

A HISTORY OF TRAINING LAY PEOPLE FOR EVANGELISATION IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN ZIMBABWE

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Abstract

This article is about the urgent need to train lay people for evangelisation in Zimbabwe. The Second Vatican Council made one very strong point that the Church was not truly established and did not fully live, and nor was it a perfect sign of Christ unless there was a genuine laity existing and working alongside the hierarchy (AG 21). This paper, seeks to trace how the Church in Zimbabwe previously trained lay people to take part in the mission of the Church so as to develop ways in which Pastoral Training Centres could train lay leaders to animate local communities, take up lay ministries satisfactorily and move the agenda of the local Church forwards. This article relates the participation and formation of lay people for their mission in the Catholic Church in Zimbabwe.

1 INTRODUCTION

The Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) gave expression to a new theological awareness about the role of the laityⁱ in the Church. The Council addressed all members of the Church as the People of God (LG 9).ⁱⁱ The People of God are made up of the laity, religious and clerics (LG 30). The majority of the People of God are the laity. The Council confirmed the missionary character and the responsibility of the entire People of God (LG 17). The Lord himself appointed all the faithful through baptism and confirmation to be apostles (LG 33). The Council further stressed the apostolate of the laity stating, "As members of the living Christ, incorporated into him, all the faithful have an obligation to collaborate in the expansion and spread of his Body" (AG 36). *Ad Gentes* 41 describes how lay people should cooperate in the Church's work of evangelisation and share in its saving mission both as witnesses and living instruments. The Second Vatican Council dedicated a whole decree to the apostolate of the lay people, emphasising that their apostolate is exercised when they go about their life in the secular world (AA 2).ⁱⁱⁱ

It was within this new self-understanding of the Church that there was a

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movement away from regarding ministry as the monopoly of ordained men; instead ministry was the responsibility of the whole People of God (Bosch 1992:467-472). The aim of this article is to assess how the Church in Zimbabwe responded to the teaching of the Council regarding the formation and training of lay people for their role in the Church. That assessment was motivated by the question posed to the whole Roman Catholic Church in Africa at the Special Synod for Africa in 1994, which asked: "Has the Church in Africa sufficiently formed the lay faithful, enabling them to assume competently their civic responsibilities and to consider social-political problems in the light of the Gospel and of faith in God?" (EA 54).^{iv} It was difficult to answer that question offhand without carrying out a certain amount of research. The key issues that this article deals with are: the role of the laity in evangelisation, the history of training lay people for evangelisation in Zimbabwe, the setting up of a National Catechetical Training Centre for Zimbabwe and the establishment and achievements of diocesan Pastoral Training Centres.

2 PARTICIPATION OF LAY PEOPLE IN THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

The mission of the Church to evangelise is based on Jesus' command, "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age" (Mt 28:19-20).^v This is the great mandate that Jesus Christ left to the Church. This mandate was directed to the whole Church.

The Second Vatican Council and the momentous shift this brought about in the church, called for a renewal of the missionary spirit in the understanding of Church and mission (Bosch 1992:467-472). The new self-understanding of the Church was that it was missionary by nature, and that the work of evangelisation was a basic duty of all the People of God (AG 35).^{vi} The shift led to the rediscovery of the apostolate of the laity. This is called a rediscovery because, from the very origins of Christianity, Christians as individuals, as families, and as entire communities shared in spreading the faith (Acts 11:19-21; 18:26; Rom.16: 1-16; Phil.4: 3).

2.1 The role of lay people before the Second Vatican Council

Before and after the Second Vatican Council, Catholic missiological thought was officially articulated by papal documents.^{vii} The following are some of the major thoughts regarding the involvement of lay people in mission before the Second Vatican Council. Lay people were called upon to support the work of missionaries through prayer and by giving the money needed for the upkeep of the missions. The teaching was that, "All the faithful have the duty to share their gift of faith with unbelievers through an active charity" (Benedict XV 1919:41-47).^{viii} Missionaries were instructed to recruit indigenous lay people who would help them by giving instructions to their own people in preparation for baptism (Pius XI 1926:65-66).^{ix} In his first encyclical, Pius XI (1931:87-

91)^x instructed that there be erected everywhere associations of Catholic men, women, students, workers, artists, clubs and sodalities which were to be considered as collaborators in missionary work. The teaching was that the action of lay people brought reform to all spheres of human life. The last encyclical letter before the Second Vatican Council laid great emphasis on the participation of lay people in the mission of the Church. It spelt out that to be a Christian was to be an apostle and that the fundamental duty of every Christian was to witness to the truth he or she believed in. Catholic schools were called upon to be the most fitting training grounds for lay leaders of Catholic action groups (John XXIII 1957:147-163).^{xi}

2.2 The role of the laity after the Second Vatican Council

All members of the Church have to carry out their share of the mission in the world, but lay people are specifically inserted in this secular world through their professions and occupations. Lay people bring the values of the gospel into all the fields of human life and witness to the way God wants people to live and to relate together in respect, mutual service and love (LG 34). Lay people have a special vocation in the political community to set an example of justice and peace (GS 47-79).^{xii} Within the Church there are various types of services, functions and ministries that they have to take up (RM 72).^{xiii} Different ministries are a common responsibility of the whole Church. The affirmation of the diversity of ministries in the Church is a sign that the Spirit always continues working in different ways (Ela 1989:56).^{xiv}

For the laity to carry out their great responsibilities within and outside the Church they need to be trained, motivated and empowered, each according to his or her specific role (EA 53). The Second Vatican Council emphasised the urgency of a solid preparation of the laity for their part in the mission of the Church (AG 35). The lay faithful are both members of the Church and citizens of society. Their formation should therefore be situated in their roles in these spheres. The training proposed by the Second Vatican Council is a comprehensive one that takes into account the spiritual, doctrinal and the variety of circumstances in which lay people find themselves (AA 28). The Second Vatican Council proposes that training be provided through congresses, recollections, retreats, frequent meetings, conferences, books and periodicals (AA 32). Thorough training makes laity become conscious of their responsibility (AG 21). Thirty years after the Second Vatican Council, the Special Synod for Africa called for a thorough formation of the lay faithful, a formation that would help them to lead a fully integrated Christian life (EA 54).

