

Pioneer,
Patriot, and
Nigerian Nationalist

CAROLINA ACADEMIC PRESS
AFRICAN WORLD SERIES
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*Pioneer, Patriot, and Nigerian Nationalist:
A Biography of the Reverend M.D. Opara, 1915–1965*
Felix Ekechi

The Tiv and Their Southern Neighbours, 1890–1990
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Pioneer,
Patriot, and
Nigerian Nationalist

*A Biography of the
Reverend M. D. Opara,
1915–1965*

Felix K. Ekechi

PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
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CAROLINA ACADEMIC PRESS
Durham, North Carolina

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Ekechi, Felix K., 1934–

Pioneer, patriot, and nigerian nationalist : a biography of the Reverend M.D. Opara, 1915–1965 / Felix Ekechi.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-59460-805-6 (alk. paper)

1. Opara, M. D., 1915-1965. 2. African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church--Biography. 3. African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church--History. 4. Nigeria--Church history. 5. Nigeria--History--20th century. I. Title.

BX8459.O63E34 2010

287'.83092--dc22

[B]

2010007569

CAROLINA ACADEMIC PRESS
700 Kent Street
Durham, North Carolina 27701
Telephone (919) 489-7486
Fax (919) 493-5668
www.cap-press.com

Printed in the United States of America

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Series Editor's Preface

The *Carolina Academic Press African World Series*, inaugurated in 2010, offers significant new works in the field of African and Black World studies. The series provides scholarly and educational texts that can serve both as reference works and as readers in college classes.

Studies in the series are anchored in the existing humanistic and the social scientific traditions. Their goal, however, is the identification and elaboration of the strategic place of Africa and its Diaspora in a shifting global world. More specifically, the studies will address gaps and larger needs in the developing scholarship on Africa and the Black World.

The series intends to fill gaps in areas such as African politics, history, law, religion, culture, sociology, literature, philosophy, visual arts, art history, geography, language, health, and social welfare. Given the complex nature of Africa and its Diaspora, and the constantly shifting perspectives prompted by globalization, the series also meets a vital need for scholarship connecting knowledge with events and practices. Reflecting the fact that life in Africa continues to change, especially in the political arena, the series explores issues emanating from racial and ethnic identities, particularly those connected with the ongoing mobilization of ethnic minorities for inclusion and representation.

Toyin Falola
University of Texas at Austin

Preface

This book has been long in coming. The urge to write the book was generated years ago, prior to the onset of the Nigerian Civil War (1967–70). But it was not until 1983, while I was on sabbatical leave in Nigeria, that the research on the subject started. Regrettably, the production of the book has dragged on almost indefinitely since then. The reasons are many, but largely due to interlocking factors. First, heavy university teaching and administrative responsibilities did not allow sufficient time for international travels to England and Nigeria for archival and fieldwork research respectively. Thus, because overseas travels were only possible during the summer vacations, the completion of research and the publication of the book itself took much longer time than originally planned. Secondly, I must admit that my quasi-perfectionist tendencies entered into the equation. Dissatisfaction with earlier drafts of the manuscript led to frequent revisions, which, by the way, are normal and necessary. A friend once advised, “Felix, enough is enough; leave the drafts as they are, and publish whatever you have. Remember, perfectionism is not the hallmark of a historian.” I finally listened, and herewith is the product of all the labor at last, even though as imperfect as it still is.

My experience in the whole book enterprise reminds me of Karl Marx’s, who in 1858, explained to his friend Lassalle, why his work on the *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* had taken such a long time to materialize. He wrote:

The job is making very slow progress because things [,] which one has for many years made the chief object of one’s investigation constantly exhibited new aspects and call forth new doubts whenever they are to be put in final shape. Besides, I am not the master of my time but rather its servant. (Quoted in Temu and Swai, *Historians and Africanist History: A Critique*, 1978, p. xii)

Given also that biographical writing is not only a difficult art, but indeed “perhaps the most demanding task of the historian,” it goes without question that

it should not therefore be a rushed job. After all, as Henry Lee Swint once observed, “the elaborate research and critical analysis that it entails” compels deliberate caution (Henry Lee Swint, “William Campbell Binkley, 1889–1970: The Historian, Editor, Teacher,” in *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 37, No. 3 (August 1971): 353–366).

