

The God of the White Man and the Gods of Our Fathers": Missionary Education, Cultural Alienation, and the Making of Efik Christian Identity, 1846–1960

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Abstract—the arrival of Presbyterian missionaries in Calabar in 1846 initiated a century-long process of educational transformation that fundamentally reshaped Efik society. Mission schools taught literacy in English and Efik, introduced Western curricula, and trained a new elite that would go on to play significant roles in the colonial administration, the nationalist movement, and the postcolonial state. But mission education also had profound cultural and psychological effects that have received less scholarly attention. This paper examines mission education as a process of cultural alienation, arguing that the curriculum, pedagogy, and disciplinary practices of Presbyterian schools systematically delegitimised Efik religious traditions, social institutions, and ways of knowing while valorising Western Christianity and culture as universal and normative. Drawing on mission archives, school records, and oral histories with descendants of early mission school students, the paper traces the experiences of the first generations of Efik Christians who navigated between the world of the mission school and the world of their ancestors. It analyses the psychological and cultural costs of this navigation, including the internalisation of negative evaluations of indigenous culture, the estrangement from extended family and community, and the production of a Christian identity defined in opposition to traditional religion. The paper argues that the effects of mission education continue to shape Efik Christian identity in the present, contributing to the Pentecostal assault on indigenous religion while also generating counter-movements that seek to recover and revalue ancestral traditions. The study contributes to the literature on mission education, cultural imperialism, and the psychology of colonisation.

Keywords: mission education, cultural alienation; Efik identity; Presbyterian mission; Calabar, cultural imperialism.

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INTRODUCTION

The arrival of the Scottish Presbyterian mission at Old Calabar in 1846 marked the beginning of a profound transformation in Efik society. The mission, led by the Reverend Hope Masterton Waddell, responded to an invitation from King Eyo Honesty II of Creek Town, who had written to missionary societies requesting teachers to establish western-style schools among the Efik people (Taylor, 1996). The first contingent of missionaries arrived on 10 April 1846, and within months they had established the first Christian school in Calabar (Hope Waddell Training Institution, n.d.). Over the next century, the Presbyterian mission would build an extensive network of schools that would educate generations of Efik children and shape the course of Nigerian history.

The educational work of the Scottish Presbyterian mission in eastern Nigeria, spanning from 1846 to 1960, represents one of the most significant missionary educational enterprises in West Africa (Taylor, 1996). The mission established schools at all levels, from village primary schools to the prestigious Hope Waddell Training Institution, founded in 1895. These schools taught literacy in English and Efik, introduced Western curricula, and trained a new elite that would go on to play significant roles in the colonial administration, the nationalist movement, and the postcolonial state. The Presbyterian mission's educational work was distinguished by its emphasis on practical vocational training, its commitment to educating both males and females, and its encouragement of an independent Nigerian church (Taylor, 1996).

However, mission education was not merely a technical enterprise of literacy and skills transmission. It was also a project of cultural transformation that sought to replace indigenous worldviews with Christian ones. The missionaries who came to Calabar brought with them not only the Gospel but also a particular set of assumptions about the superiority of Western civilisation and the inferiority of African cultures. These assumptions were embedded in the curriculum, pedagogy, and disciplinary practices of the mission schools, and they had profound effects on the students who passed through them.

The effects of mission education on African societies have been the subject of extensive scholarly debate. Some scholars have emphasised the positive contributions of mission schools to African development, including the spread of literacy, the introduction of modern skills, and the training of nationalist leaders (Ajayi, 1965). Others have focused on the negative consequences, including the destruction of indigenous cultures, the creation of alienated elites, and the perpetuation of colonial mentalities (Rodney, 1972; Ngũgĩ, 1986). This paper seeks to contribute to this debate by examining the experiences of the first generations of Efik Christians who navigated between the world of the mission school and the world of their ancestors.

The problem addressed in this study is that the cultural and psychological effects of mission education on the Efik people have received insufficient scholarly attention. While the history of the Scottish Presbyterian mission in Calabar has been documented in works such as Taylor's (1996) *Mission to Educate*, these studies have tended to focus on institutional history, curriculum development, and the mission's relationship to the colonial state. The lived experiences of Efik students, the psychological costs of cultural alienation, and the long-term effects of mission education on Efik identity have been less thoroughly explored.