An active participation of lay people in the apostolate of the Church is an expression of a truly mature Christian community. The formation of lay people takes on a special character, from the secularity proper to their lay state. They have their own particular spirituality and therefore they need proper institutes for their training, institutes which are different from the formation centres for the clergy or religious (AA 29). In response to the call of the Second Vatican Council to train lay people for their role in evangelisation, the Church in Zimbabwe built Pastoral Training Centres. Below is the historical background of how the dioceses came to set up training centres.

3 HISTORY OF TRAINING LAY PEOPLE IN ZIMBABWE

The history of the training of lay people and lay leaders in Zimbabwe dates back to 1879, the date of the establishment of the Catholic Church in Zimbabwe. Before they could train anyone to lead others the missionaries themselves were the teachers and leaders of the newly converted people. One of the first forms of evangelisation used by the missionaries in Zimbabwe was to found a mission station from which they would go out to open outstations. Besides being centres of faith, the mission stations were also centres of Western civilisation for Africans living in their vicinity (Dachs & Rea 1979:44).^{xv} Those converted to Christianity received instructions at mission stations. The catechumens were taught for three years by priests or/and brothers, after which they could be baptised. Baptism was on condition that the converts left their villages and settled at the mission stations (Zvobgo 1996:13).^{xvi} In the established Christian villages the newly baptised continued with formation in the form of practices such as fasting, almsgiving and charity. The whole village had set times for prayer at particular times of the day (Loubiere 1904:369).^{xvii}

3.1 Christian villages

In a paper presented at a conference in Bulawayo on the forming Christian villages, Loubiere (1904) pointed out that the method of separating Christians from their pagan environment originated from the method that God had used in forming the people of Israel. Loubiere pointed out that Abraham was ordered to separate himself from his relatives (Gen 12:1ff). Later on, when the Hebrews settled in Egypt, God again took them apart to keep them pure in order to worship him (Ex 4:22, 23; 8:20). The early Christians left their homes to join the Christian communities (Acts 4:32-37), they were thus set apart. Loubiere went on to say that the Jesuits, who were the advocates of this method, claimed that it had worked with fellow Jesuit missionaries in the East Indies, Japan and South America (Loubiere 1904:369).

This method of separating newly converted Christians seemed to work initially because it formed people into solid Christians. To date, remnants of early Christian villages are found at some mission stations such as Chishawasha, Kutama, Driefontein, Gokomere, Hama and Triashill (Zvobgo 1996:14). This method gradually fell out of use. As missionaries established new mission stations, it was no longer their practice to separate converts from their kith and kin; indeed this separation was regarded as artificial and unnatural. It was perceived as uprooting the Christians from their native soil and planting them in foreign surroundings. Empandeni mission was held up as an example of a mission with no Christian village and yet those who had become Christians seemed to be good and solid believers (Dachs & Rea 1979:80-82). Another disadvantage of Christian villages was the friction that arose in the newly established Christian villages. Several factors contributed to this friction, such as the fact that people were given little time to get to know each other before being forced to live together. The people in these villages remained strangers and felt like strangers (Loubiere 1904:273).

When Christians were no longer required to leave their homes, new ways of leading and forming them had to be found. Priests found that it was necessary to have helpers from among the local people. They recruited and groomed men to be catechists. This incorporation of local people for evangelisation was adopted from other denominations that were already using the method. The Wesleyans, American Methodists and others had used the method successfully because they believed that the quickest and most effective way to win Africa for Christ was through the trained native (Zvobgo 1996:130). The missionaries were aware that, by themselves they would only succeed in giving a superficial conviction and acceptance of Christianity to the newly baptised. Van der Merwe (1953:5)^{xviii} pointed out that a lack of education and thorough Christian instruction prevented Christianity from establishing strong roots, however noble and self-sacrificing the efforts of some of the earlier missionaries might have been. Missionaries realised that the Africans took Christianity just as they took civilisation; both were taken as things that one could cast off anytime, although they clung to civilisation more than to Christianity (Callan 1927b:189).^{xix} Missionaries saw that trained Africans would teach their own people in such a way that they would understand that Christianity was a way of life and not clothes that one could take on and off as one chose (Dachs & Rea 1979: 101).

