

THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

**THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE HOLY CHILD SISTERS TO WOMEN'S
EDUCATION IN THE CROSS RIVER STATE OF NIGERIA
FROM 1930 TO 1967**

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Faculty of the
School of Education
Of the Catholic University of America
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

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This dissertation was approved by Dr. Thomas Tynan as Director, and by Dr. Aubert J. Clark and Dr. Shavaun Wall as Readers.


Director


Reader


Reader

DEDICATION

To my parents, Mr. and Mrs. George U. Akpakpan, for the patience they had in taking care of my six children during the period of this study. To all Alumni of the Holy Child Institutions in the Cross River State of Nigeria and to the Sisters of the Holy Child Society, whose Golden Jubilee in Nigeria coincided with the defense of this study, this November, 1980.

ABSTRACT

The Contributions of the Holy Child Sisters to Women's Education in the Cross River State of Nigeria from 1930 to 1967

By

Anna G. Ekam

The Holy Child Sisters, a Catholic religious order founded by the American, Sister Cornelia Connelly, made one of the first and most significant attempts at women's education in Nigeria. This study investigated for the first time, the thirty-seven year history of the Sisters' work in the Cross River State, Nigeria -- the center of their activities.

As an historical study, it made use of the extensive records which the Holy Child Sisters kept of their educational activities. Diaries, notebooks, letters, school log books, personal files, etc. were examined at the Sisters' Archives in: Rosemont College, Rosemont, Pennsylvania; New York City; Mayfield, England; Rome; and Calabar, Nigeria. This archival material was supplemented and corroborated with such materials as early editions of The Pylon magazine, six unpublished histories written by members of the order, and most importantly, three taped interviews with ten surviving members active during the early period. For the more contemporary period, official Nigerian Government and Catholic Church documents were consulted along with recent journals and newspaper sources.

This study began by dividing the Sisters' work into four chronological periods significant to the development of their educational system. These periods were: 1930 to 1936, the Early Period; 1937 to 1949, the Developmental Period; 1950 to 1959, the Peak Period; 1960 to 1967, a Period of Decline. Each of these periods was then examined in terms of Buetow's (1970) organizational foci of the salient features of education, i.e., the goals of the Holy Child Sisters; the agents which affected their work; the conditions in which their work was carried out; the nature of the curriculum used; and the Sisters' view of the role of the teacher and the nature and needs of the student.

In so doing, the researcher touched on several matters: (1) The major social, political, communication and economic forces which affected the development of female education in the Cross River State; (2) The Sisters' stated goals, their motivations, and how these evolved; (3) The major accomplishments of the Sisters in Nigeria. And in retrospect, (4) Whether their educational outcomes meet with their expected goals.

The study found that in spite of economic hardship, social prejudice against women, poor means of communication, and anti-colonial political sentiment directed especially against missionary efforts, the Sisters were able to persevere in their educational goals. Motivated by the Papal Pronouncements of 1919 to inculcate religious formation to people of all races and encouraged by the example of Sister

Cornelia Connelly to help women help themselves, the Holy Child Sisters fostered both religious instruction, and those skills needed by Nigerian women in order to become self-sufficient.

After thirty-seven years in Nigeria, the Sisters left behind a rich legacy. They established seventy-five elementary schools, three teacher training colleges, four secondary institutions, four technical centers, and five preliminary training colleges for girls and women of that state. They also organized and instructed the order of the "Handmaid Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus," who continue their work today in the Cross River State of Nigeria.

While the findings of this study are exploratory in nature, providing the foundations for further research, they have shed scholarly light for the first time on the Holy Child Sisters' educational activities in Nigeria, and in turn, this had added to the scant body of knowledge on the role of women in Nigerian education.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS	iv
LIST OF TABLES	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vi
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Overview	1
Purpose of the Study	9
Method of the Study.....	11
Background Literature.....	16
Definition of Terms	25
II. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY.....	35
Foundation and Early Contributions of the Holy Child Society.....	38
The Coming of the Missionaires to Calabar.....	47
Papal Pronouncements of 1919	52
Arrival of the Holy Child's Sisters at Calabar.....	54
The Early Growth of Women's and Girls' Education in the Cross River State, Nigeria.....	59
III. THE EDUCATIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE SOCIETY OF THE HOLY CHILD JESUS	64
A. <u>The Early Period (1930-1936)</u>	64
Goal.....	66
Primary Schools.....	68
Uniforms	77
Curriculum	78
Philosophy of Education.....	82
Extracurricular Activities.....	84
Teachers.....	85
Students.....	87
Condition: Physical Plant.....	89
Agents of Education.....	90

B.	<u>The Development Period (1937-1949)</u>	92
	Holy Child Teacher Training College	92
C.	<u>The Peak Period (1950-1959)</u>	104
	Secondary Education	104
	Cornelia Connelly Secondary School Oku-Uyo....	105
D.	<u>The Decline Period (1960-1967)</u>	111
	Vocational-Technical Schools	113
	The Marriage Training Center	114
	Twineries	115
	Noviceships for the Training of the Hand- maids of the Holy Child Jesus	116
IV.	PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED BY THE HOLY CHILD SISTERS...	119
	Economic Situation	119
	Political Climate	127
	Communication	129
	Social Revolution	133
V.	SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	137
APPENDICES		
APPENDIX I.	153
	Exhibit A. Letter from the Author to Mother Superior of SHCJ, U.S. Province	154
	Exhibit B. Data Request Paper	155
	Exhibit C. Questionnaire Survey	156
	Exhibit D. Worksheet for Interview	161
APPENDIX II.	162
	Exhibits A- E. Correspondence	163
APPENDIX III.	169
	Exhibit A. Archives' Addreses	170
BIBLIOGRAPHY	171

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure		Page
1.	The Sisters of the Holy Child Schools and Their Colleges in the Cross River State of Nigeria.....	7
2.	Map of Nigeria Showing the Nineteen States....	26

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
I.	NIGERIANS STUDYING IN THE UNITED KINGDOM: 1948-1967.....	24
II.	TABLE OF SCHOOLS IN CALABAR AND OGOJA BY 1921.....	51
III.	THE GROWTH OF IFUHO COLLEGE POPULATION BETWEEN 1937-1960	98
IV.	A SAMPLE OF WOMEN TRAINED BY THE HOLY CHILD SISTERS AND HOLDING RESPONSIBLE POSITIONS IN THE CROSS RIVER STATE OF NIGERIA	139

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Overview

Throughout most of recorded history, women have been subordinated to men, receiving second class treatment. In certain ancient societies such as Greece, Mesopotamia, and even during the early days of Rome, women were believed to possess no souls at all¹ and hence, were regarded as inferior human beings. Their primary function was seen as centering about the home. As a consequence, they received little or no education, the only education necessary was informal training in certain household skills. Indeed, it was often postulated that women did not possess a mental capacity equal to men, due to their emotional nature, and therefore, they were given no intellectual training. The chief end of their existence was to obey the wills of their husbands and give pleasure to them.² Even from the time of Aristotle, social tradition almost universally treated women as it did slaves.³ At this time, women were beaten by their

¹Mable I. Emerson, Evolution of Educational Ideal. (New York: Riverside Text Books in Education, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1959), p. 99.

²Ibid.

³J. Bennett, Stricture on Female Education (London: Printed by the author, 1788), p. 1.

husbands and as Hear San Bernardino advised, there was even a proper time for beating a wife. He said:

And I say to you men, never beat your wife while they are great with child, for there would be great peril. I say not that you should never beat them; but choose your time...I know men who have more regard for a hen that lays a fresh egg daily than for their own wives. Sometimes the hen will break a pot or a cup, but the man will not beat her, for fear of losing the egg that is her fruit. How stark mad, then are many that cannot suffer a word from their own lady who bears such fair fruit! For if she speaks a word more than he thinks fit, forthwith he seizes a staff and begins to chastise her; and the hen, which cackles all day without ceasing, you suffer patiently for her egg's sake.⁴

Women did not exist for their personal development but as the companions and servants of men.⁵ It would therefore, be an unforgivable insult to their male counterparts for most women to talk about going to school during most of the ancient period.

The Middle Ages brought no change to women's life in the society. The status of women remained the same. At this time, education for women was divided into:

1. Informal household training for lower class women.
2. In the families of the wealthy classes, social arts (music, dance and poetry), some liberal

⁴Will Durant, The Story of Civilization. Vol. V. The Renaissance: A History of Civilization in Italy from 1304-1576 (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1953), p. 582.

⁵Emerson, Educational Ideal, p. 86.

arts and religious education. Some middle class women were also allowed a formal education but their numbers were few.⁶

In no sense did the girls receive equal training to the boys. Things began to change with the Protestant church culminating with the national education system in the nineteenth century, even then, women received less education than men. Although the Renaissance took a comparatively giant step towards education in general, for the lower class majority, things essentially remained the same up until the late nineteenth century. In America women were also accused of being intellectually inferior.

In his book, The American College and University, Frederick Rudolph, commenting on the education of women during the colonial era in America said:

The colonial view of woman was simply that she was intellectually inferior -- incapable, merely by reason of being a woman, of great thoughts. Her faculties were not worth training. Her place was in the home, where man had assigned her a number of useful functions.⁷

Although the colonial era is far behind us, the this notion of the intelligence of women still persists in almost every segment of the society. In the Cross River State of Nigeria, this discrimination towards women was no different; even in the modern Post-colonial period, Nigerian women

⁶Ibid, p. 100.

⁷Frederick Rudolph, The American College and University (New York: Random House, Inc., 1962), pp. 307-308.

are still treated as second class citizens and are believed to be intellectually inferior to men. In the period before colonialization, women only received informal traditional and household education, right up to the coming of the Protestant and Catholic missionaries to the Cross River State of Nigeria, in the late nineteenth century. (See Background Literature for details on Traditional Education, pages 17-19).

Therefore, the development of women's education in the Cross River State of Nigeria owes its origin to Protestant and Catholic missionaries who in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries defied all odds and made inroads into Calabar, a town in the Cross River State of Nigeria. For various reasons, many of the Christian denominations had selected Calabar as a base from which they were to expand their evangelistic activities into the hinterland. One of the reasons for this was the fact that Calabar had come into prominence during the slave trade era not only as a port, but also as a trading post for both chiefs and the European slave traders. Another reason was that, as Dr. F. K. Ekechi aptly puts it, it was a sphere of operation out of commiseration for the cruel wrongs which the slave trade had inflicted upon them.⁸ The third reason was because of the friendly attitudes of the inhabitants towards the mission-

⁸F. K. Ekechi, Missionary Enterprise and Rivalry in Igboland 1857-1914 (London: Frank Cass and Co., 1971), p. 1.

aires. As Sister Virginia Mary Lane, one of the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus (SHCJ) has written in her notes, "The Society of the Holy Child Jesus in Africa" which contains glimpses of early mission life beginning in 1930:

On arrival in Calabar, the three pioneer sisters had their first taste of what a joyous African welcome is like, because of hundreds of eager black faces smiling widely, singing and lining the wharf and the road to welcome their new missionaries.⁹

On October 18, 1930, Bishop Joseph Shanahan brought the three pioneer sisters of the Holy Child Society to Calabar, namely Sister Mary Joachim, Sister Mary Edith (British) and Sister Mary Laurentia Dalton (American). The coming of the three sisters was a blessing to young girls and women of the Cross River State. They inherited the small girls' school from Sister Magdalen Charles Walker, one of the Sisters of Charity who came in the late nineteenth century to establish a small girls' school in Calabar.¹⁰ The Sisters of the Holy Child Society expanded it into a large institution known today as the Holy Child Convent School, Calabar. This school helped to promote women's education in the state until the present day. These sisters opened and managed many girls' and women's institutions all over the

⁹ Sr. Mary Lane, The Society of the Holy Child Jesus in Africa, Some Glimpses of Early Mission Life Beginning in 1930, unpublished manuscript found at the Holy Child Archives, Dalton Center, New York.

¹⁰ Sister Henry Parker Letter to the author, from the Convent of the Holy Child Jesus, Mayfield, England, dated March 1979.

state for many years. They called them Bush Schools but the name was changed to Convent Schools, and later they came to be officially known as The Holy Child Convent Schools. In addition, the sisters also opened teacher training colleges, vocational schools, twinneries, marriage quarters and training centers for African sisters (see Figure 1, page 7.)

By 1935, the convent school at Calabar had classes up through Elementary (V) and some of the girls, after completing this training, taught in the Elementary school and studied for their Elementary (VI) certificate in the evenings.¹¹ There were no secondary schools nor teacher training colleges for women in the Cross River State nor in any other states in Nigeria at this time. The Holy Child Convent School at Calabar town had one "trained teacher" who had taken the external Higher Elementary Examination for prospective teachers. The educational conditions for women and girls were still in a sad state of affairs, even though traditional acculturation was going on before the arrival of any missionaries.

In 1936, the Holy Child Elementary School at Calabar town, introduced Elementary (VI) and Elementary Teacher Training College for four students. This College was for the training of teachers for the elementary schools that the sisters opened. The first groups of students were the first four African sisters of the "Handmaids Jesus." Later, the

¹¹Ibid., p. 1.

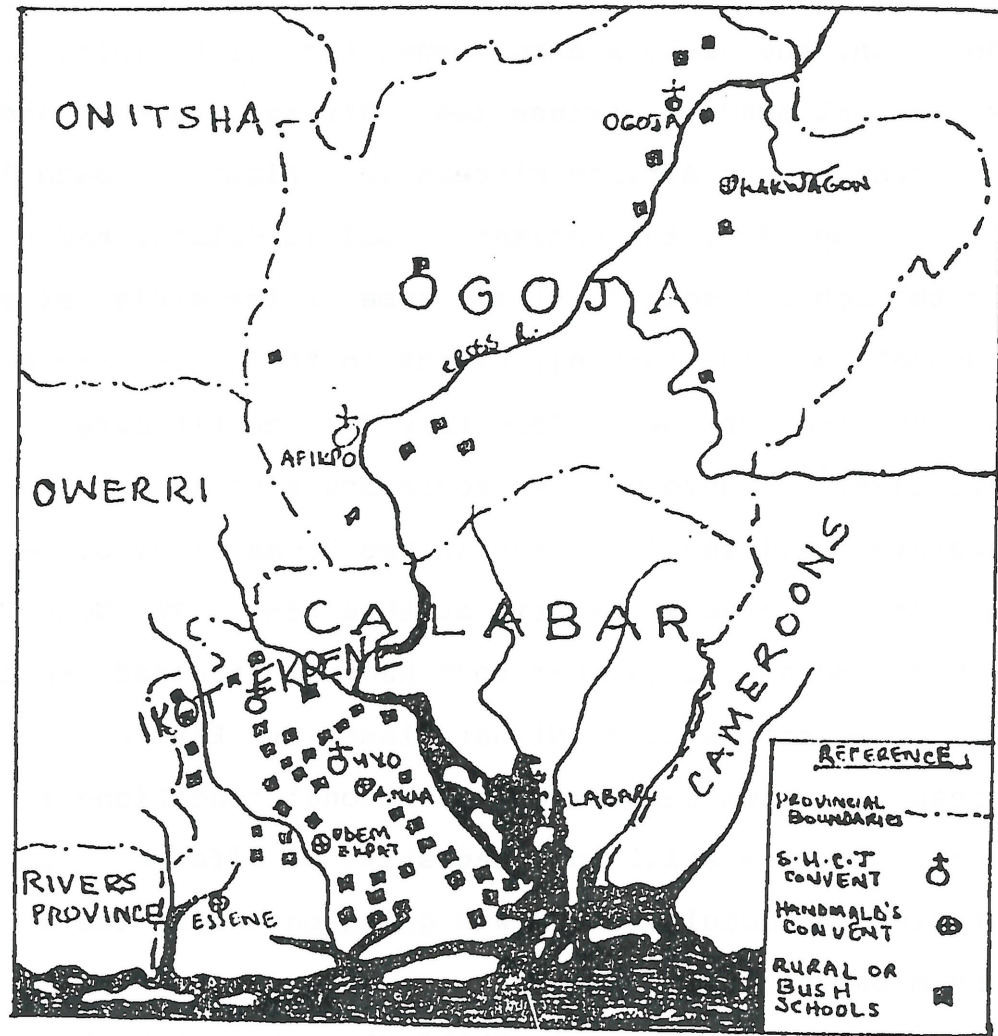


Figure 1. The Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus' Schools and Their Colleges in the Cross River State of Nigeria.

college was moved to Ifuho, Ikot Ekpene in 1937, a town in the Cross River State of Nigeria. The Holy Child Teacher Training College grew into a flourishing training institution for the training of not only Cross River State women, but additionally, for the training of female teachers from other parts of Nigeria. Ifuho Teacher Training College is a popular place of learning for women even today. It was taken over by the Ministry of Education of the Cross River State Government in 1970. At the same time, the Scotland Mission started a normal college known as Edgerley in Calabar, which eventually moved to Umuahia and became the United Missionary College, Umuahia, in Imo State of Nigeria. In fact, Catholic missionary sisters of the Holy Child Jesus dominated the entire state for thirty-seven years so much so that Protestant missionaries had no chance to expand. Because of their high standards of school management, it was difficult to compete with the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus' congregation. This Society was fundamentally concerned with the education of girls and the instruction of women in the Cross River State. Figure 1, page 7 shows the locations of the established schools.

Aside from the establishment of the Teacher Training College in 1937 to develop the education of women at Ifuho, Ikot Ekpene, in the Cross River State of Nigeria, secondary schools for girls also came into existence. The Cornelia Connelly Secondary School was started by this Society in the early 1940's at Calabar with one hundred and fifty-eight

students and was later transferred to Afaha Oku in Uyo Town, in 1949.¹² This secondary school was known at that time as a higher institution of learning for women in Eastern Nigeria.

Subsequently, the Holy Child Sisters established and ran many elementary schools, teacher training colleges, secondary schools, technical institutions in Calabar and their schools were run along the same patterns at Ogoja and Calabar Provinces of the Cross River State. They made substantial gains in the gradual development of the institutions of learning for women with the co-operation of the people in the state. Furthermore, on account of the popularity these sisters had acquired, they expanded their work to include many other activities, such as medical, social and voluntary services. (Details of the sisters' work can be seen in Chapter III.)

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the thirty-seven year history of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus' involvement with female education in the Cross River State of Nigeria. This religious order was founded by an American, Sister Cornelia Connelly, although its headquarters was eventually moved to Mayfield, England. Harold Buetow, in Of Singular Benefit, has pointed out that the work of female religious orders has frequently been over-

¹²Sr. Laurentia Dalton, Interview held during meeting of the ten selected sisters of the Holy Child Jesus, Sharon House, Rosemont, Pennsylvania, February, 1979.

looked.¹³ This statement is supported by Ellis in his book American Catholicism,¹⁴ where he indicated that the role of female religious orders has been forgotten in the history of the Catholic Church in the United States. As Paul Cohen has indicated, scholarly interest in female education in general, is rising.¹⁵ This account of the Holy Child Society contributes to this scholarly awakening by advancing an understanding of the role played by American women in spreading female educational opportunities to other parts of the world. To the author's knowledge, the history of female education in Nigeria has not been previously studied. The Sister's work in the Cross River State of Nigeria deserves particular attention since they were the first group to seriously undertake female education on a large scale in this part of the country.

The work of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus had reached a stage of high visibility, yet no scholarly record had been kept. It was important and appropriate that such a study be done, because the role of women in our society continues to grow in importance. Women in the Cross River State today comprise almost one-third of the labor force.

¹³Harold A. Buetow, Of Singular Benefit: The Story of U.S. Catholic Education (New York: MacMillan Co., 1970), p. 368.

¹⁴John T. Ellis, American Catholicism (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1956), p. 60.

¹⁵Paul Cohen, "Women's Education," History of Education Quarterly (Spring, 1979), p. 155

Therefore, the sisters' wide-spread influence for thirty-seven years is discernible in every phase of the cultural, political, economic, social, communication and educational life of the state and of its people. In the entire Cross River section of Nigeria, according to Sister Julian (in an interview with the author), the Society had established about seventy-five primary institutions, four secondary schools, three teachers' training colleges, three technical schools, and five preliminary training courses for girls by 1960.¹⁶ These private institutions were established for women only and were built much earlier than public schools; therefore, the Cross River State relied on privately controlled schools and colleges to support and provide educational opportunities for women for many years. Private colleges such as the Holy Child Teacher Training College, Ifuho in Ikot Ekpene Town, which was founded in 1937, educated many women who are prominent today in the state, the country and the continent.

Method of the Study

The approach of this study is historical. As Donald Warren¹⁷ has indicated, the use of historical techniques in education can provide valuable insights into educational policymaking and help us to better understand the cultural, social class and political connections related to

¹⁶Sr. Mary Julian. Interview held during meeting of the ten selected sisters of the Holy Child Jesus, Sharon House, Rosemont, Pennsylvania, February, 1979.

¹⁷Donald R. Warren, History of Education and Public Policy (Berkeley: McCutchan, 1978), p. 7.

educational outcomes. Again, in support of the usefulness of historical research, Kerlinger, in Foundations of Behavioral Research attested to the value of historical research in better understanding educational policy when he made the following statement:

Historical research per se has great value because it is necessary to know and understand educational accomplishments and trends of the past in order to gain perspective on present and future directions.¹⁸

The Report of the Committee of Historians on Historiography summarizes the importance of historiography to the social sciences, and by implication, to education as follows:

Historiography has a necessary relevance to all the social sciences, to the humanities, and to the formulation of public and private policies, because (1) all the data used in the social sciences, in the humanities, and in the formulation of public and private policies are drawn from records of, experience in, or writing about the past; because (2) all policies respecting human affairs, public or private, and all generalizations of a nonstatistical character in the social sciences and in the humanities involve interpretations of or assumptions about the past; and because (3) all workers in the social sciences and in the humanities are personalities of given times, places and experience whose thinking is consequently in some measure conditioned and determined by the historical circumstances of their lives and experiences.¹⁹

This author, therefore, views historical study as the only method suitable to present a chronological description of the evolution and development of women's education in the Cross River State of Nigeria, as well as to narrate and

¹⁸F. N. Kerlinger, Foundations of Behavioral Research (New York: University of New York, 1973), p. 698.

¹⁹Norma F. Cantor, How to Study History (Illinois: A. H. M. Publishing Co., 1967), p. 3.

analyze the achievements, problems and results of the work of the Holy Child Society.

This study is in fact, an analysis, in that the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus kept extensive records of their educational activities, all of which have been made available to the author.

Primary sources: Diaries, letters, school log books, and personal files were available in the Sisters' Archives of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus at Dalton Center, New York City; Mayfield, England; Rome; Rosemont, Pennsylvania and Calabar, Nigeria. This archival material was supplemented and corroborated with such materials as editions of The Pylon magazine, a quarterly magazine of missionary propaganda published with Ecclesiastical Approval in the interests of the work of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus in Southern Nigeria (known today as the Cross River State of Nigeria), six unpublished histories written by members of the order, and three taped interviews with one of the three pioneer sisters, Mary Laurentia Dalton and nine others. Sister Dalton was active during that period and now resides in Rosemont, Pennsylvania, U.S.A. Additional materials like mission notes also existed, gave the general background and conditions (the environmental milieu) in which the sisters' schools were both established and conducted.

Secondary sources were consulted as well, but due to the fact that the sisters' work has been overlooked by previous scholars, few materials directly bearing upon this

topic are not presently available. Information was collected through interviews with Sister Mary Fedelis, Sister Teresa Xavier, Sister Mary Vianney, Sister Mary Stephane, Sister Mary Julian, Sister Mary Damien, Sister Mary Rogers, and Sister John Bosco. A few chiefs who were also involved in the work of the Society were interviewed in the Cross River State of Nigeria. They all gave detailed reports of their involvement in the education of women in that state for the thirty-seven years. Letters were also received from Sister Mary Hubert, now in Ogoja in the Cross River State of Nigeria and Sister Mary Saint Henry Parker, who is now in charge of the London Provincial House.

Letters and personal notes on the Holy Child schools and colleges were received from Miss Mary James Edet, one of the outstanding Holy Child students and Mrs. A. O. Udo, the principal of Ifuho Holy Child Teacher Training College during the period of this study. All of the people contacted provided information which was very useful in this work.

Records of the current status of educational opportunities for women, journals and Nigerian magazines, yearbooks, chronicles and The Nigerian Daily Times were used in the study. Also, various official documents issued by both the Nigerian government and Catholic church officials were consulted. Publications on overseas education, volumes and United Nations publications on women in Nigeria were also useful. Correspondence and pertinent literature,

including institutional documents were used as references.

Using historical records, the sisters' work was divided into various chronological periods, significant to the development of their educational system. Each of these periods was then examined, using Buetow's (1970) model of organizational foci of the salient features of education,²⁰ i.e., the goals of the Holy Child Sisters; the agents which influenced their work; the conditions in which their work was carried out; the nature of the curriculum used; and the sisters' view of the role of the teacher and the nature and needs of the student.

