

ONE MISSION, TWO CHURCHES: THE CATHOLIC CHURCH 1947-1997

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1. Introduction: Mission and Evangelisation, a Period of Change

In 1947, “the missions” were largely geographical regions on the frontier where Catholic Christianity and civilisation was being brought to “primitive” peoples or to those “deceived” by other religions.¹ Only some people were “missionaries” and they went to the “missions”. Many foreign born priests and religious came to Southern Africa as missionaries. They preached the faith and established the Church here. In 1947 the missionaries were the vast majority of the Catholic Church’s personnel.

Fifty years later, we don’t hear so much about “the missions”. Nowadays “mission” in the singular is the more predominant form for there is only really one mission. All Christians are called in baptism to participate in this one mission. In a certain sense all Christians are missionaries. We participate in the one mission of God given to Christ and passed on to the Church. The Church's mission is nothing more than a continuation of Christ's mission: a mission is rooted in the love of God the Father who wishes to save his people.² It is a mission which touches all aspects of human life bringing faith hope and love to a world beset with fear mistrust and hate.

In 1947, the Catholic Church in Southern Africa saw itself as the only representative of the true Church of Christ whose objective was to draw all non-Catholics into the bosom of the Church. That was the mission. The Church was seen as an alternative society to that of the world. It was concerned to set up social institutions which would allow people to live their lives in the Catholic world, the Perfect community, thus avoiding being tainted by evil of the

¹The following is a typical definition from the late 1940's: “The word ‘Mission’ used more often in the plural than in the singular, designates generally the *sending* of missionaries for the *propagation of Catholic faith* among unbelievers or infidels”. Champagne, J E 1948. *Manual of Missionary Action*, Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press.

secular world. The true church was unified and uniform throughout the world. A catholic could go to mass in Africa, Asia, Europe or America and participate in the same Latin rituals as at home. The Church was secure and confident in its conviction as the possessor of the keys to the kingdom of God.

In the fifty years since then we have seen major transformation in the ethos and consciousness of the Catholic Church in Southern Africa as it has journeyed from exclusion to participation in the social life of the nations of this region. In South Africa, the anti-Catholic rhetoric of the political authority reinforced the separation of the Catholic World from South African society. But the events of Vatican II as well as the growing involvement in the struggle against apartheid empowered a move to see the world in a new more positive way as a place to be involved in (GS 1). Consequently the Church's self understanding within that world changed radically from separation to involvement. It is the emergence and continual growth of this Vatican II model of the Church which is the defining feature of this period of Church history. The Pastoral Plan of the Catholic Church in South Africa³ which was conceived in the wake of the Synod on Evangelisation and finally launched in May 1989 probably represents the main defining symbol of this approach.

The way in which evangelisation is carried out by the Church depends on many factors. The Catholic Church in South Africa has operated within several different social spheres in the fifty years since World War II. Amongst the White group it has operated pretty much as a European Church or increasingly as a North America local Church. The principal thrust is with the social and pastoral needs and concerns of Westerners. Amongst the Black majority it has tended to evangelise using pretty much the same missionary models as those found throughout the rest of sub-Saharan Africa. However, it has also had to deal with the particular social political and economic context of apartheid, colonialism and racism. It has employed differing methods and strategies to do this: from tacit acceptance, through theoretical reflection and statements, to pastoral reflection and eventually to social and political involvement at times. More recently, the Church has had to deal with moving from being a

²*Ad Gentes Divinitus*. Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity.(AG) §2.

³See below section 3

marginalised church in a political context under Calvinist hegemony to becoming one of the many participant centres of power within a modern social democracy.⁴ In all of these varying contexts the Catholic Church has attempted to develop visions and strategies for bringing good news and for implanting itself in the Southern African community.

2. The Mission of the Settler Church

a. The South African Church as a Settler Church

The Catholic Church was established in South Africa to “Attend first to the wants of the children of the household of the faith. When the wants of this portion of your flock have been provided for, turn your attention to the native population”.⁵ Consequently as Flanagan (1982:84) points out: “right from its beginning the Catholic Church shows a two pronged approach: a Settlers' Church for Whites and a Mission Church for blacks”. In 1949,⁶ ecclesiastical statistics reported 90 000 Whites in the Settler Church and 361 000 Blacks in the Mission Church. 57 000 “coloured” and 4 000 “Indians” continued their Catholic life sometimes within, sometimes between and often outside of these two churches.

In 1967, the final year for which racial figures are available for all dioceses, the Settler Church had about 190 000 “Europeans” and the Mission Church 900000 “non-Europeans”.⁷ These figures point to a 111% increase in Settler Church Christians and a 150% increase in

⁴See Bilton 1981:185-206. The Catholic Church's power is persuasive rather than coercive. It informs the value system of its members and is sometimes able to mobilise action to influence decisions made in the society.

⁵Papal instructions as outlined by Bishop Ricards in Brown 1960:194

⁶The Catholic Directory of South Africa 1950. Cape Town: Salesian Press. The figures exclude the territories of Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), Basutoland (Lesotho), Swaziland and Bechuanaland (Botswana). Note that the terms Settler Church and Mission Church never appear in official figures and would not be recognised by ecclesiastical authorities for whom the Church is clearly one. The figures produced here and below are arrived at by apportioning the White group to the Settler Church and the rest to the Mission Church.