Acknowledgments

This book owes so much to so many. First and foremost, I must acknowledge the financial support from the Kent State University Research Council, which made it possible to undertake the research trips to England and Nigeria during the summer vacations. I am particularly grateful to Dr. Rudolph Buttlar, formerly Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Kent State University, whose moral and financial support encouraged me to go on, in spite of untoward frustrations. I must also gratefully acknowledge the travel grants from the American Philosophical Society in 1982 and 1984 respectively. Special thanks are also due to the erstwhile Evangelical Methodist Church (EMC) authorities in America, and especially the Rev. Mark Rhodes of the Theological Seminary at Hollisburg, PA, who provided archival and published materials at the EMC headquarters in Altoona, Pennsylvania (but now in Knoxville, Tennessee). The Rev. Edwin Conn of Stockton, California and formerly General Secretary of the EMC Conference graciously made available to me several copies of the correspondences between him and Rev. Opara. However, the sources were obtained after some hesitation on his part, as mirrored in his letter to me dated 3-17-1986: “I have been very cautious in my relations with you due to uncertainty of your political connections due to the Civil War conditions in Nigeria. After much prayer and your explanations I am co-operating.”

As well, I am indebted to Dr. Roy Adams of the Oriental Missionary Society in Los Angeles, California, whose accounts of his missionary journey to Nigeria in 1950 enriched the historical reconstruction of the relationship between the Nigerian Zion Mission and the American Evangelical Methodist Church. In fact, this book would have been incomplete without the American dimension, which is fully discussed in the subsequent two chapters titled “The American Connection,” and “The American Missionary Episode.”

Above all, I wish to express my profound thanks to the late Sir Timothy (Tim) C. A. Anamelechi, who introduced me to the Opara family. Tim, a boyhood friend, was the Principal of Mbieri Community College (1982–86), formerly Zion Commercial Secondary School—also known fondly as “the college

that Rev. Opara founded.” It was essentially through Tim that I became well acquainted with the members of the Opara family—Mr. Nelson E. Opara, formerly Zion Mission School Manager, Madam Fanny Opara, Matron of the Zion Mission Maternity (and Rev. Opara’s second wife), and Sunday Opara, formerly Food Manager of Zion Mission Colleges. And, most importantly, Bishop Lambert Osita Opara, of whom much more will be said below. All of them graciously and generously granted me many, many hours of interviews relating to my project. To all of them individually and collectively, I say, “Thank you very, very much.”

I owe special thanks and debt of gratitude to Bishop Lambert Opara for his extraordinary courtesies and assistance during my fieldwork in Nigeria, and particularly for allowing me unrestricted access to both the Zion Mission archival records and the Rev. M. D. Opara’s private papers. The private papers consisted mostly of diaries and correspondences, and other miscellaneous papers dealing with personal matters, as well as records focusing mainly with politics. The bishop (d. 1997) was the first son of Rev. M. D. Opara, and the custodian of the Zion Mission Archives, as well as the Opara private papers, all of which are housed at the old Rev. M. D. Opara residence at Obazu Mbieri. It was in fact the bishop himself who defined my research enterprise as being “a labor of love, worthy of support.” Hence, he not only allowed me a wide range of freedom to plow through the “mountain” of archival documents under his care, but he also granted me many hours of interviews at his home in Owerri. I am indeed pleased to say that I was the first, and still the only, research scholar to have gained access to the rich Zion Mission Archives (ZMA). My deepest debt of gratitude, therefore, goes to Bishop Opara. My regret, however, is that he did not live to see the publication of this book, which, in essence, is our collective enterprise, insofar as he provided much of the source materials (oral and archival), and whole-heartedly supported, and ardently anticipated, its publication. Therefore, this book is dedicated to him and to Tim C. A. Anamelechi, with the deepest gratitude and remembrance.