In so doing, the author then touched on several matters:

1. The major social, political, cultural and economic forces which affected the development of female education in the Cross River State;
2. The sisters' stated goals, their motivations and how these evolved;
3. The major accomplishments of the sisters in Nigeria; and in retrospect,
4. Whether their educational outcomes met with expected goals.

The terms used in this dissertation are defined after the review of the literature for readers who are not

²⁰Buetow, Of Singular Benefit, pp. 227-262.

familiar with terms used in the Cross River State of Nigeria.

Background Literature

No books or academic papers have been published on the primary topic of this research. However, some publications have addressed missionary activities and women's education in general. Consequently, in addition to the examination and review of unpublished records, literature pertaining to women's education in other parts of the world has been reviewed, as well as literature relating to some of the work done by the early missionaries, who first arrived in the part of Nigeria under discussion before the advent of the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus. The Sisters of the Holy Child Society, unlike other missionaries, did not come to the Cross River State of Nigeria for religious purposes only, but to bring formal education to young girls and women of the community.

In his book, Missionary Labours and Adventures in Central Africa, James Bowen indicated that the missionaries did not come to Africa just to teach about Christ, but to educate both men and women, when he said:

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.²¹

J. F. A. Ajayi, in Christian Missions in Nigeria, has brought into light the fact that besides Yoruba, Hausa, and Kanuri, the missionaries had notable success with the Efik language, which is the main language of the Cross Riverians. There the policy of concentration yielded abundant fruit.²² The publication of the Efik language vocabulary in 1849 helped in the training of both men and women in Calabar to be able to read the Bible.²³ The Efik Dictionary, published by James Bowen, helped women to read other Efik literature; it also facilitated their learning of English as well.

The traditional system of education in the Cross River State was aimed toward acculturation and socialization of girls among the Efiks, and other ethnic tribes in the states as discussed by J. A. Majasan. In "Traditional System of Education in Nigeria," he emphasized the fact that the Efiks (or the Calabarians, as he puts it) had their own educational system for both sexes before the coming of the missionaries to Calabar.²⁴ According to Majasan, boys and

²¹James Bowen, Missionary Labours and Adventures in Central Africa (Scottish Mission, 1857), p. 324.

²²J. F. A. Ajayi, Christian Missions in Nigeria (Chicago: Northwestern University Press, 1965), p. 130.

²³Ibid, p. 130.

²⁴J. A. Majasan, "Traditional System of Education in Nigeria," Part III, Nigerian Magazine No. 96, (1968), p. 25.

girls were allowed to fend for themselves early enough to cultivate qualities that would carry them through life successfully. Farming, fishing, and trading on masks were introduced to boys and home-craft to girls, early in life.²⁵ Masks were craft work, made of wood, and were used to cover faces for socials; they were also used for decorations. Girls were betrothed as early as two years of age, although marriage did not occur until after fourteen. It was also common to tell folk tales to boys and girls alike, so as to guide their morals in the competitive struggle to distinguish themselves in order to move on to leadership.²⁶ In brief, Majasan's historical study of the education of women in Calabar, confirms that young women received traditional education before the advent of the Sisters in 1930.

Professor Festus C. Okafor, in his book, Africa at the Crossroads: Philosophical Approach to Education, provides substantial insight with regard to traditional African education, which he also characterizes as "acculturation."²⁷ Regarding education in Africa and the Cross River State inclusively, Dr. Okafor makes it clear that education started with the family and extended to the society and that it started with simple instructions and culminated in the performance of rights and initiations. According to Okafor,

²⁵Ibid., p. 25.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Festus Chukwudi Okafor, Africa at the Crossroads: A Philosophical Approach to Education (New York: Vantage Press, 1974), p. 29.

"Parents went to great pains to teach their children the right moral code of conduct and the best behavioral patterns."²⁸ From this traditional education the Holy Child Sisters, whose main objective was to give women quality education, developed new systematic instruction rapidly and progressively. It was necessary for the sisters to study the culture of the people so as to be able to moderate the old educational system.

In "Preparing Nigerian Girls for Life," Sister Mary Leo envisions the idea of a separate institution for young women, as a response to their need for formal education. She indicated that by 1959, the Holy Child Congregation of which she was a member, had established in Calabar Province, sixty convent primary schools and a technical school for slow learners.²⁹

The study done by Helen M. Burness on "Women in Katsina Province, Northern Nigeria," has brought into focus the condition of women in northern Nigeria which was opposite to that of the South.³⁰ In general, according to Burness' observations on which her notes are based, there was a much higher average level of Western education in southern Nigeria. In spite of certain outstanding, enlightened examples, the general education of men in the

²⁸Ibid, p. 30.

²⁹Sr. Mary Leo, "Preparing a Nigerian Girl for Life," Overseas Education, Vol. XXXI (August, 1959), p. 190.

³⁰H. M. Burness, "Women in Katsina Province, Northern Nigeria," Overseas Education, Vol. XXXI (October, 1957), p. 190.

north, especially among the younger generation, seems even more conservative. Their opposition to women's education is even more strongly entrenched than in the south-eastern part of Nigeria.³¹ An interview with Sister Laurentia Dalton revealed that a major difficulty in women's education in northern Nigeria was that the northerners refused to accept the missionary sisters into their territories.³² Finally, she suggested that another problem hindering the development of women's education in the north was the traditional Muslim reluctance to let girls go to school.³³ But today, that tradition is diminishing and girls are highly trained now because young educated men want educated wives. In fact, many men train their wives themselves. In contrast to the north, in the Cross River State of Nigeria and even in southern Nigeria as a whole, the education of women was not as much of a problem.

Impediments and obstacles against women's education were evident not only in Nigeria, but all over the world. In the United States of America, for instance, such impediments and obstacles are historically well known. Emma Willard, who pioneered women's education in America, tried very hard to overcome some of the obstacles. She was the first to open a boarding school for girls in the eighteenth

³¹Ibid., p. 116

³²Sr. Laurentia Dalton, Interview, Sharon House, Rosemont, Pennsylvania, February 13, 1979.

³³Ibid.

century.³⁴ Her proposal to the New York Legislature for funding girls' schools, thereby providing educational opportunities equal to boys, was rejected. However, she was able to establish the Troy Female Seminary. She was a pioneer not only of elementary and secondary education for girls, but also a pioneer of women's higher education.

Thomas Woody, in A History of Women's Education in the United States, provides more information on women's education in general.³⁵ He also gave insights into the origin of women's education which, after a century, extended to West Africa where Calabar was made a center for operation. Woody's book was the first to be published in this field in the United States. Among other things, Woody explained in this work, why and how women were educated in the United States. According to Woody, in 1891, the Randolph Macom Board of Trustees sought to establish an institution of higher education for girls which was basically the continuation of Emma Willard's work.³⁶ They declared their purpose in these words:

We wish to establish a college where our young women may obtain an education equal to that given in our best colleges for young men, and under environments in harmony with the highest ideals of womanhood; where the dignity and strength of fully-developed facilities and the charm of the highest literary

³⁴Alma Lutz, Emma Willard: Daughter of Democracy (Boston: Ginn and Co., 1929), p. 60.

³⁵Thomas Woody, A History of Women's Education in the United States (New York: Octagon Books, Inc., 1929), p. 9.

³⁶Ibid.

culture may be acquired by our daughters without loss of woman's crowning glory, her gentleness, and grace.³⁷

The effect of Emma Willard's work and vision could be seen, in some measure, in the educative work of the Holy Child Sisters whose Foundress was from the United States. In the context of the Cross River State of Nigeria, the educative work for women by the Holy Child Sisters was just as pioneering as was that by Willard in the United States, even though they were separated by more than a century. Like Willard, the sisters also encouraged higher education for girls. They did this by helping them to gain admission to Ibadan University, Nsukka, Yaba College of Technology, Lagos and Sir Amadu Bello Universities. These universities were opened late in the fifties. Before they were established, Nigerians had been studying in Europe and the United States for years. The only higher institution for both men and women in West Africa was Furrah Bay College and admission for female students were very difficult.

As Babs Fafunwa has stated in his book, A History of Nigerian Higher Education,³⁸ there was not a single higher educational institution in Nigeria before 1930. Yaba College of Technology, which was the first institution of higher learning in the country, was opened in 1932.³⁹ Since the competition for admission into Yaba College was intense,

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Babs Fafunwa, A History of Nigerian Higher Education (Lagos: MacMillan and Co., Nigeria Ltd., 1971), p. 15.

³⁹Ibid., p. 16.

a few women from the Cross River State and from other parts of the country were still being sent abroad for higher education. It is useful to note that higher educational opportunity was further extended in the Cross River State by the late 1930's by the activities of the Ibibio Union which included granting of scholarships. According to Fafunwa, the Ibibio Union's effort were particularly significant, because it was the first time a Nigerian group sponsored as many as twelve young scholars for higher studies abroad.⁴⁰ Lack of adequate records in this field tends to make historians either exaggerate or understate events. It is therefore, difficult for one to know the number of women in Ibibio land of the Cross River State who were among the twelve that left Calabar for these studies. However, the effect of discrimination against women in higher education, has resulted in the fact that for years the public service of the Cross River State has been professionally dominated by men, in terms of doctors, lawyers, and engineers, or in terms of architects, surveyors, and magistrates.

Nigerians had been studying abroad for years, particularly in Britain, as early as the 1800's, but it was not until the 1920's that a few Nigerians started to study in the United States. Although the number increased dramatically in later years, only a few women from the Cross River State attended United States' universities from 1948 to 1967. (See Table I for details on Nigerian students studying in the United Kingdom from 1948-1967.)

⁴⁰Ibid.

Table I
NIGERIAN STUDENTS STUDYING IN THE UNITED KINGDOM
1948-1967

Year	Number of Men and Women Sponsored by		Number of Women Sponsored by		Total
	Government Agencies	Private Agencies	Government Agencies	Private Agencies	
1948-49	123	387	*	*	510
1949-50	171	548	*	*	719
1950-51	221	717	32	228	938
1951-52	238	952	35	299	1,190
1952-53	255	1,061	32	335	1,316
1953-54	291	1,234	26	389	1,525
1954-55	637	1,524	71	393	2,161
1955-56	*	*	*	*	*
1956-57	*	*	*	*	*
1957-58	*	*	*	*	*
1958-59	*	*	*	*	*
1959-60	*	*	*	*	*
1960-61	*	*	*	*	6,800
1961-62	*	*	*	*	7,836
1962-63	*	*	*	*	8,954
1963-64	*	*	*	*	8,630
1964-65	*	*	*	*	8,076
1965-66	*	*	*	*	6,522
1966-67	*	*	*	*	6,156+

*Figures unavailable.

+904 of these were enrolled in undergraduate and graduate courses; 124 were in law; 1,468 in advanced technology; 1,011 in nursing; 61 in teachers' colleges; and 530 in industrial and professional courses.

Data partially compiled from the Colonial Scholars' Office, London, England, and the Federal Ministry of Educationm Lagos, Nigeria.⁴¹

⁴¹Babs Faunwa, Nigerian Higher Education, p. 19.

Definition of Terms

Some of the significant terms which repeatedly occur in this study should now be explained. They are: Cross River State, Calabar, Juju, Twinnery, Bush School, Acculturation, The Pylon, Culture, Saby and Pidgin.

The Cross River State: This is the geographical area bounded on the north by the Benue State, on the west by Anambra and Imo States, on the south-west by River State and on the east by the Cameroun Republic.⁴² It's area is 27,237 square kilo meters with a population of 3,478,131 people and administrative headquarters in Calabar. It is the second largest of the four eastern states of Nigeria (see Figure 2). The main towns of the Cross River State are: Ikot Ekpene, Uyo, Abak, Ikot Abasi, Eket, Itu, Oron, Akamkpa, Ikom, Ugep, Obubra, and Ogoja.⁴³

The Cross River State, formerly the south eastern state at the creation of the twelve states in 1967, was part of the old Eastern Region of Nigeria. The state later derived its new name from the Cross River which rises from the Cameroun mountains and flows through the entire length of the state, as seen in Figure 2.

The three major ethnic groups of the Cross River State, according to The Nigerian Yearbook, 1978-79, are the Annangs, Ibibios, and the Efiks; however, Oron group, Ibeno,

⁴²The Nigerian Year Book, 1978-79, Official Handbook of Nigeriga, published by the Federal Ministry of Information (Lagos, Nigeria, 1978), p. 50.

⁴³Ibid.

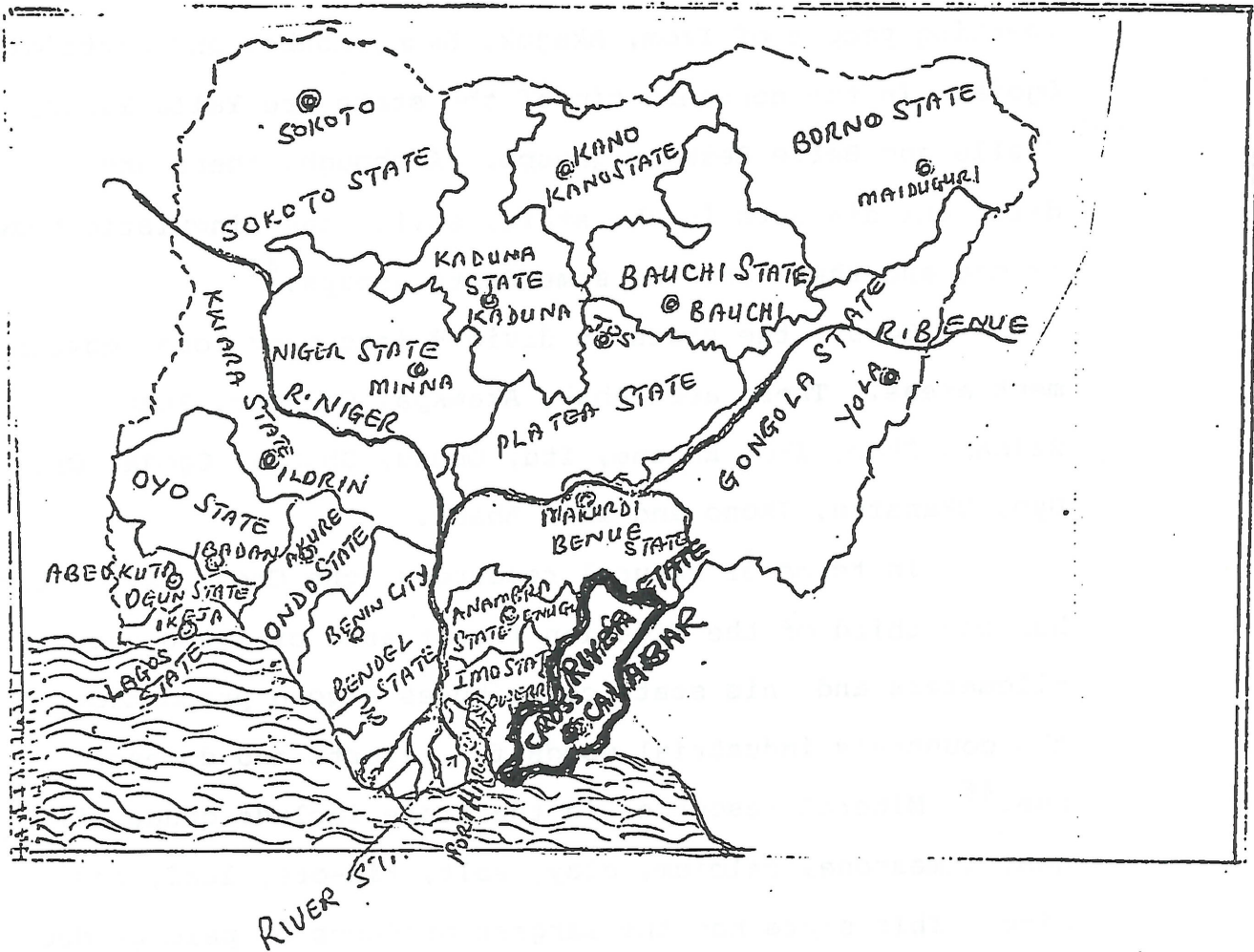


Figure 2. Map of Nigeria Showing the Nineteen States

and Andoni are also located in the southern part of the River state. The Ejagham group are spread over the North, but are divided into two sectors by an intermediary group called Ekoi.⁴⁴

The southern part of Ejagham comprises the Quas in Calabar Division and the neighbouring people of Akampa Division, while north of the Ejagham can be found the Etung speaking people of Ikom, Akajuk, Nkum, Mbube, and parts of Ogoja. In the northern tip of the state are Yalla Yache, Ukelle and Bette Bekwara groups. Although, there are different dialects in the state, still, the linguistic base is one and these are the same Bantu groups.⁴⁵

Today, the state is divided into many local government areas. There are: Abak, Akamkpa, Calabar, Eket, Etinan, Ikom, Ikot Ekpene, Itu, Obudu, Obubra, Ogoja, Oron, Uyo, Ukanafun, Ikono and Ikot Abasi.

In terms of natural resources, the Cross River State has one third of the Nigerian forest area of 1,200 square kilometers and this state contributes a good proportion of the country's industrial woods for exports and domestic use.⁴⁶ Mineral resources in the state include crude oil, gas, limestone, calcium, clay, salt, tin-ore, lead, and zinc. This state has the largest products of palm produce

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 50.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶The Nigerian Handbook, 1975-76, (Lagos, Nigeria: Federal Ministry of Information, Modern Publications, Ltd.: September, 1975): p. 35.

and is second largest in the production of rubber in the Federal Republic of Nigeria.⁴⁷

The veneer and plywood industry in the Cross River State produces sawn timbers, plywood, chipboard, veneer and fibreboard. Sawyers and private mills also exploit the forest resources for the construction of furniture, buildings, canoes, pontoons, and other water crafts. In some of these forest areas are wildlife such as chimpanzees, gorillas, leopards, buffaloes, and a variety of snakes and monkeys. As a result of its rich forest resources, agricultural industries seem to take a greater percentage of the state's industrial activities.⁴⁸

The state is accessible by land, sea and air. It has a coastal temperature of about 87° Fahrenheit (30.55°C). It has the highest temperature from February to April and the lowest in July and August. There are only two seasons of dry and wet atmosphere in the state.

Calabar: Calabar is an important town in the history of Nigeria and it is also the capital of the Cross River State of Nigeria. The original name for Calabar, before the coming of these European traders was "Efik Eburutu" or "Obio Efik" and "Efik" is the literary language of this group in Nigeria.⁴⁹ The name "Efik" is still maintained by many Cross Riverians to this day.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 35.

⁴⁸The Nigerian Yearbook, 1978-79, p. 51.

⁴⁹Akpan E. Bassey, Chief Justice, Interview held in his house at Lagos, Nigeria, February, 1980.

Calabar, even today, is a busy port and it is one of the three largest ports in Nigeria. After the expedition by MacGregor Laid, a Liverpool merchant, and the naval expedition of 1841, Calabar became a recognized and popular town on the west coast of Africa.⁵⁰ When John Becroft was appointed Consul and Agent of the Bights of Benin, he opened his office at Calabar. In 1851 the first British consulate was established at Calabar. Calabar, therefore, became the capital of Nigeria until 1906 when its charter was revoked by the colonial government.⁵¹ It was after the formation of the United Africa Company, which incorporated as the National African Company after three years, that the Company took over the services of both trade and local administration. In the Niger Delta (from the boundary of the colony of Lagos and further East to the boundary of the Camerouns), the Oil Rivers Protectorate was established in 1885.⁵² The whole territory, including Calabar, passed to the colonial office control in 1899 and in 1906. There it was amalgamated with Lagos colony to form the colony and the Protectorate of southern Nigeria.⁵³ Lagos then became the capital of Nigeria and remains so to this date.

Juju: The word juju is said to have been first used by the French to designate the fetiches or idols of West African natives.

⁵⁰The Nigerian Yearbook, 1975-76, p. 20.

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Ibid.

In the Cross River State, according to P. Amaury Talbot's book, The Peoples of Southern Nigeria, the Efik and Ibibio word for juju was ndem or idem, which in its various forms stretches far over the state.⁵⁴ Talbot classified the Ibibio's where ndem holds an important place among all other tribes, the semi-Bantu group.⁵⁵ The Annang word for juju is mbiam; while the Ekoi called it nimm. The term juju has been extended to include dieties, magical practices, spells and charms designed to give inanimate objects special powers for or against particular persons.⁵⁶ There are jujus which are believed to protect families from witchcrafts and charms. Jujus are of two kinds -- the good and the bad ones.

Twinners: This is a crech derived from the word "twins" which refers to the place set aside by the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus for the care of twins, sick or motherless babies.

In the January 1934 issue of The Pylon magazine dealing with "Foundations," Sister Mary Joachim confirmed in her general survey on the mission field, that the word "twinners" was coined by the Saint Patrick Fathers, with whom she was working with at Calabar by then.⁵⁷ So, the

⁵⁴Amaury Talbot, The Peoples of Southern Nigeria (London: Oxford University Press, 1926), p. 136.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 136-137.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 137.

⁵⁷Sr. Mary Joachim, "Foundations," The Pylon Vol. 1, No. 1. (Boncompagni, Rome, 1934), pp. 7-9.

word twinnery is a name for the place where twins are kept.

Bush Schools: Since most of the schools opened by the Holy Child Sisters were built in many primitive villages, they called these schools, Bush Schools, before they changed the name to Convent Schools. The word "convent" as we know means community or house of religious order or congregation. To many Cross Riverians it means an establishment for sisters or a place where women or girls are trained. Mother Teresa Xavier mentioned in an interview that they called them Bush Schools because there were no good roads connecting these schools for years.

The Pylon: The Pylon was a quarterly magazine of missionary propoganda, published with Ecclesiastical approval in the interests of the work of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus in southern Nigeria and the Gold Coast, Rome, 1934-1967.

Acculturation: This word means a process of inter-cultural borrowing between diverse people, resulting in new and blended patterns. As mentioned before, Professor Festus Okafor characterizes this word as the system of traditional education practiced in Africa before the coming of the white men. In that sense, he meant the modifications of a primitive culture resulting from contact with an advanced society; which was existing before the coming of the missionaries.⁵⁸

⁵⁸Okafor, Africa at the Crossroads, p. 28.

Culture: Nigeria is known today as the cultural center for the black world, where black arts festivals are exhibited and admired. Even though the word culture in the English dictionary may mean the act of developing the intellectual and moral faculties by education, for the black world, it means taste in fine arts, humanities, beauty and broad aspects of sciences as distinguished from vocational and technical skills. This act may also take the pattern of human behavior which includes thought, speech, action and artifacts and may depend upon man's capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations. To Nigerians, culture means the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious or social group.

The state is rich in culture too and this is very well displayed through dances, songs, arts, crafts, fashions and the general way of the life of the people. The cultural vitality of cults, oracles, mythology, rituals, folklore, and ceremonies.⁵⁹ The most picturesque representations of the people's culture are manifested in masquerades and traditional dances on view during festivals or special occasions throughout the year.

Cross River is one state in Nigeria that is known as the "Mother House" of cultural attractions by historians and archaeologists. It is the art and handicraft center.⁶⁰ Ikot

⁵⁹The Nigerian Handbook, 1978-79, p. 52.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 51.

Ekpene, a town in the Cross River State has the best wood carvings, stone sculpture, raffia, and cane works in Nigeria. The government of the Cross River State is building a cultural center in Calabar which will serve as a meeting place for artists.⁶¹

Saby: The word Saby is a pidgin English word meaning "to know." Nigeria is a country with many diverse groups combined to make the present day Nigeria. It is a country of about two hundred and twenty different tribes and they have about two hundred or more different dialects. The major problem in Nigeria is how to communicate, but the use of pidgin English has made this easier than before. For example, for an Efik man to communicate with a Yoruba man, he has to use pidgin English:

1. What are you doing?

Waiting you de do?

2. I shall go home tomorrow.

I go -- go home tomorrow.

3. Do you know my house?

Una Saby my house?

Pidgin language: Pidgin is an adulturated English language used by the Portugess and French traders in West Africa for communication. In Nigeria, where communication became a problem because of different languages spoken in the country, Pidgin English provided an easy means of com-

⁶¹Ibid.

munication, and still does today in Nigeria. This is applicable to other Oriental countries of Africa up till this day.

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The education of women in the Cross River state of Nigeria began with the Protestant and Catholic missionaries as mentioned in Chapter I. Among the group of missionaries who arrived in Calabar in 1890,¹ were the French Sisters of Saint Joseph of Cluny. These French sisters and Sister Magdalen Charles Walker, an Irish Sister of Charity, were the first pioneer sisters in West Africa.² They also were the first sisters to establish a small girls' school at Calabar called "Saint Joseph's Convent School." By 1905, there were only sixty-one girls in the morning and fifty-eight in the afternoon classes of Saint Joseph's Convent School, Calabar.³

Rev. Harney and his wife Mary Harney were Protestant missionaries who opened a small Methodist school for girls at Oron, a town in the Cross River State.⁴ By this

¹Sr. Mary Saint Henry Parker Letter to the author, from the Sisters of the Holy Child Society, Mayfield, England, dated March, 1979, p. 1.

²Ibid.