3.2 Mission groomed catechists

Initially, every mission station recruited and groomed its own catechists. There were many outstanding catechists locally trained and sent to set up centres. Umjemhlophe, a converted *n'anga*, was one outstanding catechist; he was baptised in 1900 by Fr Hartmann. Umjemhlophe went to school to learn to read and write and then started a school at Embakwe (O'Neil 1902:380).^{xx} Umjemhlophe was a dedicated catechist who gave instructions to women and children, visited nearby villages on Sundays and preached to people in their homes. In the same area, there was a Musotho called Joseph who was trained at Empandeni and who was sent to St Patrick's Makokoba. By 1907 Fr Diehler had trained four catechists at Empandeni mission (Dachs & Rea 1979:102). In Mashonaland, catechist Cassiano Ushewokunze was trained at Chishawasha and sent to Kutama (Zvobgo 1996:130). The priests usually trained their own catechists and moved with them to the outstations. If a priest was tasked to found a new mission station he would take his catechist with him. In 1906 Fr Schmitz moved from Chishawasha to open Driefontein mission. He was accompanied by his catechist/teacher Regis Chigwedere. Chigwedere became the first teacher of Driefontein School. He married and his son, also called Regis, became a priest (Dachs & Rea 1979:86). One of the first places to have a catechist/teacher was Murombedzi outstation of Kutama mission, where Patrick Chinamatsa was stationed in 1927 (Callan 1927b:191).

Literature that included a catechism, a prayer book and a reader in Shona was produced by Fr Moreau to be used by the African catechists groomed at the mission stations (Dachs & Rea 1979:101). It became necessary for the catechists to be literate. The catechist/teacher was the only person who could teach in both religion and secular subjects (Dachs & Rea 1979:103) in

schools. The missionaries had by 1923 opened many missions and outstations. Their main problem was that mission-groomed catechists were not sufficiently trained to be able to impart all the doctrine needed by the converts at the outstations; in other words, they could not be left in charge of these outstations. For a catechumen to be admitted into the Church a minimum knowledge of Christian doctrine was required. Catechumens had to be taught the sign of the cross, the Lord's Prayer, the Hail Mary, the Apostles' Creed, Acts of Faith, hope Charity and Contrition, the Angelus, the prayers before and after meals, the Ten Commandments and the sacraments. They also had to understand the meaning of baptism and its obligations. Young adults were to be taught the marriage laws of the Church and the concept of Christian matrimony and family life (Apel 1921:382).^{xxi}

The mission-groomed catechist was not adequately trained to teach all this knowledge on his own. According to one missionary, to place a native catechist some hundred miles at an outstation alone was expecting too much from Providence (Callan 1927b:191). Missionaries knew from their own experience that it was too early to leave mission trained catechists alone at far away outstations for long periods of time. In the early days most of the outstations were unreachable from December to April owing to the heavy rains and bad roads (Callan 1927b:190). The missionaries believed that the pagan environment was too harsh for catechists who, if they were left to fend for themselves, be tempted to fall back into their traditional practices. It is reported in the Zambesi Mission Records that a catechist, Patrick Chinamatsa, was sent to be in charge of Murombedzi, an outstation of Kutama mission. When the priest in charge made a surprise visit he found that Chinamatsa had turned a classroom into a beer hall, Chinamatsa himself was drunk and, it turned out, actively engaged in village politics. This story, however, ends on a happy note: Chinamatsa repented and started to live an exemplary Christian life for the Murombedzi villagers, who welcomed missionaries and who generously supported their priests (Callan 1927b:192-193).

3.3 Training schools for catechists

In view of the need for adequately trained catechist/teachers for outstations, missionaries agreed to set up a training school. In a paper that he presented at a conference held in Bulawayo, Withnell proposed that they set up a training school for catechists be started. The twenty-three missionaries present at that conference unanimously adopted the proposal (Withnell 1920:340-343).^{xxii} The missionaries agreed that without a school, their methods of training would continue to be haphazard (Withnell 1920:340). The issue of setting up a training school was treated as an urgent matter and, on 7 March 1921, a training school for catechists/teachers was opened at Driefontein mission (Dachs & Rea 1979:103).

Many factors militated against the success of this school. The whole undertaking was not well planned, there were no qualified teaching personnel, there were few students, the standard was low, there were some trainees whose motives were not to be catechists but to get a secular career and, above all, there were no funds organised for running the school. The training

school was closed in 1923 (Dachs & Rea 1979:104).

Two years after the closure of the Driefontein training school, another one was set up at Kutama in January 1926. To ensure that this school was successful, Fr Bodkin, the then Jesuit superior, recommended that no catechist be allowed to teach unless he was trained at Kutama. He reinforced this ruling by referring to the encyclical letter *Rerum Ecclesiae* (Pius XI 1926:65-66). In the encyclical, the pope exhorted the missionaries to educate catechists with all solicitude in order that they may learn well the Christian doctrine and teach it. Fr Bodkin then called on all the houses in the Zambezi mission to support the training school (Dachs & Rea 1979:104).

Before opening the Kutama training school, a great deal of research and planning was carried out to ensure its success. A comprehensive plan was laid down, stipulating the methods of recruiting students. The plan also included the syllabus, training costs, deployment and the remuneration of the catechists/teachers. Withnell reported that, prospective candidates were young and mature men who expressed the wish to become teachers. They would have their poll tax paid, provided with clothes and given a prayer book. To be accepted for training the applicant had to come with a letter of recommendation from the missionary in charge of his (i.e. the applicant's) current school (Dachs & Rea 1979:104-105). The applicant would be interviewed and scrutinised to establish his suitability, disposition, his talents and motives. Beer-drinkers were not recruited (Withnell 1920:342).