There are still a host of others who deserve special recognition and thanks, particularly Chief Sylvanus E. Ekeanyanwu, Aaron Akuwudike, Boniface Nnodim, Alfred Emerenini, Edmund Ajaero, and several others, whom I interviewed at Mbieri and at Owerri respectively. Needless to say that the information they provided illuminated my understanding and appreciation of the life of the Rev. M. D. Opara, and especially his social and political significance. Suffice it to say, again, “Thank you all collectively and individually.” Special thanks also are due to friends and colleagues, and especially Professor Toyin Falola, who read the original drafts (in their raw state) and provided suggestions and



Bishop Lambert O. Opara

perspectives that proved invaluable. All errors of presentation and interpretation are of course mine. I am also grateful to Ms Mary Young, Managing Editor, Kent State University Press.

Finally, I wish to thank my wife Regina and my children for their patience and encouragement during the long and arduous periods of research and writing. My daughter Chinyere (JD) often reminded me that, “Dad, you still have not finished the Opara book. Don’t give up.” This “Opara book,” in fact, became a cliché in the household, simply because I worked on it virtually every moment I had available. To be sure, without the support of my family, this book certainly would not have seen the light of day.

Sources

The primary sources for the construction of this biography derive essentially from the archival materials collected in England and Nigeria. Particularly vital are the archival records from the Christ Methodist Zion Mission Archive at Obazu Mbieri, Owerri, Nigeria, and the Church Missionary Society Archive at Birmingham University, England. The documents at the Zion Archive included records dealing with the history of the Zion Mission from 1942–1984, as well as the Rev. M. D. Opara’s private papers, consisting mainly of diaries, in-coming and out-going correspondences, and also the huge body of political papers. The latter deals largely with incidents pertaining to the Federal and the Eastern Nigeria Regional Elections of the 1950s and 1960s—most of which by and large shed some light on Rev. Opara’s political career, and most importantly his political struggles and triumphs.

Let me at this juncture briefly comment on the nature of the Zion Mission archival records, now housed in Rev. Opara’s two-story building. It is indeed remarkable that despite the ravages of the past Nigerian civil war (1967–70), many of the Zion Mission holdings/records still remained. The story goes that the Nigerian soldiers routinely burned down libraries in Biafra. Nevertheless, the Nigerian soldiers’ seemingly scorch-earth policy had its limits. Everything did not go into flames; for most of the records at the Zion mission at Mbieri survived. Unfortunately, however, many of the files and documents in them are now in various stages of deterioration, caused mostly by the lack of adequate storage facilities and sheer carelessness. The files are stored in cupboards and wooden boxes, and exposed to inclement weather. The result is that a substantial number of the documents therein have suffered water damage, and/or have been eaten up by rats and cockroaches. Many, too, have been so badly damaged that their values have become historically problematic, in the sense that many of the letters and reports could hardly be read. In many cases, only portions of the documents still exist, and thus create gaps in our reconstruction enterprise. In sum, weather conditions, and post-war neglect (storage problems), have combined to render the value of many of the files less valuable, insofar as many of the letters and reports therein are now unreadable, as

was my sad experience. Amazingly, most of the documents filed in *Leaves of Healing*, the official Newsletter of the Christian Catholic Church (printed at Zion, Illinois, USA), remain in tact.