³Sr. Teresa Xavier, Interivew, Sharon House, Rosemont, Pennsylvania, February, 1979.

⁴Sr. Mary Fedelis. Interivew, Holy Child Sisters Infirmary, Rosemont, Pennsylvania, February, 1979.

time, the United Free Church of Scotland (now the Presbyterian Church of Nigeria), had a girl's school at Greek town, Calabar,⁵ known today as "Edgerley Memorial School," which was named after the Founder. These three schools did not expand at all for many years. But Sister Magdalen Charles Walker was able to open a pre-school at Ikot Ene, a town outside Calabar and was preparing to establish the third Bush School at Anua in Uyo Division.

According to Sister Laurentia Dalton, Sister Magdalen Walker ran Saint Joseph's Convent School and Ikot Ene Bush School alone after the departure of the French sisters of Cluny in 1916, due to post-war difficulties.⁶ Since Sister Magdalen had no help, she trained four African girls to help her run the two schools that she opened. These four African girls later became the first African sisters of the Handmaids of the Holy Child Jesus in 1937.⁷ This will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

Sometimes in the 1920's Father Matthew Crawley-Bovey, the Apostle of the Sacred Heart, prophesized that should the Society of the Holy Child Jesus have a foreign mission, it would be in Nigeria.⁸ In 1930, after the

⁵Ibid.

⁶Sr. Mary Laurentia Dalton, Interview, Sharon House, Rosemont, PA, 1979.

⁷Ibid.

⁸A. Brown, Actions Not Words, 1930-1955, West African Vicariate of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus, Nigeria and the Gold Coast (Hull, England: Brown and Sons, Ltd., 1955), p. 1.

visit of the Apostolic Delegate, Monsignor Hinsley (later Cardinal) to West Africa, Bishop Shanahan, the then Bishop of Onitsha who also supervised Calabar and Ogoja Provinces, asked Rev. Mother Mary Amadeus who was at that time Rev. Mother General of the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus (SHCJ) to send sisters to help Sister Magdalen Charles Walker.⁹ Sister Magdalen Charles Walker was working alone at the old Saint Joseph's Convent School at Calabar. Sister Magdalen Charles Walker, as indicated before, was one of the Sisters of Charity and an old Mayfield girl who recommended the SHCJ Society to Bishop Shanahan.¹⁰

In September of 1930, Rev. Mother General of the SHCJ, with the company of one of her Assistants General, visited Nigeria. On October 18th of the same year, the first pioneer sisters of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus arrived at Calabar. With the help of Sister Magdalen Charles Walker, the sisters of the Holy Child Jesus moved the old Saint Joseph's Convent to its present site. By 1931, new dormitories and more classrooms were built to accommodate more girls.¹¹

As confirmed by one of the pioneer sisters, Sister Laurentia Dalton, they were able to develop Ikot Ene Bush

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Sr. Mary Teresa Xavier, Interview, Sharon House, Rosemont, Pennsylvania, 1979.

¹¹Sr. Mary Laurentia Dalton, Interview, Sharon House, Rosemont, Pennsylvania, 1979.

School up to elementary level and to complete another girl's school at Anua in Uyo Division.¹² Uyo is about seventy-five miles from Calabar town. The work of the Holy Child sisters developed rapidly after the departure of Sister Magdalen Charles Walker. The Holy Child sisters were able to build and manage many "Bush Schools" as they called them initially, before they changed the name to "Holy Child Convent Schools." This group of Western Catholic sisters contributed a lot to the development of women's education in not only the Cross River State, but in other parts of the world.

Foundation and Early Contributions
of the Holy Child Society

The Holy Child Society, the group of female educators in the Cross River State, was founded in 1846,¹³ by Cornelia Connelly (Nee Cornelia Augusta Peacock, 1809-1879), an American by birth. Born of wealthy Protestant parents and a lady of good character, she later became a convert to the Catholic faith. Cornelia was married at the age of twenty-one to Pierce Connelly, a cabinet maker's son and a Presbyterian Minister, on December 1, 1831.¹⁴

Both Cornelia and her husband, Pierce Connelly, had been born and raised in the State of Pennsylvania and their

¹²Ibid.

¹³Mary Andrew Armour, Ursula Blake, and Annette Dawson, Cornelia, The Study of Cornelia Connelly, 1809-1879, Foundress of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus (New York: Doubleday, Inc., 1979), p. 4.

¹⁴Ibid. p. 7.

married life was ideal for a number of years. But on a trip to Rome, Pierce Connelly, believing that God had called him to priesthood in the Catholic Church, asked Cornelia's consent for separation and divorce after having fathered five children.

They remained in Italy and on June 18, 1845, Cornelia made her vow of perpetual chastity, preliminary to Pierce's ordination, which took place on July 6, 1845, in the Chapel of Trinita with Cornelia singing in the choir.¹⁵ Cornelia consented to this arrangement only after intense periods of sorrow, agony, consultation, reflection, and prayer.¹⁶

After Connelly's ordination, Cornelia remained at the Trinita dei Monti, where her husband had been ordained, trying to care for her children as encouraged by the Catholic authorities. She thought of returning to America when she became fully aware of Pierce's seriousness about the priesthood. At that time, Rev. McCloskey, an American priest (later Cardinal) was in Rome.¹⁷ Cornelia used to turn to him for advice. Cardinal McCloskey later commented on Cornelia to Cornelia's niece, Mary Peacock Gaenslen, when he said:

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Sr. Connie O'Conner, Cornelia Connelly, Woman of the Year 1978-1979, Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus, Provincial House (Drexill Hill, PA, 1978), p. 2.

¹⁷Armour, Blake, and Dawson, Cornelia, p. 13.

I can see Mother Connelly approaching me, clasping her hands, and her beautiful eyes uplifted to my face, "Is it necessary for Pierce Connelly to make this sacrifice and sacrifice me? I love my husband. I love my darling children; why must I give them up? I love my religion and why cannot we remain as happy as the Earl of Shrewbury's family, Father McCloskey?" she asked.¹⁸

Much had happened in Cornelia's life since Pierce had first broached the idea of the priesthood in Rome, which this study could not cover in detail. However, the greatest sorrow in her life was when two of her children, Mary Magdalen and John Henry, died in Grand Coteau in Louisiana, where Cornelia taught music.¹⁹ Merty, Adeline and Frank stayed with their mother until John Talbot, the then sixteenth Earl of Shrewbury and also a friend of the Connelly family, invited them to England. Both Cardinal Nicholas Wiseman, the Archbishop of Westminster (1850-1965) and Pope Gregory XVI gave her the mission of promoting the education of girls in England.²⁰ In brief, Cornelia indeed was an ideal woman because she tried to extend educational opportunities to women of all ages.

According to Francis Mangan, in his article on "Cornelia Connelly," it was the year 1846, when English

¹⁸Mother Mary Theresa, Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus, Cornelia Connelly, A Study of Fidelity, with an Introduction by J. Walsh (Westminster, England: The Newman Press, 1963), p. 33.

¹⁹Armour, Blake, and Dawson, Cornelia, pp. 20-21.

²⁰The Pylon, "Cornelia Connelly, Vol. I., No. 1 (Rome, 1934), p. 11.

Catholics were still living in the catacombs that Cornelia found herself a pioneer in a strange land.²¹ At Derby, England, where she started her mission, she felt there was a real need for a congregation of English religious women to help her in the work of the education of Catholic girls.²² With the help of Bishop Wiseman, she was able to undertake the task of education and also to provide spiritual leadership for English women. Cornelia was given the religious habit by Bishop Wiseman on December 16, 1846.²³ Sister Cornelia, as Bishop Wiseman called her, had two other sisters with her in her new congregation which she named after our Saviour Jesus Christ, "The Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus." She became the Mother Foundress of the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus.²⁴ Sister Cornelia Connelly, "The Mother Foundress," was an ambitious and active woman, nun, and mother. According to her first biographer, either in a private audience or through Cardinal Franson, Pope Gregory XVI told Cornelia that she was needed for this new work. The Pope added: "From England let your efforts in the cause of education reach America."²⁵

Although Cornelia Connelly's work at St. Mary's School and the convent on Nottingham Road, Derby, proved

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid.

²³Mother Mary Theresa, Cornelia Connelly, p. 83.

²⁴Armour, Blake, and Dawson, Cornelia, p. 26.

²⁵Ibid.

abortive and the congregation had to transfer itself to St. Leonards because of financial and administrative difficulties,²⁶ her work did not give her heartache. However, she bore not only scandal but agony when her husband renounced his priesthood and sued her in the English court for restoration of his conjugal right.²⁷

Unfortunately for Pierce and to the credit of British justice, the suit failed on appeal but this case made Cornelia's name a public scandal throughout England. Pierce finally retired with his children to Italy after several attempts to remove Mother Connelly away from sisterhood in England. Pierce later died in 1883.²⁸ Although Cornelia had many problems during her years of operation of girls' schools in England; nevertheless, she was able to meet her two-fold objectives: to provide an environment conducive to the spiritual growth of those called to join her society to labour as religious sisters and to provide effectively for the education of Catholic girls.²⁹

Mother Cornelia Connelly's work in England was a welcome response to the needs of the enlightenment. It was a great help to girls, especially those from poor families who had been badly neglected and who had been thrown into

²⁶The Pylon, "Cornelia Connelly," p. 11

²⁷Sr. Connie O'Conner, Cornelia Connelly, p. 2.

²⁸Armour, Blake, and Dawson, Cornelia, p. 39.

²⁹Ibid.

the factories to work for a living. Up to that time, women's education, if mentioned, was regarded as an insult to their male counterparts. So the newly opened convent at Derby was highly regarded as an institution for the training of teachers to enable them to train and influence young girls and women to become self-sufficient.

Before Cornelia established the new system of education, there existed a training system for girls in boarding settings. Here they learned how to dance a minuet, sing and they also learned hair-dressing.³⁰ Influential ladies like Queen Victoria and Empress Josephine, attended such girls' boarding schools.³¹ Cornelia changed the old system to her pedagogical principles, with the aim of spreading a truly Christian education, as suggested by Mere Maria Eugenie.³² She founded the Institute and the educational methods that she used at Derby in 1846.

The beginning of the new system was to replace the old way of education for women with this formal, well-organized and more modernized system. So Cornelia's new system and her new congregation did not go unnoticed by Catholic circles in England. An English paper, The Tablet, carried a paragraph on October 31, 1846, which may have been inspired by Bishop Wiseman himself. According to The Tablet, Wiseman commented as follows:

³⁰Ibid., p. 30.

³¹Ibid.

³²Mother Mary Theresa, Cornelia Connelly, p. 70.

This Institute is said to enjoy very high protection at Rome and has for its object, the practice of works of Spiritual Mercy exclusively, especially the education of children, giving of Cathecism and other Catholic instructions under the direction of the parish clergy and what is a striking feature, receiving a boarder at the discretion of the Mother Superior, and under a light rule, ladies desirous of temporary retirement...converts, etc.³³

The work of Cornelia developed, expanded and progressed rapidly. In Europe, America, Africa, and Japan, her new system of providing institutions exclusively for girls and women, was unique. According to Connie O'Conner's pamphlet, "Cornelia Connelly," published at Drexel Hill, Pennsylvania, the Society has 800 religious women and is international in scope and membership.³⁴

The main reason why the Holy Child Society succeeded in their new educational system in England was that they made the curriculum flexible. Although in the beginning Cornelia had two night and day school sessions in Derby, she added still more subjects to the "Three R's" such as Sewing, Cathecism and Arithmetic. The morning period was not as crowded as the night classes, which were held from 6-9:00 p.m.³⁵ They were so scheduled to suit individual needs because most poor women and children were working in the factories during the day.

p.1. ³³The Tablet (London, England, October 31, 1846),

³⁴Sr. Connie O'Conner, Cornelia Connelly, p. 1.

³⁵Armour, Blake, and Dawson, Cornelia, p. 36.

The Catholic Directory for 1848 outlined the syllabus for Mother Connelly's new school which opened in Derby in 1848.³⁶ The girls were usually taught English, Writing, Arithmetic, History, Grammar, Singing and the Principles of Church Music, Drawing, Needlework and Embroidery, Tracing, Pointlace, Making Church Vestments, Latin and French, for only twenty-five pounds per annum.³⁷ Religious instruction was provided for the purpose of helping them achieve their goals.

Secondly, in order to further fulfil the Catholic goal of education for all peoples, Cornelia spent seven years building a college for the training of teachers for her schools. By 1900, teachers were not receiving state normal college training, but Cornelia had examined the "goodness" of a religious-trained teacher and that of a lay teacher and had concluded that their norms differed greatly.³⁸ Cornelia therefore, encouraged teacher training colleges. She thereupon, decided to train her teachers to fit into a model for a teacher within the Catholic religion, and also to be able to successfully manage their individual classrooms. Teachers' roles in education play an important part in the training of the students for their future. These teachers helped to promote her new system of education. By 1930, many religious societies were able to send

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Ibid.

their nuns to public universities to obtain professional degrees and the Holy Child Sisters were sent there also.

Coming to the aspect of teacher/student relations in her educational setting, Cornelia considered mostly the nature of the students that she was teaching. She placed the child at the center of all other aspects of education and she retained the idea of respecting human dignity as summarized by Pope Paul the VI on Christian education. She accepted morality with God in her work and helped to bring the students together and closer to Christ.

However, Cornelia's work did not die with her; after her death in 1879, the Holy Child Sisters continued to obey the rules of the Society, which read as follows:

Since the Church, in her Divine universality, encourages the means of education best adapted to each particular state of life, we are especially bound to act in unison with her, and to meet the wants of the age.³⁹

Therefore, before the death, of Mother Cornelia Connelly on the Friday in Easter Week, 1879,⁴⁰ her religious women had started to establish and manage schools for girls in England. So after her death in 1900, most of her trained sisters were encouraged to spread the education of women to America, Europe, Chile, Japan, Italy, Africa and Ireland. In September, 1929, Bishop Shanahan invited the Holy Child Sisters to Southern Nigeria in Africa, when he said:

³⁹The Pylon, "Foundations," (Rome: January, 1934), Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 34.

⁴⁰Ibid.

In the whole area committed to his care, there was not one hospital, and only two schools existed to meet the mental and moral needs of girls and women; for God's sake and for the sake of these priceless souls come out and help!⁴¹

It was in late 1930 when the first Holy Child Sisters landed at Calabar Port in the Cross River State of Nigeria in West Africa.

The Coming of Missionaries
to Calabar

Many missionaries arrived at Calabar before the advent of the Holy Child Sisters. During the era of vast colonial expansion in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, new political ideas, nationalist aspirations, and a growing race-consciousness, especially in West Africa, brought about rapid disintegration of the tribal system. These were natural developments, but many of the inhabitants were not educated to meet the needs of their age. Mrs. Husley, a non-Catholic authority on African affairs wrote:

Our high intentions and hard work create only a vacuum in the heart of the African, the need for faith, a flame, and a star remains.⁴²

Before the arrival of Catholic missionaries in 1885 to the Cross River State of Nigeria, the Church of Scotland had been invited in 1828 by King Eyo Honestly II, and with the prominent chiefs of old Calabar.⁴³

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Archives of the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus, Mission, unpublished manuscript found at Dalton Center, New York, dated 1930-1953, p. 9.

⁴³Efiong Aye, Old Calabar Through the Centuries (Calabar, Nigeria: Hope Waddell Press, 1967), p. 109.

Efiong Aye mentions that James Holman was the first missionary to visit Calabar in 1828 from Scotland and that he wrote the following in his diary on March 12th of that year:

If the Christian missionaries were to establish schools in the towns on the banks of these rivers, they would be very likely to prove eminently beneficial to the people who are very desirous of receiving every kind of instruction, more particularly, a knowledge of writing.⁴⁴

The second group of missionaries to arrive in Calabar was the group of missionary societies formed in Jamaica by Rev. Hope Masterton Waddell, an Irish Protestant minister from Dublin, who was already working among the slaves in the West Indies. He was appointed by the Church of Scotland as the representative of the churches for the Old Calabar and Ogoja provinces.⁴⁵ They arrived in Calabar with a group of Baptist missionaries since the Baptists were sent out from the Island of Fernerndo Po by John Becroft, then the Governor of that country. These two groups landed in Calabar. The Baptist group decided to settle on the mainland of the state while Hope Waddell, Mr. and Mrs. Edgerley and others settled in Calabar.

The Church in Calabar formed by Rev. Hope Waddell was known as the Presbyterian Church. Rev. Waddell started a school in Greek Town in 1846 and another in Duke Town

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 110.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 113.

because Calabar was divided into two sections. The Jamaicans and Scotland missionaries influenced the historical, economic and social aspects of Calabar. Nevertheless, their schools could not develop because of the inflexible syllabus used, and because the Protestant group devoted themselves mainly to the teaching of religion and Bible study, while their syllabus included mostly the rudiments of the three R's (reading, writing and arithmetic). In fact, some of the girls started to withdraw from one of their schools in Duke Town, when they realized that conversion to Christianity only, was the priority of these missionaries.⁴⁶

Efiong Aye reports that one of the pupils in the Protestant school was frank in attacking the inflexibility of the syllabus which was being presented to students when he remarked in anger in the class:

My father sent me to school to saby (know) trade books, and he 'no (did not) want me to saby (know) God.⁴⁷

This was why school attendance in Duke Town and Creek Town was very poor. Evidently, their schools did not improve or satisfy the needs of the people at that time.

The last group of missionaries to arrive in Calabar was the Catholic Holy Ghost Fathers, who arrived in Calabar in 1885. The Holy Ghost Fathers later handed over the evangelization of the two Provinces of Calabar and Ogoja to a

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 126.

⁴⁷Ibid.

new Society under the invocation of St. Patrick, then being formed in Ireland. By this time, in the town of Calabar, were the Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny, who opened a school for girls many years before the arrival of St. Patrick's Fathers. These sisters were forced to relinquish their work after the first World War.⁴⁸

Four young Irish lay women (among whom were the Foundress of the Medical Missionaires of Mary, Sister Mary Martin and others who later became the first sisters of the Holy Rosary Society) carried on with the school in Calabar and other work for two years.⁴⁹ As indicated earlier in the chapter, in 1890, St. Joseph Convent School, Calabar, was taken over by Sister Magdalen Charles Walker, an Irish Sister of Charity who had received permission from Rome to carry on with the work in Calabar school until other sisters volunteered to take it from her. She had heroically maintained this school for seven years because it was the only school opened for girls by the Catholic missionaries in Calabar. But from 1828 when the first missionary arrived in Calabar, till 1921, two years after the Papal Pronouncements of 1919, few schools were established for boys in the Cross River State. Only a few girls attended these institutions. Table II shows the schools established by 1921 by different

⁴⁸Archives of the Holy Child Sisters, Mission's unpublished book, 1933-1953, unpublished manuscript found at the Archives of the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus, Dalton Center, New York.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 8.

Table II

TABLE OF SCHOOLS IN CALABAR AND OGOJA BY 1921

Denomination	Provinces	Schools	Pupils	Teachers
Catholic	Calabar	121	11,960	209
	Ogoja	4	243	7
Anglican	Calabar	1	868	24
	Ogoja	-	-	-
Que Ibos Mission	Calabar	178	6,167	179
	Ogoja	-	-	-
Scotish Mission	Calabar	89	5,814	244
	Ogoja	34	2,191	74
Wesleyan	Calabar	5	656	15
	Ogoja	-	-	-
Primitive Native Authority (N.A.)	Calabar	174	10,567	152
	Ogoja	-	-	-

⁵⁰Data compiled from Rev. Uduak Umeren's book, A History of Ikot Ekpene, Catholic Diocese, Ikot Ekpene (Nigeria: 1974).

missionary groups. After the Papal Pronouncements, the Society of the Holy Child Jesus volunteered to come to Calabar to take over the small convent school from Sister Magdalen Charles Walker.

Papal Pronouncements of 1919

Papal Pronouncements (which will be cited later) were addressing race and colour prejudices which affected the development of the non-white missions of the world. Numerous mission congregations were influenced by the Pronouncements, so the Holy Child Society which came to work at Calabar, in the Cross River State of Nigeria, was no exemption. The Pronouncements of Pope Benedict XV motivated many groups of Catholic missionaries who volunteered to work in the non-white communities of the world. The Pronouncements brought about by the Vicars of the Church were applicable to Africans and Chinese as well. Because of their colour and race, they were regarded as incapable of rising to the dignity of priesthood.

Seeing the result of these erroneous views toward their fellow members of the Church, the Pontiffs (Pope Benedict XV; Pius XI; and Evangelii Praecones) issued a firm policy in three Mission Encyclicals, reasserting in them the principles of the equality of races in God's sight; that the Church is never to be identified with any particular race, colour, sex or culture; and that the true aim of the missions is to establish a fully constituted native

church.⁵¹ Consequently, the following Papal Pronouncements were chiefly concerned with the question of native clergy, namely:

1. In 1919, Pope Benedict XV issued his Maximum Illud, a moving Encyclical emphasizing the teaching of the Church and his solicitude for people still wandering outside the True Fold.⁵²
2. Rerum Ecclesia by Pope Pius XI in 1926 -- the charter of the native churches, described as revolutionary in its frank statement, e.g. that far from regarding the natives as being of inferior race or of low intelligence, they were fitted to be trained not only for priesthood, but also for the Episcopate. He consecrated in Rome six native Chinese bishops.⁵³
3. Evangelii Praecones -- Declared that the wonderful mission advances since the issue of Rerum Ecclesia were proof that the Apostolate was adapting itself to the changing conditions and needs of our times, and employing modern methods.⁵⁴ Furthermore, he showed clearly that the principles of racial equality must be

⁵¹Archives of the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus, Mission's unpublished book, 1933-1953, unpublished manuscript found at the Archives of the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus, Dalton Center, New York, pp. 8-9.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 9.

applied not only as to sacerdotal vocations but also to the lay Apostolate of both men and women in the realms of educational administration and social leadership.

Pope Benedict XV had struck a note which resounded throughout the whole mission world and galvanized it into new life. Fully, and in many respects more forcibly, the new policy was applicable to Africa.

It would seem that the impact of these Papal Pronouncements tended to revolutionize the attitudes of Christians all over the world and was catalytic in the expansion of Catholic missionary activities to Africa and consequently constituted a great influence on the work of the Holy Child Society in that part of the world.

Arrival of the Holy Child
Sisters at Calabar

Sister Mary Amadeus' record on the Society of the Holy Child Jesus maintains that the Holy Child sisters came to Calabar on the invitation of Bishop Joseph Shanahan of the Vicariate of Southern Nigeria in 1930. The first three sisters sailed from Liverpool, England with the Bishop on R.M.S. Adda to Port Harcourt. On the 18th of October, 1930,⁵⁵ they arrived in Calabar with another ship called Appan and were greeted with a tumultuous welcome by the natives. Sister Magdalen Charles Walker had been working alone for seven years before their arrival, as mentioned before.

⁵⁵Sr. Mary Edith, Papers, unpublished manuscript found in the Archives of the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus, Dalton Center, New York, written 1930-1933, p. 1.

Bishop Joseph Shanahan, who invited the Holy Child Sisters to Calabar, had been working in Nigeria for twenty-eight years. He brought them to promote women's and girls' education. He was to retire two years later, but died in East Africa on Christmas Day in 1943.⁵⁶ The sisters were working with the policies of Bishop Joseph Shanahan when they arrived at Calabar. Bishop Shanahan's policy was to use education as an instrument of conversion, because during that time, an ordinary Nigerian simply hated slavery and so the sisters co-operated with the Bishop in his great work by training them. This congregation of the Holy Child Sisters lived and developed the Calabar convent school with the help of the natives. According to the Mission Records kept by Sister Mary Edith, the sisters often said to the natives: "We are not a missionary society, but an educational one."⁵⁷ This emphasis on education impressed the natives.

The Bishop took a very long time to help the sisters adjust to the Nigerian environment after their arrival at Calabar. He instructed them daily on the part which he wished them to play in the common task of the conversion of Nigeria. He told them:

Make contact with women, instruct them on the care of their children and homes, open small Bush schools, use teachers and Catechists as Apostles. Your main task is to form leaders. And to make them good housewives and mothers.⁵⁸

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Sr. Mary Edith, "The Work of the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus from October 1930 to November 1933," unpublished manuscript found at the Archives of the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus, Dalton Center, New York.

⁵⁸Ibid. (Emphasis added)

The sisters started work rapidly at Calabar, with the help of African girls whom Sister Magdalen had trained. Sister Magdalen had opened a small school at Anua, which the sisters also took over. Within a year, they were able to build what they called "Bush Schools" at Ekpene Ukim, Edem Ekpata, and Ifuho. This marked the beginning of their progress in the Cross River State.

