the non-Igbos of Calabar, Ogoja, and Rivers reflected somewhat different concerns (Abernethy, 1969). In Calabar, for example, “the Efik-speaking elite had complained of losing its former influence, not of never having tasted power” (Abernethy, p. 38).

Educational inequality was even more pronounced in the Muslim north of Nigeria, as noted above. This is evident in Isichei’s (1983) observation regarding the situation: “the close link between Christian missions and western education and the policy, originally initiated by Lugard, of excluding missions from the Muslim emirates, meant that the North had very little contact with western education” (p. 441). In 1952, the number of people literate in English in Kano province was 23,000 out of a total population of 3.4 million. Therefore, Isichei (1983) maintained that, “the most fundamentally damaging legacy of colonialism was the immense differentials it created in society” (p. 443). Bassey (1999) noted that, “colonial educational

planners in Africa favored a selective approach to education, and therefore concentrated education in particular areas and among certain interest groups to the utter neglect and detriment of others” (p. 37). Other scholars saw the missionary work as disruptive and damaging to the African traditional society. For instance, Ayandele (1966) wrote about this at some length:

The missionary activity was a disruptive force, rocking traditional society to its very foundations, denouncing ordered polygamy in favor of disordered monogamy, producing disrespectful, presumptuous and detribalized children through the mission schools, destroying the high moral principles and orderliness of indigenous society through denunciation of traditional religion, without an adequate substitute, and transforming the mental outlook of Nigerians in a way that made them imitate European values slavishly, whilst holding in irrational contempt valuable features of traditional culture. (p. 329)

Achebe (1959), writing on the invading role of the colonial missionary work in Africa stated “things fall apart, the center cannot hold” (p. 1). Okure (2009) bemoaned the destruction of the family and other traditional structures:

Family structure, the traditional and some social ceremonies had divine origins. As far as the colonial rulers and the missionaries were concerned, these traditional modalities of behavior were inferior, and especially from the Christian standpoint, pagan. Christianity, aided by the colonial might, engaged in a systematic and constructive secularization of the traditional worldview, in order to re-sacralize it with European-Christian worldview. Whatever custom the missionary-colonial enterprise did not understand in the indigenous societies, it despised, and what it despised, it destroyed. (pp. 84-85)

Another African from Tanzania, Karim Hirji, complained that, “it was missionary education which facilitated the separation of the African from his traditional society...” (as cited in MacKenzie, 1993, p. 46). In July 1986, in a Tanzanian radio commentary, the missionaries were also accused of supporting imperialism in this way:

Mission schooling supported imperialism. We should remember not what they gave us but what they took away from us. Educating children is, in principle, fine and worthwhile. But there is a question to be asked: what were they being educated for? They were being educated for subservience, they were being educated to turn their backs on their own past and their own peoples. (as cited in MacKenzie, 1993, p. 46)

Uchendu (1979) contended that the major aim of colonial education in Africa was to assign Africans to inferior roles in the colonial regime, and this was confirmed in Lord Lugard's statement below:

The object which education in Africa must have in view must be to fit the ordinary individual to fill a useful part in his environment... and to ensure that the exceptional individual shall use his abilities for the advancement of the community and not to its detriment or to the subversion of constituted authority... I have placed the formation of the character in the foreground of African education... [because] among the primitive tribes ethical standards must be created. (as cited in Bassey, 1999, p. 36)

Okure (2009) criticized the boarding system of education in Nigeria during the colonial era and accused the missionaries of separating the students from their cultural background, thereby causing different levels of status within the same family:

Beginning from the secondary school level, and even in some primary schools, students generally lived in boarding schools and away from the home and family. They were separated at a young age from family and the cultural background of their people. At boarding school, they learned western etiquettes, new ways of eating, a new language and new habits that were geared to link them to the colonial administration and western lifestyle. Within the family then, the process created westernized and non-westernized family members; the educated and non-educated; English speakers and non-English speakers, literates and illiterates, the civilized knowledge class and the non-civilized ignorant class (pp. 91-92).

However, others saw colonial missionary education positively and praised its civility role in providing a common identity (Berger, 1969; Ekandem, 1974; Ojo, 1981). For Arinze (1990), the work and achievements of the early Christian missionaries remained in the spiritual realm and, as such, cannot be quantified or measured in material terms. He concluded, therefore, that, "the penetration of Christianity introduces a silent revolution of moral, religious, social, cultural and political consciousness which is one of the greatest assets of any society" (Arinze, 1990, p. 102).

Conclusion

The development of Catholic education during the colonial era has been discussed. Both the British colonial government's direct and indirect roles in education in Nigeria were clearly expounded upon and the different stages of the colonial educational policies discussed. More importantly, this chapter presented the rise of a nationalist movement in Nigeria from the early part of 20th century that necessitated the anti-colonialism movement in different parts of the country. This chapter also highlighted the various stages of colonialism in Nigeria that came in the form of different educational policies and the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Nigeria in 1914 for an easy access to and control of human and natural resources in the country. The British colonial regime was met with great resistance by the natives who sought many means to fight back. This was evident in the types of colonial resistance found in the different regions.

The chapter concluded with the effects and consequences of colonial and missionary education via examining the teaching methods used by the missionaries, the different examples of western hegemony found in these schools, and the removal of students from their homes, turning them into aliens to their local customs and tradition. It was found that, although there were many positive developments in this era, some critics maintained that the problematic legacies left behind by the British colonial officials were especially damaging. Moumouni (1968, as cited in Bassey, 1999, p. 50) contended that "the general concept of educational system inherited from the period of colonial domination cannot be applicable [in Africa] if one is to respond to the new political conditions and social objectives which have resulted from the accession to political independence."

CHAPTER FOUR: THE POST-COLONIAL ERA (1950-1970)

In this chapter, the legacies of the British colonial leaders and the colonial Christian missionaries in the post-colonial Nigeria from 1950-1970 are examined, especially with regard to education matters. As will be seen, the impact of western hegemony and cultural domination by the British colonial leaders continued to shape post-colonial Nigeria. The historian Williams Gwyn (1960), defined hegemony as:

An order in which a certain way of life and thought is dominant, in which one concept of reality is diffused throughout society, in all its institutional and private manifestations, informing with its spirit all tastes, morality, customs, religious and political principles, and all social relations, particularly in their intellectual and moral connotations. (p. 587)

For Nigeria, as in many other African countries with the background of colonialism, nation-building remains a challenge (Akanle, 2011). Bradley (2006) maintained that some of the British colonial government policies have led to severe repercussions for post-colonial Nigeria. An important example was the 1914 amalgamation of the Southern and Northern Nigeria, which “created the basis of inter-regional politics in the country and the future divide between the primarily Islamic Northern part of the country and the primarily Christian Southern regions” (p. 63). Another colonial policy that had important consequences was the British imperial policy of indirect rule, a situation wherein Nigerians were ruled through traditional institutions. Bradley argued that these traditional institutions were often more ethnic in nature than national, and, as such, had a long-term perpetuation of ethnic consciousness and rivalries. Hence, ethnicity became a “colonial heritage bequeathed to Nigeria at independence by the colonial masters” (Ayatse & Iorhen, 2013, p. 179). Additionally, the regional and federal emphasis of the Nigerian constitutions of the 1950s paved way to the underdevelopment of a “unified national

consciousness by determining that access to power at the national level was to be derived from holding power at the regional level” (Falola & Heaton, 2008, p. 159). As a result, the largest ethnic groups in Nigeria, the Hausa/Fulani and the Igbo and Yoruba, dominated the politics in their respective regions and contested for power at the federal level (Falola & Heaton, 2008).

Subsequently, by the time the colonial government relinquished power to the Nigerian nationalist government, these major ethnic groups became recognizable political parties. These included the Action Group (AG) in Western Nigeria, led by Chief Obafemi Awolowo; Northern Peoples Congress (NPC) in Northern Nigeria, headed by Sir Ahmadu Bello; and National Council for Nigeria and Citizens (NCNC) in the Eastern Nigeria, headed by Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe (Ayatse & Iorhen, 2013). The result, then, was that during the 1959 general elections in Nigeria, only the three major parties above participated, making the post-colonial political system in Nigeria one built upon “ethnic prejudice” (Ayatse & Iorhen, 2013 p. 185). Throughout the post-colonial era in Nigeria, other ethnic groups felt neglected and disadvantaged because of “varying political regimes and economic realities” (Bradley, 2006, p. 64). More critically, the constant disagreements among the three major ethnic groups, Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa/Fulani continued to shape the political scene in Nigeria. Bradley (2006) commented on the problems caused by ethnic rivalries on the Nigerian politics:

The continuing inter-ethnic antagonisms among the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria (Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa-Fulani) have created tenuous relations, as well as a fragile democracy in the state’s attempts to satisfy the major ethnic groups, while at the same time appeasing the multitude of other minor ethnic groups. (p. 64)

Although the post-colonial era began in 1960, when Nigeria won political independence (Nzekwe, 2007), 1954 marked the actual beginning of self-rule in Nigeria. Omenka (2007) observed that “the greatest battle for self-government in Nigeria was fought between 1940 and 1950” (p. 35), as discussed in the previous chapter. The post-colonial era marked the period

when the young Nigerian government continued in its quest to have more control over schools, as the colonial authorities once did.

The 1951 Macpherson Constitution governing self-rule granted the regional governments power to enact laws on education, health, agriculture, and local government (Omenka, 2007), while the 1953-1954 Constitutional Conference made Nigeria into a truly federal state (Arinze, 1965; Aso, 2012; Omenka, 2007; Onwubiko, 1985). By 1953, the regions had become self-governing in many domains, including education. Since education was a major concern at the time, “the nationalist government was not prepared to leave its control in private hands” (Omenka, 2007, p. 35). Consequently, with the regionalization of education in 1951 and the rise of the three major political parties, the AG in the West, the NCNC in the East, and the Northern People’s Congress (NPC) in the North, political rivalry led to each one seeking the provision of social amenities (Fafunwa, 1974). Hence, the Western and the Eastern regions headed by the AG and NCNC regarded education as a top priority in their respective governments, particularly at the primary school level (Abernethy, 1969; Fafunwa, 1974).

These developments occurred within the context of Nigerian national plans for the expansion of education through the implementation of a particular educational policy, a free and compulsory Universal Primary Education (UPE) program. This was similar to plans for mass education in other developing nations. On December 10, 1948, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) that included the right of everyone to education that shall be free at least in the early and elementary stages (United Nations, 1948, article 26). In order to promote the right of every child in Africa to education in line with the provisions of the UDHR, the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) funded an African regional conference held at Addis

Ababa in 1961 (Obasi, 2000). The Conference, with African Ministers of Education in attendance, set a goal for the attainment by 1980 of universal compulsory 6-year elementary education in Africa (Adesina, 1988). Consequently, after the Addis Ababa meeting, many countries started a free education program, beginning with a reduction of school fees at the primary level (Obasi, 2000).

The free UPE program was introduced in Nigeria a few years after the 1948 United Nations' Conference. This period was marked by a global educational revolution. Baker (2014) has suggested that, "never before in human society have so many individuals dedicated so much time, energy, and resources to becoming educated" (p. xi). In Nigeria a number of constitutional and administrative changes formed the bedrock on which the UPE scheme was built. For instance, the 1947 Richards' Constitution led Nigeria toward the path of federalism by dividing it into three regions with educational and financial matters becoming regional affairs. The decentralization of education was heightened by the 1948 education code that provided such offices as a Deputy Director, a Chief Inspector of Education, and a Board of Education for the newly created regions. More significant was Sidney Philipson's 1948 report, which created the Local Education Authorities that were given the mandate to share in the generation of revenue for the running and management of schools (Onwubiko, 1985). This scheme was implemented with different schedules in the three regions.

A major topic of this chapter, therefore, is the parameters and benefits of the UPE, its implementation, effectiveness, and controversies in the different regions, beginning with Western Nigeria. This was the first educational policy undertaken by the Nigerian nationalist government after the handover of political power by the British.

As shown in Chapter Three, Catholic education was most highly developed in the Eastern region. Therefore, while the UPE scheme was successful in the Western region, it met with opposition in the Eastern region because of the presence of the Catholic Church and other factors. It was within this period that a new generation of indigenous Catholic school leaders, such as Rev Ikeme and others, came into the limelight. As will be seen, the presence of the Catholic Church in the region and its resistance to the new educational scheme led to its eventual isolation politically. In the Northern region, the scheme was less successful because of the Muslim influence that, for a long period, opposed western schooling in preference to Islamic education. This chapter also touches upon the shortage of teachers that resulted from implementation of the UPE scheme, and it includes a discussion on the Nigerian/Biafran civil war. Following the 1966 Nigerian military *coup d'état* leading to an outbreak of war many activities including education were halted until the end of the war in 1970.

Universal Primary Education: Parameters and Benefits

The reason for implementing the free UPE in Nigeria was to ensure that every Nigerian child has a fundamental right to a 6-year primary education. This was in accordance with the provisions of the United Nation's UDHR, as a "pre-requisite for equalization of opportunities for education across the country in all its known facets" (Federal government of Nigeria, as cited in Ukeje & Aisiku, 1982, p. 211). Similarly, a growing number of observers held, like Baker (2014), that "formal education is not a privilege... but a basic human right and is socially just, in the same way food, shelter, and security are considered universal human rights" (p. 41). Apart from the equity perspective, there were other benefits of basic education that informed the UPE scheme as a policy in Africa (Obasi, 2000). According to Lockheed and Verspoor (1991), they

included poverty reduction, social and economic development, prospects for better wages, increased agricultural productivity, improved health care systems and nutrition, and acquisition of a modern life style. These authors noted that education can help parents with their children's education, promote national integration and sustain unity through common values, ideologies, and languages. Additionally, the education of citizens promotes better distribution of income, higher savings, more rational consumption, improvements in gender equality, and makes people receptive to technological changes (Lockheed & Verspoor, 1991).

According to economists at the time, financial resources spent on primary education was an investment in human capital (Schultz, 1981; World Bank, 1988), yielding greater returns than attainable from investing in secondary or higher education (Psacharopoulos, 1985). Human capital has been judged very important, particularly in the developing countries of Africa. Citing several authors (Denison, 1962; Harbison and Meyers, 1964; Schultz, 1961) who studied the developing countries, Brint (2006) maintains that there was a moderate to strong correlation between a country's spending on education and its GNP per capita. Even more than that, Baker (2014), states that even though studies on human capital theory are primarily about skills acquisition, these skills are acquired through education. He stipulates that, "the fact that an education usually leads to higher wages in the labor market is enough for the human capital position to assume that if market forces choose workers with greater productivity then education must be the main causal factor" (p. 126). Considerations such as these prompted widespread support for UPE-type programs in developing nations during the immediate post-colonial period.

On the other hand, considerable skepticism eventually appeared regarding these theories. Other scholars had cautioned that human capital development was not enough to produce economic growth. Harbison and Meyers (1964) noted that:

Human resource development is only one of many factors which are associated with economic growth. The availability of petroleum and mineral resources, world markets for particular agricultural commodities, the population-to-land ratio, the stability of political institutions, social and cultural traditions, the existence of a will to modernize, and a host of other factors are also influential. (cited in Brint, 2006 p. 91)

Similarly, Philip Foster (1965) underscored the over reliance of the African newly independent states on education expansion to the neglect of other social and economic changes:

One of the most outstanding features of African leadership in the newly independent states has been the overwhelming emphasis placed upon programs of educational expansion, often at the expense of other alternatives foregone, reflecting the belief that formal education is the pre-eminent instrument for promoting desirable social and economic change. (p. 183)

Foster noted further that the reason for this was that many new African governments were elected into power with their promises to extend education to the wider population. As a result, these governments were under pressure to impress the people that it was capable of maintaining a level of growth and development that looked far better than that of the colonial regime.

Ultimately, education became a yardstick for a more tangible manifestation of such progress that is easily identifiable by the people as noted by Foster:

The percentage of children enrolled on education, the number of schools built, the amount of money spent on education, or the level of literacy among the population serve the political end of convincing the masses that real efforts are being made. (p. 184)

Illustrating poverty reduction as touted as one of the benefits of the UPE scheme in Nigeria, as in other countries. Ityavyar (1986) recounted his experience as a student during this era just before the implementation of the UPE scheme, illustrating the deep poverty that existed then:

My father could not pay because he had no money. In fact, at home my father had problems with paying his own poll tax which was then £6. His income per year was just a little more than that. I had often painfully accommodated shame as my classmates watched me pack my tarded books in the midst of a lesson to go home as ordered by the headmaster. Many of us left school for the rest of our lives. Sometimes, we were happily absorbed in the farm... When I finally returned to school, I again faced the shame of being a classmate to those who were my juniors, while my former classmates had advanced to a higher grade. (p. 168)

Given circumstances such as these, it was clear that many children dropped out of school because of poverty. The UPE scheme thus brought changes to the economic and social life of the people. Obasi (2000) stated that it was the numerous benefits of this educational scheme that led to the importance attached to education by international institutions such as United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Bank. In the case of Nigeria, the World Bank viewed the UPE favorably and commended its effect on the school age population:

For several years following independence, Nigerians were proud of their educational system and proud of being educated. The rapid development of primary schooling throughout the Western and Eastern regions in the 1950s and 1960s, the development of good-quality secondary grammar schools throughout the Federation, plus the expansion through the Ashby Commission of a university sector with half a dozen world-class universities all made this system one to be emulated. (World Bank, October 3, 2003)

Altogether, in that case, this period marked an era of education revolution in Nigeria, as pointed out by Fafunwa (1974). In their study of the world educational revolution, Meyer, Rubinson, Ramirez and Boli-Bennett, (1977) suggested that between 1950 and 1970, education expanded worldwide as a result of overall growth in enrollment levels. Statistics indicating these trends are found in Table 3.

Table 3

Mean Primary, Secondary, and Higher Educational Enrollments as Percents of the Appropriate Age Group Populations: For all Available Countries, and Separately for Richer and Poorer Ones, 1950, 1960, and 1970

		1950 Mean %	1960 Mean %	1970 Mean %	Cases
A.	Primary students/age group pop				
	All countries	58	71	83	117
	Richer countries*	90	98	102	51
	Poorer countries	37	53	72	56
B.	Secondary students/age group pop.				
	All countries	12.7	21.5	30.5	102
	Richer countries	21.3	35.8	46.4	49
	Poorer countries	5.3	9.4	17.0	46
C.	Higher ed. Students/age group pop.				
	All countries	1.4	2.8	5.3	109
	Richer countries	2.6	5.2	9.2	46
	Poorer countries	0.6	1.2	2.6	55

*Richer countries are defined as those above the median in 1950 GNP/Capita (\$172 in 1964 U.S. dollars).
Source: UNESCO (1970-1971). Statistical Yearbook cited in Meyer, Rubinson, Ramirez & Boli-Bennett, (1977).

These data demonstrate a dramatic change that occurred in education within two decades. Overall, average primary school enrollment skyrocketed from 58% in 1950 to 83% in 1970 for all countries. Meyer, Ramirez, Rubinson, and Boli-Bennett (1977) suggested that the revolution extended to other levels of schooling too. According to them, the secondary school ratio doubled in the richer countries and more than tripled in poorer countries. These figures indicate that higher education increased almost four times in both categories of countries between 1950 and 1970. In the end, the authors contended that “between 1950 and 1970, the expansion of national educational systems was universal, with greater proportions of rapidly expanding age-groups in school” (Meyer, Ramirez, Rubinson, and Boli-Bennett, 1977, p. 245).

It is important to note, however, that the education revolution did not happen overnight. Baker (2014) underscores this by noting that “it is a revolution that began with younger children in the middle of the 19th century” (p. 25). Consistent with the history of education in Nigeria from the late 19th century, it was evident that the pioneer students of colonial missionary education were a starting point. Baker also notes that, “education revolution has expanded the notion of who can and should go to school and the idea that formal education is appropriate for all ages” (p. 30). From his perspective, the education revolution has objectively transformed the post-industrial culture into a “schooled society,” (p. 8) and this became increasingly evident in post-colonial Nigeria. This transformation took different shapes in the development of Nigerian political and educational systems, changing from more static or functional roles during the colonial era to a conflict and more competitive roles in the years that followed. These events are examined in this chapter and the next two chapters.

The Universal Primary Education Scheme in Western Nigeria

Earlier in this chapter, it was observed that the free UPE scheme began in the Western region and became successful for limited Catholic influence in the region. It was also noted that the Action Group (AG), was predominantly a Yoruba political party in Western Nigeria. The party, led by Chief Obafemi Awolowo, won its first election to the Western House of Assembly in 1952 (Fafunwa, 1974). Two days after the House had gathered for its first budget session, Chief Awolowo spelled out one of the guiding principles on which his party was founded: “as far as possible expenditure on services which tend to the welfare, and health and education of the people should be increased at the expense of any expenditure that does not answer to the same test” (Awolowo, 1960, p. 263). In July of the same year, the new Minister of Education of the Western Region, S.O. Awokoya, presented a proposal for an introduction of a free, compulsory, UPE that would take effect not later than January 1955. The proposal included: “a massive teacher-training program, the expansion of teacher-training facilities and secondary schools, the introduction of secondary technical education and secondary modern schools” (Fafunwa, p. 167). Emphasizing the importance of educational expansion in the region, Awokoya stated: “educational development is imperative and urgent. It must be treated as a national emergency, second only to war. It must move with a momentum of a revolution” (Western Region Debates, July 30 1952 pp. 463-470).

Between 1952 and 1954, consistent with this educational proposal, the Western Region made a stringent effort to meet the January 1955 deadline. More teachers were trained and many school buildings were constructed, some with concrete blocks, others with mud, and many others with a combination of both. Finally, the UPE scheme was launched in January 1955 with parades and speeches delivered by Awolowo and Awokoya. This marked the beginning of the

educational revolution in Nigeria, because in one year alone primary school enrollment rose from 457,000 to 811,000 (Fafunwa, 1974). These figures represented a jump from 35% to 61% in the number of school children aged five to 14, and the number of primary school teachers rose from 17,000 in 1954 to 27,000 in 1955 (Western Region Education Statistics, 1953-58). The capital expenditure for education rose from £2.2 million in 1954 to £5.4 million in 1955, and almost 90% of the increase was spent on primary education alone (Western Region Annual Report, 1954-1955). In 1955, a total of £2.2 million was spent on the construction of primary school buildings, while £5 million was spent for this same purpose between 1954 and 1958 (Western Region Annual Report, 1954-55). In 1960, five years after the introduction of the free UPE scheme, over 1,100,000 school children were enrolled, representing more than 90% of their age group in the Western region (Fafunwa, 1974). According to Abernethy (1969) “these few statistics indicate the dramatic and rapid expansion of school facilities that occurred once Nigerians came into semi-responsible position of power” (p. 128). However, while the introduction and implementation of the free and compulsory UPE scheme was successful in the Western region, it faced some major challenges in the others, especially in Eastern Nigeria.

The Universal Primary Education Scheme in the Eastern Region

As earlier stated, the UPE scheme faced challenges in Eastern Nigeria because of Catholic influence in the region, and other factors. As suggested by Abernethy (1969), this problem was more dramatic in the Eastern region than in the Western region. According to Abernethy, “the educational policy in the Eastern region during the 1954-1958 period was formulated in an atmosphere of crisis, caused both by the complexity of factors, political, administrative, religious and financial” (p. 161). In 1953, the Minister of Education in the Eastern region, R.I. Uzoma,

presented his government's educational policy for the free primary education. As Fafunwa (1974) noted, the proposed scheme had significant financial expectations of political local governments:

The local government bodies in the region were expected to pay 45 percent of the cost of a free junior primary education program proposed for the end of 1956 or beginning of 1957. There was to be an increase in teachers from 1,300 to 2,500 annually, and the establishment of a secondary school in every division. (p. 170)

However, in 1953 a problem erupted within the Eastern government party (NCNC) that led to the resignation of certain cabinet members and a reshuffling of portfolios. In 1954, as result of these changes, the leader of the Eastern government, Eyo Ita, was replaced by the party leader, Nnamdi Azikiwe; and the Minister of Education, R.I. Uzoma, was replaced by I.U. Akpabio. According to Fafunwa (1974). this affected the proposed free UPE scheme, which had been made by the former officials. The new government rejected the proposed scheme, preferring the rapid introduction of the UPE on a large scale, and rejecting the idea of local contributions. Accordingly, on August 17, 1956, the government of the Eastern region presented its policy to be implemented by January 1957. The new policy had features that were problematic to the Catholic mission. In particular, the Catholic Church opposed a provision that put limitations on the opening of new primary schools, the number of pupils to be admitted to existing schools, and the measure of control given to the local education boards (Omenka, 2007; Onwubiko, 1985), as well as the bonding of teachers to the government instead of the voluntary agencies that employed them (Onwubiko 1985). These difficulties may have been due to the fact the Eastern regional government had less time than its counterpart in the Western region to plan its scheme. When this UPE was finally launched in 1957, many of the new schools were staffed by untrained teachers, since there was not enough time to train them. Also, owing to the lack of time for planning, there were many inadequate buildings, equipment, and unprepared leadership. Then, in

1958, many teachers were laid off and many schools closed down due to lack of funds (Fafunwa, 1974).

Problems of funding certainly played a major role in the inability of the Eastern government to implement the UPE, but the Catholic Church, which comprised more than 60% of Christians in the East and controlled over 60% of the schools, was another factor. Expressing their position on education, on May 22, 1956 the Eastern Catholic Bishops wrote clearly that alternatives to public schools must be respected:

The right is entirely fundamental. Children belong to their parents by natural law and the parents are responsible before God for their proper upbringing and education. They cannot fulfil this responsibility unless they are free to choose the agency (or mission) to which they give their children. Freedom to choose a school for one's children is an essential freedom. It should not be removed by any government. (1956, p. 4)

The Eastern Catholic Bishops were worried that the UPE was simply the first step in a longer process of state control over education:

If we accept this first step (that is, the establishment of local education authorities proposed by the Eastern government) without protest, the second and the third steps will provide a "full education service" which will exclude our Catholic religion from all grant-aided schools. This loss of Catholic education will be followed inevitably by the loss of faith. (*The Leader*, editorial September 8, 1956)

It is clear that the Bishops' believed that control of Catholic schools was critical to their faith, as expressed in the statement above. Also, these were schools that required tuition, a critical source of income for the Church and its institutions. But not all religious groups agreed with this position. While the Catholics were against the government's new educational policy, the Protestants appeared to adopt a more liberal attitude toward the UPE. This is reflected in a 1956 press release by the head of the Church Missionary Society (Anglican) of the Niger diocese, who supported the new policy:

We, in the past, in common with other Churches have used our schools as one means of spreading that Christian faith which we believe to be the true way of life for all. We shall

naturally be sorry to see those particular opportunities restricted in the future but we recognize that when education is provided universally at public expense, the Churches cannot claim to continue to control nearly all schools... We do not feel it right to claim that all parents who registered their children at a church school were consciously insisting that there alone must their children be educated. In many places they had no option but to register at one denominational school or another. (Niger Diocese, October 1956)

Some scholars have criticized the Catholic missionary resistance to the new education scheme. The Nigerian historian Augustine Okwu (2010) observed that the Spiritans, one of the founding missionaries in Eastern Nigeria, also opposed the UPE scheme because the school was not only their main tool of evangelization but also a major source of income. Okwu's claim points to the lack of transparency and accountability of this particular missionary group, the Holy Ghost Fathers, and also questions the credibility of its evangelizing work.

