THE "BIG THINGS" BOWED: THE COMMUNITY MINISTRY OF CATHOLIC FUNERAL LEADERS IN A RURAL SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

by

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Summary

Funeral leaders share the ministry of comfort with others. They make a specific religious contribution towards restoring life or decontaminating from death, which affects the faith and hope of the bereaved. Their ministry responds to a need of the bereaved by affirming community in the face of death. It is based on spirituality and grounded in the biblical and apostolic tradition; it is carried out in a catholic contextualisation. The leaders' insertion into both the cultural background and the religious realm encourages contextualisation. Their verbal proclamation is done in various ways and is linked to ritual. It reflects the three dimensions of the model employed in pastoral theology by taking life seriously, interpreting it in the light of faith, and leading a celebration that opens up the future of the participants. The leaders' proclamation is sincere when they link cultural family-procedures and church rituals in a parallel way. Sincerity suffers when community leaders, used to provide a comprehensive service, cannot preside over the promised celebration of the Eucharist, which could be the culmination of the rite of passage. Their ministry remains incomplete because of factors beyond their control. It nevertheless contributes to justice in many ways, in particular by deploying local people. While the ministry is carried out independently, it depends on collaboration with the pastoral staff, in particular the priests. They safeguard the quality of ministry by formation and through supervision. The collaborative formation contributes to the cultural insertion of the local and expatriate staff and enhances their competence. This collaborative ministry serves the bereaved, the community of faith, and theology. It allows the development of a contextualised liturgy, and a local theology. It is a step forward on the road towards a genuine form of community ministry in this particular African context. It corresponds with contemporary secular approaches towards leadership and management. African approaches emphasise the need for contextualised management forms. They assume the compatibility of different practices employed in different contexts. The comprehensively grounded ministry seems to contribute to the avoidance or overcoming of some of the grave shortcomings of ministry as provided in the past.

Key terms

Catholic Church, collaborative ministry, community ministry, contextualisation, Eastern Cape, Eucharist, formation, funeral, funeral customs, funeral leaders, inculturation, laity, leadership, ministers, missiology, mission, ordination, servant ministry, shared ministry, spirituality, Transkei, Xhosa

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Acknowledgements

dialogue with the purpose of promoting the mission of Christ. My wish is that this study will contribute to the furthering of this dialogue.

<div align="right">Sterkspruit, June 2001</div>

Abbreviations

AA	*Apostolicam Actuositatem* (Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People. Vatican II)
ADPC	Aliwal Diocese Pastoral Council
AFER	African Ecclesial Review
AG	*Ad Gentes Divinitus* (Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity. Vatican II)
AIC	African Independent (or Initiated) Church
AMECEA	Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa
ANC	African National Congress
BA	Bachelor of Arts
Bd.	Band (Volume)
Can	Canon (of CIC)
CCC	Catechism of the Catholic Church
CD	*Christus Dominus* (Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church. Vatican II)
CDF	Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith
CEAN	Centre d' étude d' Afrique noir
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CIA	*The Church in Africa* (Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation)
CIC	Codex Iuris Canonici (Code of Canon Law)
CL	*Christfideles Laici* (Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation)
CLSA	The Canon Law Society of America
CLSGB	The Canon Law Society of Great Britain and Ireland
CODESA	Convention for a Democratic South Africa
Cosatu	Congress of South African Trade Unions
CWK	Community Week
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DS	Denzinger-Schönmetzer
EN	*Evangelii Nuntiandi* (Apostolic Exhortation by Pope Paul VI)
ETSA	Evangelization Today in Southern Africa
GS	*Gaudium et Spes* (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World. Vatican II)
Hrsg.	Herausgeber (editor)
hrsg. v.	herausgegeben von (edited by)
IAMS	International Association for Mission Studies
ICQ	*Instruction on Certain Questions regarding the collaboration of the non-ordained faithful in the sacred ministry of priests*
IEC	Independent Electoral Commission
IMBISA	Inter-Regional Meeting of Bishops of Southern Africa
LG	*Lumen Gentium* (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church. Vatican II)
MC	Master of ceremonies
NCCB	National Conference of Catholic Bishops (USA)
Nehawu	National Education and Health Allied Workers Union
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
OCL	Ordained Community Leaders
PAC	Pan Africanist Congress
PCXR	Pastoral Conference of the Xhosa Region
PO	*Presbyterorum Ordinis* (Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests. Vatican II)

PPC	Parish Pastoral Council
PPM	Pastoral Planning Meeting
RCC	Roman Catholic Church
RCIA	Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults
RM	*Redemptoris Missio* (Encyclical letter by Pope John Paul II)
SA	South Africa
SACBC	Southern African Catholic Bishops Conference
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers Union
SAMS	Southern African Missiological Society
Sanco	South African National Civic Organisation
SC	*Sacrosanctum Concilium* (The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy. Vatican II)
SCC	Small Christian Community
SCJ	Priests of the Sacred Heart
SOAS	School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London
TLC	Transitional Local Council
TRC	Transitional Regional Council
UNO	United Nations Organisation
UR	*Unitatis Redintegratio* (Decree on Ecumenism. Vatican II)
Vatican II	Second Vatican Council
WCC	World Council of Churches
Wks	Workshop
Wks-Euch	Workshop on Eucharist
Wks-Fnl	Workshop on Funerals
YCS	Young Christian Students

Figures

1 Chapter 1 – Introduction

1.1 A praise song for community leaders

Holy Spirit! Holy Spirit!

Bow, all, before the Big Things
As if you were bleeding!
Bow to show your respect!
All of you bow
To show your respect!

All things are done,
All things are completed!
Prayers are done,
Prayers are completed!

Come down, Holy Spirit, come down!
Come down, Holy Spirit, come down!

Come down Holy Spirit over the leaders!
I have heard God speaking from the heaven.
He was speaking about the leaders.
Go, you Big Things,
Go to your communities and lead them!
You are all armed by the blessing!
You are immunised by prayer!
Go, you are all sent!

Come down, Holy Spirit, come down!
Come down, Holy Spirit, come down!

Go, because you have got the weapons!
Go and lead your communities!
But don't confuse them!
Go, because you are all beloved and elected!
Go, you are trusted!

Come down, Holy Spirit, come down!
Come down, Holy Spirit, come down!

I heard God speaking from heaven.
He spoke about good fruits.
Even in your communities God is looking for fruits!
You are all given good luck!

I heard Jesus speaking with the angels about collaboration.
And even you, go!
You must do it in your communities!
You must not be the foremen,
But you must take part!
You are all trained,
And you became well trained.
Go and do your work.

Figure 1.1 *Imbongi*: The praise-singer PM Mbovu. Photo by M Wüstenberg, Umlamli 3.12.2000

The Big Things bowed,
As well as I became frightened.
Yes, they bowed,
Because they help each other.
They help each other,
And lift up all heavy jobs!
Sing you, Sotho girls!
Because the *imbongi* is going to the end!

(*The Basotho girls start singing:*
This is the day, which was made by the Lord,
Let us be glad and rejoice!)

I heard Jesus speaking with the angels in heaven.
Don't do things by your own, you Big Things!
Your priests are there.
Go and ask for advice!
Our bishop is here.
Ask him for help!
The sisters are there.
Also they are there to give you advice!
Now, ululate!

(*The ladies start ululating.*)

I can't hear you well.
Your bishop is here.
Ask for advice.
Your priests are here.
Ask for advice.
Invite the sisters and tell them
That you ask for their collaboration.[1]

These are the words of an *imbongi*, a praise singer who describes and interprets special occasions in the life of an African community by using and recontextualising traditional symbols and rhythms. These words of the *imbongi* capture the essence of the ministry of funeral leaders in a rural South African parish. They also capture the essence of Christian community ministry, as it is developed in the classical documents of the church and as practised through the ages by leaders faithful to the heart of the Christian message. The essence of this ministry is twofold. "Normal" church members, often called "lay" people, are empowered to become "Big Things", who need to be honoured publicly. These empowered members lead by bowing, that is, by serving their communities.

The "Big Things" bowed. This statement refers to Catholic community leaders. Is it a vision come true? Is there indeed something like a servant ministry? A common vision

and the resulting mission are crucial elements in the life of organisations (cf. Van der Ven 1996:375; Cooper 1993:70-1; Whitehead & Whitehead 1991:76-7; Sofield & Juliano 1987:73). As part of its vision the Pastoral Plan of the Catholic Church in Southern Africa, *Community Serving Humanity* (SACBC 1989:22), reinforced the importance of the already active community leaders.[2] It encouraged their introduction in areas where they were not yet known. Among these community leaders the funeral leaders play an important part. They are heralds of faith in the sensitive, liminal situation of a rite of passage in their communities.

Local customs provide a way to receive important matters with due praise. It is the task of an *imbongi* to encourage, to elevate, to praise with the *isibongo*, the praise-song, at special occasions. One of these occasions is the blessing of community leaders by the bishop. One such praise song initiates this study on the ministry of funeral leaders. In the eyes of the *imbongi* high expectations accompany these "Big Things" who are sent to do their work. They deserve respect by bowing as if the nose was bleeding. Called to collaborate, they share the ministry with others, including sisters, priests, and bishop. Their communities back them. Though going to lead them they remain part of them. They are instructed not to impose themselves. Their task is understood as a spiritual mission, hence the invocation of the Holy Spirit. Immunised by prayer they are able to produce good fruits. Training equipped them for this. In the encouragement aspect of an *isibongo*, this is a mission to be implemented. In the praise aspect of the *isibongo*, is it a vision become true? This study examines and explores one section of community ministry. It investigates the ministry of these respectable "Big Things".

1.2 The focus of this study: the ministry of funeral leaders

When the Pastoral Plan was launched in 1989 Small Christian Communities (SCCs) and community ministries were introduced in the Roman Catholic Sterkspruit parish. This thesis focuses on the ministry of funeral leaders in their mostly rural communities. Their ministry is shared with those who, before its introduction, were almost exclusively engaged in this area of pastoral work: the priests and the catechists. At that time only very few commissioned lay people were helping at some places.

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[1] Community Week (Wüstenberg 1998d): Praise of the leaders by PM Mbovu. Translation of the Xhosa original from the video by the *imbongi*. The Xhosa text is provided in chapter five.
[2] Instead of the commonly used term *lay leaders* I prefer to describe them as *community leaders*. For more see the section on "ministry and community leaders".