Sister Mary Joachim, Sister Mary Edith and Sister Laurentia Dalton took over the supervisory work at Anua with a view to opening other Bush schools in the vicinity. At Anua, Sister Saint John and Sister Ignatia, the Handmaid Sisters of the SHCJ who were still training at that time, were in charge of Saint Joseph School, Calabar convent and Anua. Sister Teresa Xavier joined them in Calabar in February 1932.⁵⁹

Sister Teresa Xavier, one of the Holy Child sisters, discovered the paper which revealed much about the history of the first convent school in Calabar. The paper had the following:

Convent School, Calabar. This school was opened for the first time on Monday, 13th of February, 1905. There were sixty-one girls present in the morning and fifty-eight in the afternoon.⁶⁰

⁵⁹Sr. Laurentia Dalton, Dairy, unpublished manuscript found at that Archives of the Holy Child Jesus, Dalton Center, New York, dated 1932, p. 6.

⁶⁰Sr. Teresa Xavier, Beginnings, unpublished manuscript found in the Archives of the Holy Child Jesus, Dalton Center, New York, dated 1933-1943, p. 2.

One of the hall-marks of the progress of the Holy Child Sisters in their educational work in the Cross River State was their establishment of an institution of higher learning between 1933 and 1937. This progress was in sharp contrast with what was obtained among the Anglican, Scottish and Wesleyan missionaries.

For these Protestant missionaries, unlike the Holy Child's sisters, the value of higher education for women was still a debated factor as it had been in the early periods. In fact, the idea of women being mentally inferior to men and thus unable to meet the standards set for men's higher education, was not far from the minds of men at this time.

As shown in Table II, few schools were established and few girls attended those schools during that colonial period. Children were not disciplined in schools at the time of the early missionaries. Children were allowed to do what they wanted to do; for example, roaming in the bushes near the school to hunt birds and small animals. Their schools were more or less a religious center not a training center for life. There were few women in these schools.

The Holy Child Sisters arrived to change the notion that the Protestant missionaries had against women in Calabar and Ogoja Provinces. As women, they understood the need for educating women and their purpose was to explore the development of women's collegiate education in the Cross River State.

Again, before the arrival of the Holy Child Society in 1930, the education of women posed many problems. There was no moral education for the girls who were even fortunate to attend the few schools established by these early missionaries. Secondly, women generally were not encouraged to go to school because of early marriages, and some of the girls were free to live with the traders at Calabar Port. McGettrick, one of the pioneer priests brought by Bishop Shanahan in 1930, said in addressing the Holy Child sisters:

The old conception amongst the Natives is that a woman is a slave, bought as a chattel by the intending husband, sometimes even bargained for before her birth. Her one duty is to bear children for her husband and to rear them, which means that she must work very hard to provide for them. So much are women regarded as a man's property that on death, one of the chief's five wives was buried alive with the dead husband, who must not go unaccompanied into the next world. Only by long training and careful instruction can the Christian idea of womanhood be implanted in the minds of men and women alike. One of the primary needs for this is that the girls should themselves be trained and the men then taught to respect them.⁶¹

Bishop McGettrick, the Prefect Apostolic of Ogoja Province, said the aforementioned statement in Ireland to the congregation of the Holy Child Sisters in 1940, so as to be able to win many hearts from the congregation to come out and help the few sisters in the Cross River State.⁶² At

⁶¹Monsignor McGettrick, Papers, unpublished manuscript found at the Archives of the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus, Dalton Center, New York, dated 1940, p. 1.

⁶²Ibid.

that time, the need for the development of higher education for women was at hand, so the coming of the Holy Child sisters was a necessity.

The Early Growth of Women's and Girls' Education
in the Cross River State, Nigeria

Between 1930 and 1955, the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus opened three training colleges, four secondary schools, five technical institutions, five preliminary training centers, and fifty-five elementary schools for girls in the Cross River State of Nigeria. The schools were run by forty-four sisters and sixty African qualified teachers whom they trained.⁶³

According to Sister Laurentia's notes of 1930, the schools were widely scattered in nearly all the important towns and villages in the state. (See Table II.) Transportation was a major problem; they had to journey 50-200 miles to visit these schools. The rapid growth of their work was surprising to the people of Calabar and Ogoja Provinces; by 1939 they had nine schools with a roll call of 1,400 girls. Sister Fedelis also pointed out that prior to this time, there were only four Catholic girls with higher certificates in Calabar and Ogoja Provinces.⁶⁴

Holy Child Teacher Training College, Ifuho, was established in 1937 by Sister Mary Bernard, and the Domestic Science teacher was Sister Saint Henry Parker. But Sister

⁶³Sr. Mary Fedelis, Interview

⁶⁴Ibid.

Mary Osmund and Sister Teresa Xavier were the two sisters who started Ifuho Holy Child Teacher Training College. In an interview at Rosemont, Sister Fedelis also mentioned that Ifuho Holy Child Teacher Training College was built by one man called Paul and the first principal was Sister Mary Osmund.⁶⁵ Sister Fedelis was the first Mother Superior in Calabar from 1933 to 1947. Ifuho village is in Ikot Ekpene local government area, situated on the Western side of the Cross River. This institution of higher learning is still producing women for higher positions, either in the government or the private sector up till today.

As Sister Mary Hubert pointed out in her correspondence, two colleges were also opened in the northern part of the Cross River State. The Teacher Training College, Mount Carmel, Ogoja, was begun in 1955.⁶⁶ This college was for the training of teachers also, but it was changed to a secondary school around 1960. Secondly, in Ikom, there was a secondary school which was closed down in 1967 during the Nigerian Civil War and was re-opened again in 1969. A college was also established at Afikpo for the training of elementary school teachers.

Sister Laurentia Dalton, the first American pioneer sister, mentioned that they had no difficulty with the

⁶⁵Ibid.

⁶⁶Sister Mary Hubert Letter to the author from the Holy Child Secondary School, Ogoja, Nigeria, dated March 15, 1979.

government at the beginning of their operations. At that time, Miss Plummer was the Supervisor of Schools and she liked all the Holy Child's schools because they were well organized and very well administered.

Sister Mary Edith, in her letter, attested that Miss Plummer, an English lady and the government Supervisor of Schools at that time, was well pleased with the schools because of the way in which they were built and maintained.⁶⁷ The schools were very attractive, raised with good verandahs, built of plain and fancy cement blocks, cement floors with walls about four feet high and pillars supporting the roof. All of their schools and colleges were built in a similiar pattern and could be recognized at any part of the Cross River State as the school of the Holy Child Sisters. The buildings were divided into classrooms and had separate toilets at the back of each building. Each had a darkened cement section on the front wall, forming blackboards. It is interesting to note that in all of their schools and higher institutions, girls were asked to live on campus for security reasons.

All students lived in cottages, as they were called, which were semi-detached but built also, with cement. Each had a garden with flowers and vegetables. Aparently, this cottage system developed initiative, responsibility and a vibrant spirit of rivalry, as well as served to train the

⁶⁷Sr. Mary Edith, The Work of the Holy Child Sisters in Nigeria, 1930 to 1933, unpublished manuscript found at the Archives of the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus, Dalton Center, New York.

women in the management of their homes on a native line. It further provided opportunities to practice order, discipline, and cleanliness. Since that time, the sisters of the Holy Child Society started with elementary schools and developed some schools into higher institutions of learning. Their initial school period was from 7:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

According to Sister Edith, the important work of teaching and carrying on the training of the teachers in colleges was done in the afternoon.⁶⁸ At this time, women were prepared for the elementary teachers' certificates. Later on, when Ifuho, Ogoja, and Afiko colleges were opened, the school period for college women was changed to 8:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Their progress was highly admired by both Catholics and non-Catholics in the state. But Sister Laurentia Dalton confessed that the Protestants and the Catholics were not friendly.⁶⁹ This made them feel that even greater growth was possible. However, the government encouraged them to continue to develop women's education in the state.

The sisters wanted to fulfil the preaching of equality in the Church, which Pope Benedict XV emphasized in the Papal Announcement of 1919, which was previously mentioned in this chapter. This was also consonant with the second Vatican Council which stated:

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Sr. Laurentia Dalton, Interview.

Since all men possess a rational soul and are created in God's likeness; Since they have the same nature and origin, have been redeemed by Christ and enjoy the same divine calling and destiny, the basic equality of all must receive increasingly greater recognition.⁷⁰

The Sisters of the Holy Child Society, therefore, came to give equal education to girls in the Cross River State of Nigeria. By 1967, many girls' institutions were established not only in the Cross River State of Nigeria, but in other parts of Nigeria as well. The message of Pope Benedict XV is being carried out by many religious societies all over the world.

⁷⁰Vatican Council II, Gaudium et Spec, No. 29 CF. The Teaching of the Second Vatican Council; The Complete Text of the Constitutions, Decrees and Declarations (Westminster, MD: The Newman Press, 1966), p. 469.

CHAPTER III

THE EDUCATIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE SOCIETY OF THE HOLY CHILD JESUS

The educational work of the Holy Child Society is examined in four different periods in this chapter.

The first period, extending from 1930 to 1936, is distinguished by the constant effort made by the Society to meet the needs of women's education in the Cross River State of Nigeria. As mentioned before, this was the period when the Holy Child Sisters came to take over the small girls' school which had been established by Sister Magdalen Charles Walker since February 13, 1905.¹ It was the period which marked the birth of convent schools. Calabar, Anua and Ikot Ene schools were established during this period. At this time, Calabar was used as the operational headquarters. From its earliest beginnings Calabar convent school imitated the Montessori pattern used in America and Europe. Since Calabar was a semi-Europeanized port and was highly influenced by Western civilization, the educational pattern, especially for girls, was basically Western in nature. In fact, this period was important because it was the time in which the education of women in the Cross River State emerged and expanded.

¹Sr. Virginia Marylane, Papers, unpublished manuscript found at the Archives of the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus, Dalton Center, New York, dated 1943, p. 7.

The second period opens in the year 1937 and ends in 1949, and was regarded as the Development Period. It was between 1937 and 1948 that the Elementary Teacher Training College was established at Calabar. The college was then in its infancy, but was transferred to Ifuho village in Ikot Ekpene town in the same year. The work of the development of the Elementary Teacher Training College and the expansion of primary schools was in progress as well. There was also an increase in religious vocations both to the Holy Child Society and to a new congregation of sisters from Africa itself known as the Handmaid Sisters. As a result, the authorities were able to answer the ever-growing demands of the people.

The third period (1950-1959) could be known as the Peak Period. This period is characterized as the era when higher education for women came into existence. It was the period in which women had the opportunity to receive higher education for the first time in the state. Secondly, schools were opened and higher Elementary Teacher Training Colleges were built for the training of secondary teachers.

The final stage is the Decline Period. At this particular period, between 1960 and 1967, the work of the Holy Child Society was dying out because of the social, economical and political problems the Society encountered. These periods will now be examined in detail.

A. The Early Period (1930-1936)

Goal

Before these sisters arrived in the state, they had a set of goals for the education of women in that part of the world. Their goals were the same as the Catholic aims of education which were both ultimate and proximate. The specific proximate objective was to train these women to be self-sufficient and to become good mothers. As stated by Sister Mary Vianney in her notes to the author, Bishop Shanahan, the Nigerians' greatest missionary, wanted the Cross River State women to be taught how to keep their homes and be good mothers.² Sister Laurentia Dalton, the only American (SHCJ) pioneer sister, in 1930, confirmed that their goal was to make the Cross River State women self-sufficient and masters of themselves economically, socially, and politically so as to be able to fit into the society and in the world as a whole.

These Western sisters were also guided by the ultimate aim of Catholic education. Throughout the 1930's, the sisters followed Pope Pius XI's Encyclical which declared Christian education to be the only perfect and true education:

Since education consists essentially in preparing man for what he must be and for what he must do here below in order to attain the sublime end for which he was created, it is clear that there can be no

²Sr. Mary Vianney, Paper presented to the author at the Interview, Rosemont, Pennsylvania, February, 1979, p. 3.

true education which is not wholly directed to man's last end.³

Rev. Raymond A. Lucker characterized 1930 to 1955 as a period of shift in Catholic religious educational goals from information to Christian formation. This shift must have been influenced by the Encyclical, in which the Pope said:

Christian education takes in the whole aggregate of human life, physical and spiritual, intellectual and moral, individual, domestic, and social not with a view of reducing it in any way, but in order to elevate, regulate and perfect it, in accordance with the example and teaching of Christ.⁴

The Holy Child Sisters also based their work on their Society's standard goal of education explained in Chapter II. They also incorporated the "Catholic Educational Aims" published in 1952 by American bishops, and entitled: "The Child: Citizen of Two Worlds." Among other things, this document stated as follows:

In recent decades, striking advances have been made in meeting the child's physical, emotional, and social needs; but his moral and religious needs have not been met with the same solicitude and understanding. As a result, many of our children today betray confusion and insecurity because these unmet needs are fundamental to the harmonious development of their whole nature. The child must be seen whole and entire. He must be seen as a citizen of two worlds. He belongs to the world surely, but his first and highest allegiance is to the Kingdom of God. From his earliest years he must be taught that his chief significance comes from the fact that he is created by God and is destined for life with God in Eternity.⁵

³Pope Pius XI, Christian Education of Youth (Washington, D.C.: National Catholic Welfare Conference, 1929, Reprinted 1968), pp. 4-5.

⁴Ibid., pp. 35-36.

⁵Buetow, Singular Benefit, p. 232.

According to the bishops, the child is a citizen of the Kingdom of God as well as the world. In fact, the Holy Child Sisters had similiar ideas about Heaven and Earth, because they provided brown skirts and blue blouses as morning uniforms for the children in all their institutions in Nigeria. To them, according to Mary Edet, one of the old students of the Holy Child Convent, brown colour represents the Earth on which we live and blue colour represents the Kingdom of Heaven.⁶

Primary Schools

In September 1930, Rev. Mother Mary Amadeus, accompanied by one of her counsellors, Rev. Mother Mary Genevieve, sailed from Liverpool to Calabar. This trip was to survey conditions in Nigeria and to make plans for the development of the existing schools.

The following month, Rev. Mother General (Amadeus) sent the three Holy Child Sisters to Calabar as requested by Bishop Joseph Shanahan. As mentioned previously, the pioneer sisters who came to manage Calabar, Ikot Ene, Anua, and Ifuho convents in 1930 were Sister Mary Laurentia Dalton, Sister Edith, and Sister Joachim. These sisters came to live in one of the students' cottages built by Sister Magdalen Charles Walker, until a new convent school was erected on the ground given to them by (Nsa Hensaw's) family.⁷

⁶Mary J. Edet, Interview, Ministry of Education, Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria, January 12, 1980.

⁷Sr. Mary Fedelis, Papers, unpublished manuscript found in the Archives of the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus, Dalton Center, New York, dated 1979, p. 4.

Before the arrival of the Holy Child Sisters, Sister Magdalen, who had no staff from the Sisters of Charity, managed the four small schools alone for about ten years. Four African girls volunteered to work with her and she trained them to become teachers. According to Sister Mary Vianney, in an interview in Rosemont, Pennsylvania, the first four African girls who became "pioneer sisters" of the Handmaids of Jesus were:

1. Lucy Williams - Sister Mary Saint John
2. Kathleen Bassey - Sister Mary Ignestia
3. Agnes Ugario - Sister Mary Aloysia
4. Christiana Nwaturocha - Sister Mary Gertrude⁸

Today, Sister Magdalen Charles Walker is known as the Mother Foundress of the Sisters of the Handmaids of Jesus, but the four girls were trained and hooded by the Holy Child Society.

Aside from the four African sisters who helped to manage the old girls' schools at Calabar and Ikot Ene, Sister Teresa Xavier also mentioned that three lay Irish women volunteered to help in managing the school when Sister Magdalen was away for two years.⁹ The three Irish women, as mentioned before in Chapter II, were: Mary Martin, Mary Magdalen D. Rouke, and Mary Patrick Leydon. Mother Mary Martin later became the Foundress of the Medical Missionary of

⁸Sr. Vianney Mary, Interview, Sharon House, Rosemont, Pennsylvania, February, 12, 1979.

⁹Sr. Teresa Xavier, Interivew, Sharon House, Rosemont, Pennsylvania, February 12, 1979.

Mary. She took over the little dispensary established by the Holy Child Sisters at Anua. This later grew into a hospital -- the Anua Hospital. This hospital is one of the oldest and largest hospitals in the state today. Sister Mary Martin tried to help and to heal by all means -- the sick and the needy -- at any hour of the day or night. As the medical apostolate she proved to be the powerful means of evangelization which she had envisaged. Requests poured in from all over the states for more hospitals to be established. She opened many hospitals in Nigeria and other parts of the world. She died in 1975 and up to this day her religious sisters are still running some of the hospitals in the Cross River State of Nigeria. However, some of the Holy Child Sisters who started both the hospitals and schools for girls are now imprisoned (1980) because of the political, social, and economic situation which has affected their congregation since 1967.

In the early years of the Sisters' operation, the political, social, and economic situation in Nigeria did not pose a problem to their work. In 1914, Northern and Southern Protectorates were amalgamated and Sir (later Lord) Frederick Lugard (British) became the first Governor-General of Nigeria.¹⁰ From this time until 1922, when the League of Nation's mandated that the territory of British Camerouns

¹⁰The Nigerian Handbook, (Lagos, Nigeria: Federal Ministry of Information, Modern Publications Ltd., September, 1975), p. 22.

was to be associated with Nigeria for administrative purposes, there was a Nigerian Council and a Lagos Legislative Council; these were merged in the Legislative Council of 1923; and a separate Town Council was set up for Lagos.¹¹ Between 1923 and 1946, three Regional Houses of Assembly, one for each group of provinces, having advisory powers only in regard to impending legislation were set. In short, by this time, Nigeria was under the British rule until 1952 when Nigerians were given a fuller share in shaping policy and in the directions of executive government action.¹²

Since Calabar was a semi-Europeanized port and was highly influenced by Western and French traders, the people at Calabar had the chance of interacting with white men before the coming of the sisters. So the sisters decided to start their schools in Calabar, which remains the capital of the Cross River State.

Shortly after the abolition of the slave trade, the British Dominions intrepid Protestant missionaries landed at Calabar and did much Christianizing and civilizing work among the tribes in the area of the Cross River Delta.¹³ At this time, Nigeria was under British rule and the economic situation in Calabar improved slightly. This helped the sisters' work as well. As already mentioned, an apostolate for the women and girls had been carried on for some years

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid., p. 10.

by one Sister of Charity, Sister Magdalen Charles Walker. Therefore, the Sisters of the Holy Child came to expand and improve upon her work.

During this time, Calabar was the seat of the Nigerian government (See Chapter IV), in the early years of the colonial rule, and a few recreation centers were built. The high plateau in Obudu in Ogoja Old Province was free of tse-tse flies and was suitable for cattle raising so a government owned cattle ranch was erected there on the plateau. It's cool, non-tropical climate is conducive to tourist as are the beautiful sandbanks of Ibene on the Atlantic shore.¹⁴

According to K. O. Dike, in his book, Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta, Old Calabar was a multicultural city because of its geographical position, being a town at the mouth of the River Niger.¹⁵ About thirteen different tribes lived in Calabar so English alone was spoken in Calabar itself.¹⁶ It was a town where many Europeans, Asiatic, Portuguese, and French slave traders interacted with the natives; therefore, Calabar women were the first group of women in Nigeria to socialize with the white men since the nineteenth century. These social and economic interactions

¹⁴The Nigerian Yearbook, 1975-76, p. 6.

¹⁵K. O. Dike, Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta 1830-1885 (Oxford: 1956), p. 33.

¹⁶Sr. Laurentia Dalton, Early Mission Letter, to Mother Superior, Calabar, Nigeria, found in the Archives of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus, Dalton Center, New York, October 2, 1930.

had helped them to develop their domestic life more than any other group of women in Nigeria. There were four trading towns at this time, Creek Town, Henshaw Town, Duke Town, and Obutong, each -- except on questions of common interest -- under separate and independent rulers.¹⁷

Missionaries and traders who lived in Calabar for years contributed economically to women's education in that state apart from the early girls' institutions opened by the missionaries. St. Joseph Convent School, Calabar, was the first to be opened for girls before 1930. As explained by one of the old convent ladies, Miss Mary James Edet, St. Joseph Convent School was located near St. Teresa's Press, along Egerton Street, Calabar. A few girls were trained there before it was moved to Calabar Road in 1932, where the Holy Child primary school stands till today. All elementary schools and colleges originated from the Holy Child convent before they were transferred to their new sites.

All convent elementary schools in Ogoja and Calabar Provinces were built, equipped, and organized in the same pattern. They were administered by the Holy Child Sisters and staffed with other female teachers.

With Calabar as a base for the Holy Child Sisters, they were able to work in Anua which is seventy miles toward the north western side of the Cross River. The sisters also developed Ifuho and Ikot Ene convents which were established by Sister Magdalen Charles Walker.

¹⁷Dike, Trade and Politics, p. 33.

In Calabar, the Holy Child activities were mainly the continuation and the development of existing works. The old convent school which was handed over to them was a two-story building with primary and infant schools on the ground floor, while dormitories, sisters' quarters, and a tiny oratory were located above. Sister Laurentia Dalton confirmed that during their take-over period, the school numbered nearly two hundred children (including fifty boarders) and seven female teachers. The school was situated in a pretty, palm-fringed compound where the Catholic life office is located today.

Two years before the Holy Child Sisters took over the property from Sister Magdalen Charles Walker, they were granted the use of a sixteen-acre plot of land for the school's expansion. The Holy Child Society cleared the wild bush and by 1931 one new school building and three "cottages" constructed with cement blocks were built. As pointed out by Sister Teresa Xavier in an interview, it was the chief of this community and his people who were responsible for the building of a convent school for their girls and women.¹⁸ In the months following the sisters' arrival, the work continued on these buildings and foundations were laid for a chapel to be dedicated to the Holy Child. Bishop Shanahan laid the foundation stone on the 17th of February, 1931, which was the Feast of the Flight

¹⁸Sr. Teresa Xavier, Telephone Interview, Sisters House, Rosemont, Pennsylvania, January 28, 1979.

into Egypt. Since then, February the 17th has been kept by the sisters as a special feast day in the African Vicariate of the Holy Child.¹⁹

In 1932, Sister Mary Vianney and Sister Teresa Xavier came from Europe to help in Calabar. In the same year, the new convent school buildings at Calabar Road were completed.²⁰ This marked the beginning of the Holy Child convent schools in that state.

Holy Child Convent, Calabar, was operated as a boarding school as indicated in Chapter I of this study. In an interview with Miss Mary James Edet, a lady of Calabar Convent School, she pointed out that the school had eight twin cottages.²¹ Each cottage, according to her, had a kitchen, toilet, bathroom, and a dormitory upstairs, with shutters on windows for fresh air. (See Physical Plant later in this Chapter.) These cottages also had a head girl and a teacher to supervise the girls. Each girl was given a duty to do every morning before school under the supervision of the head girl in the cottage. Sister Mary Thercicus was "the compound mistress," as they called her at Old Calabar Convent. Mary James Edet confirmed that Sister Thercicus helped to keep both the school and the cottages clean by inspecting them daily.²² The school was always clean and

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Mary J. Edet, Interview, Ministry of Education, Calabar, Cross River State of Nigeria, December, 1979.

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid.

neat according to Sister Mary Laurentia Dalton, who helped to establish the institution in 1930. As Miss Plummer, the Education Inspector aptly puts it in her report:

Buildings are all in good order and in their usual pleasing status of cleanliness and neatness. The infant school goes on well. The babies' room with its gaily painted tables and desks, and cheerful inmates, is a joy to visit. The other classes make excellent progress. New and attractive progress charts have been introduced. English is taught in Class II, which greatly enjoys the preliminary exercises in Oxford Reader I. The teachers are all keen and happy with their children. The primary school is doing excellent work. There are now only three untrained teachers on the staff. The general standard of teaching is high. I heard some excellent lessons given, especially in the lower standards. It is cheering to find teachers who can gauge the mental capacity of their classes. It is also refreshing to find clean, well-kept exercise books in every class. Arithmetic is satisfactory throughout the upper standards. The Oxford Readers are used intelligently by the teacher and the Oxford Pictorial Grammar is proving a great success. In fact, the work in English is sound, and many of the children speak and read the language very well. Oral reading is rather poor in Standard VI, which is a mediocre class, one of these odd "patches" of mediocrity which occur periodically in every school. Standard V is more hopeful. However, Standard VI Arithmetic is good, and the class is making progress in Geography. The Standard VI needlework, under the supervision of a European nun, is very good indeed. Owing to the lack of time I could not inspect needlework in other classes. Physical training is taught on modern lines. A Guide Company and Brownie Pack are attached to the school. It is always a pleasure to visit this school, which keeps up its proud tradition of being one of the best girls' schools in Nigeria.²³

Secondly, when the Governor made a visit to Calabar to inspect the school, he wrote:

²³Archives of the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus, Calabar School Report of March 14th, 6th and 7th, May, 1943 File No. 2, unpublished manuscript found at Dalton Center, New York, dated 1943, pp. 21-23.

Very satisfied the Convent School being one of the best institutions of its kind I have seen. The atmosphere of real happiness was most infectious.²⁴

The above quotations explain exactly the buildings, books, and even the curriculum used by the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus at the beginning of their work in the Cross River State of Nigeria.