At any rate, the source materials at the Zion Mission Archives are neither arranged chronologically, nor are they indexed. Hence, I had a hard time finding what was particularly relevant to the subject at hand. Consequently, therefore, my searches were laborious, as I spent a great amount of time reading virtually all the documents available in the files. Yet, there were occasional moments of relief when I stumbled on files dealing with political affairs; they are appropriately labeled “Political files,” most of them dealing with the Federal and Regional elections. The nagging question remains: What can we now do? Well, my great desire and hope is to return to Nigeria some day and undertake the arduous task of rehabilitating the archival materials. First, by making arrangements for better storage facilities, and second, to systematically organize and index the papers, so as to facilitate future researchers’ work on the still abundant, but less exploited resources at the Zion Mission Archives. The success of this ambitious (grandiose) plan, of course, is contingent on the cooperation and support of the Opara family, and most importantly, on the availability of time and funds. Nevertheless, this is a project I am now committed to accomplish; it would certainly be a rewarding academic enterprise.

In addition to the Zion Mission Archives, I also consulted the Church Missionary Society (CMS) libraries in Nigeria—particularly the ones at Egbu and Nkwerre in Imo State, respectively. The published and unpublished holdings in these places, though limited in scope, nevertheless proved invaluable as supplemental sources in my quest for information relating to Rev. Opara’s missionary and educational work. I also consulted the University of Birmingham Library in Birmingham, England where CMS papers are now deposited. (The archive was previously located at the CMS House, 157 Waterloo Road, London, England.) I am immensely grateful to the Archivists and Librarians of these institutions for all the assistance they rendered to me during my visits. Special thanks are due to the Librarian at the University of Birmingham, and the custodian of the CMS archives at St. Paul’s Church, Nkwerre (the late Archdeacon Felix E. Chukwuezi), for tolerating my importunities. I am also grateful to the late Bishop B. Nwankiti, formerly the Anglican Bishop of Owerri at Egbu, who gave me a letter of introduction to the Archdeacon Chukwuezi. It was through him also that I gained access to the annual *Synod Reports*. Regrettably, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Owerri, the Rt. Rev. Mark O. Unegbu, was not as cooperative as the Anglican bishop was. His icy reception of me was rather surprising and embarrassing. I was therefore unable to use the RCM “home” sources—published or unpublished.

Lastly, I spent a considerable amount of research time at the Nigerian National Archives, Enugu, Nigeria, between 1983 and 1985. The published and unpublished archival materials there constitute the backbone of the information used for the exploration and analysis of Rev. Opara's political career. The primary sources are mainly the *Parliamentary Debates of the Eastern House of Assembly* (1954–1965); the *Who's Who in Nigeria* (1957); *Legislators of Eastern Nigeria* (1958); *Who's Who in the Eastern House of Assembly* (1963); and *Know Your Legislators* (1963). Altogether, these sources provided valuable information that shed light on M. D. Opara's political thinking and patterns of his political activism.

It should be noted, however, that, unlike some of his contemporaries, most of whom wrote memoirs, books, pamphlets, and articles in journals from which scholars/researchers could discern or determine their social and political ideas, Rev. M. D. Opara was by no means as prolific. He left neither memoirs nor a body of writings from which one could directly or indirectly ascertain his political and social philosophy. The only possible exceptions are the two typescripts titled *Some Religious Questions and Answers*, and, *Why I Believe in Miracles*, both of which contain his views on religious and social questions like polygamy, spirits, and miracles. Thus, because he hardly wrote anything else that was strictly original, I have therefore relied largely on the *Parliamentary Debates of the Eastern House of Assembly* and the abundant oral sources for the reconstruction of much of Rev. M. D. Opara's political life. Evidence from these sources significantly illuminates our understanding and appreciation of his political and social ideas/philosophy and patterns of his activism. Furthermore, the *Parliamentary Debates* by and large portray Opara as a fearless and courageous nationalist, an outspoken political activist, who was deeply committed to the "fight to free our country from colonial rule." Thus, decolonization, in all its ramifications, could be said to have been MD's political mantra, as will be discussed later.