The study is based on research done and experiences gained between 1992 and 1999. The actual study and research process lasted from December 1997 to the end of 2000.

Different denominations regard themselves as "churches".[3] They are characterised by different theologies, regions, cultures, policies, and needs. A lot of these churches have long and valuable experiences with community ministry including experience in the area of this research, for instance the Methodist Church. The scope of this study is, however, limited to the experiences of the Roman Catholic Church only[4]. Even within the RCC itself, with its many diverse local expressions, pastoral practice differs a lot in different situations. Some regions, especially those equipped with huge numbers of full-time pastoral personnel, will scarcely find their experience reflected in this study. I hope they will gain inspiring insights about the variety and value of local adaptations within the RCC. These may gain momentum as they face the future challenges of change.

The point of departure for this study is a particular situation of community ministry. Later on in the study the history of ministry, and the way it is perceived in theoretical reflections, regulations, official documents, and guidelines, will be taken into account as needed. These reflections, regulations and documents are themselves an expression of an ongoing lively discussion and development. As reflections at a given time on sometimes limited situations they not only give valuable orientation but also cause conflict and provoke dispute. Sometimes they express anxiety about developments in the church. Ministry, with its connotations of power and influence, receives continuous attention. A thorough reflection on local practice will help people to understand the developments. I hope it will help to alleviate possible anxiety and suspicion by evaluating the ecclesial value of community ministry. It will give some leads for future development.

Initially, I intended to study the different community ministries in general. That would have included catechism teachers, Sunday service leaders, catechumen teachers, and leaders of Small Christian Communities, to mention but a few. All these ministries show that the Lord directs the church by means of charisms and differentiated ministries (cf. Parra 1996:970). There is a wide range of valuable experiences with them. Research in

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[3] The term "church" has different connotations. Knowing about the different perceptions and ecclesiological accents as for instance presented by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF 2000 16-7), I use the terminology, without embarking on an ecclesiological dispute, as used by the different churches to refer to themselves.

[4] Hirmer (1973) for instance compared the ministry in different denominations in the area of Transkei.

all these kinds of leadership could prove worthwhile. Where necessary, I will refer also to them in the course of the research. Yet to include all of them would make the scope of the study too wide for one thesis.

I therefore decided to concentrate on funeral leaders. Their ministry appeals for various reasons. (1) They are leaders working at the boundaries. Their task is neither restricted to the church communities nor confined to its buildings or the private houses of church members. They cross the boundaries of their denomination and address people beyond it: members of other churches, people of different faiths, and people of different cultures. (2) As members of particular ethnic groups the presence of different local cultures puts a peculiar challenge to them as Xhosa, Sotho, Hlubi, or Puthi. They face a cross-cultural encounter in the continuing process of inculturating the Christian faith. The way of conducting funerals is exposed to a steady change that indicates the dynamic development of culture. (3) They are confronted with a set of different identities: as local inhabitants, friends, neighbours, and Christians. (4) As leaders of the liturgy they play a crucial part in dealing with root-metaphors. These include rituals with a deep influence on beliefs, emotions, and actions in a society (cf. Luzbetak 1995:269). They are a challenge to church practices, which were developed in different contexts. These were brought and implanted by missionaries into diverse circumstances and conditions.[5] (5) Funeral-leaders are involved in an event that eclipses everything else in the life of both church and local communities. Everything else becomes secondary when it comes to funerals. Even an Easter vigil may be cancelled in order to hold the funeral vigil instead. (6) The involvement of women in the ministry of funeral leaders is still in the preliminary stages whereas they hold key roles in most of the other areas of leadership. (7) Funeral leaders share their responsibility with their priests and other pastoral workers. This collaboration takes different forms. In a crucial and highly sensitive area of pastoral work they act in co-responsibility with the pastoral team. (8) Taking into account the actual needs of their community members they act as theologians or missionaries when confronting the Christian message with the given life-situation.

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[5] This refers, for instance, to growing demand for the celebration of the Eucharist at funerals, which cannot be satisfied due to ministerial limitations. More on this will be reflected in the course of the research.

These introductory assumptions are based on personal experience. They do not anticipate the findings of the research. They are subject to correction, adjustment, or corroboration.

1.2.1 The purpose of the thesis

This thesis explores the ministry of funeral leaders in a particular context. Many publications on community ministry exist. Those dealing with training and formation are based on concrete experiences.[6] There is plenty of literature and there are many manuals on ministry within the church and documents on the relationship between ordained and non-ordained ministers, and on collaborative ministry (Sofield & Kuhn 1995; Cooper 1993; Whitehead & Whitehead 1991; Sofield & Juliano 1987). They are based on experience with training community leaders but focus mostly on full-time pastoral workers.[7] Sofield and Kuhn (1995) recently put an emphasis on the ministry of laity in the secular world. Also based on experiences are publications on management such as those by Kanungo and Mendonça (1996). However, my attempts[8] to explore the state of literature on the concrete implementation of community ministry produced meagre results. It is difficult to access dissertations for a BA degree like that of Sinabisi (1998) on collaborative ministry in Lubuye parish (in the South East of the DRC). Community ministry is mentioned in articles or monographs on Small Christian Communities or Base Communities.[9] This study will bring some insights into one case

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[6] In the South African context alone see for instance: *Spiritual Formation for Community Leaders* (Lobinger 1980a), *The Christian Community and its Leaders* (Lobinger 1980b) *Developing Shared Ministry* (Prior & Lobinger 1983), *Spiritual Growth of Community Leaders* (Stewart, Broderick & Lobinger 1984), *Serving and Leading the Christian Community* (Lobinger 1992), *Towards Non-Dominating Leadership* (Lobinger s.a.a), *The Christian Community and its Leaders* (Lobinger & Prior 1995), *Training Funeral Leaders* (Rickert et al. s.a.)
[7] So do the reflections of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (USA) (1998) on the theology of lay ministry.
[8] These attempts include, besides the permanent contacts with UNISA, visits to the Philosophisch Theologische Hochschule St Georgen, Frankfurt am Main (Germany) (June and August 1998, June 1999), to the Missionswissenschaftliche Institut Missio in Aachen (Germany) (July 1998), the Missionary Institute in London (July 1998, June 1999 & 2000), to SOAS (June 1999 & 2000), and contacts with a number of missionaries in the field.
[9] See for example the thesis on SCCs by Ugeux (1988), L Boff's book on Base Communities (1980), and Rahner's reflections on Base Communities (1980:265-272).
Azevedo (1987:40; 205-207) touches ministry within the framework of his reflections on Christian Base Communities in Brazil. He focuses on the theological basis and justification of Base Communities with an emphasis on the missiological issue of evangelisation (:2-3).

of community ministry. It will contemplate the conditions under which it operates. It will make it possible to read the theoretical considerations on community ministry in the light of the practice.

The *intellectual puzzle* (Mason 1996:6) behind this research study derives from the experience with funeral leaders in a young church. Ela (1987:76) questioned a lay involvement at funerals that is restricted to praying the rosary and singing old songs. He asked for a more active involvement of African lay people in the African context. Parra (1996:953) states that the restoration of the ministries triggered off by Vatican II affected only the service for the word and the liturgy. Thus it lacked a missionary trace. Luzbetak (1995:108) counts the new ministries among the signs of the times indicating the arrival of contextualisation. Donders (1986:206) stated that the actual work within the African church was done by the laity. Bishops and priests acted as coordinators. Besides the claims that ministry is done, or the demands that it should be done, I feel the need to look at a situation where it *is* done and how it is done. This study aims to find out what the actual community ministry is about. Where do the community leaders come from? How do they work? Where does their authority come from? What is their competence? What kind of problems do they face? What does their service mean in the context of the wider church?

The ordained ministry is a power-laden institution. The introduction of new ministries affects the incumbents. This could lead to confusion, scepticism, rejection, and even hostility. The identity of all concerned is at stake. This challenges all those involved in the process, especially when it affects an event that is so important to the populace. So this study pays attention to the impact of the introduction of community-ministries on the leaders themselves, the communities concerned, and the traditional office holders, priests and catechists.

Osuchukwu (1995) relates the traditional social group of the Igbo, the *umunna* to the SCCs. The *umunna* is based on the three principles of respect, common property, and the obligation to work. The last is the base for the first two. He pays some attention to the leadership tasks within SCCs, since "each must do something" (:18) in *umunna*, hinting at the participatory-oriented governance for the incarnation of the church (:21) and the *umunnas* ability to deepen leadership (:21). He asks: "Is *umunna* a catalyst for grace and full participation of laity in the life of the Church? What will be the role of laity within the *umunna* ensemble? Will the *umunna* ensemble give rise to a powerful lay authority in the Church? Does obedience to the parish priest reduce the role of the laity? What will be the role of the priest in such a set-up?" (:23). He dedicates one short section to the leadership (:233-253). Here he mentions that the members of *umunna* will take part in the mission of the church, e.g. by caring for the needy, celebrating weddings, facing and opposing injustice, burying the dead (:237). However, he still speaks about ideas, intentions, and hopes that *will* take concrete form in the future. His focus is not on the exercised ministry.

This study will examine the result of a deliberately initiated process of change. In the 1970s, when South Africa was still under apartheid, the Roman Catholic Church started looking at the role of the church in this specific context. The result of this was the Pastoral Plan, with the vision of a *Community Serving Humanity* (SACBC 1989). The plan encouraged the introduction of Small Christian Communities and community ministries as basic structures. Since the church claims to be implementing the plan of God for the whole of humanity, it may well be asked how it implements this plan within its own ranks. I hope to find evidence for Gospel values like empowerment and liberation at work as people, baptised and confirmed members of their Christian communities, take responsibility in a crucial area of their church life in collaboration with their ordained ministers. The activity of community leaders may emerge as a proof for the maturity of a young church and may create the conditions for the endeavour to root the faith within a particular culture (cf. Ela 1987:78). Since true liberation is inclusive the scrutiny will look at how far empowerment and liberation in this view also extends to the incumbents, the ministers. This is about roles and the change of roles. Parra (1996:961) assumes that the diversity of new ministries serves to renew the traditional form of ministry in the church.