Uniforms

As Mary James Edet carefully explained, the Holy Child pupils wore brown skirts and blue blouses as morning uniforms. According to her explanation, the brown depicts the earth²⁵ on which we live and the blue depicts the sky or Heaven. Day uniforms made of blue check material were provided for the pupils. However, on Sundays, they wore Nigerian attire to church and blue headties. This system of uniforms helped to maintain a neater look among the children. The physical education uniforms were shorts and white blouses. Each child was allowed to wear brown sandals to school and ordinary shoes to church.

Curriculum

From the school's aims and objectives, the Holy Child Sisters were able to draw up a flexible curriculum for their students. Their particular objective was to prepare the young girls of the Cross River State of Nigeria to be self-sufficient on earth and to prepare their souls for

²⁴Mary J. Edet, Interview, Ministry of Education, Calabar, Cross River State of Nigeria, April, 1980.

²⁵Edet, Interview, December 29, 1979.

Heaven. Although, during the colonial times in Nigeria, especially in the Cross River State, girls and women were not allowed to go to school and there were no teachers; still, the sisters tried to encourage the education of women. According to Mary James Edet in an interview, the three R's --reading, writing, arithmetic -- plus religion, were the basics in elementary schools, during this early period.²⁶

Since the opening of the school in 1905, the Handmaid Sisters and Sister Magdalen Charles Walker had been working very hard to expand the mission and to modify the curriculum to suit new circumstances and needs. The Montessori method still predominated. Even after the expansion of the school in 1932, as mentioned before, the Montessori system continued to be used.²⁷ The system had served very well. More apparatus were used by the sisters and individual apparatus for the students were also provided. Children were able to comprehend quickly with the use of apparatus and play methods. Children were given freedom of movement in the classroom. They interacted with their fellow students to create new ideas with the use of apparatus. Sometimes, the students were given opportunities to produce their own visual aids. Sister Mary Genevieve, in her letter to Rev. Mother General in Rome, attested to this

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Sr. Mary Genevieve, Early Mission Letter, to Rev. Mother Superior General, Calabar, found in the Archives of the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus, Dalton Center, New York, September 27, 1930.

fact when she stated that the conditions of learning in school was improving. And children had an interest in the use of Montessori methods.²⁸ The little ones used mostly mathematical apparatus, for example, coloured cubes, for counting numbers and letter cards for spelling in their classes, while the elderly girls used different apparatus in different subjects.

The Montessori method used by Sister Magdalen Charles Walker seemed to work with the pre-primary children and its curriculum provided more free periods than the modern curriculum. The schedule for primary school was as follows:

At the early beginning of the Holy Child Sisters, the school begins at 7:30 a.m. and continues till 12:15 p.m. with half an hour's break from 10:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. At 12:15 p.m. they had lunch which was their chief meal and at one o'clock, they all went for an hour's siesta. After the siesta at 2:30 p.m., they had needlework and laundry while the sisters were teaching the student-teachers their own lessons. At four o'clock, they had a little snack before going to work in the school garden, this was a way of getting them to exercise themselves and to feel at home. At six o'clock, they had recreation before supper at 7:00 p.m., after which the little ones went to bed. At this time, senior girls did quiet work -- either reading or sewing before going to bed at 8:00 p.m. So the Holy Child Primary School Curriculum included three hours of Arithmetic; forty-five minutes of grammar and an hour and a half of composition.²⁹

The four sisters who lived at Calabar Convent from 1930 were Sister Magdalen Charles Walker, Sister Mary Edith, Sister Laurentia Dalton, and Sister Mary Joachim. From Ca-

²⁸Ibid., p. 5.

²⁹Ibid., p. 6.

labar they visited small schools like Ikot Ene and Anua which were established at the same time.

The success achieved by the Holy Child Sisters stemmed basically from the curriculum they used in all their schools. During the early period, the Nigerian education was based on the work of voluntary agencies, chiefly: missions, churches, and local native authorities, which established and conducted schools. Because of historical and cultural differences, the southern part of Nigeria (Eastern and Western Regions) had a somewhat more developed school system than the Northern Region.

It must be mentioned that another influence on the curriculum was the basic government requirements. These requirements had to be incorporated into the curriculum. For, as indicated in the Report of the British Colonial Office, the elementary school schedules were outlined for each region as a whole, through consultation between the Education Department and the schools' proprietors; but considerable freedom was left for adjusting syllabuses to suit local conditions.³⁰ The Holy Child Sisters adjusted the syllabus sensibly to suit the needs of women in south eastern Nigeria. They designed a flexible curriculum to suit the needs of the students in the primary and secondary schools, and college level for the girls and women under their jurisdiction. For secondary school, they followed the

³⁰ Great Britain Colonial Office, Report on Nigeria for the Year 1949 (London: HMSO, 1950), p. 124.

Cambridge syllabus for school certificates but with modifications for West African requirements. This technique was used also by the sisters to develop their teacher training colleges and vocational institutions. Consequently, the flexibility imposed on their curriculum to suit the basic needs of the people, helped schools of the Holy Child Sisters to progress more rapidly than other institutions for girls in the state.

In the author's opinion, the Holy Child Sisters were successful in their educational programme. Their curriculum reflected their educational goals -- both proximate and ultimate. One of the greatest assets of their educational curriculum was its flexible character. While meeting the basic requirements imposed by the government, practical teaching and useful subjects were incorporated into the curriculum to suit the needs of young girls and women of that particular era.

Apart from religion and the three R's in junior elementary schools, the curriculum included the following subjects: Domestic science which includes cookery, child welfare, laundry, needle work, and handiwork, nature study, hygiene, arts and craft for Elementary V and VI standard girls, also. Sister Teresa Xavier emphasized in a taped interview that the above subjects helped to promote their work in the state.³¹

Secondly, it was the sisters' policy to give weekly and quarterly tests to their students, so as to be able to

³¹Sr. Theresa Xavier, Interview.

evaluate the their ability and progress. For senior girls in Elementary V and VI, domestic science was introduced and girls were taught how to prepare native diet soup. According to Sister Mary Fedelis, in an interview at Rosemont Infirmary in 1979, today, many of the Cross River State women are known to be the best cooks and the best homemakers because of the training given to them by the sisters and other early missionaries.³² By legend, Calabar women are the best cooks and the best love makers simply because of their domestic and humanistic training by these missionaries.

Philosophy of Education

The sisters promoted liberal education. Since liberal education requires the highest faculties of students to be developed fully, the sisters based their work on this philosophy. Furthermore, the sisters' educational approaches were influenced in a large measure --particularly in terms of methodology -- by Rousseau's philosophy of "Naturalism" and Johann Pestalozzi's principles, as well as by contemporary empirical psychological innovations, which again, are the outgrowth of the philosophy of Naturalism.

Additionally, as has already been said in this Chapter, as Catholic educators, they based their system on a unified Catholic philosophy which, as Dr. Buetow very well stated, "looked upon the goal of its educational system as complete personal formation," and which in effect, "entailed

³²Sr. Mary Fedelis, Interview, Sisters of the Holy Child Infirmary, Rosemont, Pennsylvania, February 12, 1979.

a high concentration on man's eternal destiny rather than on his life on earth."³³ Sister John Bosco, in a discussion, mentioned that their Society strongly opposed John Dewey's concept of education because Catholics hold that man is composed of body and soul.³⁴ The sisters attacked Dewey's idea of education because they believed in the philosophy of training the whole person.³⁵ Therefore, religious instruction was prominent in their curriculum.

Sister Mary Joachim pointed out in her article entitled "Foundation," that apart from this religious instruction, from kindergarten to elementary schools, the sisters actually followed the full government syllabus, especially at the early stage of their work. According to Mary Joachim, the most important lessons to girls and women apart from the three R's taught, were the three H's.³⁶ In the Nigerian girl's education: Hygiene, Horticulture, and Handwork were essential to them at that time. It was the sisters' belief that these three subjects provided a solid basis for a woman's development. Secondly, to the sisters, they were the only subjects which touched the real life. Sister Mary Joachim explained the reasons as follows:

³³Buetow, Singular Benefit, p. 195.

³⁴Sr. John Bosco, Interview, Henze House, Rosemont, Pennsylvania, February 13, 1979.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Sr. Mary Joachim, "Foundations," The Pylon, Vol. I, No. 1 (Rome: January 1934), p.8.

The clerk's daughter in Calabar, the farmer's child, the prospective wife and mother -- for all of them, clean habits, self-control, exercise, and healthy occupation are of the first importance.³⁷

Sister Joachim was the first principal of the Holy Child Convent, Calabar.

Extracurricular Activities

In an interview with Sister Mary Damien, she delineated the student-activities practiced in the early days of the Holy Child Convent, Calabar, as follows: Games, native dances, gardening, recreation, worship, sports for Empire Day Celebration, Girl Guides, Brownies, painting and crayoning for nursery sections, drama, plays and music for comfort. The sisters also organized sports competition between cottages and with other mission schools. Additionally, in the early period at Holy Child Convent, Calabar, "the pioneer school" traveling dispensary was available; a laboratory, operating-theatre ward was also established for the treatment of both women and children.³⁸

It must be mentioned that before the advent of the Holy Child Society, the French sisters of Cluny started St. Margaret's Hospital in 1916. This was stated by Sister Mary Damien in an interview. In Anua dispensary, before Sister Mary Martin took over in 1937, the Holy Child Sisters had 1,447 cases within three months of its official establishment in 1933, while the attendance in what they called "Bush

³⁷Ibid., p. 8.

³⁸Sr. Mary Damien, Interview, Sharon House, Rosemont, Pennsylvania, February 12, 1979.

dispensaries," reached a total of 1,441 patients.³⁹ The sisters also attached small dispensaries to each of the schools they opened where they gave hygiene lectures and private consultation to women who demanded it. Twineries, creches for twins, and the sick and motherless babies were built by the sisters.

Field trips were organized for the pupils to visit important places on Sundays with the direction of the teachers and the sisters. As indicated by Sister Mary Saint Henry Parker in her letter to the author, at an early age, primary six girls were teachers' aids to the sister-teachers at the Holy Child Convent School, Calabar.⁴⁰

Teachers

The decision to train female lay teachers was made by Rev. Mother General, "Mother Mary Amadeus," when she came with Sister Mary Bernard and Sister Mary Saint Henry Parker to Calabar Convent in 1936. Elementary Teacher Training College began at Holy Child Convent School, Calabar, before it was moved to Ifuho, Ikot Ekpene in 1937. Holy Child School, Calabar, and all other Holy Child institutions were staffed with sister-teachers and female lay teachers trained by the Holy Child sisters themselves. These teachers were very friendly with the children. Elementary Teacher Training College was to train only elementary school teachers. More

³⁹Sr. Mary Joachim, "Foundations," p. 8.

⁴⁰Sr. Mary St. Henry Parker, Letter to the author, p. 2.

will be discussed later in the Chapter about the progress of this College since it was transferred to its new site in 1937.

As mentioned before, the sisters brought the idea of Western education to the Cross River State of Nigeria. Consequently, most of the requirements for a teacher were basically the same as in the West. As Sister Laurentia Dalton pointed out in an interview, they adopted the proposal of Rev. Edward Jordan of Catholic University, U.S.A.,⁴¹ who spoke at the annual meeting of the National Catholic Education Association (NCEA) in 1925 about teacher's requirements:

We are apparently all agreed that the minimum requirements for a teacher in the elementary school should be the completion of a good normal course after graduation from an accredited high school. For secondary teachers, we consider graduation from a standard college essential; and for a college teacher at least a year of university is desirable.⁴²

These sisters were able to train teachers for elementary and secondary institutions. Unfortunately, they were not able to establish a university but trained a few women to be able to teach in the college by helping to get admission in overseas universities for degree certificates. In fact, the sisters were very slow in this area. Many parents had money to send their girls to overseas universities but the sisters

⁴¹Sr. Laurentia Dalton, Interview, Sharon House, Rosemont, Pennsylvania, August 21, 1979.

⁴²Rev. Edward Jordan, "The Evaluation of Credits," Report of the Proceedings and Addresses of the Twenty-second Annual Meeting of NCEA, Pittsburgh, PA., June 29 to July 2, 1925 (Columbus, Ohio: November, 1925), XXII, No. 2., p. 493.

were not interested in helping these able parents and their brilliant children to be able to gain admission to overseas colleges and universities.⁴³ Only a few sisters of the Sisters of the Handmaid Jesus, in which they trained, received a university education before 1967.⁴⁴ If the sisters had done this, by now many of the Cross River State women, doing degree programmes at an old age, would have been long standing graduates in the Nigerian labor force today.

Students

Holy Child students at the beginning were Catholic girls and young women from old Calabar Province. As pointed out earlier in this Chapter, about two hundred students reported at Calabar Convent on the first day of school. According to the history of the Foundress of the Holy Child Society, Mother Cornelia Connelly, their objective was to train lower class and poor children, whose parents could not afford to train them. But in the Cross River State at that time, very few parents could afford to train their girls. Hence, many families got involved with the sisters' programme. Later on, the sisters could not discriminate on the question of religion; however, they did on the basis of sex. The sisters did not accept the idea of co-education in their system. This made many of the families who had male children criticize them for sex discrimination too. And coeducation was not encouraged by the Catholic Church at that time.

⁴³Mary J. Edet, Interview, in her room at Catholic University, Washington, D.C., August 28, 1980.

⁴⁴Ibid.

Pope Pius XI summed up the church's view point on the subject in the Encyclical Christian Education of Youth when he declared that:

False also and harmful to Christian education is the so-called method of co-education. This too, by many of its supporters, is founded upon Naturalism and the denial of original sin; but by all, upon a deplorable confusion of ideas that mistakes a leveling promiscuity and equality, for the legitimate association of the sexes...These principles, with due regard to time and place, must, in accordance with Christian prudence, be applied to all schools, particularly in the most delicate and decisive period of formation, that, namely of adolescence.⁴⁵

Briefly speaking, the sisters as Catholic educators had no choice but to abide with the above decision, because before the arrival of the sisters, the Holy Ghost Fathers had opened a few boys' schools in Calabar and Anua. Girls had no schools of their own so they decided to open schools for girls and women also.

At this time the Eastern Region of Nigeria's government had established few government co-educational institutions. These institutions were like the public schools in Western countries. What Dr. Buetow stated with regard to the public schools in America can be applied to the government co-educational institutions of the colonial days in Nigeria. According to this statement, the public schools utilized psychologies of childhood which either neglected or denied the spiritual aspect of man's nature.⁴⁶ This new psychology of childhood emphasized, and sometimes over-

⁴⁵Pope Pius XI, Christian Education, pp. 26-27.

⁴⁶Buetow, Singular Benefit, pp. 253-54.

emphasized experimentation and empirical approaches to all reality. There was great new emphasis on tests and measurement. As Dr. Buetow aptly described the situation in the United States public schools, this situation was applicable to Nigeria: "the student must be measured and assessed --his memory, imagination, motor skills, personality, intelligence, attention, comprehension, esthetic appreciation, achievement in school subjects, and indeed, all his human faculties."⁴⁷ For students of the period in Nigeria's public schools, it was a test in time and the laboratory was a going concern too. All these activities were done under co-educational settings. This co-educational approach was in sharp contrast to that of the Catholic Church to which the sisters of the Holy Child Jesus belonged. They therefore, decided to deal only with girls.

^Condition: Physical Plant

The author noticed in her visit to Calabar in February 1980, that the pioneer convent school established in 1930 is still in existence. The school building was facing south and was an open classroom structure with good overhang to keep out the sun and to protect the classrooms against the rain. There were flower beds with assorted kinds of flowers. They had two sets of toilets, one set in the boarding section and the other in the school area designed for ten pupils per toilet. These toilets had

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 255.

flowers around them and were quite a distance from the classroom. There were built-in blackboards, four in each class.⁴⁸

Audio-visual aids used in the school during the early days of the sisters' work in the Cross River State of Nigeria were introduced to students as apparatus. These apparatus were useful both for the kindergarten and for the elementary section. They were used both in class teaching and on the sport and physical education fields.

They had open playground with different courts for Volleyball, Net Ball, Folk dancing, and Baseball. The girls were encouraged by the sisters to have a class competition within the school. Presents, such as shields, were given to winners of any game or sport.

Agents of Education

The chiefs and the church were the principal agents of education in the Cross River State of Nigeria in the thirties. Sister Laurentia Dalton stated at the interview that it was the chiefs who built their convent schools through local contributions, and that the sisters were responsible for the school equipment and staffing only. During the early days, this Catholic St. Joseph Convent School at Calabar was supported and financed by the church, the natives and the Society of the Holy Child Jesus and a few overseas benefactors.⁴⁹ Since it was a private school,

⁴⁸Sr. Mary Laurentia Dalton, Interview.

⁴⁹Ibid.

the government did not finance Calabar Convent School at the early stage. After many convent schools were established, the government started to give subsidies to the sisters. Sister Laurentia Dalton revealed that parents were very helpful in the administration of the school.

Parents played a major role in the running of the Holy Child convent schools. Teacher/parent organizations contributed mostly by providing food on Sundays for the children who were boarders in the school, even though they had a central feeding system. They also provided books, tuition fees, and uniforms. Gifts like fruits, food stuffs, chicken, and native crafts were given to the sisters by the parents, especially during harvest seasons. Finally, the school discipline was also promoted and maintained by parent/teachers' associations who worked hand-in-hand with the sisters throughout their stay in southern Nigeria.

All other convent schools, according to Sister Mary Stephane, were administered in the same pattern, including the nursery section.⁵⁰ Holy Child Convent School, Calabar, developed significantly in its new quarters, and became the pattern and model of the many primary schools that later branched out from this parent foundation.

Another work that occupied the sisters' energies was the catechising of the women, preparing them for the sacraments such as Christian marriage. Classes were held five nights weekly, and each Sunday, women in the prison

⁵⁰ Sr. Mary Stephane, Interview, Author's house, Maryland, U.S.A., November, 1979.

were visited and instructed.⁵¹ However, in 1931, the nursery section of Calabar convent was transferred to Ikot Ene where Margaret Edet was made the first principal of the school.⁵² Many other schools and a college were established between 1930 and 1937. And from 1948 to 1949, one secondary school was built at Uyo, a town in the Cross River State of Nigeria. This marked the beginning of their development period.

B. The Development Period -- 1937-1949

Holy Child Teacher Training College

This period portrays the development and growth of teacher-training institutions, vocational schools, and secondary schools by the Holy Child Sisters. Holy Child Teacher Training College, Ifuho, Ikot Ekpene is known today as "The Teachers' Training College Ifuho" under the management of the Cross River Federal Government. The foundations of this College date back to 1937 as mentioned in Chapters I and II of this dissertation. It was the first Teachers Training College opened by the Holy Child Society, with Sister Marie Osmund S.H.C.J., O.B.E., as the first principal in Calabar before the College was transferred to the present location at Ikot Ekpene.

In a letter sent by Sister Mary Saint Henry Parker, one of the pioneer sisters, to the author, she mentioned

⁵¹Archives of the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus, Mission Notes, unpublished manuscript found at Dalton Center, New York: 1943, p. 12.

⁵²Mary J. Edet, Letter, to the author dated April 20, 1980.

that it was in 1936 that they opened a five-girl elementary teachers' training school at Calabar: i.e. (Normal College).⁵³ This College was moved from Calabar to Ifuho, Ikot Ekpene in 1937 and the first students at Calabar to be registered were:

1. Agnes Ugario (Sister Mary Aloysia, Handmaid of the Holy Child Jesus), who later became the first higher elementary female teacher in Calabar - she was the only one to finish her three years Higher Elementary course in the whole state at that time.
2. Mary Archibong and Margaret Okon were the only second year students at that time.
3. Paulina Archibong and Teresita Bassey were the first year students in the lower elementary training section.⁵⁴

In 1936, Sister Mary Bernard and Sister Mary Saint Henry Parker went to Ifuho with one contractor called Paul, to begin building Ifuho Holy Child Teacher Training College, and the Novitiate for the four postulants who were the pioneer sisters of the Handmaids of the Holy Child Jesus.⁵⁵

⁵³Sr. Mary Saint Henry Parker, Letter to the author from Holy Child Convent, Mayfield England, March 1, 1979), p. 2.

⁵⁴A. O. Udoh, Principal, Holy Child College, Ifuho, Ikot Ekpene, Cross River State (Nigeria), Letter to the author, dated April 17, 1979, p. 1.

⁵⁵Sr. Mary Fedelis, Notes on Why Nigeria? given to the author at the Holy Child Infirmary, Rosemont, Pennsylvania; February, 1979, p. 5.

Ifuho Holy Child Teacher Training College was officially opened in 1937 with ten students and Sister Mary Joachim was the first principal at Ifuho. Sister Mary Osmund became the first education officer in Enugu, which was the capital of Eastern Nigeria at that time, while Sister Mary Saint Henry Parker was the Domestic Science tutor.⁵⁶

The first group of students at the Holy Child Teachers' Elementary and Higher Elementary colleges, who came after Sister Mary Aloysia were the following:

A. 3rd Year Higher Elementary

Mary Archibong

Margaret Okon

B. 2nd Year Elementary

Paulina Archibong

Teresite Bassey

Elizabeth Edet

Margaret Essien

C. 1st Year Elementary

Mary Magdalen Asuguo

Philomena Edet

Alice Ekpa Eyo

Christian Nwaturocha (who later became
Sister Mary Gertude.⁵⁷

In her article "Birth of the Nation," Sister Mary Bertrand explained the difference between High Elementary

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Ibid.

and Elementary Colleges established in Nigeria for the training of teachers.⁵⁸ In the Cross River State, the sisters of the Holy Child Jesus had various types of colleges, for example, Domestic Science College, where women were prepared to teach Domestic Science, i.e. cookery, bakery, sewing, and housekeeping, to primary school pupils. It was a two year course.⁵⁹ There were elementary teachers' training colleges where young girls were trained in the science of teaching infants and juniors; this was also a two year college. Lastly, there were the higher elementary training colleges, providing a four year course and the girls were trained to teach in the Senior Primary Section and in the lower classes of the secondary schools.⁶⁰ These colleges, especially Ifuho, grew into flourishing training colleges which still exists today.

Although the college was taken over from the Holy Child Society, still, it has produced over a thousand prominent women for major positions in the state schools and for the Nigerian civil servant positions as a whole. Ifuho Holy Child Teacher Training College for women up to this date, has no competitor. Even though the Scottish Mission established Edgerly College at Calabar around the same time and the Qua Ibo Mission established Ika Annang Women's

⁵⁸Sr. Mary Bertrand, Birth of a Nation - Nigeria Moves Forward in Giant Strides, unpublished manuscript found at the Archives of the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus, Dalton Center, New York, dated 1960.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 15.

⁶⁰Ibid.

Teacher Training College; still, Ifuho remains very outstanding and popular in its administration.⁶¹

Holy Child Teacher Training College, Ifuho, continued to train and send out female teachers to manage about fifty-five primary schools scattered all over the Cross River State. The Holy Child primary schools in Ikot Ekpene Division by 1955, were located in Ifuho, Ntoedino, Nto Nsek, Ukana, Abiakpo, Ikpe, Nkanna, Afaha Obong, Okon, and Ikot Eyem.⁶²

Teacher Training College, Ifuho had always been a training college from its formation in 1936, offering courses for higher elementary and elementary teachers' certificates. These courses were changed to teacher Grade II and Grade III certificate courses in 1950 and in 1952. The Grade II external examination was taken for the first time by only two candidates. Formally, the Higher Elementary course was a three year straight course opened to candidates who passed the screening examination at the end of the first year with 70% averages, but others who failed did a two year elementary course and received elementary certificates.⁶³

Later, many teachers with elementary certificates were allowed to go back to finish a one year course for the

⁶¹Sr. Mary St. Henry Parker, Letter to the author, from London, England, p. 1.

⁶²Ayo O. Udoh, Principal, The Holy Child Training College, Letter to the author from Ifuho, Ikot Ekpene, Cross River State Nigeria, dated 1979, pp. 1-2.

⁶³Ibid., p. 2.

Higher Elementary certificate. Secondary candidates with the school certificate (Cambridge certificate, now known as West African certificates), were admitted to do a two year course to obtain the Higher Elementary certificate at Ifuho.⁶⁴ According to Sister Mary Fedelis, in an interview in Rosemont, it was in 1950 that all Grade II teachers' institutions became a four year course for candidates who came in by an entrance examination only.⁶⁵

In 1957 the section of Ifuho Grade II Teachers' course was transferred to Oron, a town at the west coast of the Cross River, with Sister Marie Adude Therese serving as the first principal. Holy Child Teachers Training College, Ifuho, concentrated on courses for the Teachers' Grade II certificates who were qualified to teach in secondary schools and colleges, while Oron Teacher Training College produced Grade III Teachers for Elementary schools only.

The curriculum for Higher Elementary Teacher Training colleges was: Arithmetic, English Language, Infant, Junior and Senior teaching methods, Principles of Education, Practical Teaching, and Domestic Science. A few years later the curriculum was extended to include History, Geography, Hygiene, Arts and Craft, and Physical Education.⁶⁶ But the Grade III courses included Arithmetic, English, Principles

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵Sr. Mary Fedelis, Letter to the author from the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus Infirmary, Rosemont, Pennsylvania, February 12, 1979.