Schools were not only the Spiritans' missionary instrument of evangelization it was also their main source of income. Any attempts to proscribe their building more schools, or take them away from the Fathers or to make them co-managers of the school they ran exclusively and successfully to their own financial benefits and without accountability to the people, were therefore regarded both as a radical measure to emasculate their Christianization strategy, forestall their growth in Church membership and predominance in education in the region, but also as a plan to deprive them of the major source of financial strength. (Okwu, 2010, p. 285)

Despite these issues, the government of Eastern Nigeria was forced to modify its original plan in light of the financial difficulties it faced. Additionally, the Catholic presence in the region created some potential for conflict, as evidenced in the bishops' statements. As a consequence, two commissions were established in succession to help reach a compromise between the state and the Catholic mission. The results of their work were labelled the Dike Report and Ikoku Report (Onwubiko, 1985). In 1958, the Eastern government established a commission headed by K. Dike to review its educational policy. Its report showed that about one third of Eastern government revenue was spent on education alone, and that the UPE scheme was becoming more expensive (Report on the Educational System in Eastern Nigeria, 1962). This

made its sustainability an open question. Other considerations were also made. For example, it was suggested that teachers in local authority schools managed by the voluntary agencies were supposed to connect with the missions that employed them.

However, by the time Dike report was released in 1962, another committee known as the Ikoku Committee on the Review of Educational System in Eastern Nigeria was inaugurated in June 1962 (Fafunwa, 1974). This committee proposed sweeping changes to the educational system of the region, principally through greater government control of institutions:

Consolidation of primary schools and discontinuation of non-viable schools; 2) complete government control of all primary schools; 3) setting up of local school boards and the involvement of local government councils in primary education; 4) reduction of the length of primary school education from seven to six years; 5) improvement of teachers' conditions of service and the provision of in-service courses for teachers; 6) introduction of a six-year secondary education course and the elimination of the sixth form as soon as practicable. (Ikoku Report on the Educational System in Eastern Nigeria. July 1962)

The first statement above suggested that many mission schools in the region that were not considered to be effective were supposed to be closed, which meant that many Catholic schools were potentially affected. The report also recommended policy changes to give the government full control of the mission schools in the region, largely by establishing local education boards. The Ikoku report also considered improving the conditions of service of the teachers, which also could have affected the Catholic schools.

This period of tension regarding the UPE, principally between the government and the Catholic Church in the region, coincided with the meeting of the Second Vatican Council in Rome. This took place from 1962-1965, and rejected the notion of "Catholicism as a pure and perfect institution" (Bryk, Lee & Holland, 1993, p. 48). Instead, Catholic Church was presented as a human institution in need of continued reformation. The Council Fathers therefore called for tolerance of all faiths and the rejection of any coercion in the sphere of beliefs (Bryk et al.,

1993). While this was a sharp break from past practice, it did not represent such a dramatic change for many Catholics in Nigeria, including the new indigenous generation of priestly educators. For his part, Ikeme was ready to embrace this tolerance and respect for other people's faith and belief. In 1964, when he became the principal of Igbo Etiti Grammar School, Adada, he was more concerned about excellence and discipline than about religious practices. He noted this in an interview:

I furnished a part of the school for the Anglicans to hold their services, and woe to anybody or any Catholic who disturbed that area during their prayers. The Muslim boy had his place just as the Catholics had their own. And no conversion to the Catholic faith was allowed unless the student had reached the final year and had written permission of the parents. (January 2016)

While many members of the Church may have been ready to accept limitations to its evangelizing mission, especially in light of Vatican II, some of the Bishops continued to resist incursions on the autonomy of Catholic institutions. Following the recommendations of the Ikoku Report, in 1965 an Education Law was promulgated to establish Area School Boards to replace the Managers of Schools. To this, the Bishops complained that the Eastern government had promulgated a policy that was a “*de facto* State take-over of schools” (Omenka, 2007, p. 39). But opinion in the Church leadership was divided. As Omenka (2012) notes, debate over the 1965 Education Law caused a division among the Eastern Nigerian Catholic Bishops regarding their rights and authority. Those on one side were led by Bishop Whelan of Owerri and Bishop Moynagh of Calabar, while the other group was led by Father Jordan and Bishop Okoye of Port Harcourt. Bishop Whelan had confidence in subscribing to the government control of Church schools for several reasons. First, he recalled the role of Catholic men and women in “combating local authority over education, in the 1956 proposed free UPE” (Omenka, 2011 p. 9). Second, given the growing number of Catholic representation in the Regional government, and with G. E.

Okeke as the Minister of Education in 1957, Bishop Whelan believed that Catholic principles could be adequately defended by the lay faithful of the Church. Consequently, he thought that it was time to surrender control of Catholic schools to the local authority, after an agreement with the government over certain Catholic rights. The agreement in question was one that was implemented during the colonial era, in which “the state paid the teachers, while the Catholic Bishops, as proprietors, held a veto on the appointment of teachers...” (Omenka, 2011 p. 12). The opposing Bishops did not trust the government, and advocated retention of traditional Church control of the schools.

In the end, a consensus was reached by the two groups when Bishop Whelan was appointed the chairman of a special committee on education that was set up by the Nigerian Bishops’ Conference in January 1965 (Omenka, 2012). This was evident in its minutes: “the Committee remarked that ecclesiastical control of schools...is not necessarily identical with clerical control” (Enugu Diocesan Archives: Minutes of Meeting of the Special Committee on Education March 22-24 1965). In June of that year, Bishop Okoye, the leading advocate of the second group, conceded and began to support a shift in Catholic policy (Omenka 2012). In this regard, he relented on the question of government involvement with the schools: “we agree, the government must have more role to play in our educational system. Therefore we are not defending the ‘status quo’ as such” (Enugu Diocesan Archives: Letter to Vincent, Port Harcourt June 26, 1965).

In this fashion, in 1965 the Catholic Bishops finally accepted state control of education, but requested that limitations be established concerning “the Area School Boards, retention of proprietorship and the abrogation of a common religious syllabus” (Omenka 2011, p. 12). Obviously, the Vatican II Council that had just ended in 1965 had some effects, as this position

was quite different from the 1956 Bishops' statement about control of schools. Indeed, it reflected the position of the Vatican II Council, and local indigenous educators in schools were aware of these changes too.

Eventually, however, "the 1965 Education Law was implemented without any measure of Catholic influence, thus confirming Whelan's worst fears" (Omenka, p. 12). By this, Omenka meant without the agreement that Whelan had advocated. When the new UPE scheme was implemented following the civil war in 1970, it became clear that Catholic education was beginning to lose its relevance in Eastern Nigeria, especially with the move made by the government to ignore Catholic concerns. While the Eastern region experienced many challenges in the implementation of UPE, the Northern region had quite a different experience.

The Universal Primary Education Scheme in Northern Nigeria

The Northern region was not much affected by the Catholic education, because the North was mainly Islamic. As already noted, in the Northern region the development of education lagged behind than elsewhere in the country. The UPE program partly was set out to address the educational imbalance in the North (Csapo, 1983). While some Northern political and religious leaders were eager to expose their children to the modern educational system, many others, including many parents, were skeptical about the benefits of western education (Fafunwa, 1974). Despite the opposition to the new education policy from different elements of society, however, changes did occur in the North as well. In particular, the number of children enrolled in primary schools there grew from 66,000 in 1947 to 205,769 in 1957; in the West from 240,000 in 1947 to 982,755 in 1957; and in the East from 320,000 to 1,209,167 during the same period. Fafunwa (1974) noted that while both the Eastern and Western regions experienced large scale enrollment

growth, the percentage rate of increase in pupil population was higher in the North. This was because the Northern government focused on establishing of schools in the rural areas, and on the promotion of adult literacy as much as UPE. Additionally, all the primary schools, including voluntary and missionary schools, were sponsored with the public funds.

In 1958, the regional government decided to introduce primary education on a provincial basis and insisted that an increase in student population could only take place with the availability of qualified teachers. As a result of this policy, nearly all the primary schools in the North, though fewer in number than in other regions, had qualified teachers. Worried about falling further behind in the expansion of primary education elsewhere, in February 1961 the Northern regional government invited H. Oldman, the Chief Education Officer in Yorkshire, to study both the administrative and financial challenges that might arise in the process of implementing the UPE scheme. Oldman recommended the separation of administrative and inspectorial duties, the creation of education districts and the designing of a program to train education administrators to manage the new education authorities (Fafunwa, 1974).

Following Oldman's recommendations, an education law was passed in 1962 to form a partnership between the government and the voluntary agencies. According to Fafunwa (1974), the aim was to develop "a public system of primary education in which the government would be a leading partner with the Minister of Education having the overall responsibility for the promotion of primary education" (p. 175).

Table 4

Primary School Enrollment Figures by Regions, 1954-1970

Table 4.2: Primary school enrollment figures by Regions, 1954-1970							
Year	East		West		North		Total
1954	664,707	52%	456,600	36%	153,696	12%	1,275,003
1955	742,542	43%	811,432	47%	168,521	10%	1,722,495
1956	904,235	45%	908,022	46%	185,484	9%	1,997,741
1957	1,209,167	50%	982,755	41%	205,769	9%	2,397,691
1958	1,221,272	49%	1,037,388	42%	229,164	9%	2,487,824
1959	1,378,403	51%	1,080,303	40%	250,912	9%	2,709,618
1960	1,430,514	50%	1,124,788	40%	282,849	10%	2,838,151
1962	1,266,566	46%	1,108,999	41%	359,934	13%	2,735,499
1963	1,278,706	46%	1,099,418	39%	410,706	15%	2,788,830
1964	1,173,277	43%	1,104,879	40%	452,319	17%	2,730,475
1965	1,199,692	44%	1,089,327	40%	429,829	16%	2,718,848
1966	1,236,872	43%	1,128,127	39%	518,864	18%	2,883,863
1967-1969	-		-		-		-
1970							3,515,827

Table 4 provides data on the effect of the free UPE scheme in Nigeria during the post-colonial era. While primary school enrollments in the Eastern and Western region kept increasing as a result of UPE scheme, the Northern region was far behind. Although there were many challenges in the implementation of UPE in the Eastern region, primary school enrollments were high there. One reason might have been the presence of missionaries, who were predominantly located in the East using the school as a means of evangelization, as seen in Chapter Three.

It may be argued that the North lagged considerably in education expansion during this era, in spite of its higher population in the 1952, 1962 and 1963 censuses. In the 1952 census, for example, the North had a total population of 18 million, which was 54.55% of the entire country, with just 12% of school enrollment in 1954. Then, in 1962, 10 years later, it was still higher than

the South with 30.2million, which was 57.77% of the entire Nigerian population, with only 13% of total school enrollment. This may have been due to poverty and other factors. Many people living in the North were poor farmers. Additionally, it appears that the Islamic religion did not focus on modern education. As mentioned earlier, the missionaries who brought modern schooling in the colonial era were not present in the Northern region. The other regions had much higher levels of enrollment. In 1952 the population in the East was 8.5 million and it was 12.5 million in 1962; it recorded 52% of school enrollment in 1954 and 46% in 1962. The Western region had a total population of 6 million in 1952 with 36% in school enrollment in 1954, and a population of 10.5 million in 1962 and 41% of school enrollment. Clearly, regional differences in education were significant.

As noted earlier, there were disruptions in the east, more than the west. First, was the Catholic opposition toward the UPE scheme. Second, the Eastern government ran out of funds to implement the new scheme and, lastly, it was also noted earlier that many teachers were laid off as some point. There were no figures during the Nigerian/Biafran civil war years (1967-1969), when almost all the schools, primary, secondary, and colleges were shut down in the East, as noted by Omenka (2007):

The calamity which visited the Eastern Region in 1967, when the Federal Military Government began its siege, had, by 1969, halted all educational activities, except in Bigard Memorial Seminary and the Trinity Theological College, Umuahia, the only two educational institutions that remained open throughout the war, albeit in locations other than their own (p. 40).

The Nigerian civil war brought about massive devastation with “estimates of one million deaths either as a direct result from the war itself or indirectly from starvation and disease” (Bradley, p. 66). Such statistics reflect the gravity of the war, but life and educational activities resumed in 1970 immediately after it ended, as shown in Table 4, that there was a total of 3,515,

827 enrollments nationally at that time. Even as the fierce war continued, in September 1969 a National Curriculum Conference was held in Lagos. Its goal was to review and identify new national goals for Nigerian education, focusing on the task of nation-building and national reconstruction in the post-war years (Fafunwa, 1974).

Universal Primary Education and the Shortage of Teachers

Generally speaking, Nigeria struggled with a shortage of teachers as education expanded, undermining smooth implementation of the UPE. The former Premier of Western Nigeria, Chief Obafemi Awolowo (1968), wrote in this regard, “our backwardness in the field of education is aggravated by the fact that we are short of teaching personnel at all levels” (p. 305), noting “a shortage of 4,550 graduates and of 5,182 intermediate-level teachers, in our post-primary and teacher training institutions” (Awolowo, p 305). But there was regional variation on this score as well. In the Western Region, for example, Adetoro (1966) noted:

The one factor upon which all the schemes depended for their success was the recruitment of teachers for the thousands of new schools that suddenly came into existence. In the Western region, there was a three-year gap (1952-1955) between the publication of the White paper on educational policy and the start of the universal education scheme. This period was spent on planning. To combat the teacher supply problem, local authorities and voluntary agencies were encouraged to open new teacher training colleges with generous financial assistance from the regional government. (p. 209)

To meet with this demand, sixteen new Grade III colleges were opened, to provide teachers at the lowest level of certification in primary schools. This led to an increase of these teachers from 3,483 in 1954 to 6, 613 in 1957, still far below the needs of the region. A few Grade II colleges were established also, but in order to provide specialist teachers for the teacher training colleges a crash program abroad was launched. According to Adetoro, at local level, a regional teachers college was established at Ibadan, sponsored by the International Co-operation

Administration of the United States. This college was staffed and supervised by faculty sent from Ohio State University. Still, the numbers of trained teachers remained quite low. This can be seen in Table 5, which illustrates the classification of teachers in Western Nigerian primary schools from 1954-1963:

Table 5 Figures regarding the classification of teachers in the Western Nigerian primary schools between 1954-1963

Table 5

Classification of Teachers (in percentages) in Western Nigerian Primary Schools, 1954-1963

Classification of teachers in Western Nigerian primary schools 1954-1963					
Year	Trained		Untrained		Total
1954	5269	31%	11,947	69%	17,216
1955	5899	22%	21,091	78%	26,990
1956	6737	21%	24,776	79%	31,513
1957	9115	26%	26,736	77%	34,851
1958	10,897	29%	26,218	71%	37,115
1959	12,626	38%	20,675	62%	33,301
1960	14,763	42%	20,669	58%	35,432
1961	16,530	41%	23,747	59%	40,277
1962	18,400	46%	21,749	54%	40,149
1963	20,635	53%	18,856	48%	38,856

Table 5 shows the magnitude of the use of both untrained and uncertified teachers in the region. In 1954, for example, there was only a total of 5,269 (31%) trained teachers as against 11,947 (69%) untrained and uncertified teachers. This trend continued until in 1963, when the region was able to train up to 20,635 (53%) teachers, a significant margin in comparison with 18,856 (48%) untrained teachers who worked in the schools at the time. Financially, the region

experienced some difficulty, because the UPE program proved more expensive than anticipated. For example, in 1955, an estimate of £3,121,000 increased to a total of £5,358,720.

In Eastern Nigeria, the teacher shortage was worse than in the Western region as a result of its numerous tiny and ill-equipped institutions. As stated in the previous chapter, many schools came into existence due to interdenominational rivalry. Therefore, the regional government was compelled to pay for many small and poorly staffed schools. As an illustration, in the first year that the UPE was launched in Eastern Nigeria, a total sum of £4,449,328 was spent in grant-in-aid to schools against the original budget of £3,900,000 (Adetoro, 1966). In order to avoid bankruptcy, the government had to reintroduce payment of tuition in the lower two classes in primary schools. As a result, the number of schools was reduced, and while enrollment remained the same, there was a drop in the number of primary school teachers between 1958 and 1960 (Adetoro, 1966). Even though efforts were made by the regional government to keep the UPE scheme from collapsing, there was no denying the shortage of teachers. Results of this crisis ranged from low quality instruction, falling standards in primary schools, and poor remuneration for teachers. Adetoro suggested that all these factors contributed to a further lowering of the teaching profession in prestige. There was also a shortage of trained teachers at the secondary school level. In 1964, Rev Ikeme, as principal of Igbo Etiti Grammar School, dealt with the shortage of teachers in the region by recruiting his own staff:

I traveled to distant institutions to employ for the school, qualified tutors who majored in particular subjects. I was in need of them. It became that almost in every subject I had a specialist for it. That is how I had Charles Chidume GCE A level Math/Physics. (Ikeme 2012, p. 61)

In Northern Nigeria, the 1952 report from the Regional Ministry of Education noted that the establishment and expansion of primary education in the region depended solely on the development of teacher training. The report argued further that:

If parents were keen to have their children educated, money could probably be found to build and maintain schools... the subjects taught and the general content of education given in junior primary schools can be improved. But the situation of these difficulties will be of little avail unless teachers are forthcoming for training and the training centers are expanded to accommodate them. (Northern Nigeria: Educational problems and progress in 1952)

Therefore, Tibenderana (2003) suggested that it was as a result of shortage of trained teachers, rather than the scarcity of finances that caused the restriction of access to education in the Northern region. The teacher crisis in the region was acute in that it resulted in low standards of teaching. For instance, figures from the 1960 qualifications of primary school teachers showed that 4,863 out of 10,054 primary school teachers were untrained, while another 4,007 teachers only had qualifications equivalent to three years of schooling beyond primary levels. (Adesina, 1977). As earlier stated, instead of embarking on the UPE scheme like the other regions, the North chose to train qualified teachers to raise its standard of education.

In 1959, a commission entitled "Investment in Education" (Odueze, 1990, p. 67), headed by Sir Eric Ashby, was established to review post-school certificates and higher education in Nigeria; as well as to investigate Nigeria's manpower needs for a period of 20 years (Fabunmi, 2005). Apart from Sir Eric Ashby, the commission consisted of three Nigerians, three Americans and three Britons. In the end, the Commission reported a wide range of problems.

The imbalance between one level of education and the other; 2) limited admission opportunities for primary school leavers; 3) few school teachers were qualified and certified; 4) that the Nigerian education was parochial and literary; 5) imbalance in the development of education between North and South. (Investment in education, 1960)

Given the educational disparity between the North and the South, the commission suggested that the Northern region should aim at a primary school enrollment of 25% by 1970 (Bray, 1981). However, the regional government, out of concern, suggested a target of 50%, but when this became unfeasible the goal was set for 28% (Northern Nigeria 1962).

The Ashby commission also recommended changes at the post-secondary level:

The expansion and improvement of primary and secondary education; 2) the upgrading of the University College at Ibadan to a full-fledged university and the establishment of three other universities at Nsukka, Ife and Zaria; 3) the establishment of University Commission in Nigeria to enable universities maintain uniform academic standard; 4) that the post-secondary school system to produce the post-independence high-level manpower needs in Nigeria. (Investment in Education, 1960)

Regarding the commission's report on the limited qualification of primary school teachers, it was observed that, out of the 88,023 primary school teachers in 1957, 38,862 were uncertified, while a further total of 27,728 were on probation. In 1959, out of a projected total of 103,000 teachers below the university level, 70,000 were untrained. In the Western region, 26,000 of the 40,000 teachers employed in 1960 were untrained (Investment in Education, 1960). Adetoro suggested that a major contributing factor to the crisis was a lack of organization and direction within the teaching profession, as could be seen in an "absurdly large number of grades and categories of teachers" (p. 212). These included: (a) the uncertified and untrained teacher; (b) the Grade III teacher; (c) the Grade II teacher; (d) the Grade I teacher; (e) the holder of the Nigerian Certificate of Education; and (f) holders of other special certificates and diplomas (Adetoro, 1966).

The lowest of these in the trained categories was the Grade III teacher, and entry qualifications into this Grade differed from region to region. For example, in Northern Nigeria, a qualification for the Grade III certificate required at least 10-years of basic education and training. In the other regions of the country, the requirement included a secondary modern school leaving certificate, a secondary grammar class three or four certificate, and a 2-year period of training (Adetoro, 1966). According to Adetoro, the candidates were required to also meet the requirement of the Ministry of Education in their region, by passing the approved examinations in English, mathematics, history, geography, physical education, health education, and in school

method and organization. There were other optional subjects available, but there was always a compulsory teaching practice and practical examinations as well.

The Grade II certificate was obtained within two years by those candidates who were in possession of a Grade III teaching certificate and two years of teaching experience, or had successfully completed a full secondary grammar school course. They also could have been in possession of a secondary class four certificate, or a limited 4-year program conducted for those with lesser qualification. Then, for qualifications into Grade I, candidates must have passed two subjects in advanced level of the General Certificate of Education or its equivalent, have obtained the Grade II certificate, have had at least five years of successful post-graduate II teaching experience, and have passed a practical teaching examination recommended by the Ministry of Education. Table 6 shows the qualification of primary school teachers in Nigeria in 1963:

Table 6

Qualification of Primary School Teachers in Nigeria in 1963

Qualification	Number of male teachers	Number of female teachers	Total
Grade I teachers certificate or above	593	235	828
Grade II teachers certificate	13,227	2,921	16,148
Grade III teachers certificate	25,732	5,798	31,530
West African school certificate and equivalent	898	292	1,190
Secondary modern school certificate	7,202	2,206	9,408

First school leaving certificate	16,970	3,895	20,865
Others	9,764	2,950	12,714
Manual and handicraft instructors	258	249	507

(continued)

Table 6: *Qualification of Primary School Teachers in Nigeria in 1963 (continued)*

Qualification	Number of male teachers	Number of female teachers	Total
Vernacular teachers	979	7	986
Total number of teachers			94,176

Source: Federal Ministry of Education, (1965 p. 45). Statistics of Education in Nigeria 1963, Series I, Vol. III.

Table 9 shows the percentage interpretation of Table 8.

Table 7

Qualification of Primary School Teachers in Nigeria in 1963, (in Percent)

Qualification	Number of male teachers %	Number of female teachers %	Total %
Grade I teachers certificate or above	71.62	28.38	100
Grade II teachers certificate	81.91	18.09	100
Grade III teachers certificate	81.61	18.39	100
West African school certificate and equivalent	75.46	24.54	100
Secondary modern school certificate	76.55	23.45	100
First school leaving certificate	81.33	18.67	100
Others	76.80	23.20	100
Manual and handicraft instructors	50.89	49.11	100
Vernacular teachers	99.29	0.71	100

Tables 6 and 7 above are Indicative of major problems in the school systems. Some 20,865 (81% of them men, 19% women), or more than a fifth of all the primary school teachers in Nigeria, had only a basic primary education qualification. Another 31,530 (82% of them men, 18% of women), or nearly one-third had Grade III teacher qualification, a two to five year post-primary education and training. The implications were discomfoting, considering the resources expended on education in Nigeria. For instance, between the 1963 and 1964 academic years, the cost expended on education as a percentage of total budget was as follows: North, 21.2%; West, 43.4%; East, 38.3% Lagos, 4.5%; All Nigeria, 16.8% (Adetoro, 1966). Out of the total educational expenditure, about two thirds was spent on primary education alone, an indication that Nigeria has made expensive educational investments with poor results in human resource development. A major source of this was inadequate teacher quality.

The Nigerian/Biafran Civil War Years (1967-1970)

The Nigerian civil war was one of the most intense of all inter-African conflicts (Nnoli, 1972). The war itself was a climax of diverse events, with important sociocultural, political, and economic dimensions (Diejomaoh, 1972). Indeed, there are many accounts of Nigerian history and civil war (Fafunwa, 1974; Falola & Heaton, 2008; Isichei, 1983; Madiebo, 1980; Nzimiro, 1982; Uwechue, 1971), but none have discussed educational imbalance as one of the causes of the civil unrest in the 1960s. Regional differentials in education were related to the conflict in many ways.

Awolowo (1968) commented on the unequal enrollment in the country: “altogether, only 3 million of our children are receiving instruction in 15,000 primary schools. Of these 3 million, only half-a-million are receiving instruction in the Northern region, which is 53.5% of the entire

population of Nigeria” (p. 305). As a result of the differences in human resource development, the number of educated people in the South far exceeded that of the North. Diejomaoh (1972) noted that the Southerners, especially the Igbos and Yorubas, the major tribes of the region, occupied and dominated the white-collar jobs in the country:

Southerners, particularly the Ibos and Yorubas, dominated the Federal Civil Service, federal government corporations, and universities as well as positions in private industry throughout the whole federation. By dint of their superior educational attainment, Southerners felt that they too should dominate the federal government and its policy-making. (p. 320)

However, Diejomaoh suggested that the constitutional arrangements of the universal suffrage and the large population in the North that far exceeded that of the South afforded considerable control of the federal government to Northerners. This was considered unacceptable by many Southerners, who felt that the less educated Northerners would not provide the credible government that the country needed.