⁷Source Catholic Directory of South Africa 1951. CT:Salesian Press. The figures are not strictly accurate as there is no figure for the Bethlehem vicariate

Mission Christians. During the same period the population increased by 54% for “European” and 67% for “non-Europeans”.⁸ By 1974 the growth in Catholics since 1949 was 162 % for “Europeans” and 295% for “non-Europeans”.⁹ These figures show that the years between 1947 and 1975 were great growth years for the Catholic Church. From 1975 onwards the trend changed and the rate of growth began to decline. The Church began to lose significant numbers of members as well as continuing to attract new ones. The loss was for four main reasons: The decline in the number of Catholic schools, ongoing secularisation, the Church's increasing political involvement, and the growth in the Coping-healing churches which provided people with a way of coping with the increasing stress of South African Society.¹⁰

In 1947 the Settler Church held a clear hegemony in the ethos and praxis of the Catholic Church. The Bishops were all Whites: either missionaries from overseas or South African sons of immigrants. They were all trained in the Ecclesiastical system which proclaimed the Universality and Uniformity of the Latin rite Church throughout the world. The Settler ethos was rooted in the belief of the superiority of Western Civilization and the “White man’s burden”¹¹ to educate and civilize the native but at the same time to “keep him in his place”. The Settler community looked to the Metropole for its identity, values and justification. In the South African Settler Church the Metropoles were: England - as the colonising power; Ireland since a large number of Settler Catholics and clergy¹² came from there (See Higgins

⁸Source: Catholic Directory of Southern Africa 1968. CT: Salesian Press. Note the comment on the accuracy of these figures in the previous footnote.

⁹These figures are obtained by estimating the racial figures for Johannesburg. The total population change in the country from 1949 to 1974 is 72% for Europeans and 100% for non-Europeans. Source Catholic Directory for Southern Africa 1975. Cape Town: Salesian Press.

¹⁰These figures are taken from the Ecclesiastical statistics and are different to those provided in the government census. They are estimations from Catholic sources of their size. Only the South African dioceses are included here. See Bate 1995 for an analysis of the decline in adherence to mainline churches including the Catholic Church in the period 1980-1990.

¹¹From the poem by Rudyard Kipling.

¹²Irish clergy could be found almost everywhere in the country during the 1950's but were particularly dominant in the dioceses of Port Elizabeth, Cape Town, Kokstad, Lydenburg, Pietersburg (Tzaneen), Bloemfontein and Volksrust.

1972: 36) and Germany the home country for the Bishops, clergy and religious of many of the mission dioceses.¹³ The Settler Church was a church rooted in Europe and indeed its members were called “Europeans” including all those born in Africa of African born parents.

b. From European Church to Western Church

During the period under review the Settler Church has changed its self identity in a way that may be expressed as the movement from a church of “Europeans” to a church of “Whites” to a church of “Westerners”. Whilst some White South Africans still refer to themselves as European, most now do not: they see themselves as Whites. Since the 1980's more and more recognise themselves as being from Western culture and there is a greater willingness to integrate any from the other groups especially rich “Asians” and “Coloureds”. The opening of Catholic schools to other races has had something to do with this as did the political changes of the 1980's which dropped a lot of petty-apartheid laws¹⁴ and which enfranchised “Coloureds” and “Indians” albeit in their own parliaments but with nonetheless a limited form of participation in the political process. Clearly, the reality of the “New South Africa” will further accelerate this integration.

Two other factors have led to an increasing influence of the North American culture and ethos on the Settler Church. The first relates to a world-wide phenomenon of growing American cultural influence through marketing, advertising, the media, the “Cold War” and the growing political dominance of the US in general. South African White society now increasingly resembles the more rootless, flexible, utilitarian and money centred US culture than it does Europe with its greater cultural homogeneity and tradition in the nation states.

¹³Germany supplied much of the clergy of the dioceses of Kimberley, Keimoes, Aliwal, Umtata, Oudtshoorn, Queenstown, Mariannhill, Eshowe, Lydenburg, Bethlehem, Windhoek and Keetmanshoop. Pockets of Belgian and Dutch influence in the Clergy and Hierarchy were found in Pietersburg, Klerksdorp and Kroonstad. French OMI's continued to have influence in Natal and the Transvaal Provinces.

¹⁴Apartheid was popularly divided into two forms. Grand Apartheid referred to the vision of the ruling National party incarnated in the laws of residential and political separation. Petty Apartheid referred to the racial separation of public facilities such as buses, beaches, cinemas and restaurants. Petty apartheid was gradually dismantled in the 1980's as part of the “reform” process.

A second factor has been the influence that North American theology and ministerial models have had on the Settler Church since Vatican II. Most Western parishes now use United States of America sourced catechetical, ministerial and training programmes. Most training events and workshops are influenced by American models and increasingly, priests, religious and lay leaders working in the Settler Church go for training to the USA. North American inculturated liturgical practices continues to grow in the White and other Western South African parishes.

c. A Threatened Church

Part of the mission, ethos and strategy of the Settler Church has been conditioned by the fact that this church was a threatened church. De Gruchy (1982:71-2) points out that Afrikaner Calvinism was highly influenced by Abraham Kuyper who saw that “. . . by the side of romanism and in opposition to it, calvinism made its appearance, not merely to create a different church form, but an entirely different form for human life. . .” De Gruchy goes on to show that both the history of the Dutch and Huguenot settlers (Protestants escaping from Catholic persecutors in Europe) and the idea that “calvinism is in principle in conflict with Rome” (:72) led to the emergence of what was known as "*die Roomse gevaar*" (the Roman danger). Consequently, with the accession to, and continuance in political power of, the Afrikaner based National Party, the Church found itself on the defensive against a State and a White culture which was antipathetic towards it.