⁶⁶Odoh, Letter, p. 2.

of Education, Domestic Science, Infant and Junior school methods. The following represents the growth in the Ifuho college population,⁶⁷ since its founding, from 1937-1960:

Table III
THE GROWTH OF IFUHO COLLEGE
POPULATION BETWEEN 1937-1960

<u>Year</u>	<u>Students</u>	<u>Staff</u>
1937	10	2
1938	10	2
1939	0	7
1940	16	2
1941	31	6
1942	31	7
1943	43	7
1944	46	7
1945	45	8
1946	49	8
1947	49	7
1948	50	8
1949	58	8
1950	64	8
1951	59	6
1952	72	6
1953	83	7
1954	117	8
1955	116	7
1956	109	9
1957	103	7
1958	93	7
1959	110	9
1960	146	11

Holy Child Teacher Training College was under the proprietorship of the Catholic Bishop of Calabar Diocese, the Right Rev. Dr. James Moynnah. His Lordship Bishop Dominic Ekandem took over the proprietorship when he became

⁶⁷This data is compiled from Ayo O. Udoh's letter to the author, from the Holy Child College, Ifuho, Ikot Ekpene, Cross River State, Nigeria, 1979, pp. 2-3.

the Bishop of Ikot Ekpene in 1963 (later he became the first Nigerian Cardinal in 1977).⁶⁸

While this goes beyond the period under discussion, the researcher, for clarity's sake, could not hold within the time period of this study rigidly and in short, Chapter IV will expand the last period. During the Nigerian Civil War, this College was evacuated to Uyo, because of the war disturbance in the Ifuho area for over one year. The refugee students were moved to a more permanent and peaceful environment. Mr. Malachy Essien was the principal during this stage of Ifuho College. At this moment, the Holy Child Teacher Training Colleges, Ifuho and Oron had to be merged until after the war. Basically, the Ifuho school ground was a battleground between the Biafra and Nigerian armies for almost two years. Consequently, many of the college buildings were damaged and all the college property looted.

The Proprietor, Right Rev. Dr. Dominic I. Ekandem (now Cardinal), who took over this Teacher Training College from Bishop James Moynah, saw the great need for reconstructing the College which was in ruins as a result of the war. He donated nine thousand pounds in 1971 for the reconstruction of Ifufho.⁶⁹ It is interesting to mention here that the author was sent on delegation by Ifuho Teacher Training College's Board of Trustees, of which she was a

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹ Emmanuel A. Essien, Principal, Teacher Training College, Otoro, Ikot Ekpene, Cross River State, Nigeria, Interview, in his house, January 16, 1980.

member, with Mr. Cosmos Tombere to request government funds for the reconstruction of the damaged college property. The Commissioner, Mr. Emmanuel A. Essien, without any hesitation, remitted the sum of three thousand Naira for this purpose. (Naira is the Nigeria currency which is about \$1.80 U.S. dollars at the time of this study.)

In 1971, Holy Child Teachers Training College moved back to operate in Ifuho from Uyo and normal college routines were restored immediately.⁷⁰ By this time the author was a teacher/matron there and they had sixty students studying for the teachers Grade II certificate.

Ifuho Holy Child Teachers' Training College, which is now a government owned institution, was at Ifuho Village because the land was given free of charge to the sisters of the Holy Child Jesus. According to Chief Okure in an interview in 1971, rent for the land was to be paid in kind by the agreement between the villages and the sisters, that scholarships would be given to some of the native girls in the schools and colleges yearly.

The Holy Child Sisters, out of their own volition, decided yearly to train from two to four children from Ifuho and Nkap villages. After the departure of the sisters of the Holy Child Jesus in 1967, there were many problems between the villagers and the Handmaid Sisters who took over the Teacher Training College, Ifuho, since the chief and his village people were not recognized by the then principal,

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 4.

Sister Marie Therese of the Handmaid Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus. Since the landlords' children were not given free education as was done by their predecessors, the villagers revolted and appealed to the Cross River State government to take over the college. Rev. Mother Gertrude, the then Mother General of the Handmaid Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus, was able to convince the chief and people of Ifuho Village not to do so, but the government did eventually take over the school in 1973. Sister Mary Staphene was the supervisor of primary schools in Calabar Province before she became the principal of Ifuho College.

With the government take-over of schools and colleges, the Holy Child Teachers' Training College, Ifuho, passed from missionary ownership and management to the government. Now the college accommodations, originally meant for 150 students, are being used by 900 students.⁷¹ In order to enhance the government expansion programme for the Universal Primary Education (UPE) scheme, it became necessary to get more land. Apparently, a new piece of land was acquired again from the chief and people of Ifuho Village, for the Handmaid Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus to be able to expand the college.⁷² Ifuho Teacher Training College is one of the best women's training colleges in Nigeria.

The growing network of the sisters did not stop at Calabar Province; it moved to Ogoja Province which was very

⁷¹Ibid.

⁷²Archives of the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus, Notes on the History of Ifuho Teacher Training College, unpublished manuscript found at Dalton Center, New York, dated 1930-1958, p. 8.

remote, and was called the "Lost Province"⁷³ because it was cut off from the rest of Nigeria by the Cross River.

According to Monsignor McGetrick (Prefect Apostolic of Ogoja), in his talk to the Irish Holy Child Sisters, about 400,000 women and girls in Ogoja were staying at home without formal education, and over 80,000 lepers were there without any treatment until the arrival of the Holy Child Sisters in 1944.⁷⁴

Afikpo Elementary Teachers' Training College was one of the primary needs of Ogoja people. The Holy Child Sisters opened the Elementary Teachers' Training College at Ogoja in 1938. This college at Afiakpo was under the jurisdiction of Ogoja Province. Also primary/infant schools, a vocational school, two dependent schools at Ugep and Ogoja town were established during this period of expansion. Later one, Ogoja Elementary Training College was opened, but Afiakpo was the second normal college opened in the Cross River State with Sister Mary Bernard as the principal, and Sister Mary Hubert, Sister Mary Cyril, and Sister Aloysia as assistants.⁷⁵ All Holy Child colleges were erected and

⁷³Archives of the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus, "Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus Who Served in Africa," 1930-1950, Mission White Paper, Vol. V, unpublished manuscript found at Dalton Center, New York, p. 9.

⁷⁴Archives of the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus, Mission Field of the Society of the Society in Africa, Vol. III, unpublished manuscript found at Dalton Center, New York, p. 3.

⁷⁵Sr. Mary Teresa Xavier, Paper on the work of the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus presented to the author at an interview, Sharon House, Rosemont, Pennsylvania, February, 1979, p. 1.

managed in the same way. Sister Mary Julian was also the principal at Ogoja Teachers' Training College.

But Ifuho Holy Child Teachers Training College was then made the headquarters of the Holy Child Sisters when they moved from Calabar in 1937. The strategic position of Ifuho as a mission center for the Holy Child operations, had been apparent to the priests and sisters because of the large town of Ikot Ekpene and the civil and military headquarters for the Ibibio and the Annang tribes which were situated there, off the main road which stretched from the Cross River State to Port Harcourt on the Niger Delta.⁷⁶ Secondly, other "grades A and B roads" branched north and south at Ikot Ekpene, and the town was within easy reach of the Nigerian railway at Aba which was and is still a commercial center.⁷⁷ In fact, such communications played a vital role not only in the social and economic life of the sisters, but in missionary expansion in southern Nigeria. Here the people were interested in missionary work, unlike those in the Northern group, who had their own Islamic religion, traditional and cultural differences.

So 1937 to 1948 could be considered the years of progress in the work of the Holy Child Sisters, because it was during that period that teacher training colleges and secondary schools were established. It was also at this same time that the Medical Missionaries of Mary took over

⁷⁶Archives of the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus, Mission Calabar File, Vol. II, unpublished manuscript found at Dalton Center, New York.

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 25.

Anua Hospital from the Holy Child Society, whose objective was the education of girls.⁷⁸ Secondly, Monsignor Riberi, the Apostolic Delegate, had advised that Sister Mary Magdalen and Sister Mary Joseph make a short canonical novitiate under the direction of the Holy Child Sisters of Ifuho before the take-over. Sister Mary Bernard of the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus acted as their Novice Mistress.⁷⁹ And thirdly, teacher training colleges and one secondary school were built at the Cross River state of Nigeria by the Holy Child sisters.

Since the teachers were so important, a training college was begun and was sending out teachers to schools. In 1941 the first electricity was installed in Calabar Convent secondary school and prepartory classes started in Calabar.⁸⁰ At this time Sister Mary Fedelis was the Mother Superior of the Holy Child Sisters in Calabar. This secondary school was also transferred from Calabar to Afaha Oku-Uyo in 1949 where it is located till today.

C. The Peak Period -- 1950-1960

Secondary Education

The next field of labour of the sisters of the Holy Child Jesus in Calabar, was to open a secondary school, which was predominately academic in content. According to

⁷⁸Sr. Teresa Xavier, Interview, Sharon House, Rosemont, Pennsylvania, February 13, 1979.

⁷⁹Archives of the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus, Calabar File, No. II, unpublished manuscript found at Dalton Center, New York, p. 3.

⁸⁰Ibid.

Sister Mary Damien in an interview, it was not until the 1940's that secondary schools for girls came into existence.⁸¹ The first secondary institution built by the Holy Child Sisters in the Cross River State was the "Cornelia Connelly Secondary School." For one reason or another, this congregation decided to develop their work at Calabar which was then their center of operation. The research reveals that nearly all the schools established by the Society of the Holy Child Sisters took their roots from the Calabar convent ground. The Cornelia Connelly Secondary School was started in 1945 at Calabar, and in 1949 it was transferred to Afaha Oku - in Uyo Division.⁸²

Cornelia Connelly Secondary School
Oku-Uyo

Cornelia Connelly -- a secondary school for girls -- opened in Afaha Oku, Uyo on February 1, 1949. It was the first of its kind to be established by the Catholic Mission in the Calabar Vicariate. Cornelia Connelly College, as they called it, had, on the opening day, seventy-nine students enrolled in Forms II-VI and the staff consisted of four Europeans (Sisters of the Holy Child Society) and two Nigerian tutors.⁸³ The available buildings included a

⁸¹Sr. Mary Damien, Interview, Sharon House, Rosemont, Pennsylvania, February, 1979.

⁸²Sr. Mary Joachim, Letter to the author from the Holy Child Secondary School, Ikom Ogoja, Cross River State, Nigeria, 1979, p. 1.

⁸³Sr. Anslem, Paper on the history of the Cornelia Connelly College, found at the Cornelia Connelly Secondary School, Library, Uyo, Cross River State, Nigeria, 1979, p. 1.

classroom block, temporary dormitories for the students and a small mud house for sisters and staff. Within the next several years, additional buildings consisted of a second class hall, an assembly hall and temporary chapel, cottages to replace the dormitories for students and finally, a convent building.⁸⁴

In 1952 Cornelia Connelly Secondary School was inspected and approved for Form VI (now Form V), a main building for Library, Science Laboratory, Art Room and Sewing Room having been completed also. By this time the students numbered 128, fourteen of whom were preparing to do the Cambridge School Certificate.⁸⁵

The purpose of the Cornelia Connelly Secondary School was two-fold -- to provide a solid education and to offer sound religious training -- and so prepare the students to take a place as educated women in the home, in professional and social life and in service to aid the development of the country. The college bears the name of the Foundress of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus, Mother Cornelia Connelly, whose career and ideals for education symbolize the purpose of the College itself.⁸⁶ The first missionary enterprise was to America where the sisters opened a school in 1866. The second missionary enterprise was to Africa where the first sister arrived in 1930.

⁸⁴Ibid.

⁸⁵Ibid.

⁸⁶Sr. Mary Fedelis, Paper presented to the author at Rosemont, Pennsylvania, February 12, 1979.

Cornelia Connelly's ideal of education became the standard of the Society everywhere. It may be summarized in her own phrase -- "to meet the wants of the age."⁸⁷ This commitment has served as an incentive to growth, adaptation, and innovation to meet the needs of the time and place which have been distinctive of the efforts of the Sisters of the Holy Child throughout their schools in England and Ireland, in the United States, in Africa, in several European countries, and most recently in Chile, South America. Cornelia Connelly College is known in the Cross River State of Nigeria as C.C.C.

An important step in the development of Cornelia Connelly came in 1961 when the first Catholic Higher School for girls in the Eastern Region was approved at C.C.C. and many students were produced. In 1967, due to the crisis in the country, C.C.C. was closed for some months to be reopened in 1968. Because of the shortage of staff, it was impossible to reopen the Higher School.

Again going beyond the time frame, a new stage began for C.C.C. in 1969, when the School Board of the newly established South Eastern state took over responsibility for the administration of the school. C.C.C. consisted of ten classes in two streams with an enrollment of about 300 boarders. There were sixteen full-time staff members supplemented by the services of five part-time graduates.

⁸⁷Ibid., p. 9.

Sister Anslem was the principal of this College at the beginning. But during the war period, Sister Margaret Rogers was the principal, while the author was the matron-in-charge of students' affairs.

Their hopes for the future were very high. The Ministry of Education had plans for enlarging the school. It was projected that with increased enrollment and a wider choice of subjects in the curriculum, the school would gradually grow into a comprehensive school for 600 students. Today it is graded as a "Grade A School" and very few schools can compete with it.

Other secondary schools opened and managed by the Holy Child Sisters were built at Ikom, Ogoja, Ututu, Abakaliki, Lagos, and Marion Hill - Calabar. This society also opened schools in Ghana, West Africa for many years. In the Holy Child secondary schools, teacher training colleges, and elementary schools, six students were taking government general examinations in their final years.

Academic results and preparation for careers were not the only objectives in the college course. The moral and spiritual training of the pupil stood first, but success in that realm could not be assessed by figures. Catholic missionaries in the Cross River State were making education a primary issue because of its extreme urgency.⁸⁸

⁸⁸His Eminence Cardinal Bishop Dominic Ekandem, Interview, Cardinal's House, Ikot Ekpene, Cross River State, Nigeria, December 29, 1979.

As mentioned before, in other chapters, the aim of the sisters in the training of girls, was to provide a balanced and progressive Catholic education related to the social life and environment of the pupils, and to prepare them either for future professional careers or to be wives and mothers of educated households.

Sister John Bosco, in an interview, mentioned that the Holy Child Sisters, by 1960, had fifty elementary schools in the mainland of the Cross River State under Ifuho Ikot Ekpene as the headquarters.⁸⁹ She also mentioned that they established about ten primary schools in Calabar and Sister Mary Fedelis was the sister-in-charge of the pioneer school situated at Calabar Road for years. Sister Damien was her assistant, according to Mary J. Edet, in an interview at Calabar in December 1979.⁹⁰ Second, twenty-five primary schools were established at Ogoja, which Sister Mary Bernard, Sister Hubert, Sister Ronault, and Sister Julian developed for years. Therefore, between 1930 and 1960 the sisters had about ninety primary schools, four secondary schools and three teacher training colleges.⁹¹ This was really a peak period for the sisters' work because, by this time, many trained teachers were produced by them, and over

⁸⁹Sr. John Bosco, Interview, Henze House, Rosemont, Pennsylvania, February 13, 1979.

⁹⁰Mary J. Edet, Interview, Author's house, Maryland, U.S.A., August 24, 1980.

⁹¹Sr. John Bosco, Notes on the Holy Child Mission in Nigeria to the author, dated June 17, 1980.

ten thousand children were in their schools under Ifuho supervision. Among them 7,000 were Protestants.⁹² This was a great achievement within the period of 30 years, before the decline in 1967.

One of the great missionaries of the time, Sister Mary Stephane, who was the supervisor of the fifty-five schools under Ifuho jurisdiction, commented in an interview in Washington, D.C., that:

When things are changing you have to change with them, so "change" was inevitable at this time. We had achieved our goal for what we went for in Nigeria. September 1980 will be the 50th anniversary of our work in Africa and we are glad for what we did there, especially in Nigeria.⁹³

In an address of welcome presented to Rev. Sister Laurentia Dalton by Cornelia Connelly students at Afaha-Oku, Uyo, when she visited Nigeria after the war, the students wrote:

We are aware of the achievements and good works you have contributed to our country many years ago; we all are very proud of you as it is through your hard work and service to God that most of our women in this part of the country have received their education.⁹⁴

Bishop Joseph Moynagh, who helped to bring change into the society since his arrival in 1930 as a priest, mentioned in his talk at Calabar that:

The spirit of the Society (SHCJ) is particularly adapted to breaking down prejudice, liberal atti-

⁹²Ibid.

⁹³Sr. Mary Stephane, Interview released from the tape of June 16, 1980.

⁹⁴Archives of the Holy Child Jesus, Mission Calabar File, unpublished manuscript found in the Archives of the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus, Dalton Center, New York, 1979.

tudes in education and outlook. You give so much more than 'book learning' - you give a culture, too, that is appreciated by the Africans.⁹⁵

D. Decline Period - 1960-1967

The Decline Period was the period of little progress and general collapse. Dr. Patrick Essien in his study entitled "The Use of Annang Proverbs as Tools of Education in Nigeria," said:

"Two cocks do not crow from the same roof."
(Ekiko Unen Iba Ikpokke K' Okom Kiet.)⁹⁶

The Holy Child Sisters felt that it was impossible for them to continue with some of their schools when the then Eastern Region decided to open public Universal Free Primary education. This project was basically to allow poor parents to send their children to school. As such, some of the Holy Child schools were closed down because of lack of students. Sister Mary Stephane confirmed that they had no funds to pay teachers again because the government stopped giving subsidies to their school system.⁹⁷ This was the beginning of the fall of convent schools. Parents refused to pay tuition fees for their children in the Holy Child Convent Schools which were private; instead, they sent their children to the government free primary schools. At this

⁹⁵Sr. Mary Virginia, Notes on Africa, unpublished manuscript found at Dalton Center, New York, 1979, p. 108.

⁹⁶Rev. Dr. Patrick Essien, "The Use of Annang Proverbs as Tools of Education in Nigeria", Doctoral Dissertation, St. Louis University, U.S.A., 1978, p. 147.

⁹⁷Sr. Mary Stephane, Interview, at the author's house, Maryland, U.S.A., November, 1979.

time, it was not possible for the two agents of education to be able to operate successfully. One had to suffer. So many convent institutions were left empty between 1955 and 1967. Therefore, the sisters had to close down many of their schools.

According to a special correspondent on the UPE programme, unlike the Western Region, the Eastern Region of Nigeria failed to continue this project due to the huge financial drain it involved. It was from this period that the educational system in the East became a confused issue. Teachers were not paid and the pupils were totally ignored by the government. Many of the UPE schools had no equipment, not even a desk for each child. In fact, it was not until 1974 that preparations were being made for the smooth take-off of the scheme on the appointed date. According to the Third National Development Plan, \$500 million was spent on this system and the primary school expenditure for 1976 alone was estimated at \$260 million.⁹⁸

Between 1955 and 1958 parents were lamenting for the poor UPE system and as Patrick Essien said:

A child that rides on the shoulders to the farm,
does not know that the distance is far.
(Eyen Eblomo K' Afara eka inwan idionke K' usung
onyong.)⁹⁹

⁹⁸Ministry of Information, "Nigeria Embarks on Education Revolution," Nigeria Illustrated, (Lagos, Nigeria: 1977), p. 31.

⁹⁹Sr. Patrick Essien, Interview, p. 201.

The then Eastern Region did not anticipate the cost of the programme before they jumped into the system. In order to continue in the training of women in the Cross River State, the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus introduced technical and vocational schools after many of their elementary schools were closed down by 1958.

Vocational-Technical Schools

Even though the Holy Child Society suffered a great loss in the context of secondary educational enterprise and aspirations, they were able to achieve their goal in the Cross River State. With a few of the schools, they were able to maintain other institutions like vocational-technical schools, marriage centers, and twineries. Sister Mary Bernard who had worked in Nigeria for over 30 years, was the key person for these operations. With a growing number of girls leaving elementary schools and faced with the problem of unemployment, Sister Bernard decided to start "Technical Schools" or "Craft Schools," as she called them. Although, teaching and nursing absorbed many of the convent girls, still, some of them who wanted to get married preferred to go to technical or vocational schools to enable them to be able to maintain their homes. The sisters used this decline period to develop a few schools for skills training, but few girls attended these schools and few girls volunteered to join their vocational school opened for the training of African sisters.

In 1950, when Sister Bernard started the work at Ifuho, the girls were somewhat suspicious of the new venture so volunteers were few; but when machines and looms were humming, materials and dresses appearing, the numbers grew rapidly. The work expanded, and in 1952, a center was established in Calabar, and another in Edem Ekpate in 1956. This was a two year programme and they also lived in small cottages modelled like a village home, where they learned bakery, jam making, weaving, housewifery, laundry, marketing, catering, and cooking for a family of about fifteen.¹⁰⁰

In the classroom, others were learning embroidery-making of dinner mats, tablecloths, dresses, bed sheets with designs, and pillow cases. At the end of the first year, a sewing machine was given to them and lessons began on its care and use. Most of them today are the best seamstresses in many of the towns in the state.

The Marriage Training Center

This center catered to women's Catechumens (the majority of whom were already "natively" married), who were given a short intensive course and a retreat, to prepare them for the sacraments of Baptism and Matrimony.¹⁰¹

Classes were held five nights weekly on religion and how to maintain their homes. On Sundays many of the women in

¹⁰⁰Sr. Mary Bernard, "Technical Training in Nigeria," Preston Magazine (Ifuho, Ikot Ekpene, Cross River State, Nigeria: 1959), p. 2.

¹⁰¹Archives of the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus, Mission, unpublished work, found at Dalton Center, New York, p. 26.

the prison were also visited and instructed by the Holy Child Sisters. The training given to women and young girls in many of the marriage centers was based on Housecraft. This course was very essential for girls who had no opportunity to attend secondary, technical or vocational training.

One parent wrote with picturesque honesty to the sisters:

Mainly, I require you to put darling Grace through in housecraft, as her brain is not too active for book knowledge, and again her manners are very queer in several points, as being very much backward in salutations, dull in rising early in the morning, pale to run for errand...¹⁰²

Secondly, marriage was a serious business in the villages because according to the missionary point of view, it was a fundamental strategy. "Serve the women and you will save the children; serve the children and you will save the future,"¹⁰³ said Bishop James Moynah, Vicar Apostolic of Calabar. At this time, many men wanted a trained wife and their doweries were very high in those days.

Twinneries

Twins brought another major problem to the life of the Holy Child Sisters during their early days in the Cross River State. Twinneries were built at several of the convent schools. By 1953, Twinneries were built for the caring

¹⁰²Ibid., p. 15.

¹⁰³Ibid., p. 53.

of these little outcasts. Some historians treat the case of twin outcasts as an economic problem of the time.

As Joe, one of the U.S. soldiers in Nigeria in 1945, indicated in his letter to his parents:

The thing that took me was the twins -- poor little pickaninnies! Sister told us that the people are mortally afraid of twins. They are looked upon as unnatural and since inhuman things are caused by the evil spirit, twins are usually done away with; many are abandoned at birth.¹⁰⁴

In some parts of the state, especailly in "Ibibio" and "Annang tribes," a twin mother was not allowed to stay with the husband or her family. She was taboo and was therefore rejected by her friends and relatives, and even forbidden from entering some of the chiefs compounds. So the sisters had camps for these twin-mothers near their convent. But through religious education and prayers of the missionaries, the idea of doing away with the twins is almost eliminated in many parts of the state. Since the sisters of the Holy Child Jesus did not have many schools to maintain, this twinnery was another duty that occupied their time during this slow period.

Noviceship for the Training of the
Handmaids of the Holy Child Jesus

Let the founding of native religious congregations of both men and women be one of the principle duties of your office.

(Pope Pius XI to Mission Ordinaries.)¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴Rev. John E. Boyle, Ed., The Catholic Mission Paper, (Philadelphia, PA, 1945), p. 10.

¹⁰⁵Archives of the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus, Mission, Vol. 11, unpublished manuscript found at Dalton Center, New York, p. 29.

With the help of Sister Magdalen Charles Walker, Calabar Mission was blessed by a new congregation of African sisters to which a slight reference has already been made in the previous chapters.

In 1931, the first four members of this new spiritual edifice were being moulded and prepared in a providential way not only for their own lofty vocation, but to enable them to transmit a strong, faithful, and generous spirit to those who would follow them. The sacred congregation of propaganda granted the authorization for the foundation of the Handmaids Congregation in 1937, when the clothing ceremony took place at Ifuho, Ikot Ekpene in the Cross River State of Nigeria.