A look at censuses conducted in Nigeria between 1952 and 1963 reveals that the North consistently had more population than the South, as it was much larger geographically. This gave the North an edge in having more parliamentary seats in the Federal House of Assembly. Some scholars were skeptical of the 1962 census, hence another national census was conducted in 1963. For example, Abraham Okolo concluded that the 1962 census count became “a political rather than a statistical affair and the results were not acceptable to the three regional governments in the Federation” (Okolo, 1999, p. 323). The North in particular was accused of inflating its census figures of 1962 from 22.5 million to 30.2 million, an increase of 8.5 million (Uzoigwe, 2011). Regarding this Uzoigwe (2011) noted a reaction of outrage elsewhere in the country.

when this brazen and unconstitutional act became known in 1963, the NCNC in the East, furious with the NPC for what it considered as undemocratic sleight of hand, adamantly refused to accept the census result in the North... the census controversy had begun (p. 27).

Tables 8 and 9 show the total regional enrollments from primary to teacher training between 1955 and 1966; and the university population by regions in 1966:

Table 8:

Total Regional Enrollment in Primary, Secondary and Teacher Training, 1955-1966

	Primary school	Secondary (Grammar) school	Teacher Training
West*			
1955	811,432	10,935	6,743
1959	1,080,301	22,374	10,329
1966	741,832	48,146	3,410
East			
1955	641,205	10,421	4,008
1959	1,378,403	15,729	11,765
1966	1,236,872	68,737	9,093
North			
1955	168,521	2,671	1,946
1959	250,912	4,683	3,254
1966	518,864	17,700	12,687
Lagos			
1955	37,636	3,720	43
1959	66,320	4,804	424
1966	98,511	14,088	-
Midwest			
1966	384,877	16,272	3,647

West*: Between 1959 and 1966, the West was divided into two regions, the West and the Midwest, whereas the actual division occurred in 1963. Source: Western Region Statistical Bulletin, June 1959.

As noted earlier, regarding the development of primary education, the Northern region had a total enrollment of 518,864 pupils in 1966, which was very low in comparison to the West and East. The student enrollment gap was even larger at the secondary school level, with a total of 17,700 in the North, 68,737 in the East, 48,146 in the West, 16,272 in the Midwest, and 14,088 in Lagos. But importantly, in 1966, the Northern region far exceeded other regions in the teacher-training enrollment with a total of 12,687. This reflected the efforts made by the Northern regional government to train more teaching personnel for its schools, in connection with implementation of the UPE scheme.

Invariably, the educational enrollment gaps in both primary and secondary school levels reflected the university attainment in both the Northern and Southern region, respectively. Table 9 shows the university population by regions:

Table 9

University Population by Regions, 1966

University	North	East	West	Midwest	Lagos
Ahmadu Bello	74	38	18	10	2

Nsukka	2	395	54	72	6
Ibadan	4	166	204	27	2
Ife	2	61	130	24	-
Lagos	1	15	13	13	-
Total	83	675	419	146	10

Source: Federal Office of Statistics, 1967.

Diejomaoh (1972) observed that secondary school graduates in the Southern region who could afford it, travelled to the United Kingdom or the United States for university education. The result, then, was that while there were university graduates in the South in the first decade of the 20th century, it was only in the early 1950s that there was a university graduate from the Northern region (Diejomaoh, 1972). In 1966 when the crisis began in Nigeria, the university attainment gap widened between the North and the South. Table 11 shows that, in 1966, there were only 83 university graduates from the North in comparison with the 675 from the East, 419 from the West, 146 from the Midwest and 10 from Lagos. Many Nigerians also graduated from universities abroad during this period. While there was only one university in the North, Ahmadu Bello, and one in the East, University of Nigeria Nsukka, there were three universities in Western Nigeria (West and Lagos), Universities of Ife, Lagos and Ibadan. However, despite these discrepancies, the Igbos in the East far outnumbered all other regions in the number of graduates from the various universities in the country.

These gaps in school enrollment in the different regions of the country and other sociocultural and economic issues as earlier mentioned, led to the agitation by certain ethnic

groups, such as the Igbos, to seek more representation in the national government. The result was a gradual conflict that eventually escalated to a civil war in 1967.

In 1968, as the fierce war between Nigeria and Biafra continued, the Catholic Bishops of Biafra learned about a new commission that was created by the Ministry of Education to advise the government on such matters that included the proprietorship, administration, and control of schools in post-war Biafra (Omenka, 2012). These were the same issues that had been hotly contested in the pre-war years, but the method being used suddenly became coercive and undemocratic. The Catholic Bishops, as the proprietors of the largest educational institutions in the region, were neither informed nor represented in these decisions, and the speed with which the commission carried out their duties was rapid (Omenka 2007). Consequently, during their meeting on April 30, 1969, the Catholic Bishops decided to send a delegation to Sir Louis Mbanefo, the Chief Justice of Biafra, to urge him “to use his good offices to arrest what would otherwise precipitate a crisis” (Enugu Diocesan Archives: Minutes of the Bishops’ Meeting held at the Mission house at Amaimo, Owerri, April 30, 1969). They also sent a similar letter to the then Head of the Biafran State, Lt. Col. Odumegwu Ojukwu (Omenka, 2007

While the Bishops struggled to preserve their institutions, other Catholic educators found themselves embroiled in the conflict. Rev Ikeme was enlisted in the army on the side of Biafra, as he was convinced of the cause. He went to Col. Odumegwu Ojukwu, a leader of the rebellion, who commissioned him as a captain. Ikeme reported that he helped to coordinate operations and acted as an intelligence officer. Apart from taking his military assignment seriously, Ikeme carried out a priestly ministry in the war zone as a chaplain. Although Ikeme served in the military, he testified that “the only thing I didn’t do was enter the trenches and open fire against the enemy. I begged everyone especially those in authority to understand with me and handle

me with some caution” (Ikeme, 2012, p. 69). Yet his military experience would have a strong influence on him. That brief term of service, along with his colonial missionary education, were important elements of his approach toward discipline and standards in many of the schools he later headed as a principal.

Conclusion

This chapter examined colonial legacies in the post-colonial Nigeria. It also discussed the achievements and the challenges of the Nigerian government in the post-colonial era (1950-1970) that primarily included the school expansion through the introduction and implementation of a free and compulsory UPE scheme. It critically examined the successes, challenges, and controversies of this scheme in the three regions of Nigeria, West, East and North. It was found that while the UPE was somewhat successful in the Western region, it was somewhat problematic in the Eastern region for lack of adequate planning and funding, and opposition from the Catholic Church, which controlled more than 60% of the schools in the region. The chapter also discussed the impact of the new educational policy in the different regions, indicating a shift which led to the missions gradually losing the control of schools. It also discussed the battle between the Catholic Church and the regional government during this era with respect to control of schools, given the new educational policy that made education free for the masses. It was indeed an era of uncertainty for the Catholic Church, and for the relevance of Catholic education in Nigeria.

In the North, the UPE scheme was slower because of the educational gaps that existed between the region and the other regions since the colonial era because of different religious beliefs. It was found that, while the Eastern and Western regions were growing faster than the

North in primary school enrollments, there was a steady increase in the Northern primary school enrollments.

Generally, one major factor that hindered the progress of the UPE plan implementation was the shortage of trained teachers throughout the country. The results were obvious, ranging from low education standards, closure of schools, and over-crowding of schools. Nonetheless, the UPE scheme was unprecedented in the history of Nigerian education systems because it came at time when there was an educational revolution around the world, a claim that was supported by many sociologists, economists and international institutions like the World Bank, United Nations and the UNESCO. Hence the many benefits of universal primary education that included decline of poverty, education equality, gender equality, the building of human capital, and the eradication of illiteracy around the globe.

However, the 1966 *coup d'etat* and the subsequent Nigerian/Biafran civil war halted all activities, including education, in Nigeria, forcing the closure of many educational institutions until the end of war in 1970. It was only then that discussions on the reconstruction of a new Nigeria began along with new beginnings in the education system for the post-war years. Also, it was found that Rev Ikeme served as a captain in the Biafran civil war, well convinced of the cause of Biafra. That had implications for the way he managed the schools after the civil war. The next chapter presents the government takeover of all voluntary agency schools in the post-war years, the public debates on state control of schools, the various conflicts that surfaced in Nigerian schools, and the struggle by the Catholic Church for the return of the schools to the missions.

CHAPTER FIVE: POST-WAR YEARS (1970-1975)

In this chapter the events that occurred within the five years after the Nigerian/Biafran civil war and the quest for Catholic control of schools are examined. It was an era that was marked with uncertainty for Catholic education in the wake of war and attempts to assert government control of schools. In Eastern Nigeria, the focus of this study, the Catholics were accused of participating in the civil war, and so, in order to reduce their influence, the government decided to take control of the schools. These issues will be discussed with respect to two different levels of political activity, national policy and local developments. At the national level, the problems of state control of education and other sociological issues are examined, as well as arguments regarding state control and its effects on schools. At the local level, the works of Rev Charles Ikeme, and other Catholic educators who were working hard to bring order to the schools in an era of upheaval and uncertainty is considered. Even though, the foreign missionaries were repatriated from Nigeria after the government control of mission schools, local teachers and school administrators, including Rev Ikeme and other Catholic educators, continued to work as civil and public servants.

At the end of the civil war in 1970, it was clear that major ethnic and regional fractures continued to exist, thereby preventing a sense of national identity and the development of a stable, democratically elected federal government (Bradley, 2006; Falola & Heaton, 2008). The result was a “government apparatus that became increasingly divorced from its subjects, creating a stark disconnection between the will of the people and the actions of government officials, a disconnection that continues to afflict Nigeria” (Falola & Heaton, 2008, p. 181). Despite the

challenges of the post-war years in Nigeria, on October 1, 1970, the Military President, General Yakubu Gowon, presented a nine-point agenda that included, the eradication of corruption in Nigeria, the return to civilian rule in 1979, and plans for a national census (Isichei, 1983).

This government also centralized the various sectors, such as education, health care, the economic system, and civil and public service. The administration of universities was transferred from the state to the federal government for more uniformity and representative admissions into colleges and universities (Okure, 2009). The secularization of Christian schools and hospitals was part of government's efforts to centralize Nigerian public sectors. Hence, there was a state takeover of schools. The federal government considered education an instrument *par excellence* for national development, in terms of achieving social change and bringing together a country that was split by civil war (Csapo, 1983).

These events showed that the civil war and the defeat of Biafra did not favor the foreign missionaries. On February 18, 1970, many of them were forcibly repatriated from Biafra after being found guilty of illegal entry into the country (Nwosu, 1985). The Nigerian historian Vincent Nwosu (1985), expressed the Catholic Church's frustration on the deportation of the European missionaries: "this forceful repatriation of Catholic missionaries hitherto working in Biafra before and during the war was one of the saddest episodes of the war, so far as the Catholic Church was concerned" (p. 375). According to him, the role of the missionaries during the war period was immense, ranging from medical services, and the provision of relief materials to many Nigerians who could have died from disease and starvation. However, one Nigerian newspaper, the *Daily Times* (1970), criticized the role of these foreign Christian missionaries, who as agents of European powers caused the rebellion to last longer than expected:

Nigerians today are very skeptical about foreign missionaries in view of the diabolical roles some of them, acting as agents of foreign Christian bodies, played during the

Nigerian civil war. Nigerians still remember very clearly that Ojukwu's rebellion lasted for 30 long months partly because of the supports which it had had from foreign sources, especially from some well known Church organizations, including the Roman Catholic Church. (March 10, 1970)

Nonetheless, Nwosu (1985) maintained that the role of the Christian missionaries during the war times was deeply appreciated for their humanitarian services, and for the Catholic Church, the war years were a time of crisis and challenge.

The Problems of State Control of Education and Other Sociological Issues

This chapter, first offers a sociological look at the struggle between the state and the Christian churches over the control of schools in Nigeria. As noted earlier, many educational sociologists have discussed the prime position of schools in modern society. Steven Brint (2006) notes that "schooling is very highly valued by governments and their citizens" (p. 3), and even more important than any other socializing institutions, such as churches or recreational centers, given the average hours spent in schools on a daily basis. Based on such observations, Meyer (2011) states that in modern societies, education is a highly developed institution, and as such, has great impact on them above any immediate socializing experiences it offers the young.

Other educational sociologists have made similar observations about mass schooling and education expansion based on research from other countries. Ramirez and Boli (2011) examined the political construction of mass schooling through the lens of European origins and worldwide institutionalization. Citing Collins (1977), these authors noted that "state authorization, sponsorship, funding and control of mass education first developed in Western Europe" (as cited in Ramirez & Boli, p. 217), but later became a highly institutionalized model of national development around the globe (Ramirez & Boli, 1982). From their findings, the authors asserted that the European model of a national educational system has morphed into a world model that

now influences the activities of states and societies, and some cultural differences among national societies still persist. They also found that many more independent states create educational ministries (Adams & Farrel, 1976 as cited in Ramirez & Boli, 2011), and compulsory education laws (Ramirez & Boli, 1982), as a symbol of the rapidly developing links between states and schools. These developments were found to occur in many developing nations, including Nigeria in its launch of the UPE scheme of the 1950s' and 1960's. Second, states devoted funds to education and began to take greater roles in financing mass education (Inkeles & Sirowy, 1983), and regulating school admission policies, curriculum, and examination structures. Again, this was one of the reasons for the government takeover of schools immediately after the Nigerian civil war. Third, primary school enrollments in many countries had expanded since the end of World War II, irrespective of economic resources or political structures (Remirez & Rubinson, 1979). As shown in the previous chapter, there was a rapid effect of primary school enrollments following the introduction of free and compulsory UPE in Nigeria.

Meyer, Ramirez, Rubinson and Boli-Bennett (1977) viewed educational expansion in light of political and social modernization. According to them, education expands for certain reasons. First, modern political representatives require educated citizen participation and political efficacy and, as a result, this expands mass education for increased participation. Second, as modern political participatory regimes tolerate competing status groups, and as such, more such groups have access to education (Ben-David & Zloczower, 1962; Collins, 1971). Third, the spread of bureaucracy in organizations leads to an increase in the number of educational qualified positions in the society, which in turn are governed by “universalistic criteria of personnel selection” (Meyer et al., p. 243). In addition, theories of modernization argue that, “curricula and

structural arrangements of schools meet these demands for identifying and selecting individuals on such universalistic criteria” (Dreeben, 1968; Parsons, 1959 as cited in Meyer et al., p. 243).

Meyer and colleagues also acknowledged the connection of education expansion with powerful and authoritative states. Within this context, the method of expansion and strengthening of political power encourages educational expansion for the creation of a national political culture and ideology, as well as the creation of national social citizenship. In both cases, education is the key to bring about such changes (Bendix, 1964; Rubinson, 1974). Drawing on historical studies (Merriam, 1931; Resiner, 1927), Meyer and his associates underscored the close relationship between education and state-formation, and maintained that this process should deepen further in the contemporary world as the power of national states continued to increase, as was evident in Nigeria.

Following the UPE upsurge in enrollments of the 1950s and 1960s, Foster (1965) predicted the correlation between education and unemployment in the new African States, including Nigeria. He noted unequivocally that “as a result of the quickening expansion of the educational system during the late forties the challenge was becoming increasingly acute” (p. 137). He suggested that debates in the Legislative Council of Ghana showed a growing concern with the incidence of unemployment among school leavers and government was aware of this problem. The problem of educational attainment and unemployment was not only seen in Ghana but in other African countries, including Nigeria as noted by Foster (1965):

for half a century commentators on Nigeria have said that school leavers refuse to work with their hands: ‘they want white-collar jobs’, is an expression still frequently heard. The implication is always that the school leavers are lacking in some undefined morality. (p. 138)

In other words, the pursuit of the UPE program was not inherently tied to economic development. Given the foregoing, the greatest challenge to education as an instrument of

national development seems to lie in Labaree's (1997) description of the dilemma of the school as an institution. Labaree noted that, "schools... occupy an awkward position at the intersection between what we hope society will become and what we think it really is, between political ideals and economic realities" (p. 41). Over time, he continued, education is considered an arena that concurrently promotes equality and adapts to inequality. As such, within schools these contradictory purposes translated into three goals, namely, democratic equality, social efficiency and social mobility. Labaree noted that, "democratic equality is the perspective of the citizen, from which education is seen as a public good, designed to prepare people for political roles" (p.42). While social efficiency approach to schooling as a public good prepares individuals to carry out useful economic roles with competence. Finally the social mobility method to schooling argues that education is a commodity for competitive advantage in the struggle for social position. From this perspective, education is seen as a private good.

In view of this, Labaree suggested that for democratic equality goal, education is mainly a public good, since it prepares students for participation in modern society. For social efficiency, education is a public good but often in service to the private actor, while for social mobility, education is a private good for personal consumption. Labaree cautioned that the major threat to education among the three is the growing dominance of the social mobility goal, because of its narrow consumer-based approach to education that contributed to the revisualization of education as a private good. The state control of education in Eastern Nigeria was meant to treat education as a public good, but also came to be seen as a private good too. Thus, despite the development of insightful sociological perspectives on schooling in modern societies, there remained arguments regarding state control of schools and its effects on Nigerian

education. Not everyone accepted the notion that government control of education was necessary to realize national development. These issues are discussed in the sections that follow.

State Control of Education in Eastern Nigeria

The situation during the post-war years in Nigeria entailed problems extending well beyond the education sector. The state takeover of all voluntary agency schools in Eastern Nigeria was rapid, and came at a time when people were still recovering from the ravages of war, and a time of unparalleled miseries and afflictions in the region (Omenka, 2011). Thus, Cook (1978) suggested that “the post-war situation made such a take-over relatively simple in the absence of an organized opposition that in other circumstances the Catholic mission might have provided” (p. 206). In addition to the effects of the civil war, Omenka (2007) has described the level of lawlessness the region was faced with immediately after the war:

Lawlessness continued to reign in the region and the promise of reconciliation, rehabilitation and reconstruction of the state remained a mere statement of intent. The workers were not reinstated, the hospitals were moribund and the schools remained shut. As always the people looked up to the church for help, (p. 42)

In a way, the war ended the rivalry between Catholics and Protestants. Omenka noted that during the post-war years, Catholics and Protestants had come together to help in the reconstruction of the country. On May 14, 1970, an interdenominational meeting was chaired by the Catholic Archbishop Arinze with deliberations on a variety of issues, including social, economic and educational problems. Others present were Sir Louis Mbanefo and Dr. Akanu Ibiam, leading Biafran politicians who could no longer function as statesmen in the new political order. While Mbanefo attended in his capacity as the Anglican Chancellor of the Niger diocese, Akanu Ibiam was present as a ruling elder of the Presbyterian Church of Nigeria.

On May 19, 1970, these Churchmen sent a delegation to the Administrator of the East Central State Ukpabi Asika with certain concerns. These included human suffering, education accessibility, medical services, and demobilization of the army posted at private homes, along with community, school, and church premises. Also, the delegation was intended to deliberate with the administrator about the possibility of bringing experts from overseas to assist in the post-war relief efforts. (Omenka, 2011). This had become necessary because many foreigners had been expelled from Nigeria immediately after the civil war, as stated earlier.

However, the meeting was not successful given the response of Ukpabi Asika to the church delegates, in which he demonstrated the government's uncompromising stance toward the help of the Christian churches. In his own words,

It is the attitude of the government to co-operate with the Church, but unfortunately the training given by the Church all these years had been a wrong one. The climax of it was the result of the recent civil war. [The Government may] embark upon a new mode of training which would bring lasting peace. (Enugu Diocesan Archive, May 19, 1970)

Asika's response showed that the military government was no longer interested in any dialogue with the heads of churches regarding education. Unlike the situation in the 1950s and 60s. Omenka (2012) contends that after the civil war, the military administrators lacked restraint and control in their actions. He reported that after the May 1970 meeting, church leaders were convinced that Ukpabi Asika was determined to take over all schools in the state. Unknown to the church leaders at the time, their previous meeting was to be their last audience with the administrator, even though he promised another meeting to discuss the way forward. The administrator ignored the heads of the churches until new policies were announced in the form of edicts and decrees on December 31, 1970 regarding the state control of schools in the region. The first of these made it clear that schools would be managed directly by the state.

The schools in the state become functional within the shortest possible time after the vast destruction and damage suffered by the existing schools in the course of the civil war. It is desirable and necessary that the state takes over all schools within the state and their control, management and supervision, in order to secure central control and an integrated system of education which will guarantee uniform standards and fair distribution of educational facilities and reduce cost of running the schools. The take-over will ensure that schools which are in effect financed by the people and managed by their accredited representatives will more readily provide stability, satisfy the people's basic educational and national needs, combat sectionalism, religious conflicts and disloyalty to the cause of united Nigeria. (East Central State of Nigeria, Edict no. 1, p. 1 of 1970)

The East Central State was the first to announce the state control of all voluntary agency schools. The voluntary agency schools in this context represent all schools formerly built and controlled by private individuals, local communities and Christian missions before the public edict of 1970 (Anowi, 1964). Nwagwu (1979) suggested that government edicts such as the one above were rigorous and were aimed not only at ensuring the maintenance of a high standard of education, but for more effective control by the government for the type of education provided for the citizens, along with the content and objectives of the curriculum. Before long, the state take over of schools inspired a variety of viewpoints, including different arguments by scholars, and opinions in the general public. These debates were an important element of this period, and are discussed herein.

Arguments in Favor of State Control of Education in Eastern Nigeria

The government was ready to defend its action regarding control of schools. This was evident in Asika's 1971 policy statement that included provision of financial resources by the government for the reconstruction of the schools:

Apart from many other reasons why government should take this step, it is clear that in our present post-war circumstances and in the light of experience in the last fifteen years, the State would have to bear the total burden of restoring the educational system to the level and with the speed its importance requires. The war has left most voluntary agencies, private proprietors and local communities in no position to generate internally

the finances necessary to meet the capital cost of reconstruction and re-equipment and the equally heavy cost of running the schools at any appreciably good standard. The burden must rest with and be accepted by the government. This government accepts this responsibility and pledges to take the opportunity of the option it now has to develop a planned and integrated educational system for this State. (East Central State, 1971 p. 2: Policy on Public Education)

The provision of financial resources by the state was also in line with proposition that the UPE program was supposed to be free. This was quite different from the independent institutions; in Catholic schools fees were charged. Asika's policy statement was certainly consistent with the position articulated by many educational sociologists, who argued that education was an important aspect of national development. Making it free to the public was an important aspect of this goal.

Other scholars, while affirming state control of schools, criticized the alien character of mission schools. These educators believed that in Nigeria, the different missionary groups had affinity with the foreign cultures of Ireland, England, Scotland or America depending on their religious denominations. Nwagwu (1979) argued that, the education and civilized culture taught in these schools were not African but that of the western powers that they represent. Therefore, the educational socialization found in these schools became an agent of alienation rather than an integration of the child in his local community. Nwagwu states that, in the end, the schools produced "European Africans" (p. 79), and argued that the only way of Africanizing the schools was by state control of schools. As discussed in chapter three, the native culture and tradition were seen as inferior, pagan and uncivilized when they were not properly understood by the missionaries. Essien (1975) clearly stated, "as it was, everything in those practices, songs, dances, forms of response to the energy of the gods, in fact, the collective wisdom of our ancients, the very resources of our creative potential were considered as of no consequence" (p. 40).

Reflecting similar concerns, Obiabuaku (2005) sees the 1970 edict in a positive light:

When considering the reconstruction of the schools, Mr. Asika's Administration had also to worry about their future management and survival. The vast majority of the schools were the so-called mission schools, which were in fact community schools because they were built and supported by the communities in which they were located, although managed by missionaries. Handing the schools back to original owners therefore meant returning them to a totally impoverished people, the richest of whom had only twenty pounds in their bank accounts. If school take-over by the state did not occur when it did, education would have been retarded in East Central State for a very long time...

Additionally, the best thing that ever happened to teaching profession in Nigeria occurred in East Central State following the take-over (p. 1).

Ajuzie (2003) discusses additional rationales for government takeover of schools to an extent. These included the missionary inefficient accounting system, misuse of funds, observance of holidays and the missionaries active support of the Biafrans during the 1970 civil war. These are quite clear in his recounting of the history.

Besides the post-war social demands, the government nursed several allegations against the missionaries who controlled more than 75% of the educational establishment in the then Nigeria. They were branded as inefficient in their accounting system, pointing to a possible misuse of fund in their school administration. The missionaries were accused of observing too many public holidays during the school years, that is the feast days of the church. They observed the feast days of the Christmas (25th December), ascension of the Lord (forty days after Easter), Assumption of Mary into heaven (15th August), and the feast of All Saints (1st November). The last straw was government's allegation that the missionaries worked on the side of Biafra during the civil war. The Christian missionaries of course, remained in parts of Nigeria during the war on account of their works of charity. Those of them in the East were helping the refugees of the war torn areas, they tried to rescue lives, solicit for and to bring relief from overseas to the hungry people of Biafra. For these and the rest of the philanthropic services they rendered, government was displeased with them. It was felt that their activities helped to prolong Biafran resistance. (pp. 146-147)

In his study of the *historical account of government centralization of mission and voluntary agency schools in Imo State of Nigeria*, Onwana (1998) interviewed heads of schools and educators who supported the state control of schools. In one such interview, Bernard Nwokeleme noted that the centralization of schools by the government led to the unification of

teachers in the state. This brought about numerous educational groups and associations, such as: “All Nigeria Conference of Principals, The Schools Science Teachers Association, The English Teachers Association” (Onwana, 1998, p. 143). According to Nwokeleme, the existence of these groups became a means of boosting the educational confidence of both the teaching and non-teaching staffs of schools in Nigeria. Importantly, these groups served as the representative body of the educational institutions in dealing with the state. On another note, Onwana suggested that through unions and associations, the teachers could influence government educational policies readily in their interests, often times by threats of strikes and demonstrations. D. Iwuoha and T. K. Nwachukwu in Onwana’s (1998) study, observed that prior to state control of education, there was religious rivalry between Christian missions which was resolved by government intervention in controlling these schools. This effectively ended the question of inter-denominational competition in the education sector.

Similarly, the Nigerian historian Lawrence Amadi (1979) noted that the 1970 edict was necessary, adding that after three years of civil war, parents and students alike were anxious to return to school. Second, Amadi suggested that the edict was also positive, because it provided a psychological energy for the people and hope that the government intervention was an indication of its commitment to its citizenry. According to the author, it provided “both a rallying point and a directive” (p. 534). He also suggested that the unity of the country was of utmost importance and that “centrally controlled and uniform system of education is an important factor for achieving such unity” (p. 535).