This study will embrace the frequently-found concern for inculturation. Community ministry plays a leading role in inculturation. This implies both that ministry is accepted by the community and also that it accepts its own role in inculturation. With regard to inculturation I expect to find that community leaders are involved and accepted in this context. This includes their understanding of themselves as partners in the concern for inculturation and others seeing them as an integral part of it.

Throughout the world a poly-centred church is becoming more common, and people are becoming more aware of its value. Bühlmann (1985:162-163) entertains the idea that the church may learn from the experiences of other world organisations like the Roman or the British Empires, or the UNO. They left as much autonomy as possible to their local branches. Diversity served and serves the purpose of survival of a huge social structure. Based as it is in a rural South African context, this study is meant to contribute to and to be part of a genuine local theology. The word *incarnation* is used to describe one facet of Christianity really taking root in local circumstances, in this case that of leadership. Bühlmann (1985:49-50) suggests that the core of the Christian message gets the chance to take flesh and blood from African culture. What emerges is the reflected testimony of one particular contribution to the diversity in the one church.

Bühlmann (1985:53) encourages moving from a merely retrospective-static understanding of tradition towards a prospective-dynamic view. In new circumstances the church has to have the courage to create new traditions. In their different contexts the new ministries from the grass roots bring movement into a concept of ministry that previously worked from above. It is now shifting more and more to the base (cf. Parra 1996:955). In this study I shall look at ten years of a new practice at the grass roots and to some degree ask for more progress.

Sometimes people say that by relying on community leaders the church may lose quality in its work. This point needs special attention. This study may help to calm these fears by looking at the *sensus fidei* or *consensus fidelium*[10] and the state of formation of community leaders and incumbents of the established ministries alike. This study itself, with its limited context, is a contribution to a particular and peculiar kind of formation through the listening of theologians to the revelation that arises within the living communities. Such an existential exchange between theologians and communities contributes to their spiritual nourishment (cf. Mbadu-Kwalu 1989:172).[11] In the course of the research the leaders themselves may deepen the understanding of their role. Based on the experiences of the people of God this study will not only explore their theological quality but also be a contribution towards both deepening and enhancing it.[12]

Local theologies happen between the cattle kraal and the fields, when fetching water from the well and collecting firewood. Community leaders are involved in reflecting on their faith in the light of their context. They are the ones in closer contact with those who represent the traditional, scholarly way of pursuing theology. An understanding of theology as a venture undertaken in co-operation and co-responsibility emerges. Grounded in a particular context the very local theological experiences will be opened to a broader discussion and scrutiny by this study. This means that, as Schreiter (1985: 95-104) puts it, the local theology encounters Christian tradition and the Christian tradition encounters local theology (see also Bosch 1991:456; Ela 1987:78). As a result we will gain one example of an exchange in theology (cf. Bühlmann 1985:55; 217-218).

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[10] cf. Wiederkehr (1994) and later in chapter five.
[11] "Wir wissen, daß der Theologe, der mit seinem Volk, mit dem Volk Gottes, in einen echten Dialog eintritt, in der Ausarbeitung seines Redens über Gott eine kritische Rolle zu erfüllen hat. Seine Aufgabe ist es, die Erfahrung dieser christlichen Gemeinden zu formalisieren, und zwar nicht, um für sich selbst Schlüsse daraus zu ziehen, sondern um sie eben diesen Gemeinden als geistliche Nahrung mitzuteilen. Zwischen beiden, dem Theologen und den Gemeinden, muß daher ein fortwährender existentieller Austausch stattfinden" (Mbadu-Kwalu 1989:172).
[12] Hence the method of the pastoral spiral (see below) will be applied.

In this study missiology[13] will meet some of its local agents and discover them as powerful tools and as an interface between academic and local theology. It is expected that the process of producing this thesis itself will have an impact on the practice of the local ministries. So this thesis will be an exercise in practical theology and, in this particular case, show and create a concrete link between missiology and mission. In the context of a developing country the experience of a developing mission will be described. This means both that mission itself is developed, and that mission contributes to development. Thus it is committed to be an African study, inspired, written, and reflected on in an African context. To Van der Ven's (1996:x) description of the object of practical theology as the praxis of the church in the context of modern society, it is here the praxis of the church in a contemporary rural South African context. This requires an attempt to refer to and include particular African theological perceptions and world views[14] and also views from other developing regions like Asia and Latin-America into this study.

Methodologically, I would have liked to learn from the experiences of similar studies on ministries to gain from their strengths and avoid their weaknesses; I did not find any such study. Kim's (1999) dissertation on the role of the laity in the Ban-communities of Korea is not designed as a field study. In this methodological regard I hope to make a contribution by applying a qualitative research strategy in missiology. May future researchers learn from the weaknesses and shortfalls they discover in this study and gain some inspiration from it.

1.2.2 The relevance of the thesis

The ministry of community leaders is widely practised in the Catholic Church. Nevertheless, there is still some uncertainty. Little systematic attention is paid to the

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[13] Luzbetak (1995:12-14) gives an overview of different terminology used for scientific missiology and calls for a definition that does not overlook the non-theological interdisciplinary aspects of missiology with theology holding the central place and determining role. Missiology he sees as a network of sciences rather than a conglomerate of disciplines. Instead of calling it a science he prefers to regard it as a field that studies the expansion and growth of the mission of the church in all its dimensions: "communal, sacramental, kerygmatic, diaconal, and institutional" (:14).

[14] Luzbetak (1995:252-5) discerns three dimensions of world view. The cognitive dimension tells what and how to think about life and the world. The emotional dimension tells how to feel about, evaluate, and react to the world. The motivational dimension deals with a society's basic priorities, purposes, concerns, ideals etc. concerning its understanding of the universe. Since these dimensions are essential they will find attention to some degree in this study when exploring some pertinent cultural patterns of thought. This will help to approach a comprehensive understanding of the ministry of the funeral leaders.

importance and practice of this ministry.[15] One finds it mentioned in conjunction with reflections on Small Christian Communities (cf. Ugeux 1988:91-96). Some put the focus on catechists when dealing with community ministry (cf. Bühlmann 1976: 261-269). Lobinger (1973a), however, sees catechists as an interim solution on the way towards community ministry. Yet the fixation on the ministerial priesthood still limits the vision. Sometimes the plea is heard that a priest should do a certain service, especially when it comes to funerals. He is seen by some as the one administering special grace. Then, there is some fear that the ministry of lay people may endanger the existence and profile of the traditional priest (cf. ICQ:8-9). Their identity could get lost as more lay people take responsibility. On the theoretical or theological level one finds, as we will see further on, differing perceptions on the involvement of the lay-faithful within the church. All this indicates the need of inductive research and reflection.

Writing up the reflection on local practice will contribute to a more grounded understanding of what is going on. It may help to alleviate fears or at least contribute to further discussion. It will show an African approach to the crucial question of leadership. Ela (1987:74) deplores the lack of imagination of those who doubt that the new churches can contribute to the development of new forms of church life. He does not regard permanent deacons and the admission of married men for priestly ordination as unique and daring solutions. In this thesis I will examine a solution, not simply from a theoretical point of view, but from the viewpoint of a local practice. I will also indicate further steps to be taken in future.

Writing a study on the phenomenon of funeral leaders is somehow a peculiar venture. It is based in a particular context with its specific conditions. These conditions are not necessarily found in other places, but it may give an example of a concrete local theology (cf. Schreiter 1985). The local church is understood not in a deductive but in an inductive manner by looking at what is happening in it (cf. Moerschbacher 1993:162). The communication with the broader horizon of the church and theology will avoid a possible tendency to become too idiosyncratic or local (Bosch 1991:456). The result of this study will be a kind of a corroborated hypothesis (Van der Ven 1990:172). Hage and Meeker presuppose that theories are accepted as working models of the reality as

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[15] The index of the recently published history of the Catholic Church in the area of the Free State province does not mention the term *ministry*. As *lay mission helpers* it refers to six Europeans, brought to Taung in 1898 (Brain 1996:311). Catechists, however, are mentioned quite frequently (:305).

long as they have not been disconfirmed (Hage & Meeker 1988:34). Glaser (1992:16) states:

> The research product constitutes a theoretical formulation or integrated set of conceptual hypotheses about the substantive area under study. That is all, the yield is just hypotheses!

Yet exactly such a kind of hypothesis derived from a local context can contribute to the enrichment of other local churches and so to the life of the universal church (cf. Luzbetak 1995:72). It is part of missionary exchange transforming a formerly and still receiving church into a sending one for "the health, growth, and vitality of the *whole* Body of Christ" (Luzbetak 1995:73). Thus it contributes to the development of a fully-fledged local church that itself contributes to the wider church and in turn ensures the dignity of the local church.

The development of community ministries can be seen from two different angles. One is to see it as a response to a lack of priests. Since the number of priests is dropping, but the work is increasing, the demand for assistance is obvious. Whether this idea of a kind of stopgap gives the community ministry the dignity and appreciation it deserves will not be asked here. From this perspective the community ministry would become redundant if the number of priests increased (cf. ICQ:8). The first problem with this view is that it does not take seriously the charisms of the people of God and the Holy Spirit as their source (cf. Ela 1987:73). Secondly, it entails the danger that even if the number of candidates for the priesthood or the number of priests increased, such an increase might only be temporary (Bühlmann 1985:195).

The other view of community ministries is based on faith and theology. It derives from the theology of the people of God and the common priesthood of all the faithful. It assumes that all baptised and confirmed persons are to take their responsibility in the church. In South Africa, for example, this approach is reflected in the numerous materials developed and published by the Lumko Institute both before and after the Pastoral Plan of 1989. These publications themselves were deeply rooted in the thorough research on practice in the field by Lobinger (1973b) and others. The aim of this thesis is to investigate one turn in the pastoral spiral: the reflection on concrete practice, which leads in turn to a stronger vision and new practice.

The development of community ministry in a young church, with its focus on the local church and the missionary role the local people have to play, is missiologically

significant because it is a step on the road towards becoming a real local church. The local churches are entitled to be esteemed as serious partners in missiological dialogue and also to participate in appropriate formation of their ministers. It has not always been seen in this way. Missionaries who brought the gospel to South Africa imitated a model of church and ministry that they had experienced at home (cf. Prior 1996:291; Keteyi 1998:35-6). Kanyandago (1993:139) states for Eastern Africa:

> Pastoral experiences in this area in Eastern Africa could have favoured a development of theology of ministry, especially in the area of Small Christian Communities, but on the whole one has the old clerical model operating alongside of, if not overshadowing, leaders of these communities. One has the impression that church leaders while recognizing and aware of the gravity of the situation, lack enough courage to propose ministerial models particular relevant to their pastoral experiences.