The research gap, therefore, lies in the limited attention to the subjective dimensions of mission education. How did Efik students experience the process of cultural transformation? What psychological and emotional costs did they pay for their education? How did they navigate the tensions between the world of the mission school and the world of their families and communities? And how have the effects of mission education continued to shape Efik Christian identity in the present? This study seeks to address these questions by examining mission education as a process of cultural alienation.

This study holds significant value across multiple dimensions. To the body of knowledge, it contributes a nuanced analysis of mission education as a process of cultural alienation, enriching the existing literature on missionary education, cultural imperialism, and the psychology of colonisation. For the Efik community, understanding the historical roots of contemporary tensions between Christianity and indigenous religion can inform efforts to recover and revalue ancestral traditions. For scholars of religion, the study offers insights into the formation of Christian identity in contexts of cultural conflict. For policymakers and educators, the study highlights the importance of culturally responsive education that respects and values indigenous knowledge systems.

The scope of this study is confined to the educational work of the Scottish Presbyterian mission among the Efik people of Calabar from 1846 to 1960. The study draws on mission archives, school records, and oral histories with descendants of early mission school students. This study is subject to some limitations. First, the reliance on archival sources means that the analysis is limited by the scope and quality of available records. Second, the oral histories collected for this study represent a limited sample of Efik experiences. Third, the study's focus on the Presbyterian mission means that findings may not be generalisable to other missionary societies or regions. Despite these limitations, the study provides a comprehensive analysis of the cultural and psychological effects of mission education on the Efik people.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definition of Key Concepts

Mission Education: Mission education refers to the formal schooling provided by Christian missionaries as part of their evangelistic work. In the context of colonial Africa, mission education was the primary form of Western education available to Africans. It typically included literacy instruction, religious education, and practical vocational training (Taylor, 1996).

Cultural Alienation: Cultural alienation refers to the process by which individuals or groups become estranged from their own culture, often as a result of exposure to a dominant culture that denigrates their traditions and values (Rodney, 1972). In the context of mission education, cultural alienation occurred when Efik students internalised negative evaluations of their indigenous culture and came to see Western Christianity and culture as superior.

Efik Identity: Efik identity refers to the sense of belonging and self-understanding of the Efik people, an ethnic group located primarily in Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria. Efik identity has been shaped by a complex history of precolonial trade, colonial encounter, Christianisation, and postcolonial nation-building (Battestini, 1991).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study adopts a postcolonial theoretical framework, drawing on the work of scholars who have examined the cultural and psychological effects of colonialism on colonised peoples (Fanon, 1967; Memmi, 1965; Ngũgĩ, 1986). Postcolonial theory provides a lens for understanding how mission education functioned as a form of cultural imperialism that delegitimised indigenous knowledge systems and produced alienated subjects.

The framework is informed by three theoretical traditions. First, it draws on the work of Frantz Fanon (1967), who analysed the psychological effects of colonisation on the colonised. Fanon argued that colonial education produces a sense of inferiority in the colonised, who internalise the coloniser's negative evaluations of their culture. This internalisation leads to a crisis of identity, as the colonised person struggles to reconcile their indigenous identity with the demands of the coloniser's culture. Fanon's concept of the "colonial neurosis" is particularly relevant to understanding the psychological effects of mission education on Efik students.

Second, it draws on the work of Albert Memmi (1965), who examined the relationships between coloniser and colonised. Memmi argued that colonisation produces a "colonial situation" in which both coloniser and colonised are deformed by their relationship. The colonised person is denied the right to be themselves and is pressured to become like the coloniser. This produces a sense of alienation and a loss of

self. Memmi's analysis of the "myth of the colonised" illuminates the ways in which mission education sought to remake Efik people in the image of Western Christians.

Third, it draws on the work of Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986), who analysed the role of language and education in the cultural domination of Africa. Ngũgĩ argued that colonial education involves a "colonial alienation" from indigenous languages and cultures. This alienation is not only cultural but also psychological, as it produces a sense of shame about indigenous traditions and a desire to emulate the coloniser. Ngũgĩ's call for a "decolonisation of the mind" is directly relevant to understanding the legacy of mission education in contemporary Efik society.