This attitude was very clear in the debate about the release of the 1957 SACBC “Statement on Apartheid” which some Bishops considered too hostile to the government and the views of the "many Catholics [who] accepted apartheid in South Africa” (SACBCM 1957:26). The threat from the State could also be seen as the debate continued and it was noted that the “government was already determined that the Church should not rise above five percent of the population” (SACBCM 1957:26). It was largely the Settler Church which had to face this wave of antipathy. White Catholics had to carve out a place for themselves within a White society that was unwelcoming and often actively hostile.

d. Responding to the Threat: The Setting Up of a Catholic World

The certainty provided by the pre-Vatican II Catholic ideology and the threat provided by the South African context of Calvinist hegemony resulted in the Catholic Settler Church responding by setting up a Catholic ghetto enclave within prevailing White society where all of the religious and social needs of Catholics could be met from cradle to grave. The prevailing missionary strategy involved setting up Catholic institutions and structures within which Catholics could live their human and Christian lives. The Settler Church was particularly good at providing schools and many of the teaching sisters were working in this church rather than in the Mission Church. Flanagan (1982:90) notes that “in 1960 only 300 of the 2400 sisters and almost none of the teaching brothers in South Africa were employed in black schools” . She also shows how the Catholic schools in some urban areas were almost entirely at the service of Whites only: “In 1970 the segregated school system provided Johannesburg with twenty white secondary schools but only one black” (:90). Similar proportions could be found within other institutions such as hospitals and retreat centres. These were largely part of the Settler Church's mission to respond to the religious and social needs of its people within a Catholic lifestyle.

A similar observation could be made with regard to church buildings. Those in White areas became more and more beautiful whilst those in the Black areas remained usually very simple. Such a situation caused Fr. Joseph Fitzgerald canonical visitor to the Oblate provinces of South Africa in 1960-61 to remark in his Transvaal report that “Many new and very beautiful Churches are appearing in the parishes, and Johannesburg and the Rand bid fair to becoming cities of beautiful Churches....Under present conditions it has been thought wiser to build ‘utility’ Churches in the Townships” (Fitzgerald 1960:7-8). Note his use of the code words: “parish” for Settler Church and “mission” for the Mission Church. This was a very common distinction and continues even today in some areas.

Other means were used to develop social support structures in the Settler Church. The reinforcing of Roman Catholic identity was a constant preoccupation and events such as the Marian Congress in 1952 and “Corpus Christi” processions in the major cities served this purpose. Organisations such as the Knights of Da Gama, the Catholic Women's League and The Legion of Mary were vital instruments in promoting a Catholic lifestyle and adherence to

a Catholic ethos which promised salvation in the next world and actualised it in this world through institutions serving the social and personal needs of Catholics.

As the Settler Church transformed its identity into the Western Church, the nature of its institutions began to change. This was particularly so after the paradigm shift of Vatican II where re-education and updating became very important. Institutions set up at this time included the “Theological Winter School” created to provide post Vatican II theological updating, especially of the clergy; The South African Council of Priests, The South African Council of Catholic Laity and The Catholic Welfare Council. All these initially responded largely to Settler issues.

During this period, the SACBC began to look for ways to broaden its focus and coopt priests, religious and lay people into its structures. One of the ways it did this was by introducing “Commissions” to replace its “Departments” responsible for particular areas of mission and ministry. The new commissions were much broader in scope in an attempt to respond to the changed post Vatican II context. For the first time the Mission Church was not dealt with as a separate department of the Conference.

e. An Apostolic Church

On the Apostolic level the Settler Church employed three main strategies: The first was a gradual assimilation of non-Catholics into the Church. This was done through means such as the witness value of its institutions, the effect of Catholic education on non-Catholic pupils and the use of Parish based “convert classes”. The second of these was a direct apostolate to Afrikaners which although bearing little fruit had been a concern of the Church from the beginning.¹⁵ The third was through ecumenical activity.

Most of the conversions to Catholicism were achieved through the first strategy. Many converted as a result of attending Catholic schools. Others as a result of marrying into Catholic families. The second strategy was not so successful. In 1952, the Bishops approved

¹⁵Brown 1960:176-193.

the setting up of a "*Katolieke Afrikanersentrum*". Bishop Van Velsen in Kroonstad Diocese and the Dutch Dominican Province were particularly active in this apostolate. St Nicholas Priory had been set up by the English Dominicans in 1930 to provide a Catholic intellectual presence in one of the hearts of Afrikaner Calvinism at Stellenbosch. The Dominican house of studies was set up and Dominicans did their seminary studies there until the late 1960's. The Afrikaans apostolate was seen to be a difficult mission particularly given the anti-Catholic tradition and culture of Afrikaners. At the 1957 SACBC meeting, Bishop Van Velsen reported that "particularly speaking little had been achieved" (SACBCM 1957:30). A further strategy was the publication of a Catholic periodical in Afrikaans. *Die Brug* despite operating at a substantial loss, continued publication for a number of years and "reached public libraries, universities and even Dutch Reformed seminaries" (:31). Whilst this mission strategy bore little fruit in terms of converts it did provide a Catholic presence in the closed White Afrikaner society and for this reason alone was important. The Afrikaner apostolate was aimed largely at White Afrikaners. But it should be remembered that many Afrikaans speaking people were not White. And in fact during this period, many Afrikaans speaking non-White people were evangelised and became Catholics. In fact the number of Afrikaans speaking Catholics grew rapidly in this period in the Western part of the country. Some parts of the Keimoes diocese were entirely Catholic (the town of Pella for example) being founded around mission stations. The dioceses of Keimoes, Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, Oudtshoorn and Keetmanshoop¹⁶ were particularly successful in their outreach to Afrikaans speakers but these were operating more within the Mission Church than the Settler Church. Today the Oratory of St Philip Neri in Oudtshoorn, founded in 1983, continues the work of Afrikaans apostolate focussing on the publication of liturgical books and media.