One major missionary concern is the establishment of true local churches that, in the context of the Roman Catholic Church, are part of the universal church. This means building a church that is self-reliant in staff and also in material matters. All young churches face this problem. It is solved to different degrees. However, independence is still far from being achieved in the local parish context, where 86% of the pastoral full-time staff are expatriates, African and European (see also chapter 2.1.2.3), and up to 95% of the budget depends on funding from overseas, due partly to the poor economic situation of the region. This shows the urgency of finding out whether and how the development of local community ministries matches or contributes to the concern for economic and personnel independence.

In South Africa the road towards the ministerial model of community ministry was taken with the contributions of the Lumko Institute and the Pastoral Plan (SACBC 1989). This thesis shows the relevance of an African model that differs from European approaches. The latter tends to see community ministry as full-time workers with certain theological degrees.[16] The South African approach sees the community members themselves involved in ministry. Community ministry here is not co-motivated by the concern for organising a livelihood for the leaders as is the case with full-time pastoral workers and catechists. Besides the fact that theological thinking happens among the people, with community ministries theology is no longer confined to an ivory tower. It is not captured

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[16] These degrees differ in terminology and quality due to the academic careers designed by particular national policies like BAs, Masters degrees, or different kinds of diplomas required for pastoral assistants, for example, in Germany.

in books alone. Theology happens at the grass roots, grounded in daily life experience. As a true, genuine, and relevant Christian reflection on faith in the context of the local cultures it deserves proper attention. In the case of the funeral leaders this theology touches a highly sensitive area in terms of meaning, world view, and vision linked to questions of death and life. Christian proclamation is put to the test in such a setting. Whether it passes the test will emerge in the course of this study.

I expect that the research itself will influence further local development to some degree. Using the method of a conversation with a purpose it will undoubtedly lead to new emphases or insights, which can later be applied in practice since the researched and researcher are part of the same setting. I therefore regard this research as a venture of collaboration and practical theology. It may open the way for further discussion and offer a contribution to comparative studies of what is going on in the church.

When I came to South Africa my home church of Hildesheim in Germany expected some exchange about the experiences with leaders, SCCs and inculturation. The research design will safeguard against using the local people too simply. I doubt that it is possible to transfer experiences directly. I prefer to share the experiences and the tools used in the research to check whether they are useful in other and very different circumstances. Beyond the narrow confines of my home church of Hildesheim the findings of this research can inform other levels of the church that are also concerned about pressing questions of leadership. They offer an insight for those who do not have access to relevant data but want to know what is going on and being done, in order to take informed decisions.

Missiology in the academic understanding is interested in the experiences of those working at the grass roots level. It can provide them with the necessary tools and support for their mission. This support does not extend only to the practical or technical aspects of how to exercise ministry. It includes a deeper theological and spiritual dimension, unveiling the dignity of community ministry. In this way this study also contributes to further development of the pastoral spiral (see below).

The study also faces an ethical challenge. This spiral gains momentum from different sides. It is influenced partly by the wider context of the global church. By giving insight into local practice this study also exposes it to broader inspection. This requires a thorough analysis to enable even those who are not familiar with the local context to understand it properly. There is a danger that the study could pose an unintended threat

to the practice. This is an ethical concern for all involved. It calls for benevolent dialogue. The acknowledgement, respect, and dignity of the commitment of humans as Christian community leaders deserve appropriate and sensitive treatment. In this way the example in one part of the African world can contribute to a real contextualisation of discipleship in shared ministry.[17]

1.3 Personal stance – theological premisses

Before embarking on questions of the methodology used in this study I want to outline my personal stance, since it has an impact on the methodological choices. This section will help to understand them better. A totally neutral or objective analysis (of the social) must be regarded as a matter of impossibility (cf. Banawiratma & Müller 1995:60-63)[18]. Every analysis has its premisses of values, which have to be explicated (:77). A certain model of understanding mediates every experience and view of reality (cf. Schillebeeckx 1977:27). Researchers are part of their research. They are involved in the process with a certain perspective, experiences, biases, interests, concepts, and theological patterns of thought. Instead of claiming to produce a value-free (unbiased) study its premisses should be spelled out. It is only fair to outline at least the most important of them. This helps researchers to become aware of prior commitments and to make them open to inspection by others and oneself (cf. Cochrane et al. 1991:16). These premisses will play a role in the theological analysis, as will be outlined later.

1.3.1 Biographical Note

It was my encounter as a German parish priest with the partnership-parish of Boulsa in Burkina Faso that aroused my interest in the African church(es). The different pastoral approach with regard to catechumenate, catechists, inculturation, and Small Christian Communities enticed me to look for a more complete encounter. When the first indications in 1991 pointed to South Africa as the country of my destination I first disapproved of this idea. I was afraid to be assigned to a posh white suburb. My journey

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[17] Baoping (1997:85), concerned with the church in China, states that every theology is contextual since it is interrelated with the context it finds itself in. The reference to contextual theology seems imperative since there are tendencies to regard the old theological views as "genuine" theology. Eliminating the context in his view would render the result to be a religious ideology, no longer theology (:85). Contextual theology is a matter of understanding the message of God in a concrete context and to satisfy the needs of the church (:89).
[18] Banawiratma & Müller (1995) refer to the studies of Gunnar Myrdal who paid major attention to the problem of objectivity in social analysis.

to South Africa, however, led me eventually to the then homeland of Transkei. I soon realised that the work with community leaders was going to play a pivotal role. While the pastoral work in Burkina Faso was built on catechists, here the community leaders were the important role players and partners. Cooperation with them in training and formation became the main focus of my work and interest. The other aspects of the work were still important, but were subordinate to the leadership issue.

It is now a new venture to reflect scientifically on the ministry of the community leaders. Over the years of cooperation I developed a relationship of trust and friendship with quite a number of them. This is very dear to me. In my study of sociological literature I was amazed time and again to find considerations of ethics in research (see e.g. Mason 1996). This reinforces a basic condition of my research. I am striving to delve as deeply as possible into the topic. This procedure finds its clear limits when it is going to affect the trust, mutual respect, dignity, and privacy of the people negatively. This applies also to the observations where the observed are not even asked for their consent but are simply part of the setting like their pastor-researcher. On my part I always encouraged my interlocutors or partners to object to my suggestions or questions whenever they felt this was reasonable. In a very early encounter one old leader told me straight "What do you want, what do you know, you who are coming from overseas?" (Maqungo 1993). Strange as this sounded to me in the beginning it made me very aware of existing differences. I felt the sense of wounded dignity among people. I realised that I was a white European in a country with a peculiar relationship of races due to oppression, domination, and exploitation. I sensed the longing for identity and a questioning of my own. And I became very much aware of the need to pay respect to the subjects of faith. In fact, it seemed to me to be a cry for true Africanisation.

The method of research requires taking some distance to avoid biased or wishful thinking. The basics of my theological approach are independent of the local situation. The *option with the poor*, my orientation in fundamental theology, the pastoral theological approach, and my understanding of mission and the ministry involved in it guide my thinking. I will outline them briefly; in particular the fundamental theology and the approach in pastoral theology may not be well known in the English speaking community. The methodological tools I became familiar with during my theological training were those of the *Historisch Kritische Methode* in exegesis (cf. Wüstenberg

1980). I gained a lot from the new psychologically inspired approach to the Bible by Drewermann.[19] The fascination of new research tools encouraged me to acquire new skills with the methodological approach used in this study. The concern is to go beyond a mere methodological approach in the technical meaning to achieve deep theological understanding (cf. Drewermann 1984b:27). While Drewermann calls for mediating the *event* of scripture (:28), here it is to mediate the *event* of community ministry.

1.3.2 The Option with the Poor

It is an expression that the poor are the main contributors and subjects of this study and a sign of respect for them when I deal briefly in the first place with the *option with the poor*.[20] The reflection on the *option with the poor* may further support the reason for the inductive approach chosen in this study, apart from other methodological considerations.[21]

It is not only a theology of the social, which experiences the option for the poor as source of social spirituality (so seen by Banawiratma & Müller 1995:47). Prominently known from the South American context (cf. Azevedo 1987:36-37), it also plays a role in other contexts and situations. Azevedo attributes the transformation of church and community structures to the preferential option for the poor (1987:51). In the South African context I see it at work especially in *Black Theology*.[22] Within the Roman Catholic Church it reverberates in various awareness programmes and training

[19] See for instance: Drewermann (1984a; 1984b; 1985a; 1985b; 1986)
[20] More familiar may be the term Option for the Poor. Since it can assume a patronising undertone I prefer to speak about an Option with the Poor or of the Poor.
[21] Pixley and Boff (1989:139; cf. Boff 1980:67) discern three kinds of poverty, the material, the spiritual, and the evangelical. The first includes those at subsistence level and the destitute (Pixley & Boff:139-140). This kind of poverty is result of sin, the opposite of which is not riches but human dignity (:142). Seeking egoistic liberation or being passive these poor themselves become connivers in their own oppression (:142). Spiritual poverty affects every created, contingent being (:144). It can lead to a spiritual openness for God, humility, and trust. These poor live by grace. This kind of poverty can even in principle coexist with riches (:145). Both these concepts are distinct entities which, however, can coincide: the really poor having open hearts (:145-146). Evangelical poverty, then, is spiritual and material at the same time, with the spiritual aspect preceding the material (:147) and being the determinant.
[22] Kalilombe (1989:193) points out that, being derived from the South African and North American black context, black theologies are concerned with oppression and discrimination. With Latin-American liberation theologies rooted rather in the socio-economic and political area, the Africans are more aware of the significance of "anthropological poverty" (:194). A consistent period of Black Theology began to take shape in SA in the 1970s (:209). Concerned, then, with the fundamental theme of colour as the determining factor of life (:210) he regards Black theology as a developing reality. Moore (1973) with his collection of essays can serve as an introduction into the earlier stage of Black theology. Maimela reflects under the heading of "racism as a theological problem" that the attempts of colonial theologians to justify white domination led to Black theology as a response (Maimela 1994:190). For black theologians God's

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materials of the Lumko Institute and in the Pastoral Plan. Its emphasis on building Small Christian Communities and leadership can be regarded as embodiment of an *option with the poor*. Its implementation actually serves the general goal of the Pastoral Plan, it serves humanity.