Oral and published secondary sources, too, inform this historical reconstruction. The secondary/primary sources include notably newspapers such as the *Eastern Nigeria Guardian*, the *Daily Times*, the *West African Pilot*, and the *Nigerian Herald*, as well as books on issues relevant to the discussions that follow. Altogether, they provide and enrich the accounts on the life and social and political activities of the indomitable Rev. M. D. Opara. Both the *Eastern Nigeria Guardian* and the *Nigerian Herald*, as discussed in the appropriate chapters, shed valuable light on the political environment that prevailed, as well as the political disputations between MD and his adversaries during the Federal and Regional elections—1951–1961.

Oral data, mainly taped interviews collected in Nigeria between 1983 and 1999, constitute the second largest body of evidence that is utilized in the historical reconstruction. Of particular importance and significance are the oral

data relating to M. D. Opara's education, teaching, and his eventual break-away from the Anglican Church—secession that ultimately led to the establishment of his own church, the A.M.E. Zion Church. It is rather remarkable that the records at the Church Missionary Society in London, nor at the Birmingham University Library, nor even in Nigeria contained any information whatsoever about the Opara experience/association with the CMS, nor even a reference to his missionary career. But, as already indicated, oral sources on the issues are sufficient enough; as they thus provided the vital information relating to his missionary and political career, and hence the value and significance that are attached to them (oral sources) in this historical study. For convenience, some of the oral data, in Igbo, are translated into English.

In my exploration and analysis, therefore, special attention and emphasis are given to the history of the Zion Church/Mission, which for all intents and purposes, constituted the crucible for the formation and rise of M. D. Opara to social and political prominence. Furthermore, special emphasis is given to the Mission's intractable problems with the Roman Catholic and Protestant missions, both of which remained intractable adversaries, as detailed in the book. As well, the approval and funding ordeals of the Zion schools are exhaustively discussed, especially as they appeared to have been intimately connected with the Ministry of Education on the one hand, and the negative school inspection reports by the seemingly "unsympathetic" Catholic and Protestant school inspectors. Thus, the detailed examination and analysis of Zion Mission's schools provide a window to our understanding of the push factors that galvanized Rev. Opara to seek political solutions to the institutions' financial troubles. In my view, a biography of Opara, such as the one attempted here, would certainly be incomplete without due reference to the schools and their financial predicaments. As a member of the Opara family put it poignantly to me, "the schools were the body and soul of his life," and they are still the basis for measuring and/or evaluating his legacy. In reality, the schools and colleges that Opara established by and large defined his important role and pioneering initiatives in education. They were, as he himself proudly claimed, "my [great] work for Africa." Even at death, Rev. M. D. Opara's reputation remains firmly associated with the schools that he built, and particularly the Zion Commercial Secondary School, which happened to be the first mission-owned commercial secondary school in Eastern Nigeria. This letter to the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education, dated November 15, 1959, tells the story: "I have to make you know that our mission ... is the only mission in the Eastern Region having a commercial school" and, therefore, deserves government financial support.

Methodology

Most biographers follow a chronological or sequential structure/methodology. Often one reads about the early life of the subject and his/her sequential activities. The biography of Governor Éboué, the first black governor-general in French West/Central Africa by Brian Wellenstein, comes readily to mind as perhaps a typical example. However, because of the nature of the data available to me, I have adopted a thematic framework or methodology, which fits more squarely with the selected episodes of MD's life and work. Nevertheless, at some points a conscious effort has been made to present the narratives within the chronological framework. Thus, the methodology reflects a mixed bag: while some chapters adhere to the chronological paradigm, others nonetheless follow the topical or thematic approach. Either way, the style captures the essential elements or essence of the Rev. M. D. Opara's life and career.

One would have of course liked to know more details about the life histories of his parents, and even how they might have instilled certain values in him. But the obvious lacunae in the data imposed constraints. Thus, I must emphasize here that this book is neither as exhaustive nor as comprehensive as originally contemplated. Nevertheless, the biography presents a composite picture of the Rev. M. D. Opara—warts and all.