Amadi highlighted the level of community involvement after the state takeover of schools. He suggested that the 1970 Public Education Edict reinforced a spirit of common cause among the people. He illustrated further how the edict would work more along these lines:

Communities were to participate fully in the running and management of schools through participation in parent-teacher-associations, membership in school committees, and divisional boards. The financial burden being carried by the State School Board meant a welcome relief to the communities, especially in the handling of financial difficulties resulting from post-civil war conditions. It also meant more equitable distribution of schools and equipment. (pp. 536-537)

Amadi argued that state control of schools would allow students to attend school from home, thereby reducing the cost of education. He also maintained that the rights of the parents and guardians to participate in the affairs of the school were guaranteed in the new regime that became an essential part of the 1970 edict. Such rights included becoming members of the governing council at every level of the school system and participating in the development of the curriculum. He stated that this was an opportunity parents never enjoyed during the missionary era.

Amadi further suggested that the edict would provide more room for religious freedom: “the freedom of the individual to practice the religion of his choice is a fundamental freedom, safeguarding this right was important because the old East Central State had a history of positive response to “multi-Christian denominations” (p. 538). This freedom of religion in the school curriculum is stated clearly in the edict:

Save as provided in the Edict with respect to the control of schools nothing in this Edict shall have effect, or be construed to have effect, as preventing any person from practicing any religion of his choice or preventing any parent from bringing up his children in accordance with the principles of any religion. (East Central State of Nigeria Edict No. 2, Part 11, Section 4, No. 7)

In addition, the edict recommended that one day in a week should be set aside for the teaching of religious instruction which should also be made optional for students and their parents:

Subject to the provisions of the Edict and the regulations made thereunder, there shall be set aside on every Thursday which is a school day a period for religious instruction by

any religious groups, of all children who volunteer to attend or whose parents express no objection to their attending such instructions. (East Central State of Nigeria Edict, No. 8)

The government made it clear in the edict that given the many Christian denominations found in the state, it was imperative that parents exercise the option to choose any religious denomination for themselves and their children. To this effect, the teaching of religion was moved from being a core subject to an optional one in the schools. This became a major bone of contention between the Catholic Church and the state, regarding the question of religion being taught in the schools.

Finally, the implementation of UPE was linked to the state control of schools, because the government would bear the financial burden. It was expected that the Federal Government under state control of schools would find it easier to deal with states in the implementation of the UPE. Similar educational projects throughout the Federation would not have been as easily accomplished under voluntary agency control. It was argued that many voluntary agencies, especially private individuals, went into education field for profit, while some voluntary school managers lacked transparency and accountability in the handling of government grant-in-aid (Nwagwu, 1979). From the foregoing, such arguments seemed to make it clear that the government had the ability to meet the various needs of the schools in the region; as a consequence those in power justified the state control of schools in these terms.

Arguments Against State Control of Schools in Eastern Nigeria

The Catholic bishops in the region, along with various scholars, argued that it was unfair for the government to forcefully take control of the schools established by the missionaries and other private individuals. Afigbo (1978) stated that the “East Central State public edict was not,

in spite of popular belief, a bolt from the blue” (p. 77). The Catholic bishops responded in their joint pastoral letter of Easter 1971, entitled “Education” in which they expressed their frustrations about not being able to hold consultations with the state officials regarding the new policies in education:

We had nursed the hope that the State Government was only undertaking immediate post-war temporary measures. We had hoped that any proposed permanent arrangement for the future of our children would be a result of a careful and long examination and consultation between the Government, the parents and the Church. Our efforts to persuade the Government to hold discussions with us have been frustrated again and again. Finally on 31st December 1970, the State passed the Public Education Edict—which is made retrospective to 26th May 1970. (Education: 1971 Easter Joint Pastoral Letter of the Catholic Bishops of East Central State of Nigeria p. 5)

These Catholic bishops had argued that denominational schools should exist to give people freedom to make their choices. A number of observers agreed, including Nnaji (2007), who supports the need for educational choices in the society:

A society that believes in fundamental human rights should, as far as practicable, provide equally for the varying needs and desires of its members and not perpetuate a system of education that does not provide maximum choices of schools for its citizens” (p. 58)

Also, the Vatican II document “*Gravissimum Educationis*” otherwise known as, “Declaration on Christian Education” dealt with guidelines concerning the rights of people to education with particular reference to the duties of parents, government and the church to education. In particular, it provided specific duties of the government in promoting the education of the young people such as protecting the rights and responsibilities of parents and others who share in education by giving them aid according to the “principle of subsidiarity” (*Gravissimum Educationis*, 1965 no. 3, para.2). It also emphasized that the principle of subsidiarity ensures that there is no form of school monopoly, because it is “opposed to the native rights of the human person, to the development and spread of culture, to the peaceful

association of citizens and to the pluralism that exists today in ever so many societies”

(*Gravissimum Educationis*, no. 6 para. 2). Hence the term “principle of subsidiarity” states:

A community of a higher order should not interfere in the internal life of a community of a lower order, depriving the latter of its functions, but rather should support it in case of need and help to coordinate its activity with the activities of the rest of society, always with a view to the common good. (Pius XI, *Quadragesimo anno*, 1931 no. 80; see also the catechism of the Catholic Church, 1993 no. 1883)

In its 1971 pastoral letter, the Catholic Church Hierarchy in the East Central State took a stance, stating that the Catholic Church was not ready to give up its proprietary rights despite the military edict:

The Church is not against Government control and management of schools in principle. But she requests that the practical form that this takes be first discussed and agreed upon. The Church for example, does not insist on collecting fees and paying the teachers. The interest of the Church in education is not financial... These and other details are best discussed between the government, other proprietors, parents and teachers if there is to be a possibility of meaningful and dignified cooperation and success for the education system. The Catholic Church as the proprietor of many educational institutions affected by the Edict, who was not consulted before these drastic measures were taken, wishes it to be known that she has no intention of giving up her proprietary rights to her educational institutions. (Education: 1971 Easter Joint Pastoral Letter of the Catholic Bishops of East Central State of Nigeria pp. 16-17)

This subsequently remained the position of the Catholic Church in Eastern Nigeria.

Onwubiko (1985) argued that the state control of schools took place after the civil war when people were economically disadvantaged, and as such were not in the position to oppose government action:

A battered economy, people terribly impoverished, famished with hunger and weakened by disease; churches and schools in ruins, roads in terrifying state of dilapidation and disuse... Such a time the military Government of Mr. Ukpabi Asika realized was most appropriate for the take-over of schools. (p. 268)

Following the aftermath of the war, the lay Catholic faithful did not carry out public demonstrations against government takeover of schools, until the return of civilian rule in

Nigeria in 1979. Indeed, the people often were frightened for their safety since their towns and villages were surrounded with soldiers for a very long time. However, since the return to civilian rule in 1979, the Catholic laity has been in the vanguard, pressuring the government for the return of the mission schools (Onwubiko 1985).

More critically, the state control of schools that started from the Eastern region, later took place in other states outside the region. Adigwe (2010) observes that the government takeover of schools began from the Eastern region and then to other states of the country:

All schools belonging to Christian churches in East Central State were by radio announcement taken over by the government. The cry of the churches in the affected areas was rewarded by the government with a decree consolidating the radio announcement and depriving the churches of all rights to establish any institution that would look like a school. It was only by negotiations that seminaries for the training of priests were reluctantly allowed to exist. The Christian churches in all other states of the federation did not seem to have perceived what was happening, or regarded it as a peculiar arrangement designed for East Central State alone. It did not take long, however, before the plague of take-over of schools spread to other states of the nation. (p. 7)

Omenka (2012) argues that the government takeover of schools was followed by other rapidly instituted measures without consultation with the Nigerian Church leaders. These included the merger of schools and the changing of their former names, the posting of teachers and the admission of students to post primary institutions. Also, in 1971, the government ordered the demarcation of the Church and school premises. The Christian Churches that established these schools were not allowed to participate in the demarcation and building of walls between the church and the school. The Catholic priests and nuns were labeled squatters for living in houses built by Church funds on Church property. In March 1973, Offia Nwali, the sole Administrator of the State School Board, opened up a new attack in which he insisted on holding a non-religious meeting inside the chapel of a Catholic Girls' College, with the Blessed

Sacrament in the tabernacle. Immediately after that event he provocatively ordered that this same chapel be converted to a classroom (Omenka, 2007).

Other actions by the government took place in rapid succession. For instance, on July 5, 1973, the East Central State government issued another edict, *the Public Education (Amendment) Edict 1973*. This time, it became punishable by law, for anyone to enter any land, building or property vested, or deemed to be vested, or used by the state, or school boards without proper clearance. Omenka (2012) notes that it was then evident that “this was an indirect reference to Catholic rectories and convents that included some 1,000 residences scattered all over the state” (p. 45). He notes that this new edict made it impossible for any action to be carried out by any court against the School Board or its representatives.

Adigwe (2010) condemns certain measures observed in the schools that included banning the teaching of religious material and the removal of Catholic influences in any form:

The military government war on the church did not end there. The teaching of religion in schools was banned. To further compound the already complicated situation the military government waged a war against all types of religious presence or influence or signs in schools. Names of schools that bore any religious connotation were changed to something profane. Names like Community School, replaced the Roman Catholic, Anglican or CMS schools, and those bearing names of Saints were replaced with names of traditional rulers, influential people or rivers of the area. Holy Rosary School, for example, became Niger Primary School, Holy Trinity became *Obi Anazonwu*, and Queen of Apostles became Queen Amina. (p. 7).

Also, Rev Ikeme (2016, January) reflects on the state takeover of Catholic schools in the 1970s, noting that the effect was quite comprehensive:

After the war, government confiscated the schools and when that happened, employment and payment of salaries became their responsibility...the missionaries had to comply...that’s how changes came in. But I ran schools according to my convictions...I employed teachers, and then I allowed the government to rectify their employment...and they always did. But you know... not everyone has the capability of what I did. So generally, the mission complied...so there weren’t much changes coming from the Catholic Church except the ones made by the government.

Then with regard to change of names of Catholic schools, Ikeme recalls his response to the state authorities when he was informed about it in 1972:

They always have the names of the saints which they wanted to change in 1972...for example St Patrick's Emene, government wrote me about the change of name...I wrote back to tell them that change of name is not teaching biology, chemistry, physics, etc...if you want to change the name of schools, count me out when the saints begin to pursue you. (Rev Ikeme, January 2015).

In Enugu, Bishop Godfrey Okoye carried the people along, in responding to the government takeover of schools, especially after the Public Edict (Amendment) of 1973. Catholics took instructions from their Bishop, Godfrey Okoye. Omenka (2012) describes Okoye this way: "the greatest legacy of Bishop Okoye to the church in Nigeria, Catholic and Protestant, lies not only in what he made out of this crisis, but also in the manner in which he tackled it" (p. 45). This was demonstrated in the twelve-point guideline letter written by Okoye. In the letter, the Bishop asked Catholics in the state to remain calm and desist from any form of public and organized demonstration, including preaching from the pulpit. The priests were instructed to seek the support of the local community and refrain from any negotiations with the state officials.

Bishop Okoye, sent two telex messages to Ukpabi Asika, on behalf of the priests and sisters of Onitsha Ecclesiastical Province, and the other, on behalf of the Catholic laity in the Province. He also sent a similar message to the Nigerian military President, General Gowon and the telex read:

Your Excellency, the clergy and religious of Onitsha archdiocese plead with you that the public education edict 1970 and the public education (amendment) edict 1973 particularly affect us most adversely x We are priests and religious for life and live on church property and premises x We are all citizens of this state and country x We have chosen this way of life in the service of God and our nation x We have no where else to go if thrown out of our homes situated in church premises x Your Excellency, reconsider these edicts *please*. x We are vowed to the peace and good order and enlightened progress of our people and accept under God constituted authority dedicated to the

common weal x. God bless and guide you. (Omenka 2007, p. 46; see also Omenka 2012, p. 176)

This telex brought positive results for Catholics in the region. It stopped the imminent ejection of priests and sisters from their houses, typically because the school was built on church land and not the church on school land. The religious persecution of the Catholic Church by the Upkabi Asika's regime produced some good, seen in both Catholics and Protestants forming one body, as noted by Omenka (2012):

Though the Protestant Church leaders had always supported government measures that put a check on Catholic education supremacy, they now felt that the government had gone too far by the religious persecution of the Catholic Church. Together with the Catholic hierarchy, they formed the Conference of Church Leaders, East Central State, with a Catholic President (Arinze) and a Protestant Secretary General (F.E. Enelamah). This was the earliest recorded ecumenical body in Eastern Nigeria that included Catholics. (pp. 46-47)

From the foregoing, the ecumenical church leaders were determined to speak with one voice. The host bishop, Okoye, was able to convince the church leaders that "the school was just one activity for which the missions acquired land from the communities. Expropriation, if it must be, should therefore be limited only to the school and its equipment" (Omenka 2007, p. 47). In the end, these church leaders made a public statement with the caption: "East Central State Education Edict and Church Property: Statement by E.C.S. Church Leaders of the Catholic Church and the Christian Council of Nigeria" (Enugu, May 10, 1974).

The public statement of 1974 by the ecumenical church leaders helped to legitimize the position of the "totally and discredited Asika administration" (Omenka p. 47) with one major oversight. Regarding enumeration for seized properties, the document stated: "the Church will not ask for compensation on school buildings and equipment which it provided for the education of the people" (Statement by East Central State Church Leaders of the Catholic Church and the Christian Council of Nigeria Enugu, May 10, 1974). Unknown to the church leaders, and even

before their public declaration, the Asika administration had planned for a Compensation Tribunal, but after the Church leaders' declaration, the tribunal was disbanded. In any case, the Nigerian priests and nuns were not ejected from their houses. The main goal of Bishop Okoye was to make sure that priests and nuns in the region were not evicted from their residences, and to recover the rectories and the convents that were all part of the school institutions.

Other critics of state takeover of schools pointed to the corruption, incompetence and indifference of the government officials, the Local Education Authorities. Under their control, costs of school projects were widely inflated through corrupt contract system (Nwagwu, 1979). This was reflected in Ikeme's many disagreements with government officials sent to his school to carry out projects. Nwagwu put it succinctly, "the State Government spends much and achieves little when it takes over schools from voluntary agencies" (p. 84). For these reasons, it may be argued that the state was not fully competent to manage the schools at the time it took control of them.

Arguments for a Middle of the Road Course on State Control of Schools

Other scholars believe that the state should take control of the schools, but with certain conditions. Leading scholars who held these perspectives were Nigerian professors of education, Babs Fafunwa, N. A. Nwagwu and B. O. Ukeje. These educators supported the government control of schools, but suggested that the state allow voluntary agencies to continue to run their schools at their own expense. Fafunwa (1972) suggested that "the state should have complete control of all primary schools financed by the state. Missions and other organizations may run private schools at their own expense" (p. 42). Nwagwu (1979) added that non-state organizations had much to offer:

since we have recognized that in spite of their weaknesses, the voluntary agencies have much to offer to the advancement of modern education in Nigeria, the state controlled system is likely to benefit from the competition arising from the existence of some privately run schools. (p. 84)

According to him,, the private schools would be required to adhere to the state's regulations and standards. If the private controlled schools did not measure up to these standards, after all, they could lose many students due to the cost. Also, he noted that more advanced countries saw the wisdom in allowing private schools to exist without financial support from the taxpayers. From a democratic point of view, private schooling gives parents the right and the opportunity to choose the type of education they wanted for their children. This, of course, has long been the position of the Catholic Church in Nigeria. From this perspective, it was morally wrong for the government to forcefully take away the schools from the missions. At best, the Eastern government should have established more public schools for the state while setting standards for all other existing private and parochial schools to abide with.

Effects and Consequences of Government Takeover of Schools

The consequences of the state takeover of mission schools were immense. In 1974, a former Irish missionary, Father D. O. Sullivan, who visited Nigeria four years after the war, commented on the loss of Catholic influence, following the secularization of schools by the government:

The nationalization of the schools dealt the Church a much harder blow than the sudden dismissal of 300 foreign priests and 200 foreign sisters... The school has been, since the beginning of the century, the primary instrument of evangelizing. Its teachers and its manager (priest, sister or brother) communicated the faith together with education in general... With a stroke of a pen all this was changed. The Church no longer controls the school. Evangelization is in jeopardy. Religious and moral instruction is at a low ebb...(as cited in Ike, 2012, p. 6; see also Nwezeapu, 1988, p. 25)

Onwubiko (1985) reiterated that the state control of schools at the end of the civil war changed the basic characteristics of the school system: “since the state takeover of schools in 1970, certain new and unwelcome characteristics hitherto foreign to the school environment before 1970 have emerged in the behavioral patterns of the products of the state school system and teachers generally” (p. 269). As a result, parents began to question the rationale for the government takeover of schools in the first place (Onwubiko, 1985). Onwubiko listed the many challenges schools in the region experienced, such as low educational standards that were evident in certain students’ behaviors:

Falling standard of education, examination malpractice, revolting and immoral habits, indiscipline, dishonesty, drug abuse, and above all a growing sense of irreligion arising from little or no knowledge of the Christian or even the good norms of traditional religion. Children pass through the primary and secondary schools without developing a moral and religious conscience which is a necessary ingredient in the character of a good citizen. (pp. 269-270)

He further asserted that many of these problems were created because of neglect of proper teaching of religion in state schools. Bernadine Ekechukwu (1998) observed the gross indiscipline among teachers and students in the era of state control of schools:

There is negligence on the part of the teachers due in part to the lack of motivation from the government, and there is also lack of industry on the part of the students, many of whom do no longer consider hard work as a viable option. Examination malpractice is at its peak with some teachers and parents contributing to this nefarious situation. (an interview with Owana, 1998 p. 145)

Also, within the era of government control of schools, Obemeata (1995) observed that teachers’ salaries were not paid on time and the teachers’ conditions of service were also weakened:

In most States of the Federation, teachers’ salaries are paid several months behind schedule. Teachers are being retired in their thousands or their services terminated at will. The security of tenure of teachers is at its lowest ebb today than at any other time in history of education in this country. (p. 71)

As a result of conditions such as this, the work ethic and the attitude of many teachers who chose to remain changed. Onwubiko (1985) described the characteristics of personnel found in state schools and blamed these teachers for the unruly behavior of the students:

Unfortunately, the majority of our state school teachers are not free from some blame for these lapses in behavior and character. In fact, there is general consensus that the pupils and students mirror the behavioral patterns of many of their teachers especially the post-civil war products of our Teachers' Colleges many of whom are known to be patently indisciplined, incorrigibly insubordinate to authority; lived immoral lives, lack devotion to duty, engage in dishonest practices with students in examinations, have little or no regard for religion and therefore cannot and do not teach it, much less live it. (p. 270)

Onwubiko commended the efforts of the few teachers, those he called the "old good breed who have continued to maintain the good character and professional training they received in the good old days of voluntary agency schools" (p. 270). But he also believed that these challenges developed as a result of removing religious instructions in the schools. He cited the 1971 Catholic Bishops' pastoral letter: "it is contradictory for some people to try to elbow God and religion out of our schools...and then turn round and say that we want good citizens. We cannot get good citizens without religion being seriously taught and practiced" (cited in Onwubiko, p. 270).

In addition, the government takeover of schools appeared to contradict certain principles on which Nigeria was founded, expressed in the National Anthem in which Nigerians pledge themselves to "one nation bound in freedom... where peace and justice shall reign" (Nigerian National Anthem). Ultimately, this pledge was founded on the supposition that there can be no true peace and justice without freedom (Nnaji for, 2007). Reflecting this, a Catholic newspaper editorial noted:

Freedom of choice in education is non-existent in some States of Nigeria. Diversity has been transformed into forced conformity. Government take-over of schools has forced the children of these States into one single mold whose philosophy and theology are

determined solely by the State. This, needless to say, is against what we stand for as a free people. (*Leader*, 1985, p. 4)

The Catholic Church hierarchy in Nigeria during the post-war era expressed its concern with the new developments found in the schools. This was found at the end of its February 13, 1975 plenary meeting. The bishops discussed the curriculum of the post-war era and emphasized the need for religious and moral education in the Nigerian schools:

Religious and moral education remain a major pre-occupation. There is need to have such education organized and taught in schools to ensure the right character formation and training of the young and to fit them for the role of leadership tomorrow. (Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria, CBCN 1975, para.1)

The bishops further expressed their concerns about the crisis Nigeria was facing after the war including the schools, the economy, and the society at large, but which was largely found in the unruly behavior of the students through incessant “strikes, students’ agitation, and disturbances” (CBCN 1975, para. 2). They asked the government to do more by providing improved and more equitable social services, such as “better hospitals, better schools, better communications” (CBCN, para. 3) that can be within the reach of people..

These concerns were evident in the reaction of rank and file of Catholic educators as well. Participants in my fieldwork in Nigeria reflected on the challenges of the post-war era schools and students. They discussed the nature of the post-war students in comparison with the ones raised by the colonial missionaries. In the end, they blamed the state for the problems found in the schools. Robert Ikedi suggested as much regarding conditions in the post-war schools:

Catholic students were known for their discipline and serious and honest academic pursuit. [But] since the government takeover and greater interference with management of schools, indiscipline, examination malpractices and other vices crept in and slightly affect Catholic schools. (Robert Ikedi, February 2016)

Likewise, Andrew Osita, compared the students of the colonial era and the post-war era, and portrayed the colonial students as more intellectual and moral than the post-colonial students:

The students of the colonial period when there was exemplary collaboration in education between state and the Catholic Church were sound both intellectually and morally. On the contrary, the post-colonial students which as we explained are within our context the period of government forceful takeover of schools and consequent banishing of religion from education were nothing to write home about both intellectually and morally. (February 2016)

For Ikeme, the students enrolled in schools before the civil war were more physically mature: “people were grown-up before going to secondary school such that after Class three they could go to [the] army for one year” (February 2016).

Anthony Agu, a current school principal, blamed the removal of religion and moral instruction from the curriculum as the major problem in the school, one that makes the students low in morality:

There is an ascendancy from the move from the takeover of schools up till this time...there is that crescendo – an eventual uprising and it has come to this moment. So every stage in this rising you will see a drop...and the drop continues and I don't know if it will continue until *infinito*... and that drop is morality because of the separation of religion and morality that took place during the government takeover of school. People have no more fear...because it is the fear of God that leads people to do what they do...(February 2016)

It is obvious that the responses from Catholic leaders and educators have common trends and commonalities. They observed that the removal of religious and moral education from the curriculum after the government takeover of schools was a principal source of problems for the school principals, parents, teachers, and students alike during the post-war era. According to them, there was no longer an emphasis on the type of academic excellence that was seen during the missionary era, when the teaching of religion and moral instruction was an important part of the curriculum.

As already shown, a major change was the optional teaching of religion and moral education or its removal from the Nigerian school system after the government takeover of schools. Awe (1977), wrote that, in spite of government funding for high standards in schools, there was no improvement in terms of discipline and academic excellence among students:

In spite of government takeover of schools, educational standards and discipline are not encouraging. The aims of the takeover of schools by the government included improving educational standard, discipline and ensuring equal distribution of materials and teachers. The present standard in schools does not justify the huge amount of money which is being expended on education by government and people. (p. 6)

Nnaji for (2007) asserts that the government takeover of schools ended competition, obstructed creativity and progress, and quelled diversity in education; hence, the takeover of schools “precipitated undesirable consequences and implications for Nigerian educational development” (p. 61).

In other parts of the country, the same falling standard and indiscipline were found in schools during this era. In one of his public speeches, the military governor of Oyo State, Brigadier David Jemibewon, (as cited in Obemeata, 1995, p. 71) noted that the behavior of students during the post-war years was unbecoming. This included riots, damage of school property, and smoking of marijuana:

Many schools in the State still indulge in riots resulting in damage to property and injury to persons. I am informed to my dismay that some of the irate students who lead these riots also indulge in hemp smoking and other forms of immoral acts. This indeed is a shame.

Other state governors addressed Teacher Unions over the collapsed system of education in their states. In his address to the *Benue State Conference of Principals of Post-Primary Institutions*, the military governor of Benue State, John Kpera, complained about the falling standard of education at primary school level, adding that many of the local state controlled schools scored the lowest marks at the federal entrance examinations in the country (Kpera,

1984). In schools religion was taught only as an examination subject (Nwezeapu, 1988). Adigwe (2010) discusses the changes that occurred in the schools with regard to Catholic influence and religion in the post-war years:

By government forceful take-over of school, this harmony was destroyed. Even where the churches had managed to build chapels in some of the secondary schools, the government turned them into secular halls. In some cases, teaching of religion in schools was even prohibited. However, with increased pressure and protests, government allowed a type of teaching of religion that I chose to term “a religion of nobody taught by nobody”. This is certainly not a religion of Christian life. (p. 8)

Following these changes, Adigwe notes that students became educated “without academic ethics, without industrial ethics, without political ethics, and indeed without any viable ethics at all” (p. 8). He concluded that “such education is grossly inadequate to sustain a holistic lifestyle” (p. 8). Rose Amadi (2006) decries the craze for certificate acquisition that did not match students’ knowledge in the post-war years. This was precisely the sort of problem that Labaree had described in his research:

The aftermath of the Nigerian civil war, confounded by the Government’s forceful takeover of the missionary and private schools, ushered in an unprecedented fall in standards. The quest for the acquisition of certificates without the corresponding acquisition of knowledge has become the order of the day. (p. 31)

At the end of its April/May 1976 meeting, the Catholic Bishops Conference issued another communiqué, reiterating its plea to the government in regard to finding a lasting solution to the problems facing the nation:

The Church seeks increased co-operation with the government in restoring discipline and sound moral religious education into the curriculum of our institutions of learning, and eliminating unrest, destruction and riots from our schools. Recent events have shown the importance of morality, of God-fearing leadership and honesty... As the nation moves forward into the future with the hope of greater and richer inheritance, there is need for more, not less, morality and discipline. (CBCN, para. 3)

The CBCN urged the government to implement the recommendations on education made by the federal commission that allowed private and voluntary agencies to control schools:

The Catholic Church proudly recalls the recommendations on Education of the Public Service Review Commission which urged the Federal Government to invite reputable Voluntary Agencies to participate with it in the management of schools in the nation, and the note the government made of this recommendation. We therefore earnestly request the Federal Government to implement this recommendation at this crucial moment in our educational revolution. (para. 7)

Religious and moral education was a core subject during the pre-Vatican II and the colonial eras. However, critics of the pre-Vatican II era Catholic education had argued that traditional Catholic schooling had little relationship with the modern concept of education, especially with regard to intellectual development by questioning and enquiry. The philosopher Paul Hirst had argued that the teaching of catechism was not to be part of educational process, but must take place outside the school, such as the home or the parish (Grace, 2002). Hastings (1996) argued that the traditional Catholic pedagogy of catechesis had produced, in practical terms, spiritual and moral immaturity that was unable to withstand the pluralistic questioning rationality of higher education institutions. Gollnick and Chinn (2009) suggest that discussion of religion in pluralistic societies, including Nigeria, poses a problem to educators, because each has a different type of religious beliefs. They asserted that, “every student should have the security in knowing that they will not have anyone else’s religious dogma imposed on them” (p. 236). They maintain that, even though, religious pluralism had often caused conflict in the past, it is hoped that in the future, it would lead to a better understanding and respect for religious differences.