The *option with the poor* is actually not a matter of personal discretion but forms a constitutional part of Christian theology and its reflection on ministry. The option for the poor is at the heart of the gospel and the church (cf. Boff & Pixley 1987:69-83; 132-134; Pixley & Boff 1989:53-67; Banawiratma & Müller 1995:105107; CIA 44). This church arises because of the resurrection, in conformity with a symbol of fulfilment and with a concrete life of solidarity with the poor (cf. Sobrino 1985:89). Apart from this rather ideological approach towards the *option with the poor* it is the simple reality of the field of this study that demands respect for this characteristic in order to reach a more comprehensive understanding. What L Boff (1980:67) claims for the members of the Christian Base Communities in Latin America applies to the Transkeian context as well: most of the people are poor.

The mission statement of Jesus in Luke 4:16-22 leaves little room for misunderstanding. After a long period in which the church was associated with the rich and powerful it became clear that this option was not actually an option but a condition without discretion. The constitution on the church, *Lumen Gentium* of Vatican II, leaves no doubt.

> Just as Christ carried out the work of redemption in poverty and oppression, so the Church is called to follow the same path if she is to communicate the fruits of salvation to men. Christ Jesus, "though he was by nature God ... emptied himself, taking the nature of a slave" (Phil. 2:6,7), and "being rich, became poor" (2 Cor. 8:9) for our sake. Likewise, the Church, although she needs human resources to carry out her mission, is not set up to seek earthly glory, but to proclaim, and this by her own example, humility and self-denial. Christ was sent by the Father "to bring good news to the poor ... to heal the contrite of heart" (Lk. 4:18), "to seek and to save what was lost" (Lk. 19:10). Similarly, the Church encompasses with her love all those who are afflicted by human misery and she recognizes in those who are poor and who suffer, the image of her poor and suffering founder (LG 8).

Though the limits of this thesis do not require detailed examination of the *option for the poor* one must note that for Kehl (1992:242) the institutional concretion of the church is

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preferential option for the poor runs through the Bible like a red thread. Black theology is a particular theological response to a situation of racial domination and oppression (cf. Maimela 1998).

incomplete as long as it is not filled by its presence among the poor and sinners. Kehl subsequently speaks about a Kirche *mit* den Armen, a church *with* the poor (1992:244; cf. Banawiratma & Müller 1995:106).

One may rightly question whether this concern about the poor is only one of a charitable nature, so as to care for the poor as objects. I add the further necessity of the presence of the poor within the church's structures. In the light of subsequent developments I tend to hear also the challenge for a missionary church to listen to the poor in its ranks as subjects in order to hear the voice of Jesus. They may become teachers and masters as the poor Jesus is. In this active perspective I like to stress Kehl's point: the poor are the initiating "sacrament" of the all-inclusive salvation of God (Kehl 1992:244).

Vatican II influenced the episcopal conferences in Medellin (1968) and Puebla (1979) which laid down the *option for the poor*. This option develops consequently into an *option with the poor* (cf. Boff & Pixley 1987:237; Pixley & Boff 1989:221).

This shift in understanding is essential and significant. It indicates that initially "outsiders" took the option for the poor. They were committed to the poor. They triggered off a process, which now continues in discovering the need for the involvement of the poor. With its roots in liberation theology, an option *with* the poor puts a new challenge at the doorstep of theology and missiology. It has to consider the involvement of the poor in its own realm. The poor are not only the favourite addressees of the Gospel, but carriers and announcers of the Good News. The learned and wise are the ones to be introduced by them into the mysteries of the Kingdom (cf. Kehl 1992:245). Though this thesis is not going to be written by the poor, it will clearly reflect their involvement and stance and in fact will opt for their theologically important contribution. The pastoral practice of ministry in the churches of the Third World is a new way of exercising the ministry: taking its point of departure in a poor world and done by subjects who are the poor of Christ (cf. Parra 1996:951). The ministries and ministers of the poor churches have to be understood as ministries and ministers from the base, from below (cf. Parra 1996:951). Boff and Pixley (1987:237) see the option for the poor as a participatory option, which regards them not only as objects but also as subjects. They are partners in a common task. This does not allow any kind of paternalistic attitude. Sobrino speaks of the church *of* the poor:

> For this profound reason I maintain that the Church of the poor is not a
> Church for the poor but a Church that must be formed on the basis of the

poor and that must find in them the principle of its structure, organization, and mission. For the same reason I maintain that this Church does not conceive of the poor as "part" of itself, even a privileged part, but thinks of them rather as the "center" of the whole. This means that the poor are the authentic *theological source* for understanding Christian truth and practice and therefore the constitution of the Church (Sobrino 1985:93).

Without idealising or sacralising the poor they can be regarded as a structural channel for the coming into being of the church (Sobrino 1985:95).

This focus on the poor bears implications for the ministry within the church. A pluralistic participation is desirable and necessary, including new ecclesial ministries and new forms of ecclesial organisation. All are not only welcome but also required to develop their own charisms (cf. Sobrino 1985:103-104). Pluralism in ministry thus is not a matter of "rights" but of "obligation" (:104).

In this sense one can continue to read the pastoral implications of the option for the poor (Pixley & Boff 1989:233-235). It gives an incentive to redefine all sectors of church activity and also has repercussions on ministry within the church. This includes the active involvement of the poor to be church by creating base communities and setting up new forms of ministry, "so that a real 'church of the poor' can emerge" (:235).

From a fundamental theological point of view poverty and the poor of course are no guarantee for the existence of the church; they may also be far away from faith. However, they, more than other elements, represent that faith and show that the love of God is given freely and undeserved and is not the expression of endeavour and reward. The poor may be the first to raise the essential questions of life where others may remain satisfied with their well being. Thus they gain a kind of natural authority in matters of faith, though this is not limited to them.

1.3.3 Fundamental Theology

The conviction that all the faithful, including the poor, have a substantial say in matters of faith can be spelled out by a short outline of fundamental theological considerations. The fundamental theology developed by Knauer formed my theological thinking (Knauer 1978; 1986; 1991).[23] I sketch only the main traits that are relevant to the topic of the

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[23] Knauer published the first edition of his fundamental theology in 1978. Several editions followed. The latest from 1991 contains rich reference and discussion of reviews. Translations into Spanish – 1989. *Para comprender nuestra fe*. México: Universidad Iberoamericana / Libreria Parroquial de Claveria – and

community ministry of the funeral leaders. They may help to locate this ministry that works for the community in the proclamation of faith.[24]

Knauer tries to comprehend the fundamental fear and anxiety of human beings for themselves. This fear is based on vulnerability, limited existence, and exposure to death. When this fear has the last word over life it becomes the root of inhumanity (Knauer 1991:22;111). The Christian message, however, claims to affirm a certainty that is stronger than all anxiety for oneself. It wants to liberate people to true humanity. For that it claims to be the word of God (:24). This requires giving a definition of God who is imperceptible (cf. DS 3001). So looking for an unsurpassable true concept of God which retains the unsurpassable imperceptibility of God, Knauer arrives at the concept of creation (cf. DS 3004): One only perceives from God what is different from him and what at the same time hints at him. In this way one is actually able to gain a precise concept of God (Knauer 1991:28). God is the term of "being totally related to ... while being totally different from ..." (:29; cf.:30-42). This implies an immediate and one-sided relationship (:37-39). Knauer (:83-91) refutes a simplistic perception of revelation and word of God as a direct intervention and relation of God to the creation. A real relation of God to the world can only be claimed if it is primarily a relation of God to God, of the Father to the Son. This relation is the Holy Spirit (:114-129). Christian faith contends that the Son of God became human. With its incarnational understanding Christian proclamation avoids the problem of how to accommodate a word of God and

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Portuguese – 1989. *Para compreender nossa Fé*. São Paolo: Edicões Loyola – are available. An English version does unfortunately not exist.

[24] Fundamental theology provides a rather abstract framework. It does not and does not need to provide within the framework of this thesis the comprehensive perception of ministry within the Catholic Church. More insight about the theological perception of ministry offer for instance *Christus Dominus* (CD), Vatican II's decree on the pastoral office of the bishops and *Presbyterorum Ordinis* (PO), the decree on the ministry and life of priests. The bishops' ministry for unity with and within the universal church (CD 4), their leading (CD 11) and teaching (CD 12) role gains profile in this study as does the ministry of priests. Priests are joined with the episcopal order (PO 2); they are ministers of the word (PO 4) and of the sacraments (PO 5); they rule God's people (PO 6). In the similarities with the service rendered by the leaders their particular role becomes clearer. The Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *The Church in Africa* (CIA 98) underlines the irreplaceable service of unity of the bishops. The "office as representation of Christ" and "office as representation of the church" with a diversity of subheadings are key chapters in Greshake's (1982) study on priesthood. The official character of priesthood expresses the bond between Christ and the community, not between the community and the office holder (cf.:113). The office requires also a life-style that fits to the service ministry (cf.:116). A plurality of perceptions of priesthood (Priesterbilder) is for Greshake legitimate as long as they include the triad of the office of teacher, priest, and shepherd (:79). Considerations like unity, representation of the bond to Christ as well as to the church apply, of course, on their level also to the community ministers. This indicates that throughout the thesis we will move on some shaky ground. This seems to be part of development and creativity. It is not unexpected and can be put into relation to the encouragement of Christ to go on (cf. Mt 14:22-34).

human words (Knauer:114; 130-153).[25] The term "word of God" is only meaningful in a pneumatological understanding. In itself it is the self-revealing attribution of the Holy Spirit (:114; 154-158). The gospel as the word of God proclaims faith as participation in the relation of Jesus to God the Father and thus as being filled with the Holy Spirit (:162).