Ecumenism was an important part of the apostolic outreach of the Settler Church. Several institutions dealing with ecumenical issues were set up during the period especially at the level of the SACBC. A research institute was formed in 1969 followed soon by a secretariate for non-believers. Relations with the South African Council of Churches (SACC) became increasingly strong during the 1970's and 1980's and the SACBC issued at least one statement

¹⁶Between 1947 and 1974 Keimoes diocese grew by 300% in the number of coloured Catholics almost all of whom were Afrikaans speaking. In Cape Town the growth was 400%. In Port Elizabeth 300%, in Oudtshoorn 400% and in Keetmanshoop 400%. Source: Catholic Directories of

during the crisis years of the 1980's together with the SACC. In 1996 the SACBC applied for full membership of the SACC following a growing worldwide trend of National Catholic Conferences. Being a minority in a largely Protestant country where the contextual issues were mainly being drawn on political, ethnic and economic lines rather than on religious issues, it was perhaps not surprising that ecumenical cooperation would grow. One of the major projects for this cooperation was the socio-political ecumenical agency DIAKONIA in Durban which was to play such an important role in the social and political mission of the Church in the 1980's.¹⁷

3. Evangelisation in the Mission Church

a. The Church Plantation Model

Making converts to Catholicism from amongst the various non-White indigenous groups occurred in “the missions”. Missions were set up amongst the Asians and Coloureds throughout South Africa but the majority of the missions were involved with the various indigenous Africans: Khoisan and/or “Coloured” in the West and Bantu groupings in the Centre, North and East. All of these groupings can be collectively referred to as the “Mission Church”. In many ways it was a different Church to the Settler Church. It had different structures, languages, locations and priests even though a few moved between the Settler Church and the Mission Church particularly in the rural areas where a parish might have a few “Europeans” who had Mass in English on their own. The growth of the Mission Church in Southern Africa during the period after the Second World War was spectacular especially up to the mid 1970's. From then on, however, this Church began to lose numbers in much the same way as other Main-line churches.¹⁸

The strategy of the Mission Church in South Africa was similar to that in much of the rest of sub-Saharan Africa and indeed in European colonies world wide. The mission model

the relevant years (1950; 1975)

¹⁷See Walshe 1995:118-120 and Kearney in Bate 1996 for the work of Diakonia

¹⁸For statistics and an analysis of this decline see Bate 1995

followed was articulated missiologically as “Church Plantation” (Verkuyl 1978:181-183). This strategy relies upon the setting up of large mission stations equipped with a number of institutions for the “upliftment” of the local population. The school and the mission hospital or clinic were the most ubiquitous but other institutions organised farming, vocational training, trade and job training as well as other skills training. The “main mission” would be surrounded by a number of smaller communities or “outstations” where a church would be built and the priest would visit to say Mass. People were attracted to the Catholic Church because membership opened access to the institutions. However it should also be noted that most Catholic institutions also accepted non-Catholics if the numbers of Catholics was not enough. Indeed this was one of the major lines of access of the evangelisation process to non-Catholics. Many non-Catholics were converted to Catholicism after a number of years of living in a Catholic ethos and benefiting from the Catholic institutions.

As the number of missionaries increased they moved into the larger or more attractive outstations which themselves became mission centres. The process was simple and highly effective. What it required to make it work well was a large number of skilled, dedicated and cheap human beings. The Religious Institutes and Orders were the ones able to supply this woman and manpower and so whilst they were in a position to do so this mission strategy was highly effective. It worked! However, by the mid 1960's numbers of vocations began to decline alarmingly, particularly in the first world, the hitherto main source of missionaries. As the numbers available in the religious congregations began to decline, the whole missionary system began to falter and weaken. This decrease continued throughout the post Vatican II era and by the 1980's very few foreign missionaries were being sent to Southern Africa. Consequently the Church had to begin to look more intensively for local vocations. During the 1970's this mission strategy came under increasing criticism by indigenous Christians world wide who saw it as paternalistic: stifling the emergence of local leadership who just did not have the resources or the cultural mind-set and value system to continue being Church in this institution focussed way. A “Missionary Moratorium” was called for particularly in the Protestant churches.¹⁹

¹⁹See Verkuyl 1978: 334-335 and Anderson 1974:133-141

b. The Centrality of Education as a Means of Evangelisation

In 1953, the Catholic Church controlled 15% of all Black schools (Abraham 1989: 62). This was by far the most visible Catholic outreach into South African society. It was seen as an indispensable part of the Church and its mission. Flanagan (1982:87) writes: “Many Bishops simply could not conceive of a Catholic Church without schools. The majority felt that, without schools, the Church would lose its influence, vocations would diminish and many Catholics would fall away from the Church”. These views were to be put to the test as the Nationalist government devised and enacted its “Bantu Education” policy which removed the State subsidy from mission schools and placed all of Black education under direct government control. Despite a valiant rearguard action by the Church, financial constraints eventually led to the closing or handing over to State control of a vast number of its schools so that by 1995 it controlled only a tiny proportion.²⁰

The mission schools had a major impact on Catholic missionary endeavour. It was an effective, culturally mediated pastoral response to culturally mediated human needs. The cultural medium in this case arose from the modernisation process and the resulting acculturation between Modern Western (Colonial) culture and African Traditional culture. Many Black people wanted to find ways to participate in the new emerging culture which was seen as offering many benefits. The cultural key to this participation was “education” which offered a route to socialisation into the emerging society. However mission schools also provided an ethos, morality and world-view which was usually readily assimilated by those taking the key and opening the door. So many of those going to Catholic schools readily became Catholics. Consequently, the closing of the schools did inevitably lead to the lessening of Catholic influence in Black society and indeed to a decline in Catholic growth.