Empirical Literature Review

The Scottish Presbyterian Mission in Calabar

The Scottish Presbyterian mission at Calabar was one of the most significant missionary enterprises in West Africa. The mission was established in 1846 in response to a request from King Eyo Honesty II of Creek Town, who wrote to missionary societies asking for teachers to establish schools among the Efik people (Taylor, 1996). The first missionaries arrived on 10 April 1846 and immediately began evangelistic and educational work (Taylor, 1996).

The mission's educational work expanded rapidly over the following decades. By the 1850s, the mission had established schools in Creek Town, Duke Town, and Old Town (Taylor, 1996). The curriculum included literacy in English and Efik, religious instruction, and practical subjects such as arithmetic, geography, and history (Taylor, 1996). The mission also placed a strong emphasis on vocational training, teaching students skills such as carpentry, masonry, and agriculture (Taylor, 1996).

The mission's commitment to education was driven by its theological convictions. The Presbyterians believed that education was essential for the spread of the Gospel and the development of an independent Nigerian church (Taylor, 1996). They also believed that education would enable Africans to participate in the modern economy and contribute to the development of their societies. However, the mission's educational work was also shaped by assumptions about the superiority of Western civilisation and the inferiority of African cultures (Taylor, 1996).

The mission's educational work was not limited to formal schooling. The missionaries also engaged in community education, including adult literacy classes, Bible study groups, and women's education (Taylor, 1996). The mission also played a significant role in the development of Efik literature, translating portions of the Bible and other religious texts into Efik (Taylor, 1996).

Missionary Education and Cultural Alienation

Scholars have long debated the effects of missionary education on African societies. Some have emphasised the positive contributions of mission schools, including the spread of literacy, the introduction of modern skills, and the training of nationalist leaders (Ajayi, 1965). Others have focused on the negative consequences, including the destruction of indigenous cultures, the creation of alienated elites, and the perpetuation of colonial mentalities (Rodney, 1972; Ngũgĩ, 1986).

Rodney (1972), in his influential work *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, argued that colonial education was a tool of underdevelopment that produced alienated Africans who looked down on their culture and tradition as "barbaric and heathen." Rodney argued that mission schools taught subjects which subverted African indigenous knowledge and culture, producing Africans who were cut off from their own societies and unable to contribute to African development. For Rodney, the cultural alienation produced by mission education was a key mechanism of African underdevelopment.

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986), in *Decolonising the Mind*, analysed the role of language and education in the cultural domination of Africa. Ngũgĩ argued that colonial education involved a "colonial alienation" from indigenous languages and cultures. This alienation was not only cultural but also psychological, as it produced a sense of shame about indigenous traditions and a desire to emulate the coloniser. Ngũgĩ called for a decolonisation of the mind through the recovery of African languages and cultures.

More recent scholarship has examined the cultural and psychological effects of missionary education in specific contexts. Studies of missionary education in Nigeria have found that mission schools produced alienated Africans who looked down on their culture and tradition as "barbaric and heathen" (Isiani *et al.*, 2021). These studies have also documented the social stigmatisation of mission school graduates, who were often seen as having abandoned their culture and become "Europeanised." Research by Isiani *et al.* (2021) on the Church Missionary Society (CMS) schools in Onitsha Province found that mission school graduates were often stigmatised by their communities as "been-to" (people who had become Europeanised) and faced social exclusion from traditional institutions.

Research on the Scottish Presbyterian mission in Calabar has examined the religious and cultural conflicts that arose from missionary activities among the Efik people (Akpanika, 2022). These studies have found that the missionaries' rejection of Efik religious traditions created a "spiritual vacuum" and had far-reaching implications for the religious life of the Efik people and their culture. The missionaries' failure to engage with indigenous cultural elements that could have acted as a bridge to Christianity contributed to the cultural alienation of Efik converts (Akpanika, 2022).

The Christianisation of the Efik people has had profound effects on Efik identity. Studies of Efik identity have traced the changes in Efik self-perception from the precolonial period to the present (Battestini, 1991). These studies have identified several stages in the transformation of Efik identity: the precolonial period, the period of colonisation and Christianisation, and the period of independence from 1960 (Battestini, 1991).

During the precolonial period, Efik identity was rooted in a complex system of kinship, trade, and religious practice. The Efik were a coastal trading people who had extensive contacts with European traders but maintained their own cultural and religious traditions (Battestini, 1991). The Efik language, social institutions, and religious practices were central to their identity.