This implies that no act in the world would be able to constitute a relationship of God to the world as such. No prayer, no sacrifice would suffice to achieve this. The acceptance of grace is only possible by means of already received grace (cf. II. Concilium Arausicanum, DS 376). This means that everything is created in Christ (Knauer 1991:169; cf. Eph 2:10).[26] This, however, cannot be perceived at the creation itself (:170). It remains concealed unless it is revealed in the word of God (:171). Beyond faith creation means to have no communion with God (:175); within faith creation means communion with God and redemption (:177). As knowing-about-being-loved-by-God, faith means a new self-perception of people. This view comes from the proclamation of faith in human words. Faith is the response of people, borne itself by the word of God, to the word of God (:188). Paul in his letter to the Romans (10:17) says: "Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ." It is a message that requires hearing: one cannot invent it. For faith one depends on the witness of other people. Only a verbum externum, coming from other people, can be word of God (:228).

The trust or faith into the participation in the relationship of Jesus Christ to his Father depends on no external conditions but only on the word of God alone. The difference between this word of God and mere human words is that it bears in itself the reality it is talking about. The object of faith can only be believed and evades any different kind of approach. This reliability is what is meant when one talks about the infallibility of faith. It can only be perceived by faith (cf. Knauer 1991:212-216).

This has important repercussions on the community of the faithful and every single member of it. The comprehension of faith aims at the love of God, which cannot be measured by our personal perspective. Therefore one can do nothing but agree to

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[25] Grounding his fundamental theology on the word of God, Knauer actually replies to the surprising observation of Rahner that there is no space, no systematic place for a theology of the word in Catholic theology (cf. Rahner 1967:315).
[26] Schillebeeckx (1977:795) states similarly that the grace of God, the real presence among us, is not a certain section within us but the whole reality in which we live and of which we are part.

accept it. Whoever believes what only can be believed conforms necessarily with all those who believe in this way. This is reflected in the teaching of Vatican II (LG 12):

> The whole body of the faithful who have an anointing that comes from the holy one (cf. 1 Jn. 2:20 and 27) cannot err in matters of belief.

This expresses firstly that the faithful build up a whole body of those who receive their faith from others. Then the term *whole body* refers to all the believers and allows no exception. Insofar as somebody belongs to the whole body of the faithful, they can not err in matters of faith. This infallibility of every believer derives from the infallibility of faith itself (cf. Knauer 1991:216-217).

With regard to the proclamation of faith this means that the tradition of the word of God is the real conferment of the Holy Spirit and not mere talk about the Holy Spirit. The real witnessing happens in the event of proclamation. The message itself implies that it does not depend on the dignity or holiness of the witness. The witnesses themselves receive the certitude of their faith by handing over the faith and experiencing its effect on others (cf. Knauer 1991:227-237).

According to Roman Catholic teaching sacraments are signs of grace. They signify what they contain. This is not limited to them; it exists beyond the sacraments. They are actually modes of the word with the word as a constituting part,

> since the sacraments are sacraments of faith, drawing their origin and nourishment from the Word (PO 4).

The word as physical reality has the features of a sacrament: it contains and confers the reality it is talking about. The particular sacraments then emphasise certain aspects of the proclamation of the word.

Since sacraments signify the unsurpassability of the grace mediated by the word they cannot be perceived as mediators of an extraordinarily intense grace. They emphasise the visibility of a grace, which is not limited to them (Knauer 1991:240-255).

All the faithful are called to proclaim their faith. The function of the special ministry within the church is to express that faith comes not only for each and every individual but also for the whole community from the listening to the word. This ministry acts in person of Christ the head. Catholic theology often looks for particular acts of the institution of the special ministry by Christ. There are two weaknesses in this view. It gives the impression that the basic structure of the church was just arbitrarily decreed by Christ

as if he could have done otherwise. One could even ask why other words of Jesus should not be taken as binding commands and instructions. The institution of ministry by Jesus is more fundamental and is not just based on certain statements. It is anchored in the essence of faith as the original gift of Christ. This view precedes even that which argues for ministry from the viewpoint of the sociologically identifiable needs of a society. Consequently the essential difference between common and ministerial priesthood is seen in the function of the ministerial priesthood for the faith of the community. The faith as witnessed by all the faithful is unsurpassable; there is no more or less closeness to God in Christian faith (Knauer 1991:297-305).

Since we are to reflect on the actual role of community leaders one must state from a fundamental theological point of view that every proclamation of the word of God is valid and unsurpassable. It does not matter whether it is done by priests or community leaders - or by anyone else - as long as they proclaim the word of God. And if it comes to the point that lay people administer sacraments, the same applies: there is no greater or lesser grace. Kehl (1992:77) sees all the different vocations within the church as expressions of a fundamental equality in the Holy Spirit. The difference is just in the people and the different roles involved. From this point of view a position that expects the priest to apply "more" or "better" grace makes no sense, theologically speaking. The difference lies in ecclesial conventions and not in the substance of faith. Since there is immediate access to God all belong to the royal priesthood (1Petr 2:9). The only mediators are Jesus Christ and the Spirit.

1.3.4 Pastoral theology

Concerning the interpretation of the involvement in the pastoral work of the church I regard the insights of Zimmermann (1994) as a valuable and valid contribution. In a certain way they reflect the steps of the pastoral cycle and those of the method of *see – judge – act*. He developed his approach in his thesis on the catechumenate, the initiation of adults in France (Zimmermann 1974) and in the encounter with Béguerie, and refined it in further publications in 1978[27] and 1994. With its emphasis on the initiation of adults it actually comes from a missionary perspective. It helps to clarify functions and roles within the process of proclaiming faith. In particular it contributes to

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[27] Leben – Glauben – Feiern (Zimmermann 1994) was first published 1978.

a deeper understanding of the interrelationship of life, the proclamation of faith, and liturgy. These are also key dimensions in the service of the funeral leaders.

Béguerie discerns three dimensions of human life that belong closely together. Zimmermann (1998) told me that he prefers the term "dimension" to "strata" or "layers" for it expresses an irrevocable relationship in difference. The first dimension (A) is human life and its experiences as such, its acts, situations, and events. The second dimension (B) concerns becoming conscious, the understanding of life. The experience will be interpreted (arrow 1 from A to B). The interpretation makes life itself more dense (arrow 2 from B to A). The third dimension (C) deals with the celebration: what people experience and what they become conscious of being able to celebrate (arrow 3 from A via B to C). What they celebrate that they will understand deeper. They will live in a deeper way (arrow 4 from C via B to A). The celebration adds to the depth of the conscious experiences (cf. Zimmermann 1994:13-14).[28]

All facets and events of life may be approached in this way (Béguerie 1994:22). Hofrichter (1997:125), in her thesis on this model, is concerned with opening up more explicitly a broad understanding of life. This refers to all aspects of life in all its variations. These together constitute the identity acquired and built up by an individual within his or her broader context. To achieve a deeper understanding of life Hofrichter (1997:156) points to biographical research (*Biographieforschung*) which is concerned with access to the subject, to society, and to history from below where the voiceless get a voice (:157). However, not everything in human life can and will be reflected upon (Zimmermann 1994:34). Some events call for deeper understanding and interpretation. All of them can be celebrated.

The dimension of interpretation or understanding plays a key role. Hofrichter (1997:127-128) discerns a second in the process of becoming aware. The dimension of interpretation aims at transformation and conversion. L Boff (1976:15) described this transforming power as con-vocar, pro-vocar and e-
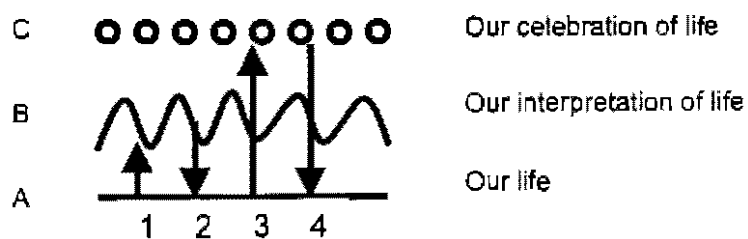
Figure 1.2. The three dimensions of life, its interpretation, and its celebration (cf. Zimmermann 1994:14)

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[28] Zimmermann also gives a circular sketch (1994: 14-15).

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vocar. Con-vocar: Interpretation calls or brings people together and creates community. It is concerned with understanding and dialogue. That means communication within the paradigm of the people involved. Pro-vocar: To understand also provokes a person. The situation under discussion influences people. They may change their position, conviction, and attitude. The new subject becomes an experience if a conversion or change of consciousness is achieved. E-vocar stresses that understanding points both at existing experiences and at those to come. Past and future meet at this particular moment and allow us to say: "This is similar to that event" and "Something similar may happen again."

Hofrichter sees the dimension of interpretation in connection with what Rahner (1971a) calls mystagogy. This means the discovery of the self-communication of the God who is next to us, the life-experience of people in which God is present, and the process of mediation, which helps to discover God's self-communication (Hofrichter 1997:164).

Without a comprehensive interpretation a celebration becomes meaningless, a hollow event. It may be merely an event of consuming food and drink together, but it will be deprived of its real meaning and transforming character for people. If life is not shared this results in an ungrounded ceremony.

The celebration means an unfolding of experienced reality in two directions: it becomes more intense and universal. The contributions and perspectives of others help to intensify our own feelings by sharing and expressing experiences. Joy may even increase as mourning becomes still deeper grounded. At the same time the common celebration of an event widens the perspective. The event, the experience, gains in importance for others as well; they feel affected and may even discover some resemblance of that event in their own lives and experiences (cf. Béguerie 1994:24). In our case that may mean that participants at funerals remember the death of their own beloved ones; others may remember friends or family members who are terminally ill.

These dimensions apply likewise to religious life. The dimension of life could be translated into lived faith. The dimension of interpretation becomes reflected faith and the dimension of celebration becomes celebrated faith. The two dimensions of reflection/understanding and celebration have a receptive and an anticipatory element. Understanding happens in the concepts people receive. Celebrating happens in forms inherited from others. On the other hand understanding and celebration reach out into the future. They aim at new life (Zimmermann 1994:16). In the case of funerals this may

take the form of new hope, strength, meaning, and relevance. The way of proclaiming, interpreting and celebrating can gain strong momentum in future life. The political funerals in South Africa with their communal and social significance are an example of this (Nolan 1988:201; cf. Cochrane et al. 1991:17). Funerals can be a way of underlining the communal aspect of human life that seems to get lost in the Western context with its tendency to private funerals in a small circle. In looking at them we need to avoid the kind of anthropology that insulates human beings from their life and death situation (cf. Cochrane et al. 1991:2). In this perspective it becomes clear that celebrations are by no means a waste of time or sentimental remnants. They are deeply human events and are powerful. This involves questioning comments that deplore a "merely" church-oriented ministry, such as that of funeral leaders. Van der Ven states from his research in the Netherlands:

> The most important items involved in liturgy are the celebration of the Eucharist, funerals... it appears that liturgy is the greatest source of religious experience... and that the unanimity about this is also the greatest ... (Van der Ven 1996:182).