The curriculum of the training school included morning catechetical instructions, reading, English, simple arithmetic, writing, Bible, History, Geography, hygiene and singing. Practical skills such as agriculture, carpentry, basket making, boot making and sewing were given to the trainees (Zvobgo 1996: 233). Besides these it was very important to inculcate into the teachers the habits of obedience, constancy and hard work. The missions that sent their men for training met the running costs of the school. Empandeni paid twelve pounds for their two boys and Driefontein sent cattle for their four boys (Callan 1927a:135).^{xxiii} The rest of the food required was grown locally. Prospective catechumens provided the labour needed on the farm, because those in training did not have time (since they were kept busy all day with schoolwork); those in training would however, do general work everyday. Livestock was also kept on the farm to provide trainees and catechumens with milk and beef (Callan 1927a:139).

At the end of the training, graduates got a certificate of good conduct and efficiency, which was countersigned by the Superior of the mission. The catechist/teacher would then be ready for deployment to any missions (Dachs & Rea 1979:105). Refresher courses were offered annually in order to maintain contact with graduates from the school (Withnell 1920:342). No one could become a permanent teacher until he was married. The teacher had to have his wife at his school. She had a role to play among the women who would look up to her as an example of a good Christian wife. Her support to the teacher was needed for the success of the school. The teachers were usually posted to their own home areas (Withnell 1920:342).

Callan explained that the catechist/teacher earned one pound per month and yet, since they were qualified teachers, they could earn up to seven pounds if they moved to the towns. The catechist/teacher was content with this pay because his work was the work of an apostle. He supplemented his earnings from his own crops and cattle (Callan 1927a:135).

The first eighteen graduates from the training school included one from Gwelo, two from Empandeni, four from Driefontein, four from Gokomere and seven from Kutama. The ages of the trainees ranged between fourteen and forty years (Callan 1927a:135). The training school had succeeded in its endeavours to train catechists for the missions. However, the success was short-lived.

3.4 Training teachers for schools

The catechist/teacher training course at Kutama did not last for very long; by 1931 it was mainly training teachers for the schools, and no longer trained catechist/teachers. In the Zambesi Mission the catechist was also a teacher. Establishing a training school for catechists was the same as training teachers for the schools. The catechist/teacher would accompany the adults during their long catechumenate period as their catechist and, in the school, besides teaching reading and writing, he would accompany the young in their faith education. The school programmes became so designed that the schooling years became the catechumenate period for the school children. By the time the pupils went through the primary schooling they would have received baptism and confirmation.

At every mission and main outstation the missionaries opened schools. The main objective of missionary education was to teach religion. The Superintendent of the Umtali District of the American Methodist Episcopal Church, Rev J Gates wrote in 1921 that the supreme objective of mission schools was "Christianising those we teach" (Zvobgo 1996:149). The syllabus at Empandeni consisted of catechism, church music, reading, and dictation from the Ndebele catechism, Bible, number operations and a few geographical facts. For the purpose of industrial training, the older girls were taught cooking, baking, washing and ironing clothes, dairy work and gardening, weaving, mat-making and sewing. The boys were taught carpentry, tin-smithing, blacksmithing, building and cobbling (Zvobgo 1996:149-153). Another reason for opening mission schools was to train local people so that they could help in teaching the faith to their fellow African people. This is why the missionaries established training schools.

After the Mashona and Mandebele uprisings of 1896, the Rhodesian government began to support African education purely out of fear. Indeed, these uprisings were an eye-opener to what Africans could do. After these uprisings, settlers ensured that African education received careful scrutiny. In 1899 the government made a ruling that grants be made available for African pupils, albeit on certain conditions. The grants were to be given to all schools on condition that the school had an enrolment of at least fifty pupils, who attended for four hours a day and for two hundred days a year. The four hours

would be divided into two hours in class and two hours of industrial training (Dachs & Rea 1979:96). The missionaries needed funds for running the schools and so they had to adhere to these terms, terms which gradually became unfavourable to their primary objectives.

In 1927 two government ordinances on native education threatened the Kutama training school. The first was directed to eliminating untrained teachers. This meant that the many mission out schools would have no teachers. This ordinance was not favourable to the Kutama catechist/teacher training school, which had just been established the year before and which had successfully trained eighteen catechist/teachers. The ordinance directly affected the 1928 Kutama catechist/teacher training school intake. Those who had been recruited from the missions according to the government's requirements numbered only thirty-four. The required number needed for the college to get a government grant was fifty (Dachs & Rea 1979:105). This meant enrolling even those who had no intentions of teaching catechism, simply to get the numbers needed for a government grant.

The second ordinance was even more drastic. The grant would be paid on the basis of the scholastic attainment and qualifications of the African teacher. The programme had to be adjusted to be in line with government requirements and the Church therefore had to seek qualified staff for the training school. Bishop A Chichester had to ask for the Marist Brothers to come and teach at Kutama to meet the high educational standards then needed by the government (Zvobgo 1996:233). The attention of the Church schools then turned to producing good academic results in order to grow and get grants; schools meant converts and so the Church could not ignore the government's conditions. The catechist/teacher strategy also had to change and the emphasis was now on training teachers for the schools (Dachs & Rea 1979:107).

By 1931 the Church changed its strategy of evangelisation from Christian villages to the teaching apostolate. But to survive and to expand to remote areas the schools had to meet the academic achievements expected by the government. With the passage of time, the catechising dimension of the schools therefore became minimal. Furthermore, the Education policy in Rhodesia kept changing so that, by 1966, all new schools in the so-called African areas were to be established by local authorities, this meant that the Churches could no longer open any new schools. In 1969 the government cut payment of salaries of teachers at mission schools by five per cent. That five per cent had to be supplemented by the Church or the parents. The Catholic Church declared itself unable to accept the financial burden. In 1971 the Catholic Church gave up nearly all its out schools to local authorities (Dachs & Rea 1979:196-197).