The mission schools strategy was very effective in gaining converts but it was increasingly criticised after Vatican II. A number of indigenous Bishops throughout Africa were in the forefront of this critique. In 1977, Bishop Kalilombe of Malawi criticised the Church's policy of setting up institutions to compete with the State. He felt this was bringing European ways

²⁰See Abraham 1989 62-8 for an interesting account of this period.

of doing things to Africa and reflected a cultural aberration of missionaries. The Church “should attempt to involve herself at a much more basic level with the life and suffering of the people”.²¹ Kalilombe was speaking at a time when there was much questioning of the missionary effort and a more critical appraisal of their real contribution to the world. A second important voice of critique came from Bishop Zwane of Swaziland. Zwane criticised the self sufficiency of the missionary effort in that it was staffed and resourced from the home country. In its self sufficiency it gave no place to Black Christians other than to be the objects of the process: outside of it and uncommitted to it.

With many vocations from Germany, Ireland and elsewhere, and with adequate foreign money, there was little pressure on the local black people to provide support for the Church in the form of trained personnel. By obtaining assistance from abroad, the missionaries did not create a sense of self-reliance among black Catholics. As a result blacks were unable to develop a sense of full responsibility for the Church, and tended not to feel wholly part of it.

(Zwane 1982:

120)

This critique is very serious and goes to the vision of mission the Church has. The lack of vocations in the missionary period seems to support the view that the Church's institutional missionary endeavour evangelised in that it provided services which led to conversion and adherence to the Church. However this approach was far less effective in leading to a real human transformation and sense of true belonging and responsibility. It produced followers but few active leaders. At the same time it should be noted that the conversion of large numbers of people has always been missiologically important in the initial phase. Deepening and commitment are things which come with time.

c. The Search for New Forms of Evangelisation as the Institutions closed

Several factors combined together in prompting the Church to look for other means and strategies of evangelisation and mission from the 1970's onwards. These included the impact of the Bantu Education Act, the change in vision wrought by Vatican II and the decline in availability of foreign missionaries from the 1970's onwards.

²¹See Abraham 1989: 118 n. 11

Already in 1957, the Bishops were discussing the “African Apostolate of the Future” (SACBCM 1957:18-23). Four areas of focus were considered: The first was “The Apostolate of Christian Doctrine”. This was an attempt to look for ways to give people a sounder knowledge of their faith. A second area of focus for future apostolate was “The Apostolate amongst Urban Africans” who were becoming a different group of people with different needs to the more rural mission Christians whom the old system still served. Migratory labour was seen as a major issue here since most urban Christians came out of this social system and urban Blacks were restricted by very severe legislation about who could and could not reside in an urban area. Work with Trades Unions and worker organisations were also part of the Church's approach here and during the period of under review the Church was actively involved through the Young Christian Workers (YCW) and the Movement of Christian Workers (MCW).

A third area was the focus on catechists as primary evangelisers in areas where there were no priests. The training of these catechists was now a priority. Several training centres were set up for them, thus ensuring an acceptable level of knowledge and ability. Properly trained catechists would then be employed as Church officials even, if possible, “promoting catechists to minor orders or even the diaconate” (SACBCM 1957:19).

The final area of focus for the proposed “African Apostolate of the Future” was based around the utilisation of the Catholic African Union as a vehicle for lay participation and commitment in the Church. With this in mind the name was changed to Catholic African Organisation. It was to be the coordination body for all “associations, unions and federations” (SACBCM 1957:22) and the official body for Lay Apostolate in the “African” arena. The Catholic African Organisation played an important role in the promotion of lay involvement in the Church of the 1950's, and 1960's. It provided forums for Black people to meet, discuss and set up Catholic structures. However it was largely superseded by the growth of lay ministries and the development of Small Christian Communities (SCC's) from the 1970's onwards.

Several initiatives focussed on youth. As the schools closed in the 1960's and 1970's so the Church's penetration and influence amongst young people declined with it. It was clear that

other strategies were required to reach out to young people. Bucher (1973) made the most detailed study of this issue and proposed the promotion of the “Chiro” movement, a Belgian Youth movement similar to the scouts but with a Catholic ethos and a catechetical thrust. The movement had proved somewhat successful in Burundi and Bucher set out to investigate whether it could be used here. He was appointed as full time National Chaplain of Chiro during the 1970's before becoming Bishop of Bethlehem in 1976. During this period Chiro grew reasonably well especially in the more rural parts of the country and joined the YCW, YCS and CLG (Christian Life Groups) as the four movements providing outreach of the Church amongst young people during this period.

Finally we should note the powerful influence of women on the Church’s evangelisation efforts. Through organisations such as the Women of St Anne, The Sacred Heart Sodality and others like them, women played a major role in catechising, visiting the sick, maintaining Catholic standards at home, educating their children in the faith and so forth. As the number of Catholic institutions declined, much of the work of initial evangelisation fell increasingly on the parish structures and many women have been trained in various catechetical and ministerial services.