The roles of those being crucially involved in interpretation and celebration need to be considered. Zimmermann and Hofrichter did not reflect on this particular issue. Bertsch sees interpretation and celebration as the task of the members of the base communities who share life and death with the dying and their families rather than as the task of the priest (Bertsch 1990:24; cf. Bujo 1986:133). This suggests that one should look to leaders emerging from the communities for the interpreting and leading roles at funerals. In our case the funeral leaders are supposed to be involved in all three dimensions: As members of their Christian and local community they were sharing their life with the deceased. Jesus' way of life may have shone through. At the particular moment of the funeral death calls for comprehension, for interpretation in the light of the lived faith. The proclamation of the love of God needs to be grounded in the trajectory of a particular life span. All of this calls for a celebration that will benefit the future life of all involved: deepening their understanding and transforming their lives.

The funeral leaders are among those praised by the initial *isibongo*. They are recruited from among the poor. They are witnesses of their faith in the dynamics of an interpreted and celebrated life. So they participate in the mission of the church. In the next step I will outline briefly my understanding of mission and of the subjects of mission.

1.3.5 Mission and Evangelisation

My basic understanding of mission derives from two mission statements in the New Testament.

> He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read. The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, and he began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing" (Lk 4:16-22).

Luke states the addressees of the good news. Jesus is sent to the poor, captives, blind, oppressed, and those dependent on mercy. This reinforces the option with the poor – as Jesus' option. For Luke, then, the content of the good news is liberty, new sight, freedom, and mercy. This implies something new and life changing. Jesus also mentions the effect of his mission: it becomes true in its proclamation. In other words: Where mission is happening it affects the addressees in terms of its content. This was also outlined in the section on fundamental theology and by the dynamics of the pastoral theological approach with the efficacious proclamation of the word.

The other text is the mission statement at the end of the gospel of Matthew:

> Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Mt 28:18-20).

This mission statement leaves no doubt that the authorisation for all the things to come derives from Jesus. It is participation in his own authority. In this authority all the nations are to be approached to make disciples. Μαθηταί, disciples, is the word used frequently for the twelve and other followers. All those who are going to be baptised will be disciples. Their instruction will encourage following the example and teaching of Christ (cf. CL 33). Schillebeeckx (cf. 1985:75) quotes the lists of names frequently found in the New Testament in order to point out that the early mission was a collegial venture not exercised by single individuals.

The new disciples are called to teach other new disciples to be witnesses of the Lord (cf. EN 13). This is part of the vision of the church. His assurance and, if one wants to see it this way, his attribution of dignity to their service lies in the assurance of his presence all the time. At the same time this text is a call for formation. This formation will lead to the awareness that Christ is present in the missionary work: It is Christ who is at work in his disciples. This actually means that the self-communication of God's love goes on through those who follow this command of Jesus.

These scripture-inspired considerations give an idea about mission. "Ultimately, mission remains undefinable; it should never be incarcerated in the narrow confines of our own predilections" (Bosch 1991:9). Rather than giving a definition my intention is to hint at some essentials of mission relevant to this study.

The Second Vatican Council's (1963-1965) decree on the church's missionary activity states that the church is by its very nature missionary (AG 2). It grounds the mission of the church in the coming down of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost just as Christ was conceived by the coming down of the Spirit (AG 4). Still, there seems to be some terminological ambiguity. The Council, with reference to Mt 28:19 and Mk 16:15, claims that the order of the bishops inherited the obligation to mission. The priests assist them in it (AG 5). However, the task is, in its own words, always attributed to the church. The decree remains, throughout its pondering about the agents of mission, somehow vague. It just quotes priests, deacons, catechists, also Catholic Action and brothers and nuns (AG 15). It also praises the role of Catechists and auxiliary Catechists (AG 17). The Council emphasises the importance for training and formation for priests, brothers, sisters and lay people, here again mentioning the laity explicitly as involved in missionary work beyond the day to day witness in their lives (AG 26). AG 23 itself refers in particular to LG 17 when talking about missionaries:

> Each disciple of Christ has the obligation of spreading the faith to the best of his ability.

This task may be carried out in different ways, depending on the circumstances, though it remains the one mission of Christ (AG 6).[29] The special, particular undertakings

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[29] On my visit to the Missionary Institute in London in July 1998 I met a Missionary of Africa from Algeria. I interviewed him on the question of community ministry in his area. I learned that he himself with two other priests and three sisters were the only members of the Christian community at his place in the Sahara. The missionary approach there is totally different (Deillon 1998).

themselves are called missions (see also Bosch 1991:10). The principal instrument of mission is the preaching of the Gospel.

> Missionary activity is nothing else, and nothing less, than the manifestation of God's plan, its epiphany and realization in the world and in history (AG 9).

It is based on preaching and the celebration of the sacraments, of which the Eucharist is the centre. Its concern includes striving for peace, and the right ordering of economic and social affairs (AG 12). An urgent plea is made for endeavours and studies leading to inculturation in order to explain the faith in terms of the philosophy, wisdom, customs, and conception of life and social structures (AG 22).

The Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *The Church in Africa* does not differentiate much when it states about the church:

> Born of the evangelizing mission of Jesus and the Twelve, she is in turn sent forth (CIA 55).

Bosch (1991:409) prefers the concept of evangelism to refer (a) to the activities to spread the gospel, and (b) the theological reflection on these activities. Evangelisation he uses to indicate (a) the process, or (b) the extent to which it has been spread. He perceives mission to be the wider term, evangelism – or evangelisation – as imbedded in the total mission of the church (Bosch 1991:411-412). One important aspect of evangelism for him is its contextuality. Parra (1991:968) sees the great mystery of evangelisation not so much in the verbal proclamation of principles. It is the living witness of the values and virtues of justice, equality, brother- and sisterhood, convivience, sharing and giving, communion with the Lord and the brothers and sisters. Keteyi (1998:32) also characterises evangelisation as proclamation by living witness and by the endeavour for justice and peace. He hints at the dialectic that "the responsibility of evangelisation is the activity that defines the nature of the church" (1998:31). On the other hand the church is the result of evangelisation. This implies that the way in which evangelisation is understood and carried out produces a particular kind of church. Proclamation, a witnessing that includes a comprehensive cultural approach, and justice will appear as crucial evangelising traits of the ministry of funeral leaders. With this they contribute to building the church in their particular context.

The background of this study is the broad and at the same time somehow vague understanding presented in the apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (EN). It calls evangelisation:

bringing the good news into all strata of humanity, and through its influence transforming humanity from within and making it new (EN 18).

Evangelisation is not only verbal proclamation (Bosch 1991:420). It goes together with deeds. *Evangelii Nuntiandi* stresses that those who received the Good News and who are gathered in the community of salvation must communicate and spread it (EN 13). The essential content of this proclamation is the love of God revealed by Jesus Christ (EN 26). This includes raising hope, seeing life as a whole, and launching a message of liberation towards human advancement without ambiguity (EN 32). It means a call for conversion (EN 36). There are different means of evangelisation. It may be the witness of life, preaching, liturgy, mass media, personal contact, the sacraments, or popular piety (EN 41-48). *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (49-57), then, identifies the different recipients of the Good News before mentioning its agents (EN 59-73). Starting with the church as a whole whose task is evangelising, it continues in a hierarchical manner. The pope, bishops and priests, and then the religious are followed by the laity. Extra attention is paid to families and young people. For the laity, tasks in the world of society, politics, and economics are mentioned first. Finally it arrives at diversified ministries:

> The laity can also feel themselves called, or be called, to work with their pastors in the service of the ecclesial community, for its growth and its life, by exercising a great variety of ministries according to the grace and charisms which the Lord is pleased to give them (EN 73).

The encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* (RM) acknowledges, with regard to ministry, that "Within the church, there are various types of services, functions, ministries and ways of promoting Christian life" (RM 72). RM 74 refers explicitly to leaders serving the church and her mission. Comblin (1994:237) emphasises that what is really new about this encyclical is the stress on the laity.[30] This encyclical expressly dedicates one section

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[30] Comblin (1994:231) about its possible effectiveness: "The Encyclical is written as if a strong desire for evangelizing were enough for the conversion of Asian peoples. This characteristic is related to another — total indifference to the human sciences. From reading RM, one could get the impression that the Church bears in itself all knowledge to fulfil its mission... It seems, indeed, that the Church does not need to pay attention to the sociocultural analysis, as if all of this is without importance to the mission enterprise ... Until today the so-called 'new evangelization' has largely remained at the level of pure speech without effect." The observations of Hearne (1993) may point in the same direction. He notices that RM does not pay sufficient attention to the historical developments and the involvement of creative thinkers in history. He has the impression that in RM "the whole realm of creativity is neglected, whereas it has to be an element of any authentic mission thinking in the here and now" (:6). He senses that RM attributes more importance to the institution than to the living Person of Christ (:6).
This study focuses, with the community leaders, on a new type of creative people within the church. They promote mission in their co-operation with the traditional ministry. It is up to other studies to compare these two recent documents for instance in terms of content, mode, and vocabulary. *Evangelii Nuntiandi* has a special appeal for an inductive study like this. Different from *Redemptoris Missio*, it departs from the

(RM 85) to the reciprocal character of mission. Young and old churches are called to give and to receive. Faithful to this teaching, this study intends to give to both, the other young and the old churches.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church does not mention any concrete people entrusted with mission. It just states that the church must be missionary (CCC 851). It stresses, among other things, the need for inculturation so that the gospel can take flesh in each culture (CCC 854) and that it should stimulate efforts towards Christian unity (CCC 855).

The Church In Africa points to the people of God as *the* resource for mission, besides the grace of Christ; they in their entirety have received the mandate to proclaim the gospel. For the task of evangelisation the whole community needs to be trained, motivated, and empowered (CIA 53).

The poor proclaim the gospel in the form of explicit evangelisation within the family, their base community, in popular religion, and by witnessing the values and virtues of the gospel (cf. Boff & Pixley 1987:240). Boff and Pixley root the competence of the poor in their being the *Locus a quo* of the gospel. Only from the position of the poor does the gospel arise as good news, light, and salt (:243). The poor evangelise the poor, the rich, and the church itself (:244).