Realising the trend of events, from 1960 the Catholic Church in the then Rhodesia assumed a new range of pastoral activities. The priests who had been managers of schools, farms and hospitals, reluctantly gave up their positions to local lay people. Some priests, especially from the diocese of Gweru, were proud to be replaced by local people because they said that this proved that their teaching apostolate was a success (Dachs & Rea 1979:189).

With the primary schools having become council schools, the schoolteachers had no obligation to give religious instructions. The government, however, gave provision for all religious denominations to go into schools and teach religion to their adherents in a programme called “Right of Entry” (Dachs & Rea 1979:196). This meant that every week, there was a day on the school timetable during which there would be an hour given to churches to gather all the pupils of their denominations and organise instructions. To cater for this new programme the Catholic Church utilised its catechists. Once again, in 1962, as in 1920 a national catechetical training school was seen as a means of providing schools, parishes and communities with trained lay leaders. It was at this time that the Church in Zimbabwe felt the need to train lay people to take an active part in evangelising in response to the Second Vatican Council teaching of actively involving lay people in mission.

4 A NATIONAL CATECHETICAL TRAINING CENTRE FOR ZIMBABWE

A National Catechetical Centre was opened in Zimbabwe in Hwange diocese at Sacred Heart Mission in 1963. This was similar to its predecessor, the training school for catechist/teacher at Kutama mission (1926). Before opening the school in Hwange, similar schools in South Africa and Northern Rhodesia were visited.^{xxiv} The first director of the training school was Fr Joseph Beny SMI, who had just finished his training at “Lumen Vitae”, an international catechetical centre in Belgium. Other members of staff in the opening year were Fr Philip Gomez and Fr Joseph Cunill (Fr A Moreno 2000: interview). Right from the start the training school had qualified staff with degrees from different universities in Europe, America and those trained at the GABA Pastoral Institute in Kenya.^{xxv}

4.1 The training programme

Only married men who had completed their Standard six were recruited. The lectures were given in English (Editor 1962:113). It was also necessary for recruits to have catechetical experience and a recommendation from their parish priests. Those accepted brought their wives and children to the centre. The centre offered special courses such as religious education and domestic sciences for the wives, who would be supporters of their husbands later in the missions (Editor 1962:113). A few of the wives followed the main course. A few single men were accepted but these were exceptions. One religious brother and many religious sisters also joined the course at the centre particularly during the 1970s.^{xxvi} A laywoman called Mai Colleta Mangwende was accepted for training in 1973. This was an exception since she said she was not sent by her parish and she paid her own fees (Mai C Mangwende 2002: interview).

The duration of the course was two years. The main courses included Biblical studies, Catholic doctrine, Liturgy, Catechetics, Church history and methods of teaching. The shorter courses were Sociology, Homiletics, Pastoral

theology, Documents of Vatican Council II, and singing. There were also workshops on, agricultural methods, book-keeping, leadership and of self-knowledge. The spiritual formation of catechists was one of the main focuses of the training programme. One of the priests on the staff was appointed as spiritual director for the catechists in training.^{xxvii} He would help them to organise their personal prayer life, days of recollection and retreats. Liturgical celebrations were carefully prepared everyday.

The centre was run on donor funds but the home mission also provided the rest of the needs. Each family was given a small family plot, but the whole group had a common plot where they practised their agricultural skills.^{xxviii}

At the end of the course the catechists were not given their diplomas immediately. They only got an academic report of their results at the end of course examinations. After two years of satisfactory catechetical work they could then apply for the diploma. The application letter for the diploma was to be accompanied by recommendations from the parish priest and the diocesan Director of Catechetics.^{xxix} Trained catechists were qualified to train voluntary and part-time catechists, to lead Sunday services without a priest, and to preside at Christian burials. They could be involved in all the pastoral work of the parish such as visiting the sick, seeking the lost, evangelising non-Christians and above all catechising those preparing to receive different sacraments.^{xxx}

Catechists were paid the same salary as trained schoolteachers. The suggested monthly salary was ten pounds and two months holidays annually (Editor 1962:113). After ten years of training catechists for the nation, the Wankie National Catechetical Training Centre was closed and dioceses set up their own diocesan Pastoral Training Centres, which are the focus of this research. At the closure of the National training Centre each diocese felt it had sufficient trained catechists for that time (Dachs & Rea 1979:197); see the numbers in table below.

Table 1.1
Wankie trained catechists

<i>Diocese</i>	<i>Trained Lay Catechists</i>	<i>Trained Religious Sisters</i>
Harare	12	1
Bulawayo	16	2
Gweru	28	2 and one lay woman
Mutare	23	1
Hwange	20	3

4.2 The closure of the Wankie National Catechetical Training Centre

The Wankie National Catechetical Training Centre was closed in 1974. The dioceses were moving towards self-reliance, and nor could they afford the salaries and training expenses for more full-time catechists. The building of the Wankie National Catechetical Training Centre and the upkeep of students during their formation was supported by the *Pastlichen Werke* of Aachen

(Editor 1962:111). This financial support was in the process of being phased out as a step towards helping dioceses to be self-reliant. Dioceses then had to bear the full costs of training their catechists. Apart from the unavailability of funds needed to train and pay the full-time catechists, dioceses felt they needed some trained personnel, not as qualified as catechists but as people who would work on voluntary basis. These are now called lay leaders (Fr A Moreno 2000: interview). The type of catechists required would carry out the same kind of roles, but at community level and on part-time basis. Thus, when diocesan Pastoral Training Centres were opened, the trained cadres were called lay leaders (Ineichen 1972). In Church documents and most of the Catholic literature the term used is 'catechist', but in this article we adopt the term 'lay leader' to replace the term 'catechist' wherever possible. Another reason for the closure of the national centre was that diocesan Pastoral Training Centres meant less travelling expenses, and more people within the diocese would be exposed to the facilities offered by local centres. The mission stations in Zimbabwe, today, have many small outstations under them. The outstations are too small to need the services of a full-time lay leader. Outstations would then have better opportunities of sending their leaders for training. Last but not least, instead of using English in training cadres, appropriate local languages would be used at each diocesan Pastoral Training Centre.