Hopefully future studies may fill the existing gaps in our knowledge of him, and thus further illuminate our understanding of the life story of this remarkable missionary pioneer, and, as his people said of him, “the quintessential patriot and nationalist of the twentieth-century, who brought Mbieri into the limelight.”

Summary of Chapters

The chapters are arranged topically, beginning with chapter 1, “The Making of a Missionary,” which discusses aspects of M. D. Opara’s early life, his education and early teaching career. In my exploration and analysis, I devote considerable space to M. D. Opara’s ambition to pursue higher education—to be trained as a certified teacher at the CMS Akwa Teacher Training College, and his disappointments. According to oral accounts, his frustration from repeated rejections for training contributed to his resignation from the Anglican Communion, and the establishment of the A. M. E. Zion Church/Mission in 1942. As it turned out, the Mission provided Opara the opportunity for advancement in education and the avenue to progress, as he ultimately emerged as a dynamic missionary evangelist. This chapter further discusses the travails of the Zion mission at Obazu Mbieri, and the factors that significantly contributed to its eventual survival and growth, including the crucial role which Rev. Opara’s mother, his wife, and elders played in the early stages of the Mission.

In chapters 2 and 3 I discuss two major themes, namely, M. D. Opara’s missionary strategies, notably the recruitment of polygamists and former members of the Catholic and Protestant churches; and perhaps most importantly, the use of education as the veritable handmaiden of evangelization. While chapter 2 deals specifically with the polygamy question and its ramifications, chapter 3, on the other hand, focuses on the critical role of education in the realization of Opara’s missionary objectives as well as his nationalist agenda. It notes, for example, that education served as the powerful weapon with which Rev. Opara/Zion Mission effectively challenged the preponderant religious and educational influence of the Roman Catholic and Protestant missions in the region. In effect, the Zion Mission emerged as a religious society to be reckoned with vis-à-vis the mainline missions, in the annals of Nigerian modern religious and educational history.

Although a significant number of scholarly works have appeared with regard to the history and evolution of education in modern Nigerian societies, nothing yet had been written, until recently, about the role of the Zion Mission with respect to its important contribution in both the evangelistic and educa-

tional enterprises. In fact, prior to my pioneering studies starting from 1987, as already noted, scholars have by and large ignored M. D. Opara and his mission in the evolving historiography of missions.¹ This book, therefore, argues for the recognition of the contributions of the Zion Mission cum Rev. Opara in both the evangelistic and educational spheres, without which a holistic understanding and analysis of missionary and educational growth in Nigeria would be complete.

Chapter 4, which deals with “the salary question,” discusses the distressing and frustrating phenomenon of the non-payment of salaries in the Zion Mission, brought about by chronic shortages of funds. This economic quagmire remained a constant worry up to the post-Opara era. Rev. M. D. Opara himself acknowledged that the Zion Mission lacked “virtually everything”—and most particularly funds, noting that because of the shortage of funds the Mission was generally unable to pay its schoolteachers and administrators regularly. The factors that contributed to the salary nightmare and the impact of irregular payment of salaries on the image of the Mission and the schools are fully discussed. Both local elders and Parliamentarians singly expressed concerns about the salary crisis. With respect to the MPs’ recriminations for the nonpayment of salaries, the response from M. D. Opara was characteristically ambivalent. In defiant language, he blamed his colleagues for the insufficient funds that made the payment of salaries problematic:

People shout themselves hoarse here about non-payment of salaries to teachers. [But] The grants-in-aid, [which] the Government is paying to the Voluntary Agencies, are not sufficient.... I am therefore appealing to the Members to desist from rising up in this House to shout that teachers are not paid. The Members are the people who owe the teachers [because of the insufficiency of funds].”²

It was thus this salary question, as illustrated in the book, that led to the embarrassing interlude of the Anglican Mission take-over of the management of Zion schools, which lasted from 1966 to 1970.