d. Emergence of Pastoral Regions

Pope Paul VI’s Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, stressed the importance of the evangelisation of cultures and it became increasingly clear that a more contextualised approach to mission and evangelisation was required. Such an approach required greater sensitivity to the culture of the people. In order to facilitate this process, the Mission Church was divided into a number of Pastoral Regions. From 1976 the SACBC approved “the establishment of the Xhosa and Zulu Regional Pastoral Councils” (SACBCM 1976:11). These were soon followed by the Sotho and Tswana Regional Pastoral Councils. The role of these councils was to look at pastoral needs and concerns which were emerging out of the linguistic and cultural context of the people. In the plenary sessions of the SACBC, the pastoral regions regularly reported on their endeavours (cf. SACBCM 1982:56-60). The concept of culture adopted was a linguistic one as the names of the regions indicates. Here, then, was a missionary strategy developing along the lines of ethnicity. The councils were

quite successful in coming up with translations and adaptations in ritual and prayer. The Xhosa prayer book (*Bongani Nkosi*) for example contained services for the healing of the sick, protection against lightning and blessing of houses with incense. An Afrikaans language pastoral region was added in 1984 and a Pedi region later. However the weakness of a purely linguistic division led to different criteria being used in the setting up of the “Northern Pastoral Region” established in 1984 “because of the variety of languages in use in the whole of the Northern area (SACBCM1984:67).

e. The Mission Church Today

Today the Mission Church is a much more fragmented church than it was at the beginning of the period under review. The old style church plantation mission model still exists particularly in the rural areas under the control of overseas missionaries. But its influence continues to wane as it no longer represents main stream thinking regarding mission strategy and methods and it is increasingly unable to maintain its institutions for lack of manpower.

The Catechists movement reached its peak in the 1970's and full time Catechists acting as leaders in the smaller rural communities are increasingly being replaced by lay-ministers and married deacons²². The influence of the Catholic Africa Organisation has been largely superseded by parish councils and lay ministries, although the lay societies particularly of the women have continued to be influential in the life of the Church and in its ministry especially in catechesis. However, today it is the Small Christian Communities which are becoming increasingly important in both urban and rural areas (Bate 1996:251-301).

The Mission Church is now beginning to supply a relatively large number of vocations. Many young people are seeing a future for themselves as full time ministers in the Church. The reasons for this are numerous but basically have to do with commitment. The Mission Church has clearly responded to some of Zwane's critique and as a result an increasingly numbers of young Blacks are ready to commit to it and accept responsibility within it. Much of this has to do with a specific change of focus in the Mission Church which has recognised

²²In 1996 there were 235 permanent deacons Southern Africa. Source Catholic

the need to look for local vocations rather than overseas ones. The largest Religious Congregation of men in Southern Africa is the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. The various provinces of the Oblates held a series of leadership meetings in the 1970's identifying their priorities and orientations. Vocation was taken as a major priority and formation houses for Pre-Novitiate were set up and have proved successful over the years.²³ Many other religious Congregations have now have adopted this strategy. The merging of the Black and White National Seminaries has also helped to empower Black students particularly since their numbers have grown and their control over the ethos of the Seminary has increased.

As the demographics of Southern Africa changes and urbanisation takes hold, the Urban Black church becomes increasingly important. We might predict that gradually this church will merge with the Urban Settler church to form one entity since the needs, concerns and culture of these groupings will continue to come closer together. At the same time, of course, we will see that paradoxically, as this merging becomes more evident, the culture card will become increasingly important for the urban dweller as urban Blacks, in particular, search for identity in the urban melting point. But this is no different to the context of multicultural urban conglomerations in North America and Europe who the main urban Catholic groupings of Johannesburg, Pretoria, Cape Town, Durban and Port Elizabeth will increasingly resemble.

The Mission Church is then destined to continue for some while longer but as a more marginalised church occupying one place amongst many in the complex of church models which make up contemporary South African Catholicism.

4. The Emergence of Local Consciousness: The Pastoral Planning Model of Evangelisation

a. Early Signs

Whilst the Catholic Church of 1947 had the appearance of two churches, the Catholic Church of 1998 is a church with an emerging local consciousness. Whilst pockets of separation in

Directory of Southern Africa 1996-1997. There were no permanent deacons before 1970.

Settler and Mission church continue there is today a greater sense of oneness in identity and mission. The prime catalyst of this emerging consciousness has been the Pastoral Plan adopted in 1989 which somehow set Catholics along the line of a common purpose and mission albeit with different cultural and contextual approaches.

The theme of the World Synod of Bishops in 1974 was evangelisation. This theme obviously struck a chord with the transitions in the South African church and played a large part in providing an impetus for the change in its mission strategy. After the synod and fuelled by the powerful papal document *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, the South African church set up its own enquiry into the state of evangelisation in the South African context. This enquiry was called ETSA (Evangelisation Today in Southern Africa) and a White Father,²⁴ C Hulsen, was engaged to embark on a sociological enquiry into the state of the Catholic Church in South Africa. His report together with the subsequent events in Soweto and around the country in the late 1970s eventually led to the emergence of a Pastoral Plan for the region.

The major thrust of Fr. Hulsen's work was to emphasise the present reality of the Church in South Africa as an overwhelmingly Black church. Following from this, he concluded that “the Church's general policy, her pastoral planning, her new structures, her prayerful study and attention should be clearly determined by the needs and spiritual and social demands of her black majority” (Hulsen 1976:180). In this regard, he suggested that the principal problem that the Catholic Church faces is that it is “[s]tructured along lines that are foreign and white in a country which is overwhelmingly black” (:113).

Hulsen's work was somewhat overshadowed by the events in the country from 1976 onwards which served to emphasise to the whole country the reality that South Africa is a predominantly Black country and will reflect that fact one way or the other. These truths, so obvious in hindsight, were in fact quite strange to many centres of authority and power in the South Africa of the mid 1970's. Hulsen's study included a survey of Catholic opinion on all

²³See Oblate Orientations 1976. Oblate Formation 1978

²⁴The Missionaries of Africa (SMA) have been traditionally referred to as the “White Fathers” because of the colour of their religious habit. The term is not popular amongst them

levels. In his conclusion he suggests that the Church is too inward looking: “The entire theology of the ‘Church in the World’ and the relationship between the Church and the world is still very much foreign terrain” (Hulsen 1979:141). He recommended that there was a need for evangelisation to change this mentality to “conscientise” the faithful, to Africanise the Church and to encourage it to get involved in the struggle against apartheid (:145-155).