The building of specialised training centres was, as I have indicated, the pattern all over Africa. There were national centres and Regional Pastoral Institutes opened in Kinshasa in the now Democratic Republic of Congo, Abidjan in the Ivory Coast, Gaba in East Africa, and Lumko in South Africa (Hastings 1989:129).^{xxxi}

In East Africa, Shorter and Kataza (1972) conducted a study to assess the future shape of the ministry of the catechist in the wake of catechetical renewal in the Church. The research established that the work of catechists was very highly esteemed and an absolute necessity for the life of the Church in Africa. As far as the training of catechists was concerned, the research found that trained catechists were generally considered indispensable co-workers of priests. Interview replies from most priests indicated the need for more training to be given to the untrained catechists, who were seen to be many and needed in the communities. On the whole, most of the priests interviewed acknowledged the contribution made by trained and untrained catechists to evangelisation. The two-year training course was considered to be very valuable because it enabled the trained catechist or lay leader to preside over Sunday services in the absence of a priest making it both attractive and satisfying for the Christian community. Trained catechists administered the sacrament of baptism in a dignified and proper manner, accompanied the gravely sick and dying and conducted funeral services. They taught the Christian message by the proper use of scripture, liturgy, doctrine and tradition and, of course, by example.

Besides the specialised training it was felt that lay people, religious brothers and sisters should be involved in pastoral activities of the Church, for example, in preparing people to receive the sacraments of baptism, marriage and Eucharist, holding Sunday services without a priest and administering

Holy Communion. The involvement of the untrained lay people would mean giving them shorter courses relevant to the ministries they would take up.

The findings were a good indication of the necessity of establishing diocesan Pastoral Training Centres. The diocesan Pastoral Training Centres would not necessarily give full two-year training, but would provide shorter and relevant courses to community leaders.

5 DIOCESAN PASTORAL TRAINING CENTRES IN ZIMBABWE

The main thrust of evangelisation by the Catholic Church in Zimbabwe was through its schools. Schools lost their catechising role owing to government policies on education. This loss created a crisis in the field of evangelisation. That crisis ushered in the implementation of the new ecclesiological threshold that depended on the increased role of the laity in the process of evangelisation (AA 58). In response, the dioceses in Zimbabwe established Pastoral Training Centres for training lay leaders and forming lay people. Pastoral Training Centres had to give quality formation to the laity to match what the mission schools had previously provided.

The summary mission statement for the Pastoral Training Centres was: “To intensify the spiritual, apostolic and human formation of the Catholic laity” (Editor 1962:112-113). The Pastoral Training Centres were started to train mainly lay leaders. It was time to start employing the services of trained, pious, generous and dynamic individuals to help in leading communities. Spiritual formation was given through preparations and celebrations of the liturgy, retreats, spiritual talks and discussions. For their apostolic involvement, Pastoral Training Centres organised in-service training courses for lay people especially those who were to be community leaders. Some of the tasks community leaders were able to take up included teaching religion, leading Sunday services in the absence of priests, being extra-ordinary ministers of the Eucharist, visiting the sick, conducting Catholic burials, and visiting lapsed Christians. The provision for conference facilities was another main reason for setting up Pastoral Training Centres.^{xxxii} Besides training lay leaders, Pastoral Training Centres were places from which different diocesan organs directed their activities. Facilities were offered for workshops, some of which were Church music courses, marriage encounters, and Catholic Teachers ‘Associations, Commissions for Justice and Peace, project management courses, and parish council leaders’ courses. Conferences, consultations or seminars were hosted at different Pastoral Training Centres. Another important function of Pastoral Training Centres was to serve as documentation centres for missionary and pastoral action. These Centres produced and disseminated information such as diocesan annual pastoral priorities, annual programmes, and liturgical guidelines for the dioceses, catechetical booklets and pamphlets.

In most dioceses Pastoral Training Centres were started because there was

need to revive and reorganise communities and outstations that had been destroyed during the war. A further interesting^{xxxiii} reason for starting Pastoral Training Centres concerned the demands of Catholics who had moved from predominantly Catholic regions. These people permanently settled in remote areas where they formed communities that survived on Sunday services without a priest (they sometimes received Mass three times a year). They relied on their lay leaders for other services such as visiting the sick, burying the dead and teaching the faith. Pastoral Training Centres therefore, were started to train lay leaders for those services that priests could not provide to remote communities. This is an example of small Christian communities that started from the 'grassroots' and which are not structured from the Catholic hierarchy. Some Pastoral Training Centres were established to offer residential courses and continue as meeting places for mobile pastoral teams. Some Pastoral Training Centres were set up at certain locations to cater for the different language speakers in the various dioceses. Today, there is a Pastoral Training Centre in all the dioceses, except in Hwange (where there are three), see table below.