While the Catholic bishops were blaming the removal of religion as the cause of falling standard of education, Rev Ikeme was particular about reinforcing discipline and academic excellence. Ultimately, this led him to focus more on proper behavior among students and teachers, without emphasizing religion. Nonetheless, he truly believed that becoming a successful school leader, and a moral one at that, was rooted in his commitment to his Catholic

faith. He instilled in his students the need to give back to the society, reflecting the argument that education is a public good. Although, the foreign Catholic missionaries were expelled from Nigeria, Ikeme, an indigenous Catholic priest and educator, continued to work in various state schools in the region. His work as an educator and headmaster is discussed in detail next.

Rev Ikeme, a Catholic Educator Working in State Schools, 1972-73

Rev Monsignor Charles Ikeme was an example of a Catholic educator working in state controlled schools during this period of uncertainty for the Catholic Church. His ability to enforce discipline, good moral behavior, and academic excellence came from Catholic principles of quality education and high standards. The government institutions were weak because of endemic corruption, and Church opposition to these problems was reflective of the superior professional standards of Catholic education.

During an interview, Rev Monsignor Ikeme, discussed his major challenges as a school administrator during this era. On one occasion he noted that,, “my principalship for 30 years was a constant battle...much of the evils in the world are cowardly...many evils can collapse if we confront them” (January 2016). He Recalled that before he went to St Patrick’s Boys College Emene, Enugu, a boys’ high school, in 1972, shortly after the Nigerian civil war, a teacher from the school warned him about the problems there, suggesting that he “touch nothing from St Patrick’s, students or staff” (January 2016). In his 2012 autobiography, Ikeme described the level of indiscipline he found at St Patrick’s high school and how he dealt with it.

The principal there was helpless and the students headed by a class five student gave himself the names “Alhaji, King, President, 2nd Lieutenant *Gwogwodigwogwo* governed the school. In my 1st assembly with the students I said: “I have come to crush indiscipline”. And that was so within 6 weeks, for one of the three chiefs in authority at the Education Board, after an inspection of the school said, and I quote: “no more trace of

the so much talked of indiscipline”. If they said many students were ex-Biafrian soldiers, I am ex-Biafrian army officer – a captain, so I dealt with indiscipline militarily...(p. 78)

Consistent with his background and conviction of his Catholic faith, Ikeme actively fought the discipline problems at St Patrick’s Secondary School in Emene, Enugu. His approach to indiscipline in the school was hardly surprising, however, given his training in colonial missionary education. As in the Catholic boys’ schools of the pre-Vatican II era, traditional methods of school discipline were based on the Old Testament injunction of utilizing pain and ordeal in the pursuit of knowledge and wisdom (Grace, 2002). Grace suggests that critics of pre-Vatican II Catholic schooling viewed the use of physical and psychological violence in teaching as hypocritical. But Ikeme likely did not agree.

Ikeme mentioned some of the boys being ex-Biafrian soldiers, an observation no other observer has offered so far, making it an important factor in evaluating the behavior of the boys. It also helps to explain the devastating effects of the civil war in delaying student graduation from school. With many students having lost three to five years either fighting as soldiers or sitting at home waiting for the war to end, the atmosphere of school was invariably affected. It also meant that many such young men were no longer traditional high school students, with respect to age, because of time lost during the civil war.

Further discussing his work at this time, Ikeme recalled the deplorable condition of the high school:

Immediately after the war, St Patrick’s Emene became one of the most undisciplined school[s] in student and staff. I have no doubts that I was sent there to subdue the school. But when I arrived there, the environment was so wild that I said, nothing like education could go on in an environment like that, and to blame the students alone for indiscipline was not right. (pp. 78-79)

Ikeme used contributed funds, mostly charities, for the reconstruction of the school. These efforts focused on tasks such as: “cleaning up the compound, creating new pathways ,reconstructing buildings to get as many things as possible ready before the arrival of the students” (p. 79). He commended the support of Mr. Offia Nwali, the Administrator of the State School Board, for his approval for projects carried out at the school. Again, his initiative to undertake the reconstruction of the college, partly with his personal money, earned him trust and confidence with the state officials. Ikeme noted that he was of aristocratic birth, and as such, no one could entice him with gifts or money to influence him in his decisions throughout his public service as an educator: “nobody in my family needed money from me. All I needed was a frugal maintenance and enough to do charity with” (p. 79). Within a year there were changes, such that the school excelled not only in academics but also in character building, discipline, and sports. When leaving to transfer to another school a year later, he received letters of appreciation from both parents and alumni from all parts of the country. As one parent wrote, “I am really very grateful for your high effort and ability to make our children be trustworthy and nice leaders. I hope you will continue like this for the welfare of our future generation, Fegge, Onitsha” (pp. 81-82)

The fact that Ikeme was recognized by the government as a good and exemplary leader, points to the advantages of Catholic educators managing the schools. He was a steadfast opponent of corruption and wasteful spending. Once he was transferred to another school because of his disagreement with a government contractor who wanted to inefficiently spend public funds that could be used for other projects elsewhere.

In 1973 Ikeme was transferred from St Patrick’s Emene to the Premier Secondary School Ukehe where he began another reconstruction of the school. On one of his courtesy visits, Offia

Nwali asked Ikeme: “where do you get the money for all this?” (p. 99). According to Ikeme, Premier Secondary School was fallow and overgrown by weeds after the Nigeria/Biafra war. He affirmed that a spirit of nationalism was also a driving force in his entire teaching career. In his address, during the visit of Offia Nwali, he expressed how accountable and transparent he had chosen to be in his dealings with any public fund. He wrote,

every kobo (i.e. Nigerian money) here is taken care of with almost high blood pressure care. Give me a kobo, I will show you ten kobo of work. Give me one naira, I will show you ten naira worth of work. (p. 99)

Ikeme maintained this type of spirit in every school he managed as a principal and he often achieved much within a short time. With respect to Ukehe, he exclaimed that “so it was and more than that, so that within a year and four months before I was exiled again from there, all the dormitories, classrooms, laboratories; everywhere was so reconstructed” (p. 99).

Ikeme discussed achievements at Premier Secondary School that were not only seen in structures, but in the rapid increase enrollees the year he arrived: “my success there was not in structures alone, I met about 6 boarders on my arrival in January 1973, but in February or January 1974, I had about 460 boarders” (p. 100). According to him, the students themselves were very proud of their school: “...they used to boast of Premier Secondary School as ‘the University on the Hill’. He was particularly proud about advancements at the school with regard to academic excellence:

The academic excellence that year cannot be questioned even if I don’t remember anything about it now. It was from this unprecedented performance that I was exiled [transferred] again – first from St Patrick’s Emene, secondly from Premier Secondary School Ukehe and thirdly and lastly from C.I.C Enugu. (p. 102)

He wrote often about his rapid and successive transfers to different schools, reflecting his success in rehabilitating institutions.

I was exiled [transferred] from St Patrick's Emene after one year of unrivalled and unprecedented success. I was rejected and exiled from Premier Secondary School Ukehe and since I left there, it has been dilapidation, deterioration and retrogression. I was exiled from C.I.C I admit that as I have said earlier, if my career in public service ended in C.I.C I would have considered it ended in public disgrace and failure. (p. 106)

It may be imagined that Ikeme's continued use of the word "exile" instead of "transfer" represents his grievous toil in making sure that things were done the right way no matter the situation or circumstances surrounding him. But the word "exile" was in very common usage after the civil war in Nigeria because certain top military officers were sent into exile. Ikeme may be justified in the use of the word "exile," however, since the nature and circumstances surrounding his transfers to other schools might be seen as one. Interestingly, he did not take his transfers very kindly and prayed upon arrival at a new institution.

As I knelt down and prayed when I came to P.S School Ukehe, which I described as the abode of lizards and wild birds and swore that I would clean up the place within 6 months but that anyone who would remove me from there would be removed from his office by God, and so it was. (p. 103)

From Premier Secondary School, he was transferred to Community Secondary School Isieniu, a boarding institution for boys and girls. In his autobiography he described the nature of the school as having no direction for the students, whom he saw walking about idly:

As soon as I got my posting letter to Community Secondary School Isieniu, I drove to the school immediately, not because I was hankering after being the principal of a school but because duty has called me to another place. Close to the school at about 12.30pm, I saw students, boys and girls straggling home most idly when the school should close about 1.30 or 2pm. This was the height of indiscipline – intolerable. I stopped my car, came out, barked at all of them with a military command... I was in my usual khaki short and shirt. (p. 108)

He stated that the students listened to his commands even though they did not know him: "I seem to have a spirit that defeats and commands so that I can do what others cannot do, a spirit that beats others hands-down, a spirit that you cannot defeat or confront or resist" (p. 108). He commenced work immediately at the school at the beginning of the academic session, noting

that the school was privately built by Nigerian, Chief Charles Abangwu, but was taken over by the government in 1970 without compensation. He observed that the boarding facilities for boys and girls were not separated by a wall but the sections were clear. Nonetheless the school was notorious for visitors, especially military men, coming in to take the girls for their own pleasure. The situation was probably worse before his arrival, as the school matron observed that “since Fr. Ikeme arrived in the school, so many girls sought and got admission into the school” (as cited in Ikeme, 2012 p. 110). Ikeme stopped male visitors from abusing the girls in short order, by inviting the officers for a drink in his house. At the end of their get together, he warned them very sternly:

All of you know me, and if anyone doesn't know me, he should find out from others. From today I don't want to see any officer or soldier in my premises. If anyone has any problem he should refer it to the Brigade Commander and I will discuss it with him. (p. 110)

With relief he remarked, “that was the end of military persons coming in for girls in the school...” (p. 110). With his hard work, the school finally became a viable learning environment. He provided a generating plant for electricity in the school and improved on other structures for better teaching and learning throughout his tenure. From his work ethic, approach, and personality, it is evident that Ikeme was capable of handling most problems in his work, based on his commitment to faith and morality in the way he approached indiscipline, and the level of academic excellence he enforced among staff and students.

Years later, one of Ikeme's early students, Bath Nnaji from St Patrick's Emene, became successful as a Professor of Industrial Engineering and Director of the Robotics and Automation Laboratory at the University of Massachusetts. In 2012 Nnaji became Nigeria's Minister of Power and Steel, and it was in this position that he paid a courtesy visit to his alma mater, St Patrick's College, and was alarmed with the rate of dilapidation that had occurred in the school.

Following this, he embarked on a renovation of the science building and went ahead to equip the science laboratories representing the physics, chemistry, biology, and agricultural sciences. He also donated 100 computers for the computer laboratory. In his inaugural and unveiling speech at the school, Professor Nnaji addressed the students, while making reference to his school days when the missionaries were in charge:

I felt bad when I visited the school last year and saw the appalling condition of the science laboratories in the school. When I was here as a student, there was a functional library equipped with books and the laboratories were well equipped. It was here that I was molded and that is why I became an engineer today. I did practical experiences of almost all subjects during my secondary school period. Whatever you take here will make you what you will become tomorrow. Your tomorrow is shaped today... If you have these laboratories, you are going to be good in science. Learning science will help students know much, even those who are not science-inclined will benefit a lot by having some knowledge of science. (Professor Nnaji, 2013)

This is the cause that Ikeme fought for, primarily for the common good. Many years after graduation, Professor Bath Nnaji returned to his alma mater to give back what the society had given to him and to appreciate the work of the missionaries, especially the Nigerian missionaries who helped to mold his character.

Apart from his disagreement with government officials over inflating costs of projects in the school, Ikeme had conflicts with the State Ministry of Education over admission processes, which he found to be thoughtless in nature. For instance, at Community Secondary School, Isienu, he had only three spaces for admission into class one (United States' 7th grade). But parents were desperate to have their children admitted into the school because of its proximity. Ikeme thought, "since I had accommodation for them, and I employed the tutors and asked government to ratify it, I could easily add another stream to the number approved by me, then I ask the government to approve that extra stream" (p. 112). He did not receive a favorable answer from the government, however, and was asked to disband the class immediately. But he

refused to carry out the government instructions in clear terms: “I replied to my bosses that I would not disband that stream and if anyone spoke to me or wrote me about that again, I would go to the press” (pp. 113-114).

Ikeme had compelling reasons for disobeying the state officials. First, he recalled an address of the Commissioner of Education, Mr. Jide Adibua, who once declared that a principal who has no initiative should be removed from his post. Second, Col. Ochefu, the Military Governor of the State, on his visit to the Nsukka and Isi-Uzo Division Headquarters stressed the importance of education and improved infrastructures in those areas. But more importantly, he noted that the students he admitted were very young and their families could not afford to send them away to non-boarding schools, many miles away from their homes. To address the question, Ikeme took photos of the students with the labels of where they were originally posted, and included them in his letter to the government officials. This clearly established the need for admitting such students. In the end, no state official challenged his decision on that matter again.

Rev Ikeme as Superintendent of State Schools, 1976

In 1976, Ikeme became a superintendent of schools, a position, according to him, he never lobbied for. He was among the top ranking principals in the public school system in the state and in salary grade. In performance, he was one of the best too. After the interview with state officials, he was chosen as a school superintendent. He discussed the behavior of his colleagues who were anxious to work in the cities, while he opted to work in a rural district:

when we were made Superintendent of Schools in 1976, during the old Anambra State, when it came to our posting to various Divisions, I noted that my fellows were struggling for the cities. I asked: ‘which is the most difficult Division in Enugu diocese’ where I belong as a diocesan priest?’ I was told Isi-uzo Division. I said: ‘I choose there’. (p. 129)

Throughout his superintendency, Ikeme shunned corruption, whether in his office or among his colleagues. On one occasion, he went on school inspections with the chairman of the division and his staff. They returned with food items as gifts from the schools they visited, such as tubers of yam and live chickens. Ikeme noted that, to his amazement, these government officials went behind the building to divide up the items. He thought that if this was right, then, why share them behind the house? He warned them and that stopped this sort of behavior. Unfortunately, corruption has continued to be a problem at a high level in the country. As a result of corruption in high offices, Ikeme chose to become an institution: “I was the Government in that Division, almost in everything. I promoted teachers after they faced a committee appointed by me to look into such matters” (p. 132). At other occasions, he gave approval for the reconstruction of schools with “matching grant” to be sure that local resources were also utilized (p. 132). To others, he gave 50% for the reconstruction of schools, and in poor rural areas he carried out the reconstruction without local contributions. He noted further, “my constraint was the sluggish sub-treasurer I met there, who could spend centuries to reconcile little amounts that in the end of that financial year, I had to retire a lot of money unspent to government” (p. 132).

In educational meetings, he ignored the members of the local government who had nothing to contribute educationally, and instead he chose to work with his “College of Headmasters” (p. 132). Then, whatever they agreed on, he implemented and would later inform the government. He administered other duties within his jurisdiction:

I awarded contracts at my discretion but I would inform the Board. I devised my own idea of transfers of teachers, so that everyone would be where he liked it, to put in his best. It should not be transfers you do sitting in your office because you have the authority to do so.” (p. 132)

However, he was unable to implement all these plans because he lasted only one year and some months before he was asked to go and serve as head in his alma mater, the College of Immaculate Conception (CIC) Enugu. This will be discussed in the next chapter. In the end, he states,, “a sense of responsibility should be a common virtue, initiative makes you respectable, resourcefulness makes you surpass others, courage joins to make you master of every situation” (p. 133). Ikeme’s statement in this respect is fundamental, showing his commitment to his Christian faith. This he showed by providing leadership for other public school principals and government officials in charge of education, and a sense of direction for his students. He was consistent with his firm belief in being an ethical and moral leader, a critical ingredient for successful school leadership.

Conclusion

This chapter examined the government takeover of all voluntary agency schools in Eastern Nigeria immediately after the war in 1970, and the insistence of the Catholic Church in regaining the control of schools. It was noted that the government aim of controlling the schools was to reunite an entire nation that was already devastated by war, and to end the rivalry among Christian denominations that was introduced by the colonial missionaries. Some scholars supported this move made by the government. In particular, many sociologists underscored the preeminent position of the school in modern societies and its socializing effects therein, and the effects of mass schooling and education expansion. However, other scholars had different views, disapproving of government action and underscoring the many consequences and implications that it held for education throughout the post-war era. These were evident in the level of

indiscipline in schools, the low standards in teaching and learning, and the low morale in the teaching force.

Still, others were of the opinion that state control of education was a good move but suggested that voluntary agencies should be allowed to run the schools at their own expense, in order to provide alternatives to government schools and competition for them. This policy, of course, was not undertaken at the time. Many of these issues were evident in the experiences of Rev Ikeme, and in his insistence on maintaining discipline, good behavior and academic excellence among students and teachers.

Amidst all this confusion, the Eastern Nigerian Bishops continued to reach out to the government to open dialogue on how to work in collaboration to restore the falling standard of education in the school systems. The discussion of these questions in Chapter Six focuses on the resolution of these issues, and includes consideration of the continuing world education revolution, with greater enrollments and school expansion that resulted in more conflict.

CHAPTER SIX: CONTEMPORARY ERA (1975-PRESENT)

This chapter examines the falling standard of education in Eastern Nigeria that occurred in conjunction with state control of schools in the region. It discusses the continued agitation by the Catholic Church to regain control of these schools under different political regimes and administrators,. Chapter Six also considers the experiences and observations of Rev Ikeme and other Catholic educators in the educational systems in the region.

In many developed nations, institutions exist to produce predictability, but in Nigeria, there has been little continuity in political institution. As will be seen, this situation also affected other institutions, such as the schools. The Catholic bishops were concerned about the lack of institutional stability and reliability in the government. The bishops were dealing with a political system that was radical and unstable, and subject to change often without notice or warning. They demanded a government that was reliable. It was in Enugu that all the voluntary agency schools were eventually returned to the Catholic mission, before other states of the federation.

Despite the many problems of Nigerian public institutions, Rev Ikeme spent his priestly life as an educator in Enugu. The interviews for this study thus reflect conditions in that part of the country. To start, however, Chapter Six features an examination of the rationale and the motivation behind the government decision to return the schools to the missions, which can perhaps best be understood within the context of neo-liberal policy.

State control of schools brought changes in the Nigerian school system. Nnaji (2007) notes that school buildings erected by the different missions became old and dilapidated without renovations: “some school buildings have collapsed, the roofs of some have been blown away by the winds, and, not infrequently, the very foundations were no more to be seen” (p. 64).

Commenting on the physical structures of the school buildings and their poor condition in earlier years, Ezeala (1979) wrote:

Lack of maintenance has resulted in the dilapidation of these schools since takeover. Broken floors, desks and broken forms constitute physical dangers. Broken walls resulting from leakages and rotten ceilings present every day state of anxiety among students and teachers. Worst in the physical danger are the broken glass windows in some schools that had the luxury of glass windows and doors before takeover. (p. 12)

As a result of the current problems found within the school systems in Eastern Nigeria, as well as other parts of the country, there was widespread concern regarding the quality of education. Nnaji for suggests that the government action that was meant to solve educational problems and harmonize education practices ended up creating more problems, especially in areas of discipline and morality. In one of his public statements,, the former military governor of Rivers State, Alfred Diette Spiff, acknowledged the government's lack of wisdom in the state control of schools:

The take over of schools was the result of an error of judgment on the part of the military administration. The military rulers would probably have returned schools to voluntary agencies before they handed the reigns of power to civilians in 1979, but they did not do so because they did not wish to admit publicly they had erred. (cited in Obemeata, 1995 p. 71)

The government faced with public pressure for the return of voluntary agency schools to the missions, finally heeded. But when these schools were returned to the Catholic Church, the Catholic educators realized that the schools were no longer like those of earlier times. The schools' principals were faced with the challenges of restoring discipline, morality, and hard work among teachers and students, and found that these goals were difficult to achieve. These issues are discussed in considerable detail in this chapter.

Education in Nigeria in the Context of Neo-Liberalism

A review of education in Nigeria within the context of neo-liberalism provides more insight into the motivation of the government in handing over the voluntary agency schools to the missions, and the privatization of many public enterprises. The concept of neo-liberalism was related to the original classical ideas of Adam Smith and David Ricardo, who viewed the market “as a self-regulating mechanism tending towards equilibrium of supply and demand, thus securing the most efficient allocation of resources” (as cited in Ekanede, 2014 p. 4). According to Manfred (2003), these British economists and philosophers believed that any restrictions on free market competition might obstruct the expected efficiency of market mechanisms, leading to social stagnation, political corruption, and the establishment of impassive state bureaucracies. In modern societies, neo-liberalism has become a synonym for a more deliberate attempt to remove the government from the economy. Nigerians began importing these ideas as neo-liberalism became a worldwide movement. It is within this conceptual frame that this chapter examines the government’s conscious effort to hand over schools to the missions, particularly in Eastern Nigeria.

Agitation for the Return of Catholic Schools Under Military Rule: 1975-1979

To understand what happened to Catholic schools in the late 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, it is important to revisit the events that took place earlier. Since the government takeover of schools, the Catholic Church in Eastern Nigeria had been in the vanguard regarding the return of all voluntary agency schools. This undoubtedly was because it had the greatest historical stake in the education sector (Onwubiko, 1985). In 1959, for instance, the government had only 11 primary schools, four secondary schools, one technical institute, one trade center and two

teacher-training colleges (Eastern Nigeria Ministry of Education, 1962). But within the same period, the voluntary agencies controlled 4,841 primary schools, 45 secondary schools and three teacher-training colleges (Amuchezi 1972). Out of these, the Catholic Church controlled about half of the primary schools in 1964 with a total of 2,406, followed by County Council Church with a total of 1,473 and the Anglican Mission managing 930 primary schools (Eastern Nigeria Ministry of Education Enugu, 1965).

In 1971, the Catholic Bishops of Eastern Nigeria maintained that the Catholic Church had an obligation to provide religious education for the children of its followers:

Education is meant to prepare man for life. Our life begins in this world where it generally lasts less than one hundred years. It continues in the next world where it lasts forever. Education must prepare man for a successful life in both. (Catholic Bishops Joint Pastoral Letter, 1971 pp. 6-7)

As noted earlier, Onwubiko suggested that a cordial relationship between the government and the Catholic Church might provide a better educational program. The Catholic Church demanded the control of schools in order to provide the type of education that it felt necessary for its children. The Church also suggested that parents have the fundamental right, as suggested by the Nigerian constitution, to make free choices of schools that they deemed fit for their children and wards. Such freedom can only be realized when there is diversity in the provision and administration of schools by different groups and organizations. But, the situation since the civil war looked rather bleak, since the government of the Eastern region retained monopoly control of schools. As Onwubiko observed, the government control of all schools “is neither to the interest of society nor even of the government itself” (Onwubiko, p. 272).

In 1974, there were renewed efforts by the Nigerian Bishops for the return of Catholic schools. In particular, the Bishops of East Central State wrote a letter pointing out the need for greater emphasis on morality and Christian virtues in Nigerian schools (East Central State

Bishops June 26 1974). Ike (2012) surmised that the Bishops were of the opinion that “education without morality was like humanity without a soul” (p. 6). He decried the magnitude of the negative effects that the school takeover by the government had on Enugu, and in Igbo land in general.

The Catholic Bishops’ requests and pleas for the return of schools did not abate, but their wishes were never granted. Instead, the military government reluctantly offered to pay compensations to all voluntary agencies for the land and structures on which the schools were built. According to Ike, the Catholic Church, for its part, refused any offer of compensations for its schools, invoking a Latin phrase, “*Rex Clamat Ad Domino,*” meaning “things cry for their owners” (pp. 6-7). While the Catholics refused this offer, the Anglican Bishops and other proprietors accepted compensations from the government, thereby surrendering rights under law to their schools and properties (Ike, 2012).

With the falling standard of education in the region and the government monopoly of education, the Nigerian educator L. A. Sofenwa (1976) wrote about the responsibilities of the government in ensuring educational standards and policies. Like other critics, he believed the state’s duty was supervisory and financial, but not necessarily one of direct control of schools.

States are advised to return schools to such agencies and communities that are dependable, provide subvention, enlist the involvement and participation of the community in the affairs of the school, provide guidelines and operational policies to ensure standards and prevent abuses and let inspectors guide and supervise. (cited in Obemeata, 1995 p. 72)

Similarly, the Udoji Commission (1974), which conducted a review of salaries and wages, commended the high standards of education during the previous eras: “the system of control through voluntary agencies produces satisfactory results in terms of management of individual schools including discipline, dedication to duty and the standard of education” (as

cited in Obemeata, 1995 p. 72). But observations such as this had little effect. The military rulers of this era never acknowledged agitation or arguments in favor of relinquishing the control of schools. Instead, they were focused on agitation for the return to civilian rule. This is discussed briefly in the next section.