The following report which was issued by Propaganda Fide on the Reception of the first Novices was very impressive:

"A New Native Congregation -- Handmaids of the Holy Child Jesus," has been founded in the Prefecture of Calabar and Ogoja, Nigeria. The training of its members has been entrusted to the Society of the Holy Child Jesus, with whom the new Congregation will co-operate in the various works of the mission, especially Catechizing and teaching in the schools. The four candidates who were clothed in the Habit of the Handmaids at Calabar on April 18th, by the Very Rev. James Moynah Prefect Apostolic, belong respectively to the Ibo, Ibibio, Efik, and Kwa tribes. They had been aspirants to the religious life for six years during which time they had overcome many obstacles in their path and had given proof of the vast work which native sisters will be able to do among their own people. In the course of this recent visitation of this Prefecture, His Excellency Mgr. Antonio Riberi, Delegate Apostolic, was greatly impressed by the capability of these future religious sisters and by the extent of their influence over the women and girls.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 30.

By 1953, the Handmaids (Professed, Novices, and Postulates) numbered over forty. Today, hundreds of them are teachers, nurses, and principals of schools. They have opened secondary schools and teacher training colleges of their own. In fact, one of the Handmaids' sisters, Sister Theresa Abang from Ogoja, successfully completed her Ph.D. program in Special Education (with particular reference to the education of the blind) at American University, Washington, D.C. in 1977, after completing her Master's Degree Program at the Catholic University of America. She is the first Handmaid Sister of the Holy Child Jesus to receive such qualification since the establishment of that society in Nigeria. She returned the following year to Nigeria to work in one of the universities. More will be written about the achievements of the Handmaid Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus in the next chapter. But since 1967, the Holy Child sisters have had no role to play in the education of women in the Cross River State of Nigeria. Reasons for their abrupt departure in Nigeria will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV

PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED BY THE HOLY CHILD SISTERS

Although the Sisters had made tremendous progress in the establishment of schools and welfare centers for the education of girls and destitute children respectively, there were several problems which confronted them during their thirty-seven years of service in the Cross River State. In the previous chapters, several areas of their work have been examined in order to consider some of the activities which were pertinent to the growth of women's education in that part of the world. In this Chapter, the problems encountered by the Holy Child Sisters and those forces which influence the growth of women's education are discussed from the following points of view:

1. The general economic trends during the pioneering years of the work of the Holy Child Sisters.
2. The political climate and the Nigerian civil war.
3. The mode of communication.
4. The social revolution.

Economic Situation

The world, particularly the United State of America and Great Britain, cannot forget the Great Depression of

1929-1930, which was a period of severe economic contraction, accompanied by a substantial reduction in the money supply.¹ The economic conditions in 1930 at Calabar, even though it was regarded as a port, were no better than elsewhere in the world. The banking system at this time had collapsed and spending decisions of individuals and businesses were greatly influenced by a substantial movement in the stock of money before the arrival of the sisters in 1930. Commerce at Calabar at this time was not suited for social or economic progress. Indeed, few individuals advanced themselves economically and the old saying of the rich becoming richer and the poor, poorer, remained in effect.

The general economic trends in Old Calabar at the early period of the Holy Child Mission did not offer them any encouragement in the education of women.² During this time, the education of boys was at its incipient stage and therefore, comparatively speaking, girls were considered not worthy of schooling. The economic situation made it very difficult for parents to pay tuition for girls. For this reason, girls were given at a tender age, for marriage for a reasonable dowry which was useful in one way or the other in the family.

¹Eli Shapiro, et al. Money and Banking 5th ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1968), p. 3.

²K. O. Dike, Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta (1830-1885): An Introduction to the Economic and Political History of Nigeria (London: Oxford University Press, 1956), p. 97.

In the early twentieth century, a girl had little or no say in the matter, as the parents arranged the marriage especially when the girl reached the adolescent period of life. The future husband would pay to the family, the first installment of the dowry. Many boys in several families, were trained with dowries received from their sisters' husbands.³

Education for women was not considered by most parents before the arrival of the missionaries. It is the strong belief of most Nigerian parents even today, that educated sons help the economic stability of their families more so than girls. But the late Bishop James Aggrey commented differently on this idea when he said:

Educate a man and you educate an individual; educate a woman and you educate a family.⁴

The Head of State, Lt. General Obasanjo confirmed this statement when he spoke at the women's college, Kano, in Nigeria, on how the level of discipline in the Nigerian society has been traced to apathy toward women's education. According to him, when you educate a woman, "You educate a nation."⁵

Since most of the Nigerian men practiced polygamy, a man could marry as many wives as possible, provided he could

³Archives of the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus, Campaign for Christ, unpublished manuscript found at Dalton Center, New York, dated 1933-1953, p. 38.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Nigerian Daily Times, 1978, p. 2.

afford to pay dowries to their parents. A girl who was married in the early days lived in a semi-secluded area with the husband's senior wife for the first few years, receiving training from the senior wife on native housekeeping, farm work, and simple native crafts. This period was regarded as the probationary period in which the girl is put to a serious test for fitness to enter the new family life and also to protect her from immoral influences.

One of the aspects of the economic situation which worked to the disadvantage of women's education was that many parents gave their daughters for marriage at an early age, as previously mentioned. The same young girls, prior to legal marriage, were given a "beautiful and expensive treatment" -- the gross and repugnant process of fattening (Mbokpo),⁶ as it was known by all Cross Riverians. This time, the girl was kept in a room and would be overfed for months while her skin was taken care of by a specialist. Then after three months, the girl would be presented to her husband after the required ceremony. Generally, the wives were treated kindly. They possessed certain independent rights; for example, the profits accruing from any trading or farming went into their pockets. The dowry system remains so that the marriage may be legal according to Native Law and custom before the church's blessing is

⁶D. Amaury Talbot, The Ibibio of Southern Nigeria: Women's Mysteries of a Primitive People (London: Frank Cass and Co., Ltd., 1968), p. 86.

given.⁷

To provide a solution to this great economic problem, the sisters endeavored to give the girls a special preparation for Catholic marriage, and also, for the girls not already affianced, a means of earning an independent livelihood was also provided by the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus. Women were kept in the parish quarters for three months to learn catechism, cookery, needle work, child care, and home economics before the church marriage.

During the period of their operation, the Society had the problem of economically coping with rising prices and economic discrimination. In spite of such economic odds, the congregation of the Holy Child Jesus was determined to fund the expenses of its missionaries at Calabar and Ogoja areas. At Calabar, the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus had to contend with the soaring prices of goods and services. The local traders took undue advantage of them because they were "white people." Hence, the people inflated the prices of their commodities because of a lack of communication. For example, a bunch of bananas which would cost an average native of Calabar one penny at Henshaw Town, Calabar Town, Duke Town or Old Town was sold for six pence to the sisters.⁸ The traders were able to make five hundred percent profit on each good sold to Mbakara (i.e. white

⁷Sr. Mary Fedelis, Interview, Holy Child Infirmary, Rosemont, Pennsylvania, February, 1979.

⁸Archives of the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus, Mission, unpublished manuscript, found at Dalton Center, New York, dated 1933-1953, p. 40.

people), as the sisters were called at Calabar. According to Sister Mary Fedelis in an interview, native traders felt that the white men came to cheat them by taking relations to slavery, so they tried to exploit and take undue advantage of whites in retaliation.⁹

When the practice of inflating costs on food and other things was discovered, the sisters of the Holy Child Jesus had to beat the profiteering tendency of the local traders of Calabar. They had to hire indigenous domestic servants to help them in shopping and thereby, cut down the cost of living. Later on the sisters interacted with the people, spoke their language and understood their habits and customs.

As Sister Mary Damien mentioned in an interview, in order to economize their budget, the sisters made each town or village chief responsible for providing land and school buildings.¹⁰ The sisters then were responsible only for equipping the schools in terms of books, teaching aids and tutorial staff. But today, many of these schools, abandoned by the sisters of the Holy Child Jesus, are falling down, un-used by the natives.

It was the general impression of some Nigerian people that Catholic educational patterns were not sacred in nature and therefore were unsuitable to African culture.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Sr. Mary Damien, Interview with the ten selected Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus, Sharon House, Rosemont, Pennsylvania, February 12, 1979.

Ayandele in his book, Holy Johnson quoted Rev. Johnson, one of the highly trained Nigerian educators of 1900 as saying:

This mode of education (secular), however it may commend itself to some people in Europe, is entirely un-African, and foreign to the traditions of a people with whom religion is everything, and whose teaching and training of their children are completely interlined with it, and it cannot command itself to thoughtful Negroes who are anxious to see preserved inviolate the religious instincts of the people, as they know this purely secular education cannot fail to produce those hybrids of humanity. Atheists, Infidels, and Indifferents which Africa has not yet given birth to.¹¹

Late in the forties, things began to change. Many parents were able to see the usefulness of Catholic schools, especially the new convent school system opened by the Holy Child Sisters. Thousands of parents were able to see the values of these cottage type of housing for girls. With the new interest in their schools, the sister's economic condition improved and this gave rise to the development of farming, technical work, sewing and other economic projects. These technical works took place in the late fifties to replace some of the schools closed down by the sisters because of the new universal education system which started at that time.

Catholic missionaries also improved the economic situation of the Cross River State in a way by encouraging cultivation and agriculture of the leppers in Ogoja Province

¹¹E. A. Ayandele, Holy Johnson; Pioneer of African Nationalism 1836-1917 (London: Frank Cass & Co., Ltd., 1970).

while receiving medical treatment. According to mission notes on the Holy Child Secondary School, Mount Carmel, Ogoja, leppers were taught how to use tractors and other machines for farming. The leppers were surprised at the progress of their farms during the dry season. This was because of the irrigation systems which were built. With this new irrigation, there was an increase of 50 percent in the quality of rice for their yearly consumption.¹²

They had 300 acres of experimental farm, and according to the sisters' notes, 300 leppers worked on the farm, 160 men and 140 women. This system helped the sisters economically and about 250 pounds of rice was sold weekly.¹³ Generally speaking, the Holy Child Sisters continued the work of Mary Slessor who established the first lepper colony at Itu in the mainland section of the Cross River State. Edwin and Irene Weaver, in their book, The Uyo Story, commented as follows:

Mary Slessor (1848-1915), heroic, esteemed, and beloved Scottish missionary, gave her life to the people of the Calabar region and beyond. Her body lies in a cemetery in Calabar, on a bluff overlooking the Cross River.¹⁴

Mary Slessor was a great missionary of her time in

¹²Archives of the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus, "The Leppers of Old Ogoja Province, 1940", Mission's Notebook VII, on the Holy Child Secondary School, Mount Carmel, Ogoja, unpublished manuscript found at Dalton Center, New York, p. 6.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Edwin Weaver and Irene Weaver, The Uyo Story (U.S.A.: Division of Christian Education, National Council of Churches of Christ, 1952), p. 26.

the Cross River State. In the history of the Cross River State of Nigeria, Mary Slessor, a Scottish woman, played a major role in the lives of babies, men and women of that state. Another group of women that helped women in the Cross River State was the Sisters of the Holy Child Society.

Political Climate

To summarize the main political problem that caused the Nigerian civil war, it must be noted that before Nigerian Independence in October, 1960, Nigeria had been a British Colony. The original nineteenth century British Colonists had been eager to include a wealth of natural resources within the colony's boundaries. But, as an American observer puts it, the British government knew little of African's cultural differences and fierce tribal loyalties. The result was that the boundaries cut many tribes in two and the same boundaries also grouped many unfriendly tribes together.¹⁵

After the Nigerian Independence in 1960, the country was divided into four regions and each region tended to be dominated by one majority tribe: the north by the Moslem Hausas, the West by the Yorubas, the Mid-West by the Edo's and the East by the Ibos. More than 200 small tribes with different languages were spread throughout the four regions.¹⁶

¹⁵Roy Hemming, "The Nigerian Civil War," American Observer Vol. 49, No. 12 (1971), pp. 3-10.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 15.

In the East, the Ibo tribes were crowded so they moved to settle in other regions where they tended to dominate the people.

The other tribes, particularly the Hausas in the North, resented the Ibo dominance and pride so this brought about tribal conflict in which many other Nigerian tribes participated in attacking the Ibos or the Biafrans during their threats of secession.¹⁷ But the Holy Child nuns were fighting the war of starvation in the Biafra section, when the Nigerian troops cut Biafra off from its coast on the Bay of Biafra in 1968. The problem of feeding in the land locked area was critical. Some of the sisters got involved with the relief supplies as Gowon and Ojukwu could not agree on methods of getting the supplies into Nigeria.

As has been mentioned before, a great mistrust was generated regarding the role of the Catholic Church, particularly the Holy Child sisters who got themselves involved with "Caritas," a charitable organization which supplied food, medications, and clothing to the then Biafrans. Since the federal government was determined to crush the Biafran regime at all costs, regardless of their propaganda of Christians versus Moslems, any persons, organizations or countries who supported Biafra in any way, were declared by the federal government as her enemies. The Holy Child Sisters became a victim of the federal government at this junc-

¹⁷Ibid.

ture. Priests and several members of the Catholic Church were often embrassed by the federal regime. Some of the Holy Child Sisters suffered detention and interrogation regarding the roles they played during the war. Many of them were warned not to enter Nigeria again.

Many of the sisters of the Holy Child Jesus Society were deported. The Holy Child sisters were not the only victims of the conflict; many indigenous members of the Catholic Church lost their jobs, lives, and status in the communities.¹⁸ Many Nigerians today feel that some of the sisters failed to recognize the politics of the Nigerian government. Thus, in an atmosphere charged with mounting hatred seriously directed against the sisters of the Holy Child Jesus, they found that the political climate was no longer conducive to their peaceful existence and that their continued presence would mitigate against the achievement of their set goals. For this reason the sisters withdrew slightly while still maintaining a skeleton body of their sisters in two of their schools in the state and in other parts of Nigeria and Ghana.¹⁹

John Roe stressed the importance of knowing political powers and remarked that the basic decisions regarding the goals and values accepted by a society are made in the political domain and should be clearly

¹⁸Mary J. Edet, Interview, at the Catholic University Hotel, Washington, D.C., 1980.

¹⁹Ibid.

recognized because it has many implications for everyone.²⁰

Communication

Before the arrival of the sisters of the Holy Child Jesus at Calabar in 1930, the United Presbyterian Church which arrived in Calabar in 1846, had founded in 1895, the Hope Waddell Training Institution. (See details in Chapter II.) This institution was a vocational school for the training of teachers, pastors, clerks and for the provision of some industrial education. A few girls attended Hope Waddell just to learn how to read and interpret the Bible.

It would have been thought that after thirty-five years since the establishment of Hope Waddell Institute, an appreciable number of the populace at Calabar should be able to speak English fluently and communicate freely with anyone who spoke to them in English. Nevertheless, those who learned English or came in close contact with the European traders were the noble children who tried to speak English. But most of the girls who were restricted from going to school and were kept at home under the watchful eyes of their parents, were unable to communicate freely with the Europeans. Only the men, who had basic education, had such free contacts with them at that time.

As the girls at Calabar had difficulties in speaking the English language, it was also difficult for the girls at Anua and Ifuho who were stark illiterates and were given no

²⁰John L. Roe, et al., The Economics and Financing of Education: A Systems Approach (New Jersey: Englewood Cliffs, 1975), p. 55.

opportunities to trade with the whites and thus learn some words of English. Whatever way one looks at it, one would find that the sisters of the Holy Child Society had a big problem of communicating with the girls and the local people during the early stages of their operation. At this time, the girls were homekeepers for their mothers, baby-sitters for their junior brothers and sisters, farmers for their parents, and if married, slaves to the husbands for life.

It was difficult for these pioneer agents of women's education in the Cross River State to be able to send their messages across to the girls, especially as they themselves did not know a word of "Efik language" or any of the dialects used by the Ibibios, the Annangs, the Ogojas or the Etung-speaking people of Ikom. The sisters had to start learning the language in order to give instructions in schools to the girls.

According to Sister Laurentia Dalton in an interview at Rosemont, Pennsylvania in the United States, the only medium of communication was for the most part, the use of hand signals or bells.²¹ Later on, the use of interpreters helped the sisters very much in their work. In fact, praises are for the first four Handmaid Sisters because they played a major role in this area. Most of them were interpreters and the Holy Child Sisters allowed them to run many of the early convent schools as Head Mistresses.

The sisters also had the problem of communicating

²¹Sr. Mary Laurentia Dalton, Interview, Sharon House, Rosemont, Pennsylvania, February 13, 1979.

quickly with their Mother House, parents and relations overseas because letters were generally carried by sea. Although the first postal services were established in Lagos in 1951, only twenty-nine post offices were built in the country.²²

By 1964, after sixty-one years, the number of postal agencies increased to about 1,667 post offices and the postal items handled was up to 150,827,014.²³ Before this time, few roads were built in a road transportation system. Consequently, the means of communication was a major problem for the sisters. Between 1930 and 1967, the telephone system in Nigeria was not improved upon either. The only medium that helped the sisters was the daily newspapers, weekly papers and periodicals.

One of the earliest newspapers was Lagos Weekly Record published first by the late John Jackson and later by his son, Horatio Jackson (1880-1930). Jackson is one of the greatest pioneers in the history of Nigerian journalism.²⁴ The sisters were able to read papers like the Lagos Daily News established by Herbert Maculary (from 1922 to 1960) which he used in attacking the colonial government. Herbert Maculary was a Nationalist who formed the Nigerian National

²²Nigerian Handbook, 1978-79, (Lagos, Nigeria: Federal Ministry of Information, 1979), p. 177.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Nigerian Year Book (Lagos, Nigeria: Federal Ministry of Information, 1971): p. 270.

Democratic Party in Nigeria in 1922.²⁵ Another useful paper of the early twenties was the Daily Times established in 1925, but the original company was absorbed by overseas interests in 1948, before then it had maintained a neutral role in party politics while promoting the economic and social interests of Nigeria as a whole.²⁶

Periodicals like Africans Challenge, Drum, Federal Nigeria, Nigerian trade journals, Spear, Fitila, Woman's World, and Insight were used by the sisters, according to Sister Mary Feddelis' notes to the researcher.

When the Holy Child sisters arrived in Nigeria in 1930 there was no railway connecting Calabar and there was no airport in Calabar. Hence, they arrived by boat after many days of travelling. Secondly, most of their work was done by using small boats because the roads were poorly built.²⁷ This made their communication with smaller stations very problematic.

Social Revolution

At the time that the Holy Child sisters arrived in Calabar, the natives had seen enough of the white man and European civilization to know that material prosperity and a high intellectual culture were not necessarily bound up with the beliefs and practices of Christianity. So local authorities made life difficult for the sisters during the

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Ibid., p. 270-271.

²⁷Sr. Mary Fedelis, Mission Notes to the author, 1979, p. 7.

early 1930's when animals, trees and idols were worshipped as gods in many parts of the states.

In some areas the primitive life style lingered for a long time. In places like Calabar, Port Harcourt, and Lagos where people had been associating with the white men, many were wholly preoccupied in a feverish attempt to ape and to rival the sophisticated materialism of the foreigners. This also had incalculable effects on the sisters' work in Calabar.

Another factor which negatively affected the sisters' work in the Cross River State on occasions were the "Ekpo" and the "Ekpe" social organizations. As the Pylon magazine neatly described "Ekpo" (Masquerade) and "Ekpe Ikpa Ukot" (Leopard), they are organizations which helped men acquire and maintain power in the society.²⁸ One of the principal aims of these native organizations was to dominate women and young girls' movement in the society. As such, during Ekpo season in particular, few girls could attend school, and they did this only with their father's escort. Ekpo is practiced mostly by the Ibibios and the Annang tribes of the state, but Ekpe is a general organization in the Cross River State and is commonly played by the Efiks or the Calabarians.

In fact, Western civilization brought both good and bad. It brought economic and material comfort and spiritual values. Unfortunately, too often people would take the

²⁸The Pylon, (Rome: April, 1936): pp. 9-10.

material goods and ignore the values. Thus, the sisters worked hard to install values; however, these were basically Western, not traditional African values.

As a result, the impact of the West was that it destroyed the traditional African values and way of life and replaced this with very different values or no values at all. With independence there was a reaction against those who inculcated Western values, such as the sisters, since they were perceived as having helped to destroy traditional Nigerian society. On one hand, this was an unjust accusation since the sisters had tried to minimize the negative effects of Western culture by emphasizing African value system. But one may be critical of the sisters' work in that they did not always try to fully incorporate African values, history, culture, traditions and language into their curriculum. As such, one has reason to believe that this Western educational system was not a complete educational system for the African people, even though the people were taught to read and write. The author, being very critical of this issue, has suggested in her article, "The Situation in Africa," that the new educational policies in Nigeria should emphasize courses in customs, culture, tradition, language, philosophy, and the history of the Nigerian people so that the present system of education may shift from being Western to being Nigerian in nature.²⁹

²⁹Anna Ekam, "The Situation in Africa," in Human Development Through Social Change, Proceedings of St. Francis Xavier University's International Symposium Commemorating the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Antigonish Movement, 1928-1978 (Antigonish, Nova Scotia, Canada, 1978), p. 56.

Although the missionaries brought Western culture into the Cross River State, their traditions and culture are still there today. Many of the Nigerian traditions and cultural practices were destroyed by the new imported culture right from the colonial period up to the Missionary Era. But today, the Cross River State is one of the best cultural centers in Nigeria.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has investigated for the first time, the thirty-seven year history of the Holy Child Sisters' educational efforts in the Cross River State, Nigeria, the center of their operations in that country. Although the sisters encountered major social prejudice against women, anti-colonial political sentiment directed against missionary efforts, economic hardship, and the communication problems explained in Chapter IV, still they were able to achieve their goals before their departure in 1967. In Chapter III it was noted that the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus Society's intention was to train and influence young girls and women to become skilled and self-sufficient. Arriving in the Cross River State of Nigeria, Mother Connelly's Society began to operationalize these goals with considerable success. To prove their success, here are some major findings of the study:

- o Between 1930 and 1967, these Western sisters were able to establish seventy-five elementary schools, three teacher training colleges, four secondary institutions, four technical centers, and five preliminary training colleges for young girls and women.

o Their major achievement was the training of native sisters known as the "Handmaid Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus," who took over their work in the Cross River State of Nigeria till today. More about the sisters can be seen in Chapter III. But in short, the work of the Holy Child Society continues today with the Handmaid Sisters who opened and managed girls' schools in the Cross River State of Nigeria.

o The Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus laid the ground work not only for a native society of sisters, but for laywomen as well.

Looking at the aftermath of the sisters' work, one can see that thousands of women were trained by this congregation of Western sisters over those thirty-seven years. As a result, today, the entire picture of women's education in the Cross River State of Nigeria has changed radically. Further, many of these women, having now been educated, are entering into the political, social, and economic sphere of Nigerian society. According to Miss Mary Edet in an interview with the author, women are playing an increasing role in the labor force.¹ And the majority of these women were convent educated. Many of the Holy Child students are graduates and are holding a few major positions in the government not only on the state level but in Nigeria as a whole. According to Miss Mary James Edet in an interview in

¹Mary J. Edet, Interview at the Ministry of Education, Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria, January 1980.

Washington, D.C. many of the women who are holding responsible positions in the Cross River State today, were trained by the Holy Child Sisters (see Table III below).

Table III

A SAMPLE OF WOMEN TRAINED BY THE HOLY CHILD SISTERS
AND HOLDING RESPONSIBLE POSITIONS IN THE
CROSS RIVER STATE OF NIGERIA

Names	Positions
Miss Mary James Edet	Assistant Chief Education Officer, Counseling Division, Ministry of Education, Calabar.
Miss Mary Effiom	Assistant Chief Education Officer, Inspectorate Division, Ministry of Education, Calabar.
Miss Elizabeth N. Bassey	Assistant Chief Education Officer in charge of Home Economics, Ministry of Education, Calabar.
Miss Louisa George	Advisor, Home Economics, Ministry of Education, Calabar
Miss Teresa Henshaw	Chief, Education Officer, Education Services, Ministry of Education, Calabar.
Mrs. Louisa Inyang	Principal, Holy Child Secondary School, Calabar.
Mrs. Patricia Nyambi	Assistant Chief Education Officer in charge of Examinations and Registration Section, Ministry of Education, Calabar.

Names	Positions
Ms. Mfon Nsasak	Chief Nursing Officer, Minsitry of Health, Calabar.
Mrs. Udo Inyang	Assistant Chief Nursing Officer, Ministry of Health, Calabar
Mrs. Lucy Etim	Social Welfare Officer, Calabar.
Mrs. Helen J. Essuene	Principal Assistant Secretary, Divisional Office, Eket, Cross River State.
Mrs. Mary Obot	Deputy Permanent Secretary, Divisional Office, Eket, Cross River State.
Mrs. Margaret Uya	Deputy Registrar, University of Calabar.
Dr. Elizabeth Henshaw	Assistant Professor, University of Benin.
Mrs. Julian Offorbache	Wife of Deputy Governor, Cross River State.
Mrs. Josephine Ogar	Lecturer, Teacher Training College, Ikot Ansa, Calabar.
Mrs. Helen B. Abua	Accountant, Health Service Management Board, Calabar.
Miss Mary Colette Eyo	Barrister - Shell B.P., Lagos.
Mrs. Winifred Eyo	Bylingual Secretary, Calabar.
Mrs. Iyang Akpa Mbang	Director, Nigerian Television Co., Calabar
Miss Geraldine Oku	Lawyer
Dr. Maria William	Medical Officer, Lagos.