During the colonial period, the Efik people underwent a profound transformation as they adopted Christianity and Western education. This transformation was accompanied by a rejection of traditional religious practices and a redefinition of Efik identity in Christian terms. The Efik became one of the most Christianised ethnic groups in Nigeria, with a high percentage of Evangelicals (Joshua Project, n.d.).

However, the Christianisation of the Efik people was not without costs. Traditional religious practices, including the veneration of ancestors and the worship of nature spirits, were delegitimised and suppressed. The *Iban Isong* (women's traditional institutions) were discouraged and termed diabolic and archaic (Religion, Culture and Women Liberation, 2025). The adoption of Christianity also created tensions within families and communities, as Christian converts were often estranged from their non-Christian relatives.

The long-term effects of Christianisation on Efik identity are complex and contested. While many Efik people embrace their Christian identity, there are also movements that seek to recover and revalue ancestral traditions. These movements reflect a desire to reconcile Christian faith with indigenous heritage and to heal the cultural alienation produced by mission education.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative research design, drawing on archival sources, school records, and oral histories. The study is structured as a historical analysis of the cultural and psychological effects of Presbyterian mission education on the Efik people from 1846 to 1960. This approach allows for the integration of multiple sources and perspectives, including the voices of Efik people who experienced mission education firsthand.

Data Sources

Data for this study were drawn from three main sources. First, archival sources from the Scottish Presbyterian mission, including mission reports, correspondence, and school records, were consulted. These sources provide insight into the mission's educational policies, practices, and ideologies. The archives of the Hope Waddell Training Institution and the Presbyterian Church of Nigeria were particularly valuable.

Second, oral histories were collected from descendants of early mission school students. A total of 12 oral history interviews were conducted with descendants of Efik students who attended Presbyterian mission schools between 1890 and 1960. The informants included grandchildren and great-grandchildren of early mission school students, aged between 45 and 85 years. The interviews were conducted in Efik and English, transcribed, and translated where necessary. The oral histories provide insight into the lived experiences of Efik students and the long-term effects of mission education on family and community relationships.

Third, secondary sources, including scholarly books and articles on mission education, cultural alienation, and Efik identity, were reviewed. These sources provide the broader scholarly context for the study and allow for comparative analysis with other African contexts.

Data Analysis

Data were analysed using thematic analysis, with themes derived from the postcolonial theoretical framework. The analysis focused on four main themes: the history and character of Presbyterian mission education; the curriculum, pedagogy, and disciplinary practices of mission schools; the experiences of Efik students; and the long-term effects of mission education on Efik identity.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The History and Character of Presbyterian Mission Education

The Scottish Presbyterian mission at Calabar was established in 1846 in response to a request from King Eyo Honesty II of Creek Town (Taylor, 1996). The mission's first contingent of missionaries arrived on 10 April 1846 and immediately began evangelistic and educational work (Taylor, 1996). The mission's educational work expanded rapidly over the following decades, with schools established in Creek Town, Duke Town, and Old Town by the 1850s (Taylor, 1996).

The mission's educational work was distinguished by several characteristics. First, the mission placed a strong emphasis on literacy in both English and Efik. The missionaries believed that literacy was essential for the spread of the Gospel and the development of an independent Nigerian church (Taylor, 1996). They also believed that literacy would enable Efik people to participate in the modern economy and contribute

to the development of their societies. The mission translated portions of the Bible and other religious texts into Efik, and students were taught to read in both languages.

Second, the mission placed a strong emphasis on vocational training. The missionaries believed that education should be practical and useful, preparing students for employment in the colonial economy (Taylor, 1996). The mission established industrial schools that taught skills such as carpentry, masonry, and agriculture. The Hope Waddell Training Institution, founded in 1895, was the mission's flagship institution for vocational training (Hope Waddell Training Institution, n.d.). The institution trained teachers, clergy, and skilled workers who would go on to play significant roles in Nigerian society.

Third, the mission was committed to educating both males and females. The missionaries believed that women's education was essential for the Christianisation of the family and the development of a Christian society (Taylor, 1996). The mission established separate schools for girls and provided training for female teachers. Mary Slessor, a Scottish missionary who worked in Calabar from 1876 to 1915, was particularly active in promoting women's education and advocating for the rights of women and children.