In their “Declaration of Commitment” (SACBCD 1977) the Bishops decided on a “Pastoral Consultation” to bring together Catholics from all over the country in order to determine, together with the Bishops, “a policy on Church life and Apostolate but not on doctrinal or canonical matters” (§E21). This Pastoral Consultation was carried out in two stages.²⁵ During 1979, various groups and organisations within the dioceses of the conference were asked to indicate their own needs and priorities. These findings were then summarised in a base document for the “Interdiocesan Pastoral Consultation” in 1980. This meeting brought together 178 delegates representing Catholics of South Africa, Namibia, Swaziland and Botswana for four days of reflection at Hammanskraal. The consultation made over one hundred recommendations in six basic areas of Catechetics, Liturgy and Sacraments, Lay Responsibility and Formation, Justice, and Family Life and Youth (SACBCD 1980:48-53). The large number and variety of the recommendations was an indication of the magnitude of the task of renewal sought by the delegates to the consultation. It was immediately clear that this was going to be a long term process and that there was a need to develop a consultative ongoing process of pastoral planning in order to develop a process which would somehow respond to the many needs which surfaced. So from 1983 onward, preparations were made to develop an effective “Pastoral Plan” which would respond to the complex needs of the South African context. In order to help the whole Church to reflect on this issue, a “Pastoral Working Paper” was drawn up and submitted to parishes, movement, religious communities, and individuals for their reflection. This process continued during 1984 and 1985 and from the comments and responses received, the following major points emerged (SACBCD 1987:4):

- a) There is a need for a Pastoral Plan in the Church in Southern Africa inspired

today.

by the understanding of the Church which emerged in Vatican II.

- b) This understanding of the Church must be related to the realities of life in Southern Africa.
- c) There should be a key theme for the Pastoral Plan and this can be formulated as “Community Serving Humanity”
- d) that the basic element in the plan must be FORMATION i.e. the evangelization of all people in the Church: bishops, priests, religious, laity, adults, youth and children in terms of the vision expressed by the theme.

The Pastoral Plan was formally introduced to the Church in 1987 by means of a “Pastoral Plan Kit” which was sent to all dioceses and through them to all parishes in the country. Each parish was guided through a series of reflections on the theme and asked to adopt or reject the plan, giving reasons. The matter was then discussed at diocesan synods held towards the end of 1987. The response was overwhelmingly positive although some groupings felt that the approach was overly humanistic and secular not giving enough weight to the spiritual dimension. As a result of these deliberations, the Bishops Conference formally decided to commit the churches of Southern Africa to following the Pastoral Plan from Pentecost 1989 onwards. The significance of this step on the ecclesiological level is that for the first time the whole Catholic Church, White and Black, Settler and Mission was set on the path of common purpose and vision. The ideal of unity entered praxis to the extent that Catholics from all walks of life began to be involved in the Pastoral plan process.

b. The Pastoral Plan and its Theme

Pastoral planning is the means that the Church uses in order to develop methods and means of releasing its mission in South Africa (SACBCD 1987:2). Its basic purpose is to attempt to “improve the quality of Christianity in the church” (SACBCD 1987:4). It does this in two basic ways. The first is to provide a vision of the kind of church we wish to be. This vision was summed up in the theme “Community Serving Humanity”. The second is by means of a process of evangelisation and renewal which will enable the Church to live its vision.

²⁵This section and the following two sections comes from Bate 1991:72-80

The mission to become a true community indicates a response to the division of apartheid and a rejection of the image of the Church as a “Mass of Individual Consumers”. The mission to become a “Serving Community” (SACBCD 1987:16) implies a special commitment to those in desperate need: “whose humanity is degraded or denied in some way or other” (:17). It is a commitment to building a better world. In the South African context the restoration of human dignity takes on a particularly important role in the ministry of service. The Church must “preach and practice and fight for the dignity of all people. It must oppose all systems and laws that enforce . . . injustices” (SACBCD 1987:10).

c. The Pastoral Plan and its Method

Three particular methods were highlighted as means of increasing the sense of community and of the serving Church. These were: the creation of Small Christian Communities; the “Renew” process and Multiple Task Groups. The first two of these have been very effective whilst the third was hardly used.²⁶ In South Africa as elsewhere in Africa, the Catholic Church has opted for Small Christian Communities as the means of living faith. They are seen as a privileged way of living the aim of the Church as a Community serving Humanity. They are a means of “initiation into a spiritually richer and more vigorous Christian Life in which the laity assumes its full and rightful role in many aspects of the Church's mission” (SACBCD 1987:20). They are described as follows:

They are neighbourhood communities; they are intended to be permanent; they meet weekly in members' homes by rotation; they are based on Gospel sharing and on communal action; they form a network coordinated through the Parish Pastoral Council. All Catholics, including members of associations and movements, are invited to participate. There is no blueprint or universal form for such communities. Experience has shown that they flourish equally well in urban and rural areas.

(SACBCD 1989:37)

Many dioceses decided to opt for the “Renew” programme as a means of introducing the Pastoral Plan. It was developed in the United States as a programme for parish renewal in

²⁶See Bate 1991:76-78 for a more detailed presentation of these methods

evangelisation and community development. It uses the liturgy and small group discussion to achieve its goals. In linking “Renew” with the introduction of the Pastoral plan the Bishops described it as a:

spiritual renewal process to help parishioners develop a closer relationship with Christ, to make an adult commitment to Jesus as central in their lives and to open them to the power of the Holy Spirit so that they become more authentic witnesses.