Transition to a Civilian Rule, 1975-1979

As earlier stated, Nigerian politics was known for its instability. When General Gowon seized political power in 1966, he pledged to return Nigeria to a civilian rule in 1976. This pledge not only lent legitimacy to the regime, but also enabled peace to reign in the country for a time (Falola & Ihonybere, 1985). However, it turned out that General Gowon had no plans to disengage the army on that timetable, as became evident in his October 1, 1974 independence broadcast to the nation. He stated that “it would indeed amount to a betrayal of trust to adhere rigidly to that date” (Text of a Broadcast for the Nation, October 1, 1974). He clearly lacked confidence in the abilities of individuals who were preparing to assume the mantle of leadership:

It was clear that those to lead the nation on the return to civilian rule have not learnt any lesson from past experiences... It would be utterly irresponsible to leave the nation in the lurch by a precipitate withdrawal which will certainly throw the nation back into confusion. (General Yakubu Gowon, October 1, 1974: Text of a Broadcast to the Nation)

However, when it became clear that the Gowon regime was not ready to return to the barracks, an opposition to his regime became very vocal beginning on October 3, 1974. In newspaper editorials, features, and analysis, his administration was condemned and opposition movements soon emerged. The opposition distributed pamphlets to the public exposing the bankruptcy of the Gowon regime (Falola & Ihonybere, 1985). Despite his ties to the military, he was ousted by a bloodless military coup led by Murtala Muhammed and Olusegun Obasanjo on July 29, 1975 (*Daily Times*, August 2, 1975).

General Muhammed and Obasanjo, his second, were determined to disengage from politics using a constitutional-evolutionary style of military disengagement (Adekson, 1979). This was clearly outlined in a 5-stage program of transition announced in 1975. Stage one concerned settlement of the question of new states, with a state review panel to report by December 1975 and the creation of states to be completed by April 1976. Stage two dealt with local government re-organization, non partisan elections at the local government level, and establishment of the constituent assembly partly elected and partly nominated. All these steps were to be completed by October 1978. Stage three entailed lifting the ban on politics and the abrogation of the emergency decree. Stage four involved elections to state and federal legislatures in 1979. And stage five was to complete the handover to a civilian government on October 1, 1979 (*Daily Times*, October 1, 1975). Murtala Muhammed pursued this 5-point agenda with vigor, but died in an attempted coup in 1976. Thereafter, his colleague, Olusegun Obasanjo, reaffirmed the commitment to disengage from the politics (Falola & Ihonvbere, 1985).

In his July 1978 national broadcast, Obasanjo criticized those who doubted whether or not his administration would continue in the transition program to democracy and admonished those patronizing him to remain in power:

but let me sound a note of warning. This administration is committed to bringing about an elected government in 1979 through a peaceful process of free and fair elections and we will not tolerate from anybody or group any act that is capable of diverting us from this goal. (July 14, 1978: Text of Broadcast to the Nation)

On September 21, 1978, he signed the Decree No. 25 that promulgated the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria into law, taking effect on October 1, 1979 (Falola & Ihonvbere, 1985). Indeed, the Obasanjo regime did disengage from Nigerian politics, following the planned transition that occurred between 1976 and September 21, 1978 in preparation for a return to democracy in 1979.

Agitation for the Return of Catholic Schools Under Civilian Rule: 1979-1983

Throughout the military regime in Nigeria between 1966 and 1979, the request for the return of voluntary agency schools was presented to the government of the Eastern State mainly by the Catholic Bishops of the region (Onwubiko, 1985). But, with return to civilian rule in 1979, two additional Catholic lay organizations joined in making this demand, the Catholic Laity Council of Nigeria and the Catholic Women Organization (CWO). In December 1980, the Laity Council reiterated its commitment in requesting that its schools were returned to them:

The right and responsibility of parents to bring up their children in a God-fearing manner must be recognized and protected... The attempt to impose only one system of educational control and ownership infringes the fundamental rights of both parents and their children. (Memorandum of the National Laity Council of Nigeria, 1981)

With a firm belief in the important role of education in the development of the country, the Catholic Bishops of Nigeria (1983), in another joint pastoral letter, reaffirmed their commitment to education by calling for an involvement of all religious bodies to instill a sense of responsibility in the students. In 1985, the bishops asserted their interest in the Church's participation in education, declaring that "in the fight against corruption, dishonesty, public and private immorality, we have an irreplaceable contribution to make" (CBCN, 1985 p. 15).

Many Christian families in Southeastern Nigeria believed that, given the falling standard of education in the region, there should be a more harmonious church-state partnership in the system (Onwubiko, 1985). Characteristically, Onwubiko warned against the danger posed for both present and future generations of Nigerians as a result of the attitude of government officials toward the teaching of religion and moral instruction in schools. He maintained that while the Catholic Church may not boast of turning students into angels, it can "temper their evil propensities and turn them into good citizens by a well-planned and articulated course of well-

taught religious and moral instruction” (p. 273). As an example of this reasoning, he cited Benjamin Franklin, one of the founding fathers of the United States, who once said, “if men are so wicked with religion, what would they be without it” (quoted in Onwubiko, p. 273).

While the Catholics were agitating for the control of schools, the Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT), expressed objections to the return of schools to the voluntary agencies. The NUT opposed the move for the return of voluntary agency schools because, under the control of missions, the condition of service of the teachers would likely change. The teachers union did not agree with the approach of the Church regarding discipline (Nnajiolor, 2007). Other potential reasons for the NUT’s criticisms of the Catholic schools are clear. Teachers in Catholic schools historically worked quite hard, and were often held accountable for higher academic standards. On the other hand, in public schools, as already seen, teachers were often less committed to the same standards. Generally speaking, the shortage of teachers and the presence of untrained and unqualified teachers of the 1960s during the UPE era had repercussions regarding the quality of teachers in Nigerian schools. Given this, the NUT opposition to the returning schools to the Catholic mission was not surprising, since Catholic education was known for its standards, and discipline. This undoubtedly gave many teachers in the public sector pause when considering the reassertion of Catholic control of many schools.

Nonetheless, the Catholic Church never relented in its efforts to demand the return of mission schools, despite opposition and objections from various quarters. It is thus possible that persistent Catholic agitation influenced the government’s interest in the voluntary agencies’ participation in the management of schools, as articulated in the 1981 revised National Policy on Education:

Government welcomes the contribution of voluntary agencies, communities and private individuals in the establishment and management of primary schools alongside those

provided by the State Government as long as they meet the minimum standards laid down by the Federal Government. (National Policy on Education, 1981, p. 15)

With regard to secondary schools in Nigeria, the same policy also affirmed government willingness to collaborate with private individuals, organizations and missions in the establishment and management of schools:

Concerning the proprietorship of secondary schools, Government welcomes the contribution of voluntary agencies, communities and private individuals in the establishment and management of secondary schools alongside those provided by the Federal and State Governments. State Governments already prescribe conditions to be met by communities and others wishing to build secondary schools. State Governments may include in their condition criteria to be satisfied by communities and other groups who wish to build and run secondary schools. (National Policy on Education, 1981 p. 19)

This, of course, represented a major shift in policy. , The federal government of Nigeria had finally given approval for the establishment and management of schools by private bodies and various churches. But what was the cause of this change in outlook? One possible explanation concerns the neo-liberal agenda, which was becoming more widely influential around the world at that time. This made the participation of non-governmental organizations in various social service capacities more palatable in Africa and elsewhere. And it extended far beyond education as a focal point. For example, in 1981, Shagari's government appointed a commission to examine government-owned industries. The commission's report recommended an increase in the role of the private sector in managing the partially government owned establishments, in a bid to cut down government expenditure at the expense of other, more popular programs (Ekande, 2014).

Following this development regarding education, the Eastern states' civilian governors made moves toward actualization of the revised national policy on education. Onwubiko (1985) stated, "there are now very strong indications that good reason is bringing light and guidance to

policy makers in various state governments to see the wisdom and absolute need of taking positive steps in implementing the handover of schools” (p. 275). Civilian state governors who made declarations leading to the handover of some mission schools included the governors of old Anambra State and Imo State. In 1983, the government of Anambra State passed a law, *The Public Education (transfer of schools) Special Provision Law No. 4 of 1983*, which transferred to the voluntary agencies the proprietorship, management, and control of certain educational institutions (Ike, 2012). These included: St. Charles T.T.C., Onitsha (Roman Catholic Church of Nigeria), Holy Rosary T.T.C., Enugu (Roman Catholic Church of Nigeria), St. Monica’s T.T.C., Ogbunike (Anglican Church of Nigeria), St. Cyprian’s T.T.C., Nsukka (Anglican Church of Nigeria). (Supplement to Anambra State of Nigeria, *Gazette*, no. 19, vol. 8 September 15, 1983 as cited in Onwubiko, 1985 p. 275).

Similarly, in Imo State, the civilian governor, S.O. Mbakwe, made plans to hand over schools to the mission organizations before the December 31, 1983 military coup:

I had already given an indication that a number of schools will be handed back to their original proprietors/owners with effect from 1st January 1984. The details for the handover are being worked out for implementation. (Mbakwe, 1983 p. 10)

While these governors were returning the control of schools to the mission, Arinze (1983) took a stance on the Catholic Church’s involvement with regard to the return of Catholic schools, stating that:

The Catholic Church maintains that all teachers in all schools should receive their salaries and allowances of service, including promotion prospects, whether they are teaching in a Church school or Government school, or other school. None of them should suffer a disability because of the type of school in which he is teaching. (p. 159)

He suggested that the Catholic Church was more interested in the quality of education in the country. He criticized the government schools and used a striking metaphor to describe the

students: “the dull anonymity of matches in a box” (p. 159). He also described formerly Catholic schools as having lost their souls and the teachers as lacking job satisfaction:

Many schools founded by the [Catholic] Church have practically lost their souls... Many teachers do not find joy and fulfillment in their work. They do not place as central the child to be educated. They talk of better conditions of service, with emphasis on conditions, but not on service. They sit under a tree and eat groundnuts when they should be teaching the children. They mount classes in the evening which they call “lesson”, as if the morning one was not a lesson. It is in the evening that they teach with great dedication. The children know it. Those who want to pass the common entrance examination come in the evening. There is a payment which is additional to the teacher’s salary. Not all teachers in our State do this, but some do. (p. 159)

Arinze described the situations found in many schools, which included students stealing during examination, smoking, or engaging in other immoral acts, which many parents were very unhappy about. He asserted that high school boys had been caught in armed robbery, with parents becoming frightened when their boys were returning from school on holiday. He added that parents complained that, “their sons and daughters go to boarding houses and learn new evils about which they did not know before... That is why the Catholic Church want our schools back” (p. 159). Critiques such as these contributed to popular support for the emerging new-liberal policy regime then beginning to emerge in Nigeria.

Military Interruption, 1983-1999

As can be seen, by the early 1980s many steps were in motion to return the control of schools to the Church, but this was halted by the military coup that ousted the civilian government on December 31, 1983. Unlike the 1966 *coup d’etat*, the 1983 coup was a bloodless one led by Buhari, known as “a brass knuckle” leader (Madueke, 2014 p. 146). On taking office, Buhari blamed the previous civilian administration for its indifference, mismanagement, and evasion of the Nigerian constitution (Buhari, 1984). The military dictator pledged to rid

corruption, secure life and property, raise the economic life of the people, and strengthen accountability and transparency in government. He also stated that his regime would not “condone forgery, fraud, embezzlement, misuse and abuse of office, or illegal dealings in foreign exchange and smuggling” (Buhari, 1984 para. 4). However, Buhari abandoned the constitution and ruled by decree. In the words of one observer, “the administration had no plan to return to rule of law as a way to ensure people’s voice in government” (Madueke, p. 145).

As it turned out, however, a neo-liberal policy regime was also pursued during the Buhari regime, which had implications for the education system and other public sectors in Nigeria. His government introduced an economic policy of counter trade, a modified version of barter with Brazil and certain western European nations, which did little to address the country’s economic challenges (Olukoshi, 1993). Thus, his government introduced austerity measures as part of its stabilization efforts, with restrictions on imports. The result was that many local industries were unable to import essential raw materials, forcing them to shut down with workers laid off. These developments were accompanied by inflation, making the price of food items and other basic needs rise (Lewis, 1996). Altogether, Buhari’s austerity measures had adverse effects on many people, especially in the health sector and education. The mortality rate of children under five rose from 181.1 per 1,000 births in 1980 to 192.4 per 1,000 births in 1985 (Amaghionyeodiwe, 1990). In education, the total number of secondary schools in Nigeria fell from 38,211 in 1984 to 35,281 in 1985. In addition, the government imposed levies on parents and students, and at the higher education level, it withdrew the students’ food stamps, thereby increasing the cost of college attendance for students and parents (Ibeanu, 1993).

Buhari’s regime soon became unpopular and was ousted by General Ibrahim Babangida on August 27, 1985. In order to win legitimacy and the support of the people, as was typical of

military regimes, Babangida promised to start the process for a transition to a civilian rule. In line with this, Babangida encouraged the growth of civil organizations. He also supported programs such as the Mobilization for Economic Recovery (MANSER), which was targeted to build grassroots support for the transition to a civilian rule (Folala & Heaton, 2008). He also created an additional 10 states.

In 1986, General Banbangida introduced the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) to remove any sort of subsidies to industry, the reduction of public expenditures, encourage privatization, and the devaluation of domestic currency (Ikubolajeh & Mengisteab, 1995). The SAP was a package of neo-liberal policy reforms that strengthened market forces while retrenching the state (Ekanade, 2014). This had consequences for the Nigerian economy, its citizenry, agriculture, industry (Attahiru, 2003), and education. The public sector, for instance, carried out a massive retrenchment exercise. Education, on the other hand, was constantly underfunded at less than 6% of the total budget during Babangida's regime (Lewis, 1996). The result was poor facility maintenance, teaching, research, and flagging teacher morale. The latter resulted from arrears of salaries owed for many months, causing many teachers to abandon their duties in search of means of livelihood (Daddieh, 1995). Thus, the SAP, rather than helping to improve the Nigerian economy, produced additional hardship, poverty, and discontentment among the citizens (Ekanade, 2014).

For eight years, , Banbangida remained in office and assumed the title of President of Nigeria. But due to public pressure, both locally and internationally, he finally fixed a date for an election to hand over power in 1993. As a result of the political turmoil following the election of June 12, 1993, Babaginda's regime annulled the vote and imprisoned M.K.O. Abiola, who allegedly won the election (Madueke, 2014). The annulment threw the country into political

instability and caused more violent conflicts. An interim national government was established, but after six months it was toppled by General Sani Abacha (Madueke, 2014).

In 1994, under General Sani Abacha as military president, the Babaginda neo-liberal policy, SAP, was replaced with another approach to a neo-liberal agenda, a policy of guided deregulation to improve economic development by proper government discretionary interventions (Ifamose, 2010). Abacha's government made efforts to implement welfare policies that were intended to guard against the counter effects of its economic policy. A key example was the Petroleum Trust Fund (PTF), meant for the rehabilitation of roads, funding of education and the provision of critical infrastructures in the health sector. Ekande (2014) notes that, "its implementation was skewed as it mediated well in the Northern part of Nigeria with marginal presence in the Southern part" (p. 13). General Abacha died in 1998 while still in power.

In 1998, General Abdulsalami Abubakar assumed office as the Nigeria's Head of State following the death of General Sani Abacha. He was the military dictator who finally disengaged the army and handed over power to elected political officials in 1999. On May 29, 1999, Olusegun Obasanjo, the former General who had led Nigeria to democracy in 1979, was sworn in as the duly elected President of Nigeria.

Military Dictatorship in Retrospect

The many effects of military dictatorship in Nigeria are evident. In the narrative so far, starting from the post-colonial era, there were examples of disruptions on educational policies planned by the civilian administrations. A major example was the post-colonial educational policy of the free UPE scheme, which was interrupted by the 1966 military *coup d'état*. This program was implemented most successfully in the Western region of the country, but

experienced challenges elsewhere. The Eastern Catholic Bishops had accepted the state control of schools in principle, but their approach to this never materialized because of the 1966 military coup and the civil war. It seems evident that the lengthy military period in Nigerian politics was a major contributor to the country's economic and political problems. It would take considerable time and effort to overcome this legacy. (Omenka, 2007)

Okpaku (1972) criticized the military regimes in Nigeria and argued that politicians should be responsible for running the country. According to him, when the military shifts or expands its area of responsibility from national security to national government and policy making, it changes its area of authority. He argued that the politicians under civilian rule are accountable to the people they govern because they are elected. On the contrary, the military leaders that were not elected by the people lose their immunity from political responsibilities and criticisms. Onwubiko (1985) criticized the poor moral behavior of young adults on the negligence of the military, and reiterated the urgency for a government-church partnership in the field of education:

It is now a generally accepted fact that in these days of drug abuse, violence, robbery, and insubordination among our youths, the matter of church-state partnership in education has become more pressing than ever before. This partnership is necessary if the church and state cooperate in giving the Nigerian child that education which will make him a good, honest, disciplined and God-fearing citizen that Nigeria badly needs today and in the future. (Onwubiko, 1985, p. 276)

As all these developments were unfolding at the regional level, educators continued to work on the local level. These included the Nigerian Catholic educators who were trained in the colonial education system, and who continued to work towards maintaining order and discipline in schools. Ikeme and other Catholic educators had to deal with the consequences of failure in the UPE scheme, and with the long rule of the military. Ikeme, for example, rejected any form of compromise in terms of discipline and academic excellence in schools, and maintained that

teachers cannot educate unless they capture the attention and respect of those being educated. As their responses to the interviews clearly show, these Catholic educators strongly believed that the Church was justified in its demand for the control of schools in Eastern Nigeria. Their responses are insightful in many other respects as well.

Ikeme and Other Catholic Educators' Observations on the Return of Schools to Catholic Control

The observations of the Catholic educators about Catholic control of schools offered signs of their commitment to Catholic religious principles. They exhibited a sense of accountability and responsibility to a higher power. When asked in an interview why the Catholic Church was demanding the return of voluntary agency schools, Rev Ikeme (2016, February) maintained that, “the Church has a moral obligation to educate the individuals, spiritual, mental, moral, academic and otherwise, meaning the whole formation of the individual.” Another interview participant, Joseph Okoro, suggested that the summary seizing of schools by the state was an act of injustice: “The [Catholic] Church regarded the forceful takeover of her schools by the government as an act of injustice (January 2016). He noted that the Catholic Church continues to feel victimized by the government for its humanitarian assistance to the dying children of Biafra during the civil war:

She [Catholic Church] regarded it as an act of vindictiveness or punishment because the government viewed the assistance given by the Church to the refugees and children dying of kwashiorkor during the war as a form of assistance to Biafra. (January 2016)

He also observed that the Catholic Church was opposed to the government monopoly of schools because secular standards jeopardized the Catholic faith:

The Church is opposed to government monopoly of schools, depriving the parents of the right of choice for the education of their children. The takeover of schools by the government was hostile to Catholic faith especially as government initially banned the teaching of religion in schools and later allowed a type of Christian religious education

which can better be described as a religion of nobody taught by anybody. (January 2016)

Andrew Osita, another Catholic priest and educator, thought that the interview was timely: “this interview is very apt because it allows us to sum the major negative effects of the state takeover of schools (by the military) after the civil war” (January 2016). He enumerated those negative effects of state control of education as a lengthy list:

Education without religion; expo and exam malpractice; leakage of question papers; cultism and secret societies in schools; amoral behavior among members of the staff and between staff and students; general indiscipline in schools; armed robbery and insecurity in the society; and complete ignorance of the knowledge of the Bible and the catechism of the Catholic Church (January 2016).

It is obvious from these observations that there was a breakdown in the education system of Eastern Nigeria that needed to be fixed. Osita strongly believed that the state had failed the larger society, and, for that reason, the Catholic Church felt compelled to demand the control of these schools in order to bring back order and discipline:

These and more of them compelled the Catholic Bishops [of Eastern Nigeria] and all concerned church authorities to declare the situation and urge the immediate return of schools to their appropriate owners so that religion can return to schools and the sanity, security, and fear of God be reinstalled to the schools and society at large. (January 2016)

Robert Ikedi, another Catholic clergyman, observed that the Catholic Church was committed to education and continued to oppose the government control of schools: “The Catholic Church never gave up the commitment to education. The Church continued to resist the government takeover of schools” (January 2016). He noted that the Catholic Church refused any form of compensation from the government and suggested that the Church eventually started building new schools to provide what was lacking in public schools:

Meanwhile, the Catholic Church had started new schools (mission schools) in the bid to continue promoting integral and holistic education alongside the public schools. Indeed, everybody saw that the government takeover of schools had brought about serious defects in education, destruction of structures and lowering of standards of education. (January 2016)

As suggested above, the Catholic Church was finally able to build new schools under the military regime following the publication of the 1981 revised national policy on education, which allowed private bodies, organizations, and churches to establish and manage schools. James Onwu, another participant, noted that the Catholic bishops wanted to control the schools because of their deplorable conditions: “as time passed by, the schools both in infrastructure and products deteriorated and the clamor for return of schools became louder” (February 2016). Michael Okeke, a priest and a historian, observed that the Catholic Church’s demand for control of schools began immediately after the Nigerian civil war: “This is a demand they have been making since January 1970 when the schools were seized by military edict. Only a handful of the thousands of schools have been returned to the church so far” (February 2016). He suggested that the Church’s demand for the return of schools had roots in the late 19th century, when the colonial government was not interested in providing education for the masses. These schools increased in number by the 20th century, and to take them away from the Catholic Church without offering any form of involvement in education was morally unjust.

It is clear that a need for more discipline in schools was a common theme in the participants’ observations with regard to state control of schools. Ikeme and the other Catholic educators insisted that there must be high standards of behavior and academic excellence in schools. They also argued that under government control, discipline and high standards may not have been evident.

In the past there was little or no tension in the administration of schools in Nigeria, at least with regard to the teaching of religion and moral instruction, partly because the schools were still the legacy of the colonial missionaries. The conflict began with the government control of schools, since the end of the civil war in 1970. Ikeme, who remained a principal in the

public schools, had experienced difficulty dealing with the students and their unruly behavior. According to him, he was successful in restoring order and discipline at the College of Immaculate Conception (CIC) Enugu, when he became the college principal, but not without a great deal of hard work. His experience in this regard reflected the many changes that occurred in Nigerian education in the years following independence.

Rev Ikeme, A Catholic Educator Leading Additional State Schools, 1977-1985

Rev Ikeme, who in Chapter Five was gaining experience as an administrator in different settings, was transferred to another secondary school after his superintendency, his alma mater. He discussed his daily encounter as the principal of the College of Immaculate Conception (CIC) Enugu. In particular, his first two years in the school will be discussed in detail because these were the years that he focused especially on indiscipline among students. It is possible that it was in recognition of Ikeme's service ethic that the government urged him to give up his position as a superintendent and return to CIC. Rev. Ikeme described his struggles and how difficult it was to turn around this failing school:

I suffered a lot at College of Immaculate Conception. There was a concerted effort from all quarters to make the school ungovernable. My bosses relaxed in their offices, full of their own importance. The school was threatened by all kinds of indiscipline. (Ikeme, 2012 p. 139)

He recounted his willingness to serve at whatever capacity, provided it was for the common good: "it was because of the notoriety of the school that I was requested to give up my appointment as a superintendent of schools to come and head CIC my Alma Mater" (Ikeme, 2012 p. 139). According to his account, he dealt with indiscipline within six months of his arrival at the college, with or without the support of the government officials:

Within six months I crushed the indiscipline there, where there was even a murder of a student by a student and the number stabbed were more than a few. My bosses should know the number of daggers worn by students for defense and aggression which I snatched from the students and submitted to their offices. I don't mention the number I burnt, and some I still have kept for over 30 years now. (p. 139)

The challenges at CIC affected the academic performance of the final year class 1977/78.

In his address to these graduating students, he reprimanded them and expressed his displeasure for their bad academic performance:

Today however, we are sending off the class Vs. They are being sent out into the world to live by the training they received here. My heart is not happy because the violence, the disobedience, the destruction, the vanity that characterized the end of their stay indicated how little of our spirit they have learnt; what little meaning they have made of their studies of the scriptures, and what a price they have to pay for their inability to learn what God wants of them, and arrive at the knowledge of the truth, elementary facts—that good is to be done and evil avoided...(p. 139).

It is possible that limited teaching of religious studies might account for the students' unruly behavior in the school. Ikeme made more use of the scriptures than the teachers in the public schools. This may account for his success in these schools and the students' improved behavior. He expressed frustration with the summary academic results of the class of 1977/78, especially regarding the final year examination. Out of the total number of final year students (417) who enrolled for the examination, none made a distinction, only 23 students scored divisions one, that is next to a distinction, 96 candidates made it at a divisions two, while 137 scored divisions three, 156 sat for the General Certificate Examination (G.C.E), while five students failed, which means that they did not qualify to go to the university that year. This system of grading in final exams in high schools in Nigeria has since been replaced. The table below is a representation of the 1977/78 final year class of the College of Immaculate Conception:

Table 10

College of Immaculate Conception (CIC) G.C.E. Result 1977/1978 Class

Divisions	1977/78	
	Number of candidates	% - out of number of candidates
Distinction	0	0%
Divisions 1	23	5%
Divisions 2	96	23%
Divisions 3	137	33%
G.C.E.	156	37%
Failures	5	1%
% of Passes	256	61%
Absent	0	0
Number of students	417	

Source: Ikeme (2012). An Autobiography.

Through hard work on the part of Ikeme in tackling indiscipline, as he earlier stated, the culture of the school improved and it became a more positive learning environment for students and teachers. This is evident in comparing the earlier test scores with those of the class of 1978/79. The number of students in 1977 was far greater, which might also account for its

weaker performance in the final exam. In 1977 there was a total of 417 students who sat for the G.C.E, while in the class of 1978 there was only 281.

Table 11

College of Immaculate Conception (CIC) G.C.E.Result 1978/1979 Class

Divisions	1978/79	
	Number of candidates	% - out of number of candidates
Distinction	9	3%
Divisions 1	72	26%
Divisions 2	99	35%
Divisions 3	81	29%
G.C.E.	18	6%
Failures	2	1%
% of Passes	261	93%
Absent	0	0
Number of students	281	

Source: Ikeme (2012). An Autobiography.