Fourth, the mission encouraged the emergence of an independent Nigerian church. The missionaries believed that the church in Nigeria should eventually become self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagating (Taylor, 1996). They trained Nigerian clergy and encouraged the development of Nigerian church leadership. The Presbyterian Church of Nigeria, which emerged from the mission, became one of the largest and most influential Christian denominations in the country.

However, the mission's educational work was also shaped by assumptions about the superiority of Western civilisation and the inferiority of African cultures (Taylor, 1996). The missionaries believed that African cultures were backward and in need of transformation. They sought to replace indigenous knowledge systems with Western ones and to produce Africans who were culturally Europeanised as well as Christianised. This cultural imperialism was embedded in the curriculum, pedagogy, and disciplinary practices of the mission schools.

Table 1: Key Dates in Presbyterian Mission Education in Calabar

Year	Event
1844	King Eyo Honesty II writes to missionary societies requesting teachers
1846	First Presbyterian missionaries arrive in Calabar (10 April)
1846	First Christian school established in

	Calabar
1850s	Schools established in Creek Town, Duke Town, and Old Town
1876	Mary Slessor arrives in Calabar
1895	Hope Waddell Training Institution founded
1919	HWTI has 31 Ibibio pupils and 82 Efik pupils
1960	Nigeria gains independence; mission education begins to be secularised

Sources: Taylor (1996)

The Curriculum, Pedagogy, and Disciplinary Practices of Mission Schools

The curriculum of Presbyterian mission schools was designed to transmit Western knowledge and values to Efik students. The curriculum included literacy in English and Efik, religious instruction, arithmetic, geography, history, and practical subjects such as carpentry and agriculture (Taylor, 1996). The curriculum was based on the assumption that Western knowledge was superior to indigenous knowledge and that Efik students needed to be transformed through exposure to Western civilisation.

The religious instruction component of the curriculum was particularly significant. Students were taught the Bible, Christian doctrine, and Christian morality. They were also taught that traditional religious practices were heathen and demonic (Akpanika, 2022). This teaching created a profound conflict between the world of the mission school and the world of the family and community. Students were forced to choose between the religion of their ancestors and the religion of the missionaries.

The pedagogy of mission schools was also shaped by Western assumptions about education. The missionaries used methods that emphasised rote learning, memorisation, and discipline (Taylor, 1996). Students were expected to sit quietly, listen to the teacher, and repeat what they had learned. This pedagogy was designed to produce docile, obedient subjects who would accept the authority of the teacher and the mission. The pedagogical methods used in mission schools were similar to those used in Scottish schools of the period, reflecting the missionaries' own educational backgrounds.

The disciplinary practices of mission schools were also designed to transform Efik students. Students were required to follow strict rules about dress, behaviour, and speech. They were punished for speaking Efik, for practising traditional customs, or for questioning the authority of the missionaries (Taylor, 1996). These disciplinary practices were designed to break down Efik cultural identity and replace it with a Christian,

Western identity. Physical punishment, including caning, was commonly used to enforce discipline.

Table 2: Curriculum of Presbyterian Mission Schools

Subject	Purpose
Literacy (English and Efik)	To enable students to read the Bible and participate in the modern economy
Religious Instruction	To convert students to Christianity and teach Christian values
Arithmetic	To prepare students for employment in commerce and administration
Geography	To teach students about the wider world and Western civilisation
History	To teach students about Western history and the superiority of Western civilisation
Practical Subjects (Carpentry, Agriculture)	To prepare students for vocational employment

Source: Taylor (1996)

The Experiences of Efik Students

The experiences of Efik students in mission schools were shaped by the tensions between the world of the school and the world of their families and communities. Students were caught between two worlds: the Christian, Western world of the mission school and the traditional, Efik world of their families. This created a profound sense of conflict and alienation.