In chapter 5, I discuss the important theme dealing with the democratization of education. The discussion highlights Zion Mission’s cum Rev. Opara’s contributions to the advancement of education in Nigeria. Emphasis is given to the provision of scholarships to thousands of Nigerian students, as well as the adoption of an open-door policy on college admissions, both of which collectively fostered the democratization of education. As demonstrated in this chapter, the democratization of education, in turn, enhanced the life chances of most of the recipients of M. D. Opara’s largesse. Said an observer, “It is re-

markable that there were those who had no money [to go to school], but Rev. Opara offered them scholarships.” In the process, he literally opened the door of progress to a host of Nigerians, who today occupy important positions in business and government. Perhaps the most striking aspect of the development in education was the initiative in secondary school education, which by all accounts, had a profound impact on the progress and growth of higher education in Eastern Nigeria. Thus Rev. Opara’s investment in education, as discussed here and elsewhere, significantly constituted to the expansion and democratization of education, which Opara himself claimed to have been among his great “work for Africa.” In this chapter, therefore, I highlighted the profuse “voices of gratitude” from the recipients of M. D. Opara’s largesse.

Chapter 6, titled “Expansion and Denominational Squabbles,” examines the nature of Zion Mission expansion schemes and the attendant denominational challenges that bedeviled the penetration into regions already occupied by the other rival missions. As students of missions have amply shown, denominational wrangling and struggles over spheres of territorial influence characterized missionary evangelism in Nigeria and elsewhere in Africa.³ This chapter also discusses the Igbo quest for education during the period of the 1950s and early 1960s, and particularly the clamor for institutions of higher learning. It was in fact this quest for “infrastructures of modernity” that led to the urgent and persistent invitations to the missions, and particularly the Zion Mission/Rev. Opara, “to please come and open schools and colleges of any type.” The rivalry and the poisoning of inter-group relations that followed, forms part of the discussion. In the main, Zion Mission’s search for a place in the sun under-girds Opara’s response: “We shall defend our religion at all costs, even to the last man.” In a sense, the competitive atmosphere engendered the education revolution of the 1950s and early 1960s.

Chapters 7 and 8, on the other hand, focus on the important story of the American episode in the Zion Mission saga, meaning the Zion Mission’s association/affiliation with the American Evangelical Methodist Church. In brief, from about 1940, Rev. Opara had desperately sought to establish a direct relationship with the Methodist Church in New York. But the quest failed. However, in 1950, this quest finally became a reality when, in that year, Opara went to the United States and arranged the affiliation of the Christ Methodist Zion Church/Mission (Nigeria) with the Evangelical Methodist Church, whose headquarters was then in Altoona, Pennsylvania. Details of the origin and nature of this inter-church relationship are thus discussed in the two chapters, including the disastrous episode of the Rev. Horace Trigg. Rev. Trigg was the American missionary attached to the Zion Mission, whose missteps culmi-

nated in the eventual lull in the already existing cordial relationship between the Nigerian Zion Church/Mission and the American Evangelical Methodist Church. Although the Trigg fiasco disrupted the duo's relations, there were nonetheless half-hearted efforts to revive the relations after the Nigerian civil war (1967–70). Unfortunately things had already fallen apart, and so nothing substantial came out of it, even though deep and fond memories of the relationship persisted.

In the next two chapters, 9 and 10 respectively, I explore and analyze Rev. M. D. Opara's entry into politics, his political activism, as well as the dynamics of his political nightmare—political opposition by political adversaries—and finally his political triumph. Chapter eleven focuses on the important question of colonial underdevelopment, and the nationalists' responses to the crisis of underdevelopment that accompanied colonial misrule. As usual, emphasis is given to M. D. Opara's perceptions of British imperialism and the role he played in the confrontation with the crisis of rural underdevelopment. Chapter twelve, "Weathering the Storm," examines the political tussle between Rev. M. D. Opara and Barrister Ubochi Osuji during the 1961 Regional Elections, and concludes with an evaluation of MD's social and political importance and significance, as seen from the eyes of his people, and others, following his death in 1965.