Table 1.2
Pastoral Training Centres in Zimbabwe

<i>Diocese</i>	<i>Pastoral Training Centre</i>	<i>Year of Opening</i>
Masvingo	Gokomere	1972
Gokwe	Shingai	1978
Harare	Rockwood	1980
Hwange	Chimuniko	1984
Bulawayo	Emthonjeni	1985
Hwange	Dingindlela	1988
Mutare	Mutare	1992
Chinhoyi	St Peter's	1998
Gweru	Gweru	2000
Hwange	Tusimpe	2002

5.1 Achievements of Pastoral Training Centres

As a result of the work of trained lay leaders the parishes experienced a number of changes. Those who went to the Pastoral Training Centres for training understood the teachings they received and implemented those teachings in their parishes. Lay participation during liturgical celebrations became visible, especially once Africanised church music and drums were introduced into church services. With the participation of trained lay leaders in evangelisation people were given reasons why some of the traditional rituals were not Christian; this in itself helped them to accept the good and reject the bad. There was an increase in the number of outstations and many people were converted to the Church. Participation in the preparations for liturgy became good catechesis for communities. Lay people began to take up lay ministries such as Sunday services without a priest, visiting and praying for the sick, conducting funeral services, praying for rain and many other needs in the communities. Trained lay leaders started to organise parish workshops led by the Justice and Peace Commission or by the Catholic development Commission. In the parishes, catechesis became more organised, complete with properly kept records and parishioners volunteering to teach catechism. There was an increase in the numbers of women trainees. More and more women began taking up lay ministries and leadership positions in their

communities. The training of lay leaders helped to improve relationships between priests and parishioners because many pastoral workers were trained, which made priests' work much easier. Priests were relieved from their heavy schedules, which gave them more time to listen to individual problems. Parish structures such as parish councils and pastoral teams were formed; these made it much easier for everyone to participate. The work of parish councils made parishioners aware of their duty to financially support the Church.

6 CONCLUSION

It was said that the training programmes offered by the Wankie National Catechetical Training Centre between 1963 and 1974 were so high that the trained catechists were of the same standard as the trained schoolteachers. The directors and trainers were degreed, competent professionals. Today Pastoral Training Centres are called to train lay leaders of an even higher calibre because these lay leaders have to function in different environments and minister to a varied audience. In urban areas they have to deal with educated elite who may well despise their low academic qualifications. Most Pastoral Training Centres in Zimbabwe were established to serve people in the rural areas at out schools and out centres. This type of training would be inadequate to face the present-day realities of Zimbabwe. The rural areas are no more as rural as they were; they now include a lot of people who have moved back from town in search of land. HIV/AIDS is devastating families in both the rural and urban areas. There is therefore a need for the creation, development and constant evaluation of a leadership-training curriculum to nurture the present leadership and to cultivate new ones. What is needed is a well-planned, relevant and inculturated programme of formation that can help people to live their faith daily. This programme of formation helps them to address the aspirations, fears, needs, sufferings and joys (GS 4) of the people they serve. Besides inculturation, there is also the area of ecumenical dialogue, which was one of the principal concerns of the Second Vatican Council (UR 1).

For Pastoral Training Centres to carry out their purposes well, they need directors. Directors have the functions of setting goals, planning, organising, programming, motivating, coordinating and evaluating the whole enterprise of Pastoral Training Centres. The ultimate aim of pastoral training is to enable the whole community to experience the fullness of life in Christ. The level of education of directors and trainers will vary according to the needs and possibilities of each diocese. However all the dioceses have to meet certain minimum standards in order to give a solid formation to lay leaders. They should be people who are able to develop a plan of action with clear objectives and practical suggestions that will help them to achieve the mission objectives of the training centres. Directors and trainers must be theologically trained and have basic skills such as the ability to teach, knowledge of languages and other relevant gifts. Directors should be able to source and manage funds for the Pastoral Training Centre. Besides qualifications and experience in the pastoral field, directors and trainers should be people who

accept ideas and suggestions, who inspire and show respect to all those who come to the Pastoral Training Centres and who lead by example. Mature and experienced directors are able to identify and assess the real needs of the dioceses as far as faith education is concerned.

Bishops should be ready to train their cadres for leadership through attending university courses and workshops. They should be given enough time to experience pastoral life both in urban and rural parishes. This will help them to produce handbooks and manuals that can be used in parishes by lay leaders who, in turn, have the task of teaching and vitalising Christian communities.

There should be some criteria for selecting those who go for training, because their contribution is indispensable to the mission of the local Church. Each diocese, perhaps, should lay down its own rules concerning the standards of those who are to be chosen for training as lay leaders. Lay leaders are often chosen and trained for particular ministries needed in the communities. This means that the different ministries are distributed among a number of people within the community. In most dioceses in Zimbabwe they no longer employ full-time lay leaders. Some ministries do not need highly educated people (e.g. Communion givers – these are men and women who bring Holy Communion to the sick or who distribute it during the service). Whatever the criteria, or whatever the ministry, the right choice of candidates is essential. Most communities choose their own lay leaders. In most communities the people chosen are those who have been actively involved in the Church. Those selected should be given adequate preparation so that they can lead and form others in turn (CL 63). Pope Paul VI pointed out (EN 73) that there should be serious preparation given to all workers of evangelisation.