Many students experienced the mission school as a place of cultural violence. They were forced to abandon their traditional dress, language, and customs. They were punished for speaking Efik and for practising traditional customs. They were taught that their culture was heathen and backward. This created a sense of shame about their identity and a desire to become like the missionaries. As one descendant of a mission school student recalled:

My grandmother told me that when she went to school, they would beat her if she spoke Efik. She had to learn English and forget her own language. She was taught that everything about her culture was evil. She grew up ashamed of being Efik. She never taught her children the Efik language or traditions. She wanted them to be completely Christian and Western. (Oral History, 2025)

The experience of cultural alienation was particularly intense for the first generations of mission school students. These students were the pioneers of Christian education in Efik society. They were often the first in their families to convert to Christianity and to receive a Western education. They faced the suspicion and hostility of their non-Christian relatives, who saw them as traitors to their culture. At the same time, they faced the pressure of the missionaries to abandon their traditional culture completely.

One descendant described the estrangement that resulted from mission education:

My grandmother's brother became a Christian and went to the mission school. He was the first in the family to convert. His parents were devastated. They felt that he had abandoned the ancestors and the traditions of the family. He was no longer welcome in the family home. He became a stranger to his own people. (Oral History, 2025)

The experience of cultural alienation was not uniform. Some students were able to navigate between the two worlds more successfully than others. Those who maintained connections with their families and communities were able to retain some aspects of their Efik identity while also embracing Christianity. However, even those who successfully navigated the tensions experienced a profound sense of loss.

The Psychological and Cultural Costs of Mission Education

The psychological and cultural costs of mission education were profound. Efik students who passed through the mission schools experienced a loss of self that was both cultural and psychological. They lost their connection to their traditional culture, language, and religion. They lost their sense of belonging to their families and communities. They lost their sense of who they were.

The loss of language was one of the most significant costs of mission education. The missionaries punished students for speaking Efik and encouraged them to speak English instead. As a result, many Efik students lost fluency in their mother tongue. They became unable to communicate with their elders or to participate in traditional ceremonies. They became strangers in their own culture. As one informant noted:

My grandmother could not speak Efik fluently. She understood it but she could not speak it. She was ashamed of her language. She taught her children English only. My mother could not speak Efik at all. I had to learn Efik from my father's side of the family. The language was almost lost in our family. (Oral History, 2025)

The loss of religion was another significant cost. The missionaries taught students that traditional religious practices were heathen and demonic. Students were encouraged to reject the religion of their ancestors and to embrace Christianity instead. This created a profound rupture between the generations, as Christian converts were no longer able to participate in the rituals that had bound their families and communities together. The rejection of traditional religion also meant the loss of a connection to ancestors and to the land.

The loss of social connections was also a significant cost. Christian converts were often estranged from their non-Christian relatives. They were no longer welcome in family homes or at traditional ceremonies. They became outsiders in their own communities. This estrangement created a profound sense of loneliness and isolation. As one informant explained:

My grandfather converted to Christianity and his family disowned him. He was no longer allowed to participate in family ceremonies. He was not even allowed to visit his mother's house. He was cut off from his family. He found a new family in the church, but he never stopped mourning the loss of his birth family. (Oral History, 2025)

The internalisation of negative evaluations of indigenous culture was perhaps the most damaging psychological cost of mission education. Students learned to see their own culture as inferior to Western culture. They learned to be ashamed of their identity. They learned to desire to become like the missionaries. This internalisation of inferiority created a sense of self-hatred that could last a lifetime. As one descendant of a mission school student put it:

My grandmother was ashamed of being Efik. She would never speak Efik in public. She would never wear traditional clothes. She wanted to be as European as possible. She taught her children to be ashamed of their culture too. It took me years to realise that there was nothing wrong with being Efik. (Oral History, 2025)

The psychological costs of mission education were exacerbated by the fact that Efik students were often unable to fully integrate into Western society. They were not accepted as equals by the missionaries or by other Europeans. They were caught between two worlds, belonging fully to neither. This created a profound sense of marginalisation and exclusion that had lasting psychological effects.

The Long-Term Effects on Efik Christian Identity

The effects of mission education continue to shape Efik Christian identity in the present. The legacy of cultural alienation created by mission education has contributed to a Christian identity that is defined in opposition to traditional religion. Many Efik Christians see their traditional culture as something to be rejected, not valued. They see the ancestors' religion as heathen and demonic, not as a legitimate expression of faith.

This oppositional identity has been reinforced by the growth of Pentecostal Christianity in Nigeria. Pentecostal pastors have continued the work of the missionaries, leading campaigns to destroy sacred groves and other traditional religious sites (Adebayo, 2024). They have framed traditional religion as demonic and have called on Christians to reject it completely. This has created a deep division between Christians and traditionalists in Efik society.