(SACBCD 1989:38)

d. What Results?

During 1995 The Catholic Theological Society of Southern Africa investigated the effects of the Pastoral Plan in the life of the Church after seven years (Bate 1996). This study reported on a growing emphasis in six areas of praxis linked to the ethos and spirit of the Pastoral plan. These were: Reconstruction and Development, Inculturation, The growing empowerment of women, Ecumenical and Interfaith cooperation in ministry, Healing, and Evangelisation especially through Small Christian Communities. Whilst the Pastoral Plan may not have completely transformed the praxis of the Church it has played an important role in rooting the Church in the life of the people and in opening up new creative ways for lay people in particular to be agents of mission and evangelisation.

e. The role of Lumko

Much of the emergence of the Pastoral Plan approach to mission and evangelisation has come as a result of the work and influence of the Lumko Missiological Institute. Lumko is probably the most influential institution emerging from the South African local Church and yet it is relatively unknown within the country. Its programs are used in more than 65 countries and have been translated into scores of languages.²⁷ The Lumko mission near Ladyfrere in the Eastern Cape was the original centre of several institutions for training and study in catechetics, pastoral studies, missiology, anthropology, music and African languages. The Lumko Missiological Institute was originally one of these. It was set up in 1962 and

²⁷I am indebted to Fr Anselm Prior, Director of the Lumko Missiological Institute for the information in this section. See also Prior (nd) for a more detailed presentation of the

originally it was concerned with missiological and anthropological research. A number of seminars were organised on these themes. Several publications were also produced. A language laboratory was set up for African languages and it was the first institute in South Africa to produce tapes for the study of African languages. These tapes are still used today throughout the country. Eventually all the various institutions on the mission were subsumed under the Lumko Missiological Institute. From 1970 onwards it began to be concerned with training for pastoral ministry and began to run training courses. An African Music department also emerged during this period. In 1976 the Bishops approved the Constitution of the Lumko Missiological Institute. The institute's principal task was the preparing of programs for the involvement of lay people in the life and ministry of the Church.

Early on the Lumko staff saw that the Mission Church model had severe limitations for ministry and a new way forward was required (Lobinger nd). The strategy of mission in the Mission Church model usually required a travelling priest residing at the main mission and a number of catechists residing in the larger outstations and functioning as local church ministers. The main weaknesses of the model were that it was too dependent on individuals and did not encourage "ownership" of the Church by the people in it. Influenced heavily by South America models especially emerging from the Medellin and Pueblo²⁸ councils, and also by the Methodist model in the Eastern Cape where most of the Lumko founders worked, the Institute moved towards the vision of small communities becoming the local expression of Church. In this way it was hoped that the local people within these small communities would be more able to carry forward the life of the Church on as many levels as possible. A large number of programs fostering the skills development of lay people in the running of the Church were drawn up. They followed the methodology of "non-dominating leadership" (Lobinger nd). More than a hundred of these have been drawn up and published and new programmes continue to emerge. Many have been translated and have been used by local churches in many parts of the world.

history of the Lumko Institute

²⁸Medellin and Puebla refer to the Second and Third General Conferences of the Latin American Bishops. These two conferences have had an international impact because of the vision and directions set in them for evangelisation and liberation. The Medellin council was

This new approach to mission and evangelisation was a sharp move away from a praxis of Church which reserved ministry to the clergy and religious. It was an attempt to involve more people in the life of the Church and its ministry, particularly in their own areas. In this way Catholics were encouraged not to see themselves as passive recipients of the sacraments but as active agents of evangelisation. Programs of Gospel sharing encouraged Catholics to read the scriptures and reflect on the Word for themselves and to look for ways to put it in practice on their own local level. Programs for readers, funeral leaders, worship leaders and the like provided structured ways for people to gather and be Church when priests and catechists were not available.

The Lumko approach was somewhat controversial and was not universally accepted. It also tended to work better in the rural areas than in the urban areas. Some priests, it has to be said, were not happy with the large number of lay ministries promoted, considering it confusing to people who might not perceive the difference between Mass and a Communion Service or between the sacraments and other forms of worship. For some it was just too Protestant. Nevertheless the Lumko “method” had a major impact in the Church and the Lumko approach was the principal inspiration for the methodology and strategy of the Pastoral Plan of the Bishops developed during the 1980's and officially launched in 1989.

5. Conclusion

This brief survey of the issues of mission and evangelisation in the Catholic Church during the second half of the twentieth century has focussed on the move from a Church operating largely as two realities: a Western Church and an African Church, to a Church which is recognising the importance of common purpose as a “community serving humanity”. In the Settler Church mission and evangelisation focussed on the pastoral concerns of the “European” population. In the Mission church on the plantation of the Church amongst Africans. The focus of mission and evangelisation today is on becoming community and serving humanity. However it is important to note that the sense of mission and evangelisation is in reality much wider than the focus we have placed in this article. Indeed every article in the book has something to do with mission and evangelisation since these are

held in 1968 and the Puebla one in 1979

the defining concepts of the Church itself. Mission is as concerned with social, political, and economic issues as it is about ministry, word and sacrament. It affects questions about the structure of the Church itself and its strategy in the world. Evangelisation defines our purpose as harbingers of the good news in every situation. Consequently any history of the Church is in its entirety a history of mission and evangelisation. Here we have focussed on specific issues of the way in which the Church has redefined its goal during this period. It shows us the way to the future.

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