The Synod of bishops for Africa deplored those African customs and practices that deprive women of their rights and respect. The Church on the continent was asked to make every effort to foster the safeguarding of these rights (EA 82). The Synod however, noted the growing awareness of women's dignity and their specific role in the Church and in society. Women^{xxxiv} have, in many ways, been released from the taboos and the myths which surrounded them in the past. Women today attain certain autonomy more rapidly than in former times. More and more have access to higher studies, making them critical of any attempt to assign them a subordinate position in society. Every person should be allowed to contribute fully from the gifts given him or her by the Holy Spirit. When referring to lay ministries there is no distinction between male or female ministries. Every Christian, of whatever sex, age or situation, is called to be an apostle. At present women are involved in nearly all spheres of life (GS 60) and they therefore ought to be permitted to play their part fully in ministry. The work of women should not be motivated by the shortage of priests and men, but should stem from their practical ingenuity, ability to organise and perseverance.

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ENDNOTES

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- 1 Laity: this is a term understood by the Church to mean all the faithful except the clergy and those who belong to approved religious congregations (Can.204). LG 31 describes the lay people as "The faithful who by baptism are incorporated into Christ, are placed in the People of God, and in their own way share the priestly, prophetic and kingly office of Christ, and to the best of their ability carry on the mission of the whole people, in the Church and in the world."
 - 2 LG *Lumen Gentium*, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church. 21 Nov 1964. (Flannery 1975:350-426).
 - 3 AA *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People. 18 Nov 1965. Flannery 1975:766-798.
 - 4 EA *Ecclesia in Africa*, The Church in Africa by Pope John Paul II. 14 Sept.1995. Gweru: Mambo Press.
 - 5 All Biblical quotations are from the African Bible, 1999, Paulines Publications Africa.
 - 6 AG *Ad Gentes Divinitus*, Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity. 7 Dec 1965. Flannery 1975:813-856.

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- 7 Benedict XV, *Maximum Illud* (1919); Pius XI, *Rerum ecclesiae* (1926); Pius XII, *Evangelii praecones*, (1951); *Fidei domum* (1957); John XXIII, *Princeps pastorum* (1959); Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1975); John Paul II, *Redemptoris missio* (1990).
- 8 Benedict XV, 1919. *Maximum illud*, in *Modern missionary documents and Africa*, 27-47. Hickey, R 1982. Dublin: Dominican Publications.
- 9 Pius XI, 1926. *Rerum ecclesiae*, in *Modern missionary documents and Africa*, 48-71. Hickey, R 1982. Dublin: Dominican Publications.
- 10 Pius XII, 1951. *Evangelii praecones*, in *Modern missionary documents and Africa*, 72-103, Hickey, R 1982. Dublin: Dominican Publications.
- 11 John XXIII, 1959. *Princeps pastorum*, in *Modern Missionary Documents and Africa*, 129-165. Hickey, R 1982, Dublin: Dominican Publications.
- 12 GS *Gaudium et Spes*, Pastoral constitution on the church in the modern world, 7 December 1965. Flannery 1975:903-1001.
- 13 RM *Redemptoris Missio*, The Permanent Validity of the Church's Missionary Mandate. Pope John Paul II. 7 December 1990. (Catholic Truth Society).
- 14 Ela, J M 1989. *My faith as an African*, Geoffrey Chapman.
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- 19 Callan, B 1927a. The training school for native catechists and teachers at Kutama. *ZMR*, (1926-1929), VIII, 115-150.
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- 21 Apel, J 1921. The catechumenate. *ZMR* (1918-1921), IV, 381-382.
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- 23 Callan, B 1927b. Missionaries and their catechists. *ZMR*, (1926-1929), V 111, 189-195.
- 24 Editor, 1962. *St Augustine's Catechetical School Wankie*, Gutu, 1962, 9, 113 of Pakati Pedu.
- 25 The Director: 1974 *History of Wankie Catechetical Training Centre*, page 5, unpublished paper. Hwange Bishop's House Archives.
- 26 The Director: 1974 *History of Wankie Catechetical Training Centre*, page 6, unpublished paper. Hwange Bishop's House Archives.
- 27 The Director: 1969 *The programme of Wankie Catechetical Training Centre*, unpublished copies of the programmes, Hwange Bishop's House Archives.
- 28 The Director: 1974 *History of Wankie Catechetical Training Centre*, page 7, unpublished paper. Hwange Bishop's House Archives.
- 29 The Director: Undated copies of *Application forms for the diploma of Wankie Catechetical Training Centre*, unpublished copies, Hwange Bishop's House Archives.
- 30 The Director: 1963 *The programme of Wankie Catechetical Training Centre*, unpublished copies of the description of programmes offered, Hwange Bishop's House Archives.
- 31 Hastings, A 1989. *African Catholicism: Essays in discovery*. London: SCM, Press.
- 32 Conferences, symposiums, consultations or seminars have been held and are held at the different Pastoral Training Centres. Seminars have been held at Gokomere on how to build small Christian communities. After the liberation war in Zimbabwe, both the laity and the clergy met to deliberate. Other conferences and consultations were on topics such as marriage, birth and death rituals, rainmaking and other ceremonies. Some Pastoral Training Centres have been organizing and holding what they called synods or congresses or study weeks on the Eucharist, or inculturation topics. At such theological conferences priests and lay people come together to listen to inputs, discuss and come up with results, which are then published at diocesan or inter-diocesan levels.
- 33 This is an example of small Christian communities that started from the 'grassroots' and not structured from above. These communities were started by Catholics who had moved from Bikita, Gutu and Chirumhanzu to settle in the Gokwe area of Hwange.
- 34 The role of women in evangelisation; this issue was discussed in the Pastoral Commission of SCEP *Dans le cadre*, July 1976.