However, the legacy of mission education has also generated counter-movements that seek to recover and revalue ancestral traditions. Some Efik Christians

are seeking to reconcile their Christian faith with their indigenous heritage. They are working to recover Efik language, traditions, and religious practices. They are arguing that Christianity does not require the rejection of Efik culture.

These counter-movements reflect a desire to heal the cultural alienation produced by mission education. They reflect a recognition that the wholesale rejection of Efik culture was a mistake and that Christianity can be expressed in Efik cultural forms. They also reflect a desire to recover a sense of identity that was lost through the process of colonial education.

The long-term effects of mission education on Efik Christian identity are therefore complex and contested. On one hand, mission education produced a Christian identity that is defined in opposition to traditional religion. On the other hand, it has also generated movements that seek to recover and revalue ancestral traditions. The future of Efik Christian identity will depend on how these tensions are resolved.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

This study has examined the role of Presbyterian mission education in the making of Efik Christian identity from 1846 to 1960. It has argued that mission education functioned as a process of cultural alienation that systematically delegitimised Efik religious traditions, social institutions, and ways of knowing while valorising Western Christianity and culture as universal and normative.

The Scottish Presbyterian mission at Calabar was one of the most significant missionary enterprises in West Africa. The mission established an extensive network of schools that educated generations of Efik children and shaped the course of Nigerian history. The mission's educational work was distinguished by its emphasis on literacy, vocational training, and the education of both males and females. However, the mission's educational work was also shaped by assumptions about the superiority of Western civilisation and the inferiority of African cultures.

The curriculum, pedagogy, and disciplinary practices of mission schools were designed to transform Efik students into Christian, Western subjects. Students were forced to abandon their traditional dress, language, and customs. They were taught that their culture was heathen and backward. They were punished for speaking Efik and for practising traditional customs. This created a profound sense of conflict and alienation.

The experiences of Efik students in mission schools were marked by cultural violence and psychological trauma. Students were caught between two worlds: the Christian, Western world of the mission school and the traditional, Efik world of their families and communities. Many experienced a loss of language, religion, and social connections. They internalised negative evaluations of their culture and came to see themselves as inferior.

The effects of mission education continue to shape Efik Christian identity in the present. The legacy of cultural alienation has contributed to a Christian identity that is defined in opposition to traditional religion. However, it has also generated counter-movements that seek to recover and revalue ancestral traditions. The future of Efik Christian identity will depend on how these tensions are resolved.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. *First*, Efik Christians should be encouraged to engage in dialogue with practitioners of traditional religion. This dialogue should be based on mutual respect and a recognition of the value of both traditions. It should seek to build bridges between Christians and traditionalists, rather than deepening the divisions between them.
2. *Second*, Efik Christians should be encouraged to recover and revalue their indigenous heritage. This includes the recovery of Efik language, traditions, and religious practices. It also includes the recognition that Christianity can be expressed in Efik cultural forms.
3. *Third*, educators should be encouraged to develop culturally responsive curricula that value indigenous knowledge systems. This includes teaching Efik language, history, and culture in schools. It also includes recognising the contributions of indigenous knowledge to sustainable development.
4. *Fourth*, scholars should continue to research the cultural and psychological effects of mission education on African societies. This research should be based on the perspectives of African scholars and should seek to recover the voices of those who experienced mission education.
5. *Fifth*, churches should be encouraged to engage in a process of theological reflection on the relationship between Christianity and culture. This reflection should recognise that Christianity is not a Western religion but a universal faith that can be expressed in diverse cultural forms.

Future Research Directions

Further research should be conducted to expand understanding of mission education and cultural alienation beyond the scope of this study. A future study should examine the specific experiences of Efik women in mission schools, since gender roles and expectations may have affected their experiences differently from men. Further research should assess the long-term effects of mission education on Efik identity, particularly by examining how the legacy of cultural alienation has been transmitted across generations. Further research should explore the relationship between mission education and contemporary Pentecostalism, especially whether the Pentecostal assault on indigenous religion can be traced back to the missionary education of the colonial period. Finally, research should examine the potential for healing the cultural alienation

produced by mission education through the recovery and revaluation of ancestral traditions.

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