Names	Positions
Mrs. Regina Ugbize	Accountant
Mrs. Martha Ekpo	Health Sister, Ministry of Health, Calabar.
Mrs. Ekandem Suka	Accountant
Mrs. Grace Edet	Physical Education Lecturer, University of Calabar.
Dr. Lucy Eboh	Nutrition and Food Science.
Mrs. Teresa Akan	Lawyer
Mrs. Louisa Ekpo	Principal Lecturer, Home Economics, College of Education, Uyo, Cross River State.
Mrs. Georgina Garrick	Principal, Federal Government Girls' School, Lagos.
Mrs. Agnes Effiom	Principal Lecturer, Queen's College, Lagos, Nigeria.
Mrs. Agnes Ekong	Matron, Saint Margaret's Hospital, Calabar.
Mrs. Josephine Ogolo	Principal, Girls' Secondary School, Utu Ikpe, Ikot Ekpene, Cross River State.
Sister Maria Theresa (B.A.)	Mother Superior, Handmaid Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus, Nigeria.
Sister Teresa Abang (Ph.D.)	Special Education Assistant Professor, University of Jos, Nigeria. ²

²Compiled by the author with the assistance of Miss Mary J. Edet.

The findings of this study are exploratory in nature, providing the foundations for further research, they have shed scholarly light for the first time on the Holy Child Sisters' educational activities in Nigeria, and in turn, this had added to the scanty body of knowledge on the role of women in Nigerian education.

Secondly, Ifuho, Ikot Ekpene, the twinnery opened in the early days by the Holy Child Society, is still carrying on today. The Handmaid Sisters, during the civil war, took an interest in caring for twins, motherless, and displaced families. Sister Mary Stephen, one of the sisters of the Handmaid Society, has brought up hundreds of children in their orphanage to a professional or vocational stage, since she took over the office. Today, His Eminence, the Bishop of Ikot Ekpene has promoted this work by establishing quarters and a pre-school center for the children.

Ifuho Holy Child Teacher Training elementary and higher elementary colleges and other colleges in Ogoja Province have produced over five thousand trained women for the Nigerian labor force, especially in the fields of education, nursing, trade and industries.³ Many women trained in those days by the Holy Child Sisters in Ogoja and Calabar jurisdictions are the best homemakers in the state today.⁴ Most of their children are now parents of the new generation

³Miss Mary James Edet, Interview, December, 1980.

⁴Miss Mary James Edet, Letter to the author from the Ministry of Education, Calabar, dated April 20, 1979, p. 2.

and are transmitting the training from one generation to the other.

Finally, the marriage and the technical institutions opened by the Holy Child Sisters helped some women in the Cross River State to become good seamstresses and good housewives. The domestic science subject taught has helped women to become the best cooks in Nigeria. The flexible curriculum drawn and used by the Holy Child Sisters resulted in their work being more successful than other missionaries. This is explained in Chapter III.

As mentioned at the beginning of this Chapter, the sisters' first objective was to prepare girls and young women to be self-sufficient and to give moral and religious instructions to them. Religion was emphasized in their training colleges. The teachers and administrators of the schools were, from its very origin, the Holy Child Sisters and the lay women teachers trained by the Holy Child Society. These teachers were trained to put emphasis on religion also, which was a required subject in their curriculum in both primary schools and colleges. Moral education, which is almost a dead subject in the schools today, became a tool of character formation in the sisters' private institutions, so the goals of religious education were achieved. Moral training and discipline were very helpful in the training of girls in the Cross River State. Hence, sex in the schools was not a problem for the sisters as it is today in many of the schools not only in the Cross

River State, but also in Nigeria as a whole. As declared by Ngozi E. Iheanacho in her article, "Accept My Sympathy," she said:

Formerly, reputation was the aim of every boss, teacher, pastor, principal, manager, father, or any class of authority. Today, life has changed. The elders no more give advice; rather they misbehave or induce the younger ones to evil. Whom are you calling on now to come to your rescue? The boss in the office who impregnates his confidential secretary? Or the principal who is friendly with almost all of his female students?⁵

From the viewpoint of both general morality and male attitudes towards women as little more than sex objects, it seems to this author that a return to the type of moral education given by the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus is definitely needed. Proper moral formation and respect for the dignity and integrity of the individual, be they male or female, goes hand-in-hand.

Accordingly, having presented the history of the Holy Child Sisters, this author is inspired to make some suggestions based on her reading of that history and her personal experiences with contemporary Nigerian society. These are solely moral, personal views, but the depriving of moral knowledge without application seems a total destruction of peoples' characters. Perhaps these suggestions (or recommendations) may be of use to those concerned with the moral breakdown of contemporary Nigerian education. Therefore, the following are offered for the

⁵Ngozi E. Iheanacho, "Response to 'Sexual Harrasment in School,'" The Nigerian Weekly Star, June 25, 1978, p. 4.

reader's consideration:

1. That in both public and Catholic education, parents should have a major and essential role to play in the education of their children. As indicated in Vatican II's Declaration on Christian education, parents are cited as the "first and foremost educators of their children," a role the Fathers considers to be so decisive that scarcely anything can compensate for their failure in it.⁶ The sisters were able to recognize the usefulness of P.T.A. meetings. This type of communication and interaction with the people in the community in which they worked, helped to promote peace, unity, and morality in the school setting. It would therefore, be advisable if the parents could be regarded as the first teachers in the school system of the state and also be allowed to exercise their rights in terms of their children's education. They should be given a place in the school program to participate in the education of their children both at home and in school. After all, it is true that parents are the first teachers. Moral instruction therefore, should be given to the children by the school, the church, and the family.

In the article by A. J. Udo-Ema, "The ABC's of School Management," he advised that communities should be enlightened enough to appreciate the value of parent/teacher meetings when he suggested that:

Parent/teacher meetings, like staff meetings, should be a regular feature of the school management. It

⁶Mark J. Hurley (ed.) The Declaration on Christian Education of the Vatican Council II (New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1966), pp. 154-157.

should provide a forum where parents express their views on matters affecting their children, and where the head-teacher and his assistant put the problems of the school and those of the pupils before the parents.⁷

2. It is suggested that private Christian education and religious instruction in public school should be re-introduced, especially for those girls and women whose parents encourage moral instruction for character formation, that they might in turn be able to morally train their children as well. John Courtney Murray, S.J. talked about the usefulness of Christian education when he said:

The failures of Christian education are normally multitudinous, sometimes scandalous, and occasionally spectacular. Even at its best a school is only a school, one milieu of influence among others, able to do only what a school can do. What matters in every age is the idea that inspires its efforts, and the integrity of these efforts.⁸

To preserve the Christian commitment and religious rights in the institution, the separation of the educational institutions from the religious community imposes a problem of immorality in the schools. An appropriate agreement, therefore, should be made between the parents, the church, and the government on how religion should be taught in schools. Because women provide the first training to the children in family. Private schools compete with the public school system at all times, so without private schools,

⁷A. J. Udo-Ema, "The ABC's of School Management," The Nigerian Chronicle, (Nigeria: August 12, 1977), p. 7.

⁸John Courtney Murray, S.J., The Christian Idea of Education (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), p. 162.

public schools have no competitors. Therefore, it is also suggested that the government allow the Holy Child Sisters to return and continue their efforts.

3. It is suggested that the Nigerian government, especially in the Cross River State, should give key positions to their women, because women are just as capable of making a useful contribution to the society as men. For instance, one of the prominent Nigerian women, Mrs. Margaret Ekpo, a Cross Riverian during the colonial era, was in the forefront of appeals to the British government for Nigerian Independence.⁹

It has been shown that many women try as hard as men in the fields of education, politics, and sports; yet, few Nigerian women have the opportunity to hold top political positions. It is the author's belief that the education of women had been ignored and neglected in the Cross River State until the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus came and determined to improve upon women's education in the state.

According to the Honorable Minister of State, Federal Minister of Internal Affairs, Chief (Mrs.) J. A. Akinrinade on her meeting with Jos women:

We represent 51% of the voters in Nigeria, but as was pointed out to His Excellency, President Alhaji Shehu Shagari, the women of Nigeria have, hitherto, been more than poorly represented in any of the branches of government's higher positions, both at

⁹Eastern House of Assembly, Eastern Region, Sessional Paper No. 2 of 1954, Debate on Independence (Enugu, Nigeria: The Government Printer, 1954).

state and federal levels. If our government is the government of the Nigerian people, for the Nigerian people, and by the Nigerian people, it is then evident that each and every section of our society must be adequately represented in the government, especially where there are more than enough members of that section competent enough to handle the responsibilities concurrent with such representation.¹⁰

Women are not allowed to display their talents effectively because of men's pride and insecurity when comparing themselves with women. Women need achievement, encouragement and fulfillment as a part of their lives; because they teach and provide moral guidance to men within the family and therefore, widen the culture. Women, therefore, should be given the opportunity to develop themselves through education and should be allowed to have prominent positions in the country. These should not depend on class stereotypes based on sex or tribe but upon individual needs, desires, and potentials for contributions.

4. It is also suggested that admission criteria into the universities be changed to provide equitable opportunities for both men and women to study in higher institutions. Women want to develop in terms of knowledge as men do. Just as Benjamin Rush advocated the education of women in the eighteenth century, Freud suggested the idea of women's equality in higher education. He did so through asking his famous question, "What do women want?"¹¹ Many

¹⁰Chief (Mrs.) J. A. Akinrinade, Federal Minister of Internal Affairs, Speech to the National Council of Women's 1980 Session (Jos, Nigeria: The Government Printer, 1980).

¹¹E. Jones, The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud, Year of Maturity, 1901-1919, Vol II. (New York; Basic Books, 1955), p. 48.

enlightened men like Freud are still asking the same question today. But one wonders whether it is so hard to understand that women want an end to discrimination. So women should be given admission to universities so as to develop their inborn faculties and be able to fit in the society in which they live.

Referring back to the national objectives of the white paper entitled "New Nigerian Policy on Education," the five national objectives embodied in the second national development plan document are considered to be put into practice:

- a. A united, strong and self-reliant nation
- b. A great and dynamic economy
- c. A just and equalitarian society
- d. A land of bright and full opportunity for all citizens
- e. A free and democratic society.¹²

If our state and the entire country still abide by the above objectives, then the status of women should be improved upon by the authorities of this democratic society. We hope the present government will provide some guidelines for the improvement of women's situation in the society.

According to the Daily Times of Friday, September 1, 1978, Aina Lewis enumerated the fundamental rights in her article "The Nigerian Women and the Constitution II," as follows:

¹²Federal Nigeria, "New Nigerian Policy on Education" National Objectives, Vol. IV, No. 1., July, August, September, 1977, p. 10.

- a. Right to life
- b. Right to dignity of the human person
- c. Right to personal liberty
- d. Right to fair hearing
- e. Right to private and family life
- f. Right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion
- g. Right to freedom of expression and press
- h. Right to peaceful assembly and association
- i. Right to freedom of movement
- j. Right to freedom from discrimination
- k. Right to property.¹³

If the above human rights are equally applicable to women as well as men, all women therefore, should be allowed to achieve higher qualifications so as to be able to maintain their families. For instance, if one happens to become a widow with many children, certificates are not transferable. Instead, they become decorative papers when the owners pass away. In fact, certificates become absolutely useless to the family after the death of the bread-winner. So why thwart women's progress in the field of learning? Whereas no one knows tomorrow. Equality in education does not apply to women's liberation but is an asset to the entire family and to the country as a whole. Early education of women in the southeastern state, known today as the Cross River State, has enabled most women in the society become

¹³Aina Lewis, "The Nigerian Women and the Constitution II," The Nigerian Daily Times, September 1, 1978, p. 12.

independent socially, economically, and physically. Therefore, sexual discrimination at work and sexual embrassment should be avoided. Many women should be encouraged to further their education regardless of their age, sex, tribe and religion.

According to United Nations research on "The Role of Women in Nigeria," a sample survey showed that most women were economically independent from their husbands,¹⁴ especially in southern Nigeria, where this research focused. This is true because as mentioned before, women received education in the south earlier than women in the north, and additionally, had the "Right to Life." However, most of these women who are highly educated, are not allowed to exercise their skills and abilities in higher positions of many state offices.

5. That suitable and flexible curriculums be established for the development of women's morality, etiquette, prudence, and home economics. This training should be provided in separate, private institutions, as done prior to the departure of the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus.

6. Finally, more research should be done on the education of women in other states of Nigeria so as to be able to produce a unique history of women's education for the entire country.

Lastly, it is hoped that this paper will stand as a

¹⁴United Nations, "The Role of Women in New Nigeria," (New York, United Nations Library, File No. E/CN/14/SW/INF/16), pp. 1-2.

memorial document to Mother Cornelia Connelly, the Mother Foundress of the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus. She was the American woman who deemed it necessary to develop women's faculties so as to enable them to fit into the society in which they lived. In the Cross River State of Nigeria, her Society achieved this goal through the successful management of their institutions. As a result, many women in Nigeria and throughout the world have benefited and are in her debt.

APPENDIX I.

- Exhibit A. Letter from the Author to Mother
Superior of SHCJ, U. S. Province
- Exhibit B. Data Request Paper
- Exhibit C. Questionnaire Survey
- Exhibit D. Worksheet for Interviews

EXHIBIT A

2400 Queen's Chapel Rd.
#706
Hyattsville, MD 20782
(301) 699-1340
March 6, 1980

Rev. Mother Superior
Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus
Provincial Staff House
443, Shadeland Avenue
Drexel Hill, PA 19026

Dear Rev. Mother Superior:

My name is Anna George Ekam (Mrs.), an ex-student of the Holy Child College Ifuho, Ikot Ekpene in Cross River State of Nigeria. I have been studying at the Catholic University of America for the past seven years and I am now doing my Ph.D. in Foundations of Education.

I am particularly interested in the contributions of the Holy Child Sisters to women's education in Cross River State of Nigeria.

I am therefore, seeking your permission to use your archives, interview your sisters and to use the sisters' old names in this study. In fact, the purpose of this research is to keep on record the work of your Society on women's education in that part of the world from 1930 to 1967.

Could you please send me a written permission so as for me to carry on with the study.

Thank you for your co-operation. May God bless you all.

Sincerely yours,


Anna G. Ekam (Mrs.)

EXHIBIT B

Catholic University of America
Washington, D.C. 20064
February 23, 1979

Dear Sister:

REQUEST FOR RESEARCH MATERIALS ON
THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF S.H.C.J. ON
WOMEN'S EDUCATION IN THE CROSS
RIVER STATE OF NIGERIA, 1930-1967

With due respect, I wish to request for your cooperation in furnishing me with all available materials relating to the above mentioned topic.

I am a Nigerian, from Ikot Ekpene in the Cross River State, and currently a Doctorial Candidate at the Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C.

I was admitted to study at this University since 1973 where I have been able to obtain my B.A. in History and M.A. in Educational Administration. At the moment, I am pursuing my Ph.D. programme on History of Education. I have chosen the above as my topic for my Dissertation which was accepted by my committee. My interest in choosing the topic stems from the fact that I am a product of the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus who had worked so hard in the development of women's education in the Cross River State of Nigeria. It is my intention to place on record the history of your contributions. Therefore, whatever could be done to help me in this will be highly appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

Agkam
Anna G. Ekam (Mrs.)

EXHIBIT C

THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE HOLY CHILD SISTERS TO WOMEN'S
EDUCATION IN THE CROSS RIVER STATE OF NIGERIA
FROM 1930 TO 1967

Questionnaire for Dissertation by Anna G. Ekam,
Catholic University of America
Washington, D.C. 20064

A. INTRODUCTORY DATA

1. Name _____
2. Name and Address of Institution Served _____

3. Date of Foundation _____
4. Number of Years Served in the Cross River State of
Nigeria _____
5. Position Held _____

B. BACKGROUND

1. Give Brief History of your Society, your Objective
and Philosophy _____

2. Date of the Sisters of the Holy Child Society's
first arrival at Calabar _____
3. Why did you choose Calabar the Capital of the
Cross River State of Nigeria as a Center for your
educational development in Africa? _____

4. What motivated the Holy Child Society to come out to Africa? _____

5. What were your specific Goals during your stages of educational development in that State? _____

C. ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION

1. Governing Board: Official Title _____

2. Number of Members _____ Term _____

3. Manner of Selection _____

4. Composition: _____ Priests _____ Laymen _____

Sisters _____ Laywomen _____ Students _____

Teachers _____

5. Were there any situations of actual contact between the students and the Board? ____Yes ____No

6. What was the extent to which the Board determined the educational policy of your Institution? _____

7. What were the actual Roles of the Board? _____

8. Did you have Parent/Teachers Associations in your Schools? ____Yes ____No

9. What were the Functions of PTA? _____

10. What were the parts played by the Government in an effort to promote your work in the State? _____

11. What Role did the Church play? _____

12. Did the People play any major Role in the Training of the girls and women in the Cross River State?

D. FACULTY (WOMEN ONLY)

1. Full Time _____ Part Time _____

Total number of teachers served in the your
Schools and Colleges during your years of
service _____

Laywomen _____ Sisters _____

E. STUDENTS (WOMEN ONLY)

F. INSTITUTIONS. Number of institutions established by
your Society between 1930 and 1967 _____

G. FINANCES

Rank in figures 1, 2, 3, ... order. The following
sources of revenue.

_____ Tuition _____ Federal, State subsidy

<u> </u>	Endowment	<u> </u>	Contributed Services or assumed Local Contributions
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Foundation Grant

Private Philanthropy

H. CURRICULUM

1. Please indicate any curricular features of methods of Instruction that you feel distinguish your Institutions from others. Explain why your curriculum for women was admired by others in that State.

2. Was Religion a free subject in your curriculum?

 Yes No

- I. LIBRARY - Did you have libraries in all your
Institutions? Yes No

J. PHYSICAL PLANT

What were the physical plants of your Institution during your thirty-seven years of service in the Cross River State. Check these lists below.

	Elementary School	Secondary School	College
Auditorium			
Classrooms			
Library			
Theatre			
Dormitory			
Student Union			
Athletic Buildings			
Science Building			
Teacher Houses			
Chapel			
Toilet Rooms			

K. CONDITIONS

Please delineate the most important problems you encountered in revising the traditional procedure and the acceptance of the change? _____

What opposition, if any, was faced in implementing the new trend? _____

What were the advantages and disadvantages of your work in that State? State briefly. _____

L. PROGRESS AND FUTURE PROSPECT

1. What were the major Achievements during your educational development in the Cross River State for thirty-seven years? _____

2. What plans do you have for some of your Institutions closed down in the Cross River State of Nigeria?

3. Will you like to go back to Nigeria?

_____ Yes

_____ No

COMMENTS AND REMARKS: _____

EXHIBIT D

WORKSHEET FOR INTERVIEW

Address of Interview: Holy Child Convent, Sharon House 1341
Montgomery Ave., Rosemont, PA 19010

Topic: THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE HOLY CHILD SISTERS TO
WOMEN'S EDUCATION IN THE CROSS RIVER STATE OF NIGERIA FROM
1930 TO 1967

1. Comments, Recommendations, and Remarks regarding the
above topic.
2. Answer to Questionnaire attached.
3. a. _____ Yes, I shall participate in the interview at
the above address on February 12, 1979.
b. _____ No, I shall participate in the telephone
interview.

Please call me on _____ at _____
Month and Date Hour

My telephone number is _____
Area Code Number

Please chose one: I prefer the following type of
interview:

Written _____ Tape _____ Verbal _____

Group _____ Personal _____

Name and Title _____

Address _____

APPENDIX II.

Correspondence



EXHIBIT A

HOLY CHILD TRAINING COLLEGE, IFE, OYO,
P. M. B. 1104, IKOT EKPENE,
CROSS RIVER STATE-NIGERIA

Mrs. Anna G. Ekam
2400 Queen's Chapel Rd.
Hyattsville, MD 20782
U.S.A.

Dear Mrs. Ekam:

Greetings! Your letter came to hand about a month ago and immediately I contacted the sisters at the convent for material on the topic you sent. But up to the time of writing, I could not obtain a line from there.

But I did remember seeing some write-up before since I assumed office here, so, I set up to search every file and on the 12th of April, 1979, I found it. I had to wait till after Easter, to make copies so as to send you one.

Thank you very much for the part you played in getting Akon over to study in the States. The war brought us together, and I was only too happy to be of little help to her especially since she was willing to take the little I could offer her.

My love to Akon. I got her last letter and just before Easter, I was able to visit the mother.

With the hope that this material can still be of help to you.

Compliments of the season.

Yours sincerely,

A. O. Udo (Mrs.)
PRINCIPAL

AOU/AMO

EXHIBIT B

Telephone :
MAYFIELD 3055.
STD 003-55

CONVENT OF THE HOLY CHILD
MAYFIELD, SUSSEX TN20 6PH

1st March, 1979

My dear Anna,

I lived in Nigeria for 40 years and mainly in what is now the Cross River State so it was fortunate that you sent your letter here as I can give you first hand information. As I lived at Ifuho for 15 years and started the Training College, it is possible that you are one of my old pupils, but you did not give your maiden name.

As you probably know, once the students began to emerge from the Training College we were able to open numerous rural schools in the Cross River State. I did not refer to them in the enclosed as you asked for the growth of Higher Education.

I do hope that you will be very successful in your present studies.

I remain,

Yours affectionately in J.C.,

Sister Mary Henry Parker.

Sister Mary Henry Parker

Mission Co-ordinator European Province S.H.C.J.

SOCIETY OF THE HOLY CHILD JESUS
PROVINCIAL HOUSE
620 EDMONDS AVENUE
DREXEL HILL, PA. 19026
MADISON 6-1400

September 17, 1979

Anna G. Ekam
School of Education
Catholic University
Washington, DC 20064

Dear Anna:

I understand that you are working on your dissertation, Contribution of Holy Child Sisters to Women's Education in the Cross River State of Nigeria, 1930 to 1967.

At your request I am granting permission to research the Holy Child Sisters who were in Calabar, Nigeria from 1930 to 1967 and to use their religious names rather than their christian names. You may also use the Society Archives in your research.

I am happy to know of your work and am pleased to be able to assist you in this way.

Sincerely,

Sr. Elizabeth Fitzmaurice
SINC.

Sr. Elizabeth Fitzmaurice, SHCJ
Provincial Superior

EF:ab

Holy Child Secondary School
P. O. Box 70
Ikom, Cross River State.
Nigeria.
March 15, 1979.

Dear Mrs. Ekam,

I have received your letter of February 23, 1979 only a few days ago. I would be very glad to help you but I am a bit confused by the wording of the topic of your dissertation, especially by the word 'higher'. In American education circles, 'higher education' would mean post-secondary education and not primary or even secondary education. As you no doubt know, our early work in Calabar was entirely taken up with only primary schools until 1937 when we began the Teachers Training College at Ifuho. Later, we began Cornelia Connelly Secondary School at Uyo.

Most of my work in the northern part of the now Cross River State from 1942 to 1967 was with the primary schools. The Teacher Training College, Mt. Carmel, Ogoja was begun in 1955. This developed into a secondary school around 1960.

This secondary school here in Ikom did not begin until 1967 - was closed for a year during the war and reopened in 1969.

I wish you God's blessing on your work and pray that all will go well.

Sincerely yours,

Sister Mary Hu Bert
V.D.C.

Convent of the Holy Child Jesus

1341 Montgomery Avenue
Rosemont, Pennsylvania 19010

Jan. 8, 1981

+
Dearest Anna:

I write this note, hoping that you are still in Washington! How is your thesis getting on? I mentioned it yesterday to Fr. Longworth, one of our Irish Missionary Fathers who is living over here now carrying on their work. He suggested, that for some background information you read, or use for reference, the book one of their Fathers has just written on St. Magdalen Walker who was in Nigeria before us and here for some time. She adapted the Montessori System of education to the needs of the school at that time. Her ideas & work were highly

perused by the Inspectors of Ed. &
 those who would know what she
 was doing. We lived with her for
 a few years or so, & I agree with
 this idea. If you can get this book
 or borrow it (I have no copy my-
 self although I scanned one that
 was left here overnight) This might
 be of use to you -

I send all my good wishes for
 you & your family for the new Year,
 hoping that you, all of them are
 well & that your work is going
 ahead well.

Yours v. faithfully in X^{to}.

Sr. Mary Laurentia
 S.H.P.

I enclose the name & author of
 the book according to Sr. Tereusius.

"A Sister in Calabar" (Title)

- Sr. Margaret Walker

to ^{by} Colonel Cook author.

APPENDIX III.

Exhibit A. Archives' Addresses

EXHIBIT A

ARCHIVES' ADDRESSES

1. Archives of the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus,
Generalate casa Cornelia, via della Magliannella, 375
DO166, Rome, Italy.
2. Archives of the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus, Mayfield,
Sussex: England TN, 206PH.
3. Archives of the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus, Dalton
Center, 154 Waverly Place, New York, New York 10014.
4. Archives of the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus, Rosemont
College, Rosemont, PA 10910 (Pylon magazines from
1930 to 1969 are kept here.)
5. Archives of the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus, Calabar,
Cross River State, Nigeria.

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