Jaeschke’s book is less satisfactory than Forster’s. His biography of Gutmann borders on the hagiographical and there is no factual evaluation of Gutmann’s folk-church system. The text is a tissue of lengthy quotations. In the case of Gutmann’s own writings, this does have the beneficial result of introducing them to the English-reading public. The frequent German spellings and printing errors make reading difficult. Gutmann, however, stands out, like T. Cullen Young, as one who adopted a cultural approach to missionary work. They are both, in their own way, precursors of inculturation.

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This book is an important and penetrating study of the place of modern education among the evangelizing strategies of Roman Catholic missionaries in Eastern Nigeria from the late nineteenth century to the middle of the twentieth. It does not, despite its subtitle, attempt to evaluate the results of the Roman Catholic educational enterprise on the social or even educational development of the communities involved nor to assess its place among the other forms of schooling engaged locally during the colonial period. Rather it analyses the growth of Roman Catholic missionary endeavour in Igboland and Calabar through a close examination of the principal vehicle for religious and cultural imperialism utilized by the missionaries of the time, the modern schooling system.

The book begins with a chapter on the local historical context and the pioneering phases of Catholic mission activity in Eastern Nigeria. It then traces the history of Roman Catholic schooling in the area up to about 1920 before examining two of the principal issues of the educational system in the period between the wars, those of the recruitment, training and treatment of local teachers and the system and manner of expatriate educational management. The work ends with two chapters devoted to the rise of local politics.

and the relationship between the mission school authorities and a growing Nigerian national consciousness.

Largely because of the nature of its sources much of this work reads like an administrative study, but its discussions go beyond managerial and political issues to those of evangelistic methods and the relationships between foreign clergymen and local farmers and schoolteachers within a colonial polity. Not all of these matters are dealt with in as much detail as some of the inter-agency administrative issues, but the book effectively opens up for examination some interesting problems relating to the nature of missionary penetration in that time and place.

The main problem of missionary method addressed in this book is that of why and how a particular group of priests and brothers decided to rely to such an extent on schooling as a vehicle for religious conversion. The issue was hotly debated among the missionaries concerned, and could eventually be reduced to the preferences between European nationalities. The French priests, who were the pioneers and who had in the early days lived much closer to their neophytes than the later school-bound communities, favoured direct catechesis and teaching through vernacular languages. The Irish missionaries on the other hand, originally invited by the French to service the growing school system of the mission, placed most of the Church’s resources on the school as the basis of Christianization. Omenka’s analysis is very revealing here, since the Irish strategy included both a preference for working through the colonial language rather than through vernaculars, and a distrust of other social vehicles for religious change (preferred by other nationalities in other areas of Africa) such as the family or local community unit. The preference of the Irish priests for English rather than local languages does not seem so anomalous when one remembers that in Ireland itself the Roman Catholic hierarchy had opted for the colonial language instead of Gaelic when negotiating the religious control of village schooling in the late 19th century.

One consequence of the concentration on schooling in English was the mission’s failure for many years to produce an influential body of religious literature, including the Bible itself, in Igbo. Omenka points out that most of the clergy involved in the writing of vernacular texts were French, but they too were hampered in their efforts by the Roman Catholic refusal to cooperate with rival