The test scores above show evidence of the dramatic change that Ikeme brought to the school in less than a year. The statistics showed an improvement from 61% of the number of students who passed in the previous year to 93% passes in the class of 1978/79. Additionally, in the previous class, no student made a distinction and this same class recorded more failures than

the class of 1978/79. Indeed, for the class of 1978/79 there was a different tone in Ikeme's address during its graduation ceremony. He did not hide his feelings of pride and appreciation for his students:

We are today sending off a group of boys, most of whom have not left much more to be desired in orderly behavior, serious mindedness, spirit of healthy competition, determination to tackle and solve problem with confidence and respect for and cooperation with teachers, integrity and reliability, appreciation for spiritual and supernatural values and other qualities that make a man. (p. 141)

Ikeme was confident in the boys he was sending off to the world, whom he felt had learned to be responsible and hard working and ready to face the challenges of the society:

We therefore feel we are addressing ourselves to boys of spirit, boys of will, boys of muscles, brain and power, fit to cope with everything – we expect you to bear much fruit in devotion to duty and sense of responsibility, in initiative, dynamism and resourcefulness which you have seen in us. You will maintain good conscience, the foundation of peace and boldness that no adversary can face; as well as of fame and respectability. You will have constant cheerfulness which attracts more than a barrel of vinegar. With these qualities, you will be *semper fidelis* – always faithful to the virtues of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mother of God, to whom the college was dedicated. (p. 141)

Clearly Ikeme became successful within the first two or three years of his stay at CIC. This meant that the school became calm and conducive for learning for the remaining time of his tenure.. He believed in discipline, academic excellence, and good moral behavior, exemplified in his lifestyle as a leader. This is the point Ikeme tried to put across to the public and government officials throughout his public career as an educator and administrator.

Agitation for the Return of Catholic Schools Under Civilian Rule: 1999-2009

Throughout the years following the civil war, each time a new government assumed office, the Catholic Bishops of Nigeria continued to seek control of the formerly Church

sponsored schools. In 1999, the Bishop of Enugu, Anthony Gbuji, appointed a committee of Catholic experts who began a new negotiation with the Enugu State Commissioner of Education, Architect Offor. This team included Rev Monsignor Obiora Ike, as chairman, Rev Monsignor Anthony Anijelo, Rev Monsignor Anthony Aso, Sister Mercy Anih, MSHR, and Sir Igwe Iloeje (Ike, 2012). Their major responsibility was to meet with the commissioner of education, and the military governor of Enugu, the navy captain Benson Adekunmi Agbaje, to fix a date for the handover of the remaining Catholic schools. Shortly afterwards, the military government transferred nine schools to two different Christian missions, five to Catholics and four to Anglicans. The schools handed back to the Anglican Church included: Girls' Secondary School Awkunanaw, Nsukka High School Nsukka, Union Secondary School Awkunanaw, and Girls' Secondary School Ngwo.

Five schools were returned to the Catholic Church: College of Immaculate Conception (CIC) Enugu, Queen of the Holy Rosary (QHRC) Nsukka, Rosary High School Awgu, St Paul's College Eke, and St. Theresa's College Nsukka. Subsequently, these schools were provided a transitional period lasting up to nine months for effective resumption of Church control on January 1, 2000. By implication, the Church would take full responsibility for the management and running of these schools, including finances.

However, with the arrival of a new civilian administration in May 1999, with Chimaroke Nnamani as the governor of Enugu State, the transfer of schools to mission control was halted because the NUT had threatened a strike action. Nonetheless, eight years later, on May 29, 2007, Obiora Ike's team initiated another conversation with the new governor, Sullivan Chime, for a total return of the mission schools to Catholic diocese of Enugu (Ike, 2012). Much

discussion and many exchanges of letters and memos took place between the government of Enugu and Bishop Gbuji of Enugu diocese in this regard.

The Actual Return of Catholic Schools in Enugu, 2009-2017

It was as a result of the joint efforts of the three Catholic Bishops in Enugu State that the government finally released the schools for Church control. On September 1, 2009, all former Catholic schools, both primary and secondary were returned to the church in a brief ceremony performed at the Bishop's house, Enugu:

The government of Enugu State finally returned with full ownership, management and control of all the 638 primary and 17 secondary schools, which the former East Central State government forcefully took over from the Roman Catholic Church 39 years ago.

In the new dispensation, while the total ownership, management and administration of the schools are that of the church, the posting and payment of the salaries and emoluments of the teachers and their non-tutorial colleagues in the schools, as well as having the oversight function of ensuring the maintenance of education curriculum, will be that of the government, as its statutory social obligation to its citizenry, which the staff and students of the schools are also beneficiaries. (Chime 2010: Governor Chime returns 655 schools to the Catholic Church)

With time, however, it became clear that these agreements were not to be completely implemented, reflecting an emerging neo-liberal agenda, as suggested earlier. In this respect, the neo-liberal policy of the Obasanjo government had consequences for Catholic education. This could be seen as being contrary to the stipulations of Nigeria's Constitution, particularly Article 18, section 3, stating that the government should strive to eradicate illiteracy. The public-private partnership resulted in the re-introduction of fees in primary and secondary schools, steep tuition increases in higher education, both public and private. There were also budget cuts in education from 11.2% in 1999 to 1.8% of GNP in 2003, contrary to UNESCO's recommendation of 26%

for developing countries (Ekanade, 2014). This undermined academic achievement in Nigeria, restricted resources for research in higher education and other sectors, and progressively affected the quality of teaching and learning in Nigerian schools. It also represented a potential strengthening of neo-colonial imperialism in Nigeria, insofar as it encouraged greater reliance on foreign capital and political influence (Okpe, 2007). It may thus be argued that neo-liberalism in Nigerian politics and economic policies influenced the government decisions to privatize education and other public enterprises. This is evident in the way state governments were returning schools to the missions.

In 2006, for example, the Akwa Ibom State government returned 14 schools to the different missions. However, the Parent/Teacher Association in the state frowned upon it, noting that many poor students in these schools would be deprived of the federal government benefits in public schools. Similarly, in 2011, Delta State returned 40 schools to voluntary agencies. The commissioner of education in the state, Professor Patrick Muobaghare, stated that one of the reasons for the handover was to encourage competition in school management in order to raise standards. Recently, on May 17, 2017 the Nigeria Education Minister, Matthew Opoku Prempeh, speaking on government return of mission schools across the country, stated that it was one of the government efforts in its pro-private sector outlook to see non-government organizations take up space in the public education sector. All these events reflected government efforts to privatize public enterprises, including education, and quite independently of Catholic agitation for the control of these schools.

With the return of schools to Church control, Igboaja (2012) notes that the Catholic education office in Enugu charged the students an additional N1, 000.00 fee (one thousand naira Nigerian currency), since the state did not fulfill its promise of financing certain projects in the

schools. Igboaja described the major challenges facing these institutions, including financial difficulties:

One of the basic problems that faced us was how to finance our office and the returned schools. On the part of the government they merely returned the schools without any monetary commitment. The bishops, on their part, did not make any reference to the financing of the state secretariat and the returned schools. (p. 191)

In a nearby state, Anambra, the government handed back the schools to the Church and provided the funds for their reconstruction. However, Okeke (2012) identified major challenges facing these schools too. These included lack of teaching personnel, especially in the rural areas, and the state reluctance to replace retired teachers. As seen in the earlier analysis of schooling in Nigeria, it is evident that the shortage of teachers continued to be a major challenge. In addition, many teachers still lack adequate qualification to teach as pointed out by Okeke:

Again, the seriousness of education also goes beyond mere number of teachers. Some of our teachers are well below standard. Many are not able to impart reasonable knowledge to the children. The situation should take us back to the training of teachers to our colleges of education and to our faculties of education. If the teachers are not able to guide the young people, then our hope that the educational system will produce better results could be diminished. There is need to give more attention to the training of teachers. (pp. 73-74)

This was the trend across the states where voluntary agency schools were returned to the missions. In Enugu, Igboaja (2012) described the low quality of the principals:

After long years in the public schools the principals we inherited, though ours by faith and religious practices, were by far below the moral standard required to handle the returned schools and make them centers for moral and academic excellence. (pp. 191-192).

The Catholic education office in Enugu organized seminars for its staff and faculty to improve standards.

Convinced of the fact that our students are not our major problems because they are like virgin grounds that produce what is sown in them, we decided to concentrate on the staff. They are the people who sow the educational seed. Since they cannot give what they have not, we embarked on state-wide seminars for all the members of the staff both

tutorial and non-tutorial. This took us severally to Awgu, Nsukka and Enugu where we held the seminars at diocesan levels. (Igboaja, p. 192)

As a product of a colonial missionary school, Igboaja was able to organize these seminars for administrators, teachers and staff in the diocese. He had a clear idea of the Catholic legacy in education. Yet another current Catholic school leader, Anthony Agu, described his challenges as a principal in considerable detail. His perceptions provide a telling epilogue to the story of Catholic education in Nigeria.

Anthony Agu: A Current College Principal, 2009-2017

Anthony Agu, the principal of a boys' Catholic high school that was returned to the missions, offered reflections that serve as a follow-up to the government handover of schools. He believes that government is politicizing education in the way it has returned the schools to the missions: "even this effort at the current era to give back the schools to the missions is not complete...it is like a white sepulcher...it's a show because government is making it political...they are politicizing education" (January 2016). He also believes that the government should take full financial responsibility for these schools: "the government should take over funding and subventions so that these missionary schools will not be money-minded" (January 2016).

Agu's statements suggest that the government policy in handing over schools to the missions was incomplete. Rather than restoring these institutions to their former status, the government is supporting a form of neo-liberal change that has affected education in many ways. Agu is especially concerned about the shortage of teachers and suggests that, in the end, students pay for the recruitment of better teachers in the form of tuition:

They are not supplying sufficient teachers... You see these mission schools charging more money to employ teachers. Most schools handed over to missionaries do have skeletal government staff...they dwindle by the day and as they are retiring no replacement is being made, then the schools continue to employ more teachers. (January 2016)

He also commented on the categories of teachers found in the schools: “there are missionary teachers employed by the principal, and government teachers who were in the school before it was handed back to the mission” (January 2016). He criticized the state for failing to keep its promise of taking responsibility for financing the schools returned to the missions:

So they made a promise which they are not fulfilling, they are not serious with it. I’m not saying that they didn’t do anything...they did something but it is not enough. Left alone to the government staff, these schools will not run properly and maintain the academic curriculum required in these schools and it is not a wonderful thing...so they need more teachers. (Agu, January 2016)

The different categories of teachers identified by Agu remains critical in the education system. Here is the breakdown of the teachers in his school: government teachers, 63; mission teachers, 127; government non-teaching staff, 7; mission non-teaching staff, 32 (June 7, 2017). The total number of government faculty and staff in the school was 70, while the mission teachers and non-teaching staff were a total of 159. According to him, the state government refused to post teachers to the schools, even after their retirement. However, Kelechi Ani (2010), in his review of the Catholic Church policy on education in Enugu, suggests that, the provision for two categories of teachers is a “pedagogic-time-bomb” (p. 8). He states that “such dual patterns of recruitment would naturally create dichotomy and struggle for supremacy amongst the teachers, which would terribly impact on the overall human capital development system” (p. 8).

Agu expresses concerns about the current government relationship with the Catholic mission in the management of schools. He insists that the state should assume a supervisory role while the different missions perform the task of managing the schools:

The government and mission are competing which is not right...it is supposed to be complimentary whereby the government is supervising and the mission is running the schools...that's the only way it should work – government supervises and then coming down with sledge hammer where it is needed...then missionary running the schools and looking up to the government for some other things like supervision and subvention. That's all they have to do...government doesn't have to run schools. (January 2016)

Agu also is vocal in his criticism of the new role government is taking in the schools by creating a new government organ that supervises the daily management of the schools. In his opinion, the Ministry of Education should maintain its policymaking role:

The ministry of education is a policymaking ministry and not a school running ministry. But, by creating the Post Primary School Management Board (PPMSB), it becomes the running arm of the Ministry. If PPMSB is scrapped off, the ministry retains its supervisory role. (January 2016)

He argues that government should, instead, ensure that high standards are maintained in the schools by providing supervisory support. Agu identified additional daily challenges in the school, such as parents becoming more intolerant and impatient with teachers and administrators. The old method of discipline in the traditional Catholic education of the pre-Vatican II era has been discussed extensively regarding its influence in the contemporary school system. In Agu's school, parents now challenge the disciplinary mode found in the Catholic schools because they are better informed. Regarding the teachers, he readily acknowledges the inadequacies found in the teaching force since after the Nigerian civil war. He believes that cheating in exams among students is still the most serious problem in Nigerian education:

Nobody gives what you don't have...after the civil war, expo—a system of cheating in examination became fashionable. This cheating has reached a very sophisticated level in the society. Now the same people who are products of expo came up to become teachers in the educational system and they are helping to perpetuate the expo such that the end

result is thunderbolt. These are teachers who are products of expo and are employed in the mission schools and this creates a major problem to us. However, we do our best to fight the menace of expo. (January 2016)

Agu discusses other challenges, such as the effects of holidays and midterm breaks on his boys, the problem of single sex education, and inadequate security of the school compound. He complains about the bad influence students are exposed to each time they are on holiday or mid-term break, and blames that on the larger social context:

Going home among their people have always been a set back because the society is morally bankrupt. Even when they go for a short break they get swallowed up in this system that has permeated the society and once they return you start all over again. (Agu, January 2016).

The boarding school system of the colonial era remains a widely valued approach in the management of Catholic schools in Nigeria during the contemporary era. Many scholars (Bassey, 1999; Okure, 2009) have criticized this system and its consequences. A major problem during the colonial era was the removal of students from their local traditions and customs; but today Agu suggests that they remove the students from morally bereft social influences.

Additionally, he compares single sex education with co-education and found the latter more useful than the former:

When the boys and girls are together they try to please one another and so try to do things the right way, the same with the girls. But when this does not happen as checkmates they go to the other extreme...that's why there are community colleges... I'm not saying that community colleges don't have their problems...for example you can easily find teenage pregnancies there. But I think in community colleges they are more balanced there, they come out more balanced than in separate schools. (January 2016)

As noted earlier, pre-Vatican II Catholic education encouraged single sex schooling, and in Nigerian Catholic schools, and sometimes public schools, single sex education is still upheld. This suggests that the influence of pre-Vatican II Catholic education in Nigeria may take many years to change. Agu also discussed the significance of having a secured compound: “lack of [a]

complete secured compound makes the students to sneak out and the Catholic Church may not be financially buoyant to carry out this project” (Agu, January, 2016). Maintaining secure premises in this manner remains a critical element of sustaining a strict disciplinary regime as schools of this sort. These were lessons conveyed in Father Ikeme’s practice as a school leader as well.

Agu discussed other major issues, such as the curriculum in the current era, its implications for the school system, and student appearance and demeanor. He acknowledges that there have been different priorities in the curriculum during the previous eras, as noted in previous chapters. These included the teaching of religion, reading, arithmetic, history, geography, and, later, sciences. According to him, “in the current time when technology became the norm, emphasis is now more on computer science, and so these new additions affected the general studies that were there during the colonial era” (January, 2016). He bemoans the changes that have occurred in the course of study over time: “the curriculum became more enlarged, they started dropping or de-emphasizing some and those that suffered most are history, geography. History, for example, is almost gone from our schools and that’s why people no longer know their history” (January 2016). He also suggested that there is too much emphasis on music and science:

The only thing that is global now is the knowledge of music and knowledge of scientific formulas... History is no more there, geography is de-emphasized and because people do not know what has gone in the past...look at the civil war in Nigeria...it’s not anywhere in the history any longer, it’s not in the curriculum. Nothing of the Nigerian past is in the curriculum and so the students do not know what is in the past except the things their parents tell them. Apart from that, they have no clue, they have no history. So all these things are very painful (January 2016).

It is telling in many respects that History is no longer emphasized in the Nigerian secondary school curriculum. Even when it was taught, topics such as the civil war were

removed from the curriculum and that is why, today, young people from the Eastern region have no idea what the older generations experienced in their quest for secession from Nigeria. Agu uses his school to demonstrate how the secondary school curriculum has been shaped by Information Technology (ICT):

Now you have computer science different from ICT in the new curriculum, but they are all in the same family – ICT, Computer, Word development, then you have Computer Writings. These are things the secondary school pupils are doing and they have just one subject alone which is computer science and this subject is divided into several other parts standing on their own in the curriculum, thereby pushing out so many other subjects (January 2016).

In his critique of the computer lessons, he observed that his 10th grade class suffers the most; having to take 20-21 subjects each term sounds rather ridiculous:

the SS1 [Senior Secondary One] (US 10th grade) is the class that takes the broth of the whole mischief of the current era curriculum...because now in SS1 class they study 20-21 subjects and it's so difficult to fit in all these subjects in the daily curriculum (January 2016).

He focuses on the curriculum because, when all are added up, there is practically no place to teach General Studies, which should play an important role in the secondary school curriculum:

It's so useless the way I personally see it...it's so useless that it doesn't make sense to me. So when you put together all these things you find that general studies have no place because you can't create more hours and you can't make the day longer than it should be...and then you can't make the year go beyond 364 or 365 days. So things become more confusing that a whole lot of things that are more important are not placed on a bigger scale. So these are my experiences with the curriculum. (January 2016)

Agu recalls another factor that he considers very disturbing, and that is the recommended texts for schools and the corrupt practices of Nigerian government. He challenges the government policies on these counts:

the government is corrupt and so bad that they don't allow schools to make recommendations. Well as missionaries we try to be independent, we close our eyes and try to take the bull by the horn and choose our books. (January 2016)

While condemning the selection criteria of the recommended texts for schools, Agu also complained about the low quality of the texts. He notes that educators in mission schools disregard the government policies and choose high quality books to ensure that Catholic schools continue to deliver a sound education:

In the list of so called approved books, you can see that mediocrity becomes the case...and that's why sometimes we are mandated to take books from approved books. So sometimes you see the mission schools that are independent choose their own books, though it's against the law, they are doing it. They do it in order to preserve the quality of education because some of these approved books when you read them you will just see that something fishy is behind them. So that's how I look at what is going on...sincerity is not there anymore, and without sincerity we cannot have a good curriculum. (January 2016)

While affirming the high level of malfeasance in Nigeria among public officials, Okpaku (1972) noted that, "it would be misleading to suggest that in Nigeria only the military is corrupt" (p. 375). He suggested that corruption is also prevalent in the civilian government, noting that "the average American earns at east fifty times more money than the average Nigerian, but the Nigerian pays much more than the American for most services and products because of all the bribes involved" (pp. 375-376). The cause was that Nigerians tended to be impressed by wealth, no matter how it was acquired. Therefore, he suggests that the only solution to corruption in Nigeria was perhaps to legalize it (Okpaku, 1972).

Agu lamented the implications of a compromised curriculum on the Nigerian school system. He suggests that the students finished high school poorly qualified to use their diploma, whereas, during the colonial era, primary school graduates were better qualified, due to the curriculum. He compares the type of books colonial students read and their ability to quote from them:

For example, the quality of books they have read are not the same...you see somebody from the colonial era with only a first school leaving certificate quoting books and their

brain is so sharp, quoting books like [those of] *Rudyard Kipling*[and] *Shakespeare*—all these classical books that were written with distinction. (February 2016)

In addition to curricular concerns, Agu also wondered about the students' physical appearance, intellectual bearing, and academic performance. Using his students as a point of reference, he noted first, their dress code, and then their lack of respect for the teachers:

because they have no fear of God, they don't care, they have no respect for their teachers, even in their dressing and if you correct them, flog them...good! What else can you do? Then when you go beyond what they expect, they bring in their parents and when their parents come, they sue you and then what can you do? (February 2016)

Worse still, the students no longer feel threatened with suspension, because they like being sent home since their parents have no more control over them. He observes the presence of secret cults (cultism) in many high schools, both public and private, and how the teachers and staff resisted these developments in his school. The presence of cults in Nigerian high schools started immediately after the civil war. Many scholars (e.g Adigwe, 2010; Onwubiko, 1985) have condemned it. Rev. Ikeme fought cultism in his schools until it was subdued. Here again, Agu describes his experience with cult boys in the school and how willing he was ready to die in the process:

Now of course you know what is called the cult which is everywhere now, we fought them here in this school. We used everything to chase them out of this school and we are very proud of doing that. But many schools cannot chase them out and we do most of the things we do because we are ready to die, we don't have families, we don't have wives, we don't have children, so we are not afraid of them and we are ready to die. (February 2016)

With all these challenging issues in the schools, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) reiterates its firm belief that higher quality education for all that would lead to a stronger nation. At the end of its February 2012 plenary meeting, the CBCN once again published its communiqué: "education and nation building". In this statement, the bishops discussed the current crisis facing Nigeria as a result of poor quality education:

The crises we face in Nigeria border is on how we can live and work together in civility... It is the moral and religious obligation to acknowledge our common humanity and our common citizenship even as we acknowledge our ethnic, religious, linguistic and cultural diversity. Ignorance nourishes xenophobia, that is, fear of persons of different identities. (CBCN 2012, p. 306)

Agu considered the school age of his students and compared them with those of the colonial era. In his view, students then were more mature than the students found in Nigerian schools today, who lack knowledge of life from the way they act and behave. He bemoans the influence of television and other electronic media on the students, and how these pose a great danger to the administration of a contemporary school. In his school for example, the students were not permitted to bring phones and other such devices to school, and yet, every term, the school administrators must confiscate phones from the students. As Agu notes, “the influence of the television and hand gadgets is enormous. In this school we don’t allow students to have hand phones and yet every term we seize not less than 20 cell phones from them” (February 2016). Interestingly, he finds that his boys do not use the phones to make calls. Instead, the phones are used for other purposes, such as watching pornography:

They have these phones with chips, memory cards which they put in there and they go out there at the streets nearby to load the memory cards with pornographies. That’s all they do...nothing worthwhile...they fill the memory cards with pornography, then they come in, hiding the phone. They don’t use their phones to make calls but they use them to watch pornographies...yes! They do that and it’s very common. Each time we seize these phones we find that they have these memory cards and when you get the memory card, you may decide to check what these boys have on those cards, you put the memory card on television or anywhere, it’s all pornography. Things have changed...they are kids really but they are behaving like adults. (February 2016)

With regard to whether there were certain advantages over going to school much early rather than later, he states that, while it is a good idea to complete schooling early, he is asking the parents to co-operate with the school in instilling good behavior in the child. Yet at the

moment, it seems that is a problem in Nigeria because both parents work and the child often is left unsupervised.

If the parents are doing their own side of the work things will be better, but they are not. The fact that father is working, mother is working, the maid is there...not interested... and what the maid is doing is just the house chores...eventually this kid has no morals, nothing. They come to school so the school would give them everything...the school can't do magic, there must be certain basics on which the school will have to build on. (February 2016)

From Agu's observations, it seems clear that he is faced with many challenges in running the school, an indication that things have changed from the previous eras.

But the Nigerian bishops believe that education is one of the answers to the current crisis in Nigeria:

Quality education produces citizens who will work for the establishment and maintenance of socio-economic and political order. It is the antidote for the recurring and related problems of poverty, corruption, insecurity and incompetence in our land. Indeed, the task of building a better Nigeria begins with the provision of quality education. Yet Nigeria must avoid a reductionist conception of education. (CBCN 2012 p. 306)

Reinforcing their sentiments, the Bishops cite the admonitions of Pope Benedict XVI who stated that, "real education is not possible without the light of the truth, truth about good and evil" (January 1, 2012, Message on the World Day of peace, no. 2, cited in CBCN, p. 306). In proving a definition of quality education, the bishops state that, "quality education involves the formation of the whole person, that is, the human person in his or her spiritual, intellectual, moral and technical dimensions. It is rooted in and animated by spiritual values" (CBCN, 307). They addressed the negative power of science on young people and its consequences, and asked the following question:

Does not the evil of science without morality stare us in the face? Technical education without ethical values create persons who promote a culture of death. The terrorists in our midst are without doubt well educated in the technique of making explosives. In the

same way religion without the use of the intellect makes us intolerant of other people's religious beliefs. Faith without reason breeds fanatics. Artisans of a new Nigeria – religious leaders, politicians, civil servants, business men and women, parents—need holistic education. (CBCN p, 307)

The CBCN then calls the attention of the state governments and admonishes all others who think religion is the problem in Nigeria and systematically present the real problem:

Nigeria is a country where majority of the population is made up of people who oppose one religious belief of the other, and some people have found it convenient to blame religion for the problems of Nigeria. For this reason, they would want to banish religion from places of learning. But Nigeria's problems, even as they are have [*sic*] religious dimensions, should not be blamed on religion but on the abuse of religion and on the failure of the state. (CBCN p, 307)

For the Bishops, the root cause of the problems and the crises Nigeria is facing are found in leaving the teaching of religious studies in the hands of incompetent instructors:

What we are experiencing are the unpleasant consequences of leaving matters of religious instructions to ill-prepared teachers. That is why, rather than exclude religion from the sphere of education, this, in fact, is the time to bring religion and education together. It is by bringing religion and education together we bring faith and reason together and avoid formation of religious fanatics in our midst. (CBCN, 307)

The bishops support their argument by making reference to Pope Benedict's XVI's 2009 encyclical, *Caritas in Veritate* that notes:, “without religion public life is sapped of its motivation and politics takes on a domineering and aggressive character. Human rights risk being ignored, either because they are robbed of their transcendent foundation or because personal freedom is not acknowledged.” (Pope Benedict XVI, no. 56 June 29 2009)

Above all, the Bishops maintain that the ultimate goal of real education is to teach children the real essence of love, love of God and love of neighbor because, according to them, God loves everyone in our differences—religious, ethnic, or cultural. They conclude by stating: “it is by pursuing this objective that education fosters a just socio-economic and political order.

Nigeria is in dire need of education that promotes love, and love integrates a diverse population to work for authentic development” (CBCN, 2012 p. 307).

Conclusion

In this chapter, the impact of neo-liberalism on public enterprises, including education in Nigeria was examined. The agitation for the return of voluntary agency schools under various political administrators was discussed. There were many reasons why the Catholic Church in Eastern Nigeria requested the return of the schools. An important one was the falling standard of education. Although the military regime refused to grant their request, the Catholic Bishops and other lay Catholic associations persisted in their struggle for the return of these schools. As was noted, one major group, the Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT) objected to this move. The NUT was skeptical about the ability of voluntary agencies to meet or improve the condition of service and other benefits of the teachers as public servants.

In the end, schools were returned in many states, as well as in Enugu. Although the schools were returned for Catholic control, they continued to face many challenges in its management, for lack of teachers or qualified teachers and teachers’ remunerations. Due to lack of adequate funds, these schools were forced to charge tuition to the exclusion of many students from low-income backgrounds. This suggests the possibility that the government deliberately returned the schools for mission control in a bid to encourage more private sector participation in public enterprises. This move attracted criticism from various groups, including many that strongly believed that neo-liberal policies remain alien to many African nations. As Ekanade (2014) notes, “neo-liberal economic policies... are challenging African states, including Nigeria.

Even though they are acknowledged as independent states within the global community, African countries have not adequately established themselves as nations with national identities” (p. 2).

There was an influence of both the traditional Catholic education of the pre-Vatican II era and the colonial missionary education, clearly witnessed in the statements of Rev Ikeme and other Catholic school leaders and educators who participated in this study. In Ikeme’s experience as a college principal, it was found that, although he still operated in the old-world view of the colonial approach and the traditional Catholic schooling of the pre-Vatican II, especially in the area of discipline and pedagogy, he did so because the government failed the students.

The Nigerian Catholic Bishops continued to negotiate with the government to find the best ways to improve the education system in Nigeria, despite the many challenges facing education in contemporary African settings.

CHAPTER SEVEN: DISCUSSION OF MAJOR FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This thesis represented historical research on the development of Catholic education in Southeastern Nigeria, in the context of national development, 1885–2017. The study examined colonial legacies, Catholic Church’s participation, and efforts to resist colonialism. The study showed that the Catholic Church was accused of supporting the rebellion during the civil war. At the end of the conflict, the military authorities diminished the church by confiscating Catholic institutions.. At this time, the Church had a very significant historical stake in education. The Catholic bishops in the region began to assume a more active role, but it was difficult for them to consistently express it. Nevertheless, indigenous Catholic educators such as Rev Ikeme worked within the public school system, bringing a zealous spirit and highly ethical approach in restoring discipline, and academic excellence. Finally, when the Catholic leaders eventually regained control of schools, they discovered that circumstances had changed, and there was no going back.

All these issues were examined in light of the different stages of Catholic education during the eras under investigation: the colonial era (1885-1950), the post-colonial era (1950-1970), the post-war years (1970-1975), and the contemporary era (1975-2017). Without doubt, as was clearly shown, the schools during each era under study had their own successes and challenges.

The pre-Vatican II era had a clear and lasting impact on the other eras that were examined. This era represented the period of a more conservative observance of Catholic doctrine and, in many ways, was reflected in both the pedagogy and curriculum of Catholic

education. Nevertheless, while the traditional Catholic education had many strengths, it was clear that it also had important limitations. The impact of traditional Catholic education was especially evident with the arrival of the colonial missionaries in Africa through their teaching and evangelization.

It was observed that, throughout the 19th century, the establishment and management of schools were entirely in the hands of Christian missions in Southern Nigeria. The Berlin Conference of 1884-1885 saw to the partitioning of Africa. This era primarily marked the beginning of an intense missionary scramble for the souls of Africans (Bassey, 1999). The result was the establishment of schools used as a means of proselytization, security and commercial purposes (Bassey, 1999; Carnoy, 1974). However, as Fafunwa (1974) noted, the absence of any official educational policy resulted in a lack of: (a) a common syllabus, standard textbooks, regular school hours; (b) adequate supervision of schools—buildings, teachers, and pupils; (c) a central examination system; (d) uniformity in the condition of service of teachers; and (e) adequate financial support and control.

Toward the end of 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, the British colonial government partially took control of education in Southern Nigeria and later in the Northern region. Falola and Ihonvbere (1985) have argued that the colonial state used its supervisory role in education to ensure that the establishment of institutions and content of the curriculum did not violate colonial policies. As such, education in Nigeria, as in other African countries, was used as an ideological weapon to propagate the values of the colonial government.

As discussed in Chapter Three, the colonial government did attempt to reform education when policies were enacted to establish its schools and the expansion of voluntary agency schools. Efforts were made to affect the content and quality of curriculum, and the funding of

voluntary agency schools through grants-in-aid. In order to strengthen its control of education in Nigeria, including Catholic schools, the first educational policy was adopted in 1882. This policy authorized the appointment of an inspector of schools for all British West African colonies, including Lagos in Nigeria. Fafunwa noted that the 1882 Act established a set of criteria for grants for teachers' salaries. Soon afterwards, the 1887 ordinance created a Board of Education, headed by a governor. By 1892, Henry Carr, a veteran Nigerian educator, was named the inspector of schools. Henry Carr was a famous critic of Catholic education. He was mainly critical of Catholics' use of the schools as centers for conversion to Christianity (Omenka, 1989). In 1903, a Department of Education was created for Southern Nigeria, and another educational policy was formulated (Menakaya, 1980). This code laid down rules for the provision of primary and secondary education in the region and made provisions for the payment of grant-in-aid to all schools (Fafunwa, 1974), including Catholic schools.

In 1906, the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria and Lagos were merged into the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria. Soon afterward, in 1908, another educational ordinance was passed that made provisions for education boards in the Western, Central, and Eastern Provinces of Southern Nigeria. These boards were given the opportunity to make certain regulations according to local situations. From then on, an administrative apparatus gradually emerged, with at least nominal responsibility for the Southern Nigerian education (Abernethy, 1969). Throughout this period, the colonial government controlled mission schools through indirect rule by providing financial assistance to both Catholic missionaries and other missionary groups.

In 1916, another educational code was formulated under Lord Lugard, the governor general of Northern and Southern Nigeria, for the formation of character and the habits of

discipline among pupils in Africa. The 1926 education document, popularly known as the “Phelps-Stokes Report on Education in Africa” (Abernethy, 1969; Fafunwa, 1974; Sifuna & Otiende, 1994), primarily stipulated the registration of all teachers and gave the governor general permission to close any school that was inactive for the community. It also created mission supervisors of schools in charge of the use of grant-in-aid received for services. However, the Phelps-Stoke Report for use in Nigeria, an American approach, was for subservient roles for literate Nigerians serving in the colonial government.

The period, between 1930-1950 was marked with more educational changes and the rise of a Nigerian nationalist movement. In 1929, E.R.J Hussey, a British and director of education in Nigeria made certain restrictive educational changes (Legislative Council of Nigeria, 1930). He suggested changes that affected the type and quality of education in Nigeria that comprised three levels of education. First was a six-year primary education replacing the former eight-year program. Second was an intermediate program of six years for both lower and higher middle schools. The last stage offered vocational or higher college courses for qualified medical and engineering assistants and teachers of higher middle schools. This proposal was finally published in the 1930 Memorandum on Educational Policy in Nigeria.

In the wake of nationalist opposition, British policies shifted once again. By the 1940s there was a restructuring in the colonial educational policy with the creation of a Colonial Development and Welfare Fund (Omenka, 1989). Funds were sent to this office, primarily for educational matters in Nigeria. This helped the colonial administration, led by Governor B.H. Bourdillon, to design a ten-tier education proposal in 1942. This proposal was disrupted by the destructive impact of the Second World War on Europe, the promises of self-determination contained in the Atlantic Charter, and the attainment of independence by several British colonies.

These created a climate of world opinion that was clearly hostile to the continued rule of the Europeans over Africans. From then on, “colonialism was to be atoned for, if at all, by the rapid transfer of power from the European bureaucrats to indigenous political leaders” (Abernethy, p. 96).

Although the colonial government and missionaries brought Western education and Christianity to Africa, their legacies had serious consequences for many African nations. More critical, was the educational inequality that existed within the country, with a greater concentration of schools in Western and Eastern Nigeria, and relatively little in the Northern region. Even in the post-colonial era, it was clear that the Northern region was struggling to catch up educationally with the other regions.

It was affirmed that the colonial missionaries introduced Christianity through the establishment of schools in all African states, while colonialism provided the impetus for the rise of the nationalist movement that fought for independence in many African states. However, the impact of Western hegemony and cultural domination springing from the British authorities continued to shape post-colonial Nigeria. Falola and Ihonvbere (1985) suggested that when a hegemonic order exists in a society or any formation, the supremacy of the hegemonic class is established, maintained, and reproduced in other social classes. According to Falola and Ihonvbere (1985), “this domination is imposed through the penetration of all aspects of society and manifested in the general acceptance of the worldview of the dominant class and the interpretations that this class gives to social reality” (p. 239). In Nigeria, the British colonial government was mainly interested in raw materials, cheap labor, and compliant natives. This government used force and intimidation in their dealings with Africans through the imposition of taxes and warrant chiefs, but Nigerians showed their resistance toward colonialism through riots

in various parts of the country. Before long, anticolonial sentiments were raised and that led to the rise of the nationalist movement in Nigeria in the 1940s.

During the colonial era, as the sociologist Steven Brint (2006) suggested, “schooling for the masses was sometimes considered helpful for these purposes, but it was a comparatively low priority” (p. 69). The education system was structured not to have scientists, top bureaucrats or senior management officials, but interpreters, clerks, messengers, station masters, sanitary inspectors, dispensers, and house boys (Falola & Ihonvbere, 1985). According to Falola and Ihonvbere, “colonialism as a logical extension of imperialism imposed the colonial state to protect and reproduce the interests of the metropolitan bourgeoisie” (p. 243).

Falola and Ihonvbere (1985) added that, “the limited goals of the educational system are evidenced in the fact that, for mainly political reasons, the British government, working through the colonial office, ensured that the northern part of the country was largely isolated from the influence of the missionaries” (p. 244). All these had implications for education in Nigeria in the long run. Chinua Achebe’s (1959) literary work, *Things Fall Apart*, depicted colonialism in Nigeria:

The white man is very clever. He came quietly and peaceably with his religion. We were amused at his foolishness and allowed him to stay. Now he has won our brothers, and our clan no longer act like one. He has put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart (p. 176).

The 1950s were marked by an educational revolution, a worldwide revolution (Fafunwa, 1974; Meyer, Rubinson, Ramirez & Boli-Bennett, 1977). This revolution led to the introduction of the first educational policy by the Nigerian nationalist government, the free and compulsory UPE scheme. The policy asserted that education should be free at the early and elementary stages of schooling (United Nations, 1948, art. 26).

The UPE scheme boosted the enrollment rates of primary school children in the various regions throughout the 1950s and 1960s. It was first introduced in the Western region in 1952 and took effect in 1955. For many people, this was the beginning of an educational revolution in Nigeria, because the region witnessed a jump in school enrollment from 475,000 in 1954 to 811,000 in 1955 for students aged 5 to 14. By 1960, more than 1,100,000 pupils were enrolled in schools, representing over 90% of school age children in the Western region. Abernethy (1969) observed that, “these few statistics indicate the dramatic and rapid expansion of school facilities that occurred once Nigerians came into semi-responsible position of power” (p. 128).

However, while the UPE scheme worked very successfully in the Western region, it had major challenges in the Eastern region. As Abernethy (1969) observed, “the educational policy in the Eastern region during the 1954 - 1958 period was formulated in an atmosphere of crisis, caused both by the complexity of factors, political, administrative, religious and financial” (p. 161). These included the short time frame in the planning of the scheme and the training of teachers. This resulted in staffing schools with untrained teachers, and by 1958, many of these teachers were laid off and schools closed for lack of funds. Also, the Catholic Church in the region opposed certain aspects of the policy that objected to the opening of new primary schools and the measure of control given to the local boards (Omenka, 2007; Onwubiko, 1985).

As a result of these problems, the regional government was forced to modify the scheme. In 1958, it set up a committee led by K. Dike to review its educational policy. The Dike Report found that about one third of the government revenue was spent on education alone (Report on the Educational System in Eastern Nigeria, 1962). Other considerations were made. For example, teachers in local authority schools managed by the voluntary agencies were to connect with the mission that employed them. While the Catholic Church in the region resisted the new

educational policy, the Protestants took a more liberal approach, adapting to the new changes in education.

In the Northern region, Western education was yet to take roots because of strong presence of Islamic education within the region. The UPE program was partly set out to address the educational imbalance in the North (Csapo, 1983). While some politicians were eager to expose their children to Western education, many parents were skeptical about it, preferring the Islamic education with which they were familiar. However, although the Northern region was more backward in education than the other regions, it was more stable. Fafunwa (1974) noted that while both the Eastern and Western regions experienced large scale enrollment growth, the percentage rate of increase in pupil population was higher in the North. Despite the success story of the scheme in the different regions, the country was faced with shortage of teachers as a major hindrance to its accomplishment.

The UPE scheme was discontinued with the 1966 bloody *coup d'etat* and the Nigerian civil war of 1967. Although many studies have examined the causes of the Nigerian civil war, it was argued that the unequal location of schools in Nigeria may have contributed to the war. It was argued too, that the Muslims in the North rejected Catholic education, a form of Western education, in favor of Islamic education. These issues were discussed in detail in Chapter Four. The civil war halted many activities in the country, including education. It was only in 1970, after the civil war, that national reconstruction and nation building started, and that led to the secularization of all Christian institutions in Eastern Nigeria.

Apart from the UPE scheme, there were other educational policies and the recommendations of different Commissions that helped to shape Nigerian education systems. Unlike the colonial educational policies, whose contents denied the existence of Nigerian history

while serving the glory of the Queen and the British Empire as a core value system (Falola & Ihonvbere, 1985), the indigenous policies were relevant and appropriate for Nigerian schools. The 1958 Dike report, among other recommendations, suggested the overhauling of the Nigerian school curriculum in English, history, geography and the sciences. It also recommended the expansion of secondary schools that was limited during the colonial era, which gave priority to primary education. The 1962 Ikoku report was another step further in education innovation in the country. It was this commission that recommended total government control of primary education in the country. The 1960 Ashby commission, entitled “investment in education” was set up to review post-school certificates and higher education in Nigeria, as well as to investigate Nigeria’s manpower needs for a period of 20 years, 1960-1980 (Fabunmi 2005). For the first time, Nigeria had universities on its soil. More importantly, it recommended the establishment of a University’s Commission that accredits and monitors university programs in Nigeria.

The transition from colonial to post-colonial Nigeria in the 1950s and 1960s gave birth to a new generation of indigenous Catholic educators. Rev Monsignor Charles Ikeme and other Catholic educators represented the new phase of Catholic school leaders in the country. While the colonial missionaries, had a different experience with regard to the administration of schools, curriculum, types of students, and relationship with the colonial government, Ikeme’s was different. However, the colonial missionaries were driven away from Nigeria for their relief support to the Biafrans during the civil war. This resulted in Nigerian educators, including Rev Ikeme, taking active roles as principals, and he later served as a superintendent in the public school system.

The military government had hoped that the takeover of Christian schools and hospitals would bring about national unity, peace, and stability. But for lack of proper planning,

negotiations, dialogue and consultations, the government action had counter effects, particularly with the schools. Subsequently, this became a topic of public debate with some in favor of the state control of schools, others against the move, while others favored the action but with conditions. The Catholic Church in Eastern Nigeria petitioned for the control of these schools, and blamed the government for the fallen standard of education in the state.

In the wake of government seizure of Catholic institutions in 1970, the bishops focused on the removal of religious education, linking it to falling standard of education and lack of moral behavior among students.. But, Rev Ikeme, worked pragmatically to restore discipline and academic excellence in the public schools.

While the agitation for the return of mission schools was continued by the Catholic Church, the government finally decided to relinquish control of schools to private individuals and Christian Churches. The move began in 1979, when the civilian government handed back some of the schools for control by the missions and private individuals. It was argued that this was done not because of the pressure from the public and the Christian Churches but because of the influence of neo-liberal policy that has become a worldwide view of allowing the private sector to participate in the running of public enterprises. However, the Nigerian historian, Victor Ekanade (2014) argues that, “the neo-liberal orthodoxy was perpetuated paradoxically by subsequent democratic regimes without the consent of the citizens” (p. 23).

Conclusions

The study found that Catholic education in Nigeria was affected by many factors, both negative and positive. First, the historical narrative showed that Catholic Church was not an indigenous association. As such, the Nigeria nationalist elites viewed the colonial regime and Christian missionary work as external forces that compelled Nigerians to develop dislike toward

their local customs. Second, the Catholic Church leaders, bishops, priests and nuns were mostly Europeans. This scenario led many Nigerian educated elites to regard the Church as foreign, at least in comparison with other Christian denominations. Their leadership was mainly local (for example, Ajayi Crowther, a Nigerian, was an Anglican bishop during the colonial era). Third, the Catholic ecclesiastical provinces in Nigeria corresponded to the administrative territories of the colonial political rulers (Okure, 2009). Fourth, its linkages with the Vatican and other European countries and its oversea reliance for personnel and funds all made the Catholic Church being accused of supporting colonialism, even though it did not create it. Finally, the Catholic Church was accused of supporting rebellion during the Nigerian civil war. All these connections made the Catholic Church a target of the government decolonization programs.

Given all these issues, the Nigerian political elite embarked on programs aimed at eradicating aspects of colonialism that were problematic. These programs included the secularizations of institutions, including schools formerly controlled by the Christian missions, with consequences for the Catholic Church that had the highest historical stake in these institutions. As a result, the Catholic Bishops in the region struggled for legitimacy, but to no avail. It was only after two to three decades that the government decided to begin a more serious dialogue with them, leading eventually to the return of schools to the missions.

But on a positive side, despite the challenges facing Catholic education in the region, Catholic school leaders and educators worked hard to restore discipline and academic excellence in the schools, as evident in the works of Rev Charles Ikeme. As I noted earlier, in Ikeme's experience as a school leader, he did not foreground religious education. Instead, he focused more on standards, discipline and good moral behavior among students and teachers. His approach to leadership and instruction constantly brought him to disagreement with government

officials, but he remained steadfast and undaunted. He summarized his actions thus, “a sense of responsibility should be a common virtue, initiative makes you respectable, resourcefulness makes you surpass others, courage joins to make you master of every situation” (p. 133).

Suggestions for Future Research

This study presented an historical account of Catholic education in Southeastern Nigeria in the context of national development, 1885 - 2017. For future research, the following are suggested: (a) the challenges of human capital development following the return of schools to the Catholic Church in Southeastern Nigeria, (b) a comparative analysis of Catholic and public education in Southeastern Nigeria after the civil war, (c) a study of Catholic education and colonialism in Southeastern Nigeria with a focus on Catholic women’s colleges, (d) a study of the contributions of the Nigerian Catholic nuns in the development of education in Nigeria, (e) a study of the relationship of the Christian missions in Nigeria in the area of education, and (f) a study on Catholic co-education and single sex education and boarding and day school systems.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Sample copies of curriculum design and development in Eastern Nigerian Catholic schools from the colonial era to the current contemporary era, (1915-2004). However, with the government takeover of schools after the Nigerian civil war in 1970, the Catholic schools no longer have a separate curriculum and therefore have to abide by the National curriculum and standards set out by the Federal and State Governments in Nigeria. By this, it means that all schools - public, private, parochial, throughout the country must follow the government standards.

Part A: Section 1.

Temporary scheme of Religious Moral Instruction in the Roman Catholic mission schools by Father J. Shanahan, Apostolic Prefect, Onitsha, 1915.

INFANTS:

Class 1

1. Sign of the Cross.
2. Recitation of Our Father.
3. Hail Mary.
4. The Apostles' Creed.
5. Elementary notion about God as Creator of: Angels, Men, the World.
6. Our First Parents.
7. The Garden of Eden.

8. The First Sin.
9. The Promise of a Redeemer.
10. The Birth of Jesus at Bethlehem.
11. The Adoration of Jesus by Angels, the Shepherds, Kings from the East.
12. The Life of Jesus During His Childhood. His obedience to his Parents.
13. The Love of Jesus for Children.
14. The Death of Jesus. His Resurrection and Ascension into Heaven.
15. Refrains of Some Igbo Hymns.

Class 11

1. Prayers learned the previous year.
2. The Commandments of God and of the Church.
3. Elementary Notions about the Attributes of God.
4. More detailed Notions about the Angels in general – Good Angels, Bad Angels, and Guardian Angels.
5. Original Sin and its Effects.
6. Short Stories taken from the Life of Christ.
7. The Passion of Christ.
8. The Institution of the Seven Sacraments.
9. Special Lesson on: Baptism, Penance, Holy Eucharist.
10. Virtues peculiar to Children, how to acquire them.
11. Vices peculiar to Children, how to avoid them.
12. Igbo Hymns.

STNADARDS

Class 1 (Std. III)

1. All the Prayers learned in previous years.
2. Short explanation of the 12 Articles of the Apostles' Creed, 10 Commandments of God, Commandments of the Church, and the 7 Sacraments.
3. Special stress to be laid on the 1st, 4th, 6th, 7th, and 8th Commandments.
4. Elementary notion about the Sacraments.
5. Further details taken from the life of Christ.
6. Hymns and Serving of Mass.

Class 11 (Std. III & IV)

1. More advanced Lesson on nos. 1), 2), 3), of Class 1.
2. Explanation of the Parables contained in the New Testament.
3. Special Lesson on Pagan Customs and Practices:- a) some, good or indifferent, b) others, evil.
4. Elementary Bible History for Children. The Old Law.
5. Elementary Notion of Church History: I – IV Centuries.
6. Noble deeds performed by Christian Men and Women.
7. How character is acquired and Heaven won by those who observe the law of God.
8. Latin Hymns.

Class 111 (Std. V & VI)

1. All the Catechism of Christian Doctrine.
2. Special Lesson to show the authorities on which is based Christian Belief.
3. Liturgy and Ceremonies of the Church with Explanation.
4. Elementary Bible History: Old and New Law.

5. Principal events in the History of the Church up to the present day.
6. What Christianity has done for the human race.
7. What it may do for Africa.
8. Special reference to the lives of men and women who by their learning or great deeds have honored and benefitted the human race.
9. Special insistence on:- a) Character and its acquisition; b) Respect for lawful authority; c) Good example, its effects; d) Fidelity to duty; e) Sobriety, etc, etc.

Part A: Section 2.

Approved scheme of Religious Instruction for the Onitsha-Owerri Vicariate, 1944.

A. SCHOLARS

Infant Class 1

- a. Ayiyo Ututu na Ayiyo Anyase as on pages 48 and 49 of the Igbo Catechism
- b. Isi I and Isi II of Katikizma kne Umu-aka.

Infant Class 11

- a. Katikizma nke Umu aka from beginning to end.

Standard 1

- a. Part One of the Igbo Catechism
- b. From the beginning of Ndu Dinwenu Anyi to number 36 (inclusive)

Standard 11

- a. Part Two of the Igbo Catechism.
- b. From number 36 in Ndu Dinwenu Anyi to the end.

Standard 111

- a. Revision of the whole Igbo Catechism

- b. Mary, Nne Jesu.

B. CATECHUMENS (NON-SCHOLARS)

First Year Catechumens

- a. Katikizma nke Umu-aka

Second Year Catechumens

- a. Part One of the Igbo Catechism
- b. From the beginning of Ndu Dinwenu Anyi to number 36

Third Year Catechumens

- a. Part Two of the Igbo Catechism
- b. Number 36 of Ndu Dinwenu Anyi to the end.

C. BAPTIZED MEMBERS

Children's First Communion Class

- a. Katikizma nke Umu-aka

Adults (receiving Sacraments)

- a. Igbo Catechism (one class per week)
- b. Ndu Dinwenu Anyi (one class per week)
- c. Mary, Nne Jesu (one class per week).

Part A: Section 3

Regulations on the running of school farms in senior primary schools

1. Each class in the senior primary school should have a plot of land. This plot is kept by the same class from Standard III until they leave, thus the new Standard III takes over the ex-standard VI's plot.

2. The plot varies in size but should be neatly marked out and all paths should be straight, preferably lined with lemon grass or some other suitable edging plant.
3. The plot is divided into a number of sections corresponding to the number of courses in the rotation, e.g., a plot farmed on a 4 course rotation will be divided into 4 sections, each cropped with a different course.
4. The Rural Science Teacher should be able to supply a copy of the rotation and on visiting the farm an education officer should check that the required crops have been planted and growing well.
5. In some schools there may be extra plots of land cropped with oil palms, bananas, or any other permanent crop. This plot is looked after by all the classes.
6. **Compost:** Compost should be made in all schools and is usually made in a series of 4 to 6 pits. This refuse is put in one pit and watered and after an interval of about two weeks is turned into the next pit. This continues so that the last pit contains the finished compost which resembles coarse soil with a little amount of dead leaves, etc.
7. The compost pits should be shallow, i.e., no more than 2 ft. deep and they should have neat, straight edges. It is preferable if the last pits are covered by a shed to prevent excess leaching by the rain.
8. Urine from the urinal should be poured over the first compost pit daily to act as a started which enables the bacteria to commence the process of decay.
9. Cultivation is done on ridges which should be well made and straight.
10. Some fallow plot should contain icheku, fallow well covered with leguminous plants.
11. Steps should be taken to prevent erosion on the school compound.

12. **Class work:** Each class teacher should take his class for Rural Science with the help of the Rural Science Teacher.

Part A: Section 4

Rural Science in primary schools: Circular by the Director of Education, Eastern Region, Enugu, June 26, 1953

1. Each class should do 5 hours of Rural Science per week.
2. The period for Rural Science should come in the morning, the best arrangements being two morning sessions per class per week.
3. The periods on the time-table should not be split up into 'Agriculture', 'Nature Study', 'Hygiene', but should be left as 'Rural Science'. The time devoted to the various divisions of the subject will vary according to the time of the year, and will be organized by the Rural Science Teacher accordingly.
4. On mornings on which a class is doing practical farm work, the children involved should not do physical training, but go straight to the farm.

Source: Omenka, N. I. (1989). *The School in the service of evangelization: The Catholic educational impact in Eastern Nigeria 1886-1950*. NewYork & Koln: Brill.

APPENDIX 2

Interview Questions

Please answer the following questions, as there is no limit to the response you may provide. Also please provide your email address here if you have for easy communication. Mine is found at the end of these questions.

1. When were you ordained to the Catholic priesthood?
2. What is your date of birth?
3. What is your email address if any?
4. What connection do you have with Catholic education in your diocese whether in the past or at present?
5. What is your current position in your diocese?
6. What were the major challenges of a principal of a Catholic school? How would you compare these challenges with the principalship during **(6a)**the colonial era, **(6b)**the post-colonial **(6c)**up till the contemporary era?
7. How was the relationship of the Catholic Church and the State during **(7a)**the colonial, **(7b)**post-colonial and **(7c)**contemporary era and **(7d)** how has this impacted the work of a Catholic school principal?
8. What prompted the decision of the Catholic Bishops to restore Catholic control over the schools after the military takeover?

9. In what ways would you describe the nature of Catholic identity of a Catholic school, during **(9a)**the colonial and **(9b)** post-colonial era up until **(9c)**the present time?
10. What does the curriculum look like now and how would you compare them during the various periods above?
11. What were the students like in **(11a)**the late 19th,**(11b)** 20th and **(11c)**21st centuries if you have any knowledge?