Canon Law (CIC) summarises the previous developments. It states simply:

> Can 781: Because the whole Church is of its nature missionary and the work of evangelisation is to be considered a fundamental duty of the people of God, all Christ's faithful must be conscious of the responsibility to play their part in missionary activity.

Though there can never be a last word on mission, I regard it as necessary to spell out briefly some basics of the perception of mission. We saw some ambiguity in the qualification and determination of roles within mission. That locates the appeal of this study. This vagueness is also present in the perception of ministry. As a last conceptual qualification I will briefly touch the usage of the terms "leader" and "ministry." Other terminological specification will take place in the course of the study as need arises.

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witness of Christ going from town to town bringing the good news to the poor (EN 6). *Redemptoris Missio* starts with the witness about Christ: No one comes to the Father, but by me (RM 5). While believing the truth of this I note here a specific difference in the point of departure.

1.3.6 Ministry and community leaders

Leadership can take many forms (cf. Kellner 1998:286-7). In this study the term refers to those who participate in the ministry of the church. The concepts of *ministry* and *leadership*, like the term *mission*, resist an easy definition. They are subject to continuing and dynamic development, which defies a static description.

It is one of the merits of the so-called feminist theologies to have brought about an increased awareness on the kind of language one uses. *Mutatis mutandis* this applies to lay leaders as well, here called community leaders. The words one uses to refer to them are often clumsy; the temptation to use paternalistic language is always present.

It becomes a language of "helpers". But who actually helps whom: does the lay-leader help the priest, or does the priest help the lay-leader, or is there mutual help? It is a language of assistants. But what kind of assistance is it when people are carrying out tasks in an accountable way? It is a language of servitude. But if you are supposed to talk about being brothers and sisters, all of them are in the service ministry. It is a language of exceptions. But how does one think about exceptions if they are actually the rule? It is a language of anxiety and distinct fears. But how does one then witness to the overcoming of all fears as proclaimed by Jesus? It is often a language developed in the European context. But what if it does not match another context? It is or it was a paternalistic language, developed by those in power. But what, if you talk to adults, if you actually deal *with* them, let alone those who went through deprivation of human dignity? There is a growing understanding that these poor have a crucial contribution to make to the church's life. Cardinal Malula was convinced that the Roman Catholic Church could only be universal if it consisted of competent independent local churches, which are aware of their own significance (cf. Bertsch 1990:27).

The term "lay" is a term of belonging. Over time it acquired a connotation of lower standards and qualifications. Originally it indicated belonging to the people. It stood in contradistinction to being outside or alien. So it was an expression of pride (Osborne 1993:37). As such it could be applied to all church members. However, it later lost its specifying character (cf. Werbick 1997:590). Though the term is widely used, I will not use it in the subsequent chapters to refer to what I prefer to call community ministry. This term indicates the concrete origin and location of this ministry. Referring to the leaders in general I will here use the term community leaders since the singular "minister" is too clearly reserved for ordained or installed church ministers. Though the

pope, bishops, and priests are clearly leaders and fulfil a distinctive task in leading the church, the term *leader* will be reserved here for those in community ministry. One may regard it as a problem that this term is also used in secular language to refer to leaders of the political and social life. History teaches that even the very churchy terms of bishop (ἐπίσκοπος), presbyter (πρεσβύτερος), and deacon (διάκονος) were secular terms. When talking about specific leaders the term "community" will be replaced by their particular task such as *funeral*-leaders. Whatever term is used I always want to use it with the above-mentioned connotation of pride. By avoiding the term *laity* I want to avoid its negative connotations, where it can indicate people who are less experienced and uneducated. In the local languages this problem of terminology does not arise. Here we refer to leaders as *iinkokheli* (isiXhosa) or *baetapeli* (Sesotho).

By the term "community minister" or "leader" I refer to men and women from among the discipleship of Jesus who are not ordained. They are Christians with their personal charisms who are trained for their tasks in their particular circumstances. They are members of their communities and elected by them. They have a task that is limited to the community they serve. These leaders are volunteers who receive no remuneration.

In this way they are different from other lay people who also do or did pastoral work, namely part-time or full-time catechists, sisters, or brothers in pastoral work. This also includes (in the European context) the installed ministries introduced since Vatican II such as Pastoral Assistants (cf. Mette 1997:597). All these, since they are not ordained, belong to the so-called laity, whereas religious sisters and brothers are sometimes regarded as something in between. In our context neither the remaining catechists nor sisters from animation teams are supposed to take over the tasks of community leaders.[31]

1.4 Method employed – the pastoral spiral

This section outlines the method employed for researching the phenomenon of the ministry of funeral leaders. I will follow the pastoral cycle or spiral as described by

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[31] The term lay-ministers can have different meanings. Canon law refers to lay ministers as installed but not having the right of remuneration and of those authorised, as in canon 230§3. This refers to ministers emerging from their communities. Some are installed, others authorised. Those authorised may even act in the presence of installed ministers (cf. CLSA:169). Those installed or authorised are not office holders in the strict sense of the law. The provisions on office holders of canon 145§1 and 2 and the requirements of canons 146-196 apply also to lay persons. Such offices may be directors of charities, schools, and

Holland and Henriot and others (cf. Holland & Henriot 1983; Wijsen 1993; Banawiratma & Müller 1995, and, with some modifications, SACBC 1989:42). Bate (1998:153;173) speaks of the missiological spiral. This indicates the broader application of this method. It is not only useful for social analysis of social situations like oppression, unemployment, and so forth but is also applicable to the faith event of mission. This spiral comprises the stages of insertion, analysis, theological reflection, and pastoral planning. When the pastoral planning is implemented a new turn in the spiral begins.[32]

1.4.1 Insertion

Insertion raises two issues: *who* is going to insert himself and *where* will he be inserted. The research is done from the particular perspective of faith. This was expressed in the section on my personal stance. In this particular study the researcher is at the same time professionally involved in the setting. I am one of the priests of the observed communities and their leaders. This includes being in a position to influence them by training and guiding. This means holding a position endued with a certain power. This has to be taken into account both because of its possible influence on the research and also in order to prevent it from distorting it. Insertion into the situation is an attempt to get an answer to the pastoral problem or intellectual puzzle from and with the people (cf. Luzbetak 1995:71)[33]. This happens in the encounter with the funeral leaders. They play a crucial role in the research process, both as objects and subjects. Though they are being researched, they also contribute to the research and influence it at the same time. The scope extends of course to the communities they serve and the lives of their people, in particular the funerals. The term "community" is somewhat vague. Normally by the term *community* I mean the (Roman Catholic) Christian community within a particular village. This community may consist of Small Christian Communities.[34] And of course other stakeholders like the priests and other pastoral workers involved and

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religious education (CLSA:99). In this sense, the community leaders I am dealing with here are not office holders.

[32] The Pastoral Plan indicates clearly a pastoral spiral when adding implementation and evaluation as further steps of the cycle, thus introducing them as the first steps in the new turn of the pastoral spiral.

[33] "At times the expatriate pastor ... will have to disagree and challenge the local church, but the chances are that if there be an answer it will be found deep in the soul of the community" (Luzbetak 1995:71).

[34] The term SCC or Base community refers to a variety of entities, which I am not going to explore here. For the South African context one may consult the material published by the Lumko Institute and by Lobinger (1995; 1997). For the context of Brazil articles and monographs by Azevedo (1987) and Boff (1980), for East Africa by Healey (1993; 1995), for Nigeria by Osuchukwu (1995) and by Ugeux (1988) for the then Zaïre may help to give an overview over the complex reality. Wüstenberg (1995a) compares SCCs in South Africa and Christian Base Communities in Burkina Faso.

affected will contribute from their perspective. All this takes into account the first moment of the pastoral cycle, insertion:

> This locates the geography of our pastoral responses in the lived experience of individuals and communities. What people are feeling, what they are undergoing, how they are responding – these are the experiences that constitute primary data. We gain access to these by inserting our approach close to the experiences of ordinary people (Holland & Henriot 1980:8).

Banawiratma and Müller[35] (1995:26) in their *Contextual theology of the social*, call this *exposure* participatory observation. No theory or theology can replace it. Inserting oneself into a concrete and limited situation makes the difference to studies like that of Azevedo (1987:4), who based his investigation of Base Communities on the wide range of available literature. Wijsen (1993:21;12) prefers to use the term participant observation when dealing with this first step of becoming acquainted with the situation to be analysed. The concrete way this insertion takes place and the concrete analysis of the situation will be spelled out in the section on *A qualitative research design*.

1.4.2 Social analysis

In order to understand the situation I will call on the assistance of social sciences (cf. Banawiratma & Müller 1995:26). They provide the tools for analysis to give thorough attention to the social setting.

> For a theology orientated towards praxis, consequently, the sciences of the social perform a necessary function of theoretical mediation, which I call "socio-analytic mediation" (Boff 1987:6).

Boff's concern is the theology of the political. In the analysis of the practice of the ministry of the funeral leaders the theoretical mediation also relies on the social sciences. Boff sees them entering the theology of the political as a *constitutive* part.

> But they do so precisely at the level of the raw material of this theology, at the level of its *material object* – not at that of its proper pertinency, or formal object (Boff 1987:31).

Kehl (1976) gives one example of the relationship between theology and social sciences as represented by sociology. From his ecclesiological point of view he tries to

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[35] Their book was first published in Indonesia in 1993: *Berteologi Sosial Lintas Ilmu. Kemiskinan sebagai Tantangan Hidup Beriman*. Yogyakarta: Kenerbit Kanisius. Banawiratma and Müller wrote it as manual of the theology of the social with an emphasis on methodology. It deals in its concrete approach with the challenge of poverty. The German translation was released in 1995.

avoid the alternatives of a clear separation of theology and sociology as incompatible, and of dissolving theology in sociology. Theology searches in all given reality for God. Though its formal object differs from non-theological ways of understanding, theology actually depends on them for its way of understanding. What one actually faces is the problem of transcendence and its immanent mediation (cf. Kehl 1976:53-55). The *Realitätsschwäche* (weakness in perceiving reality; a term of T. Rendtorff) of theology requires the knowledge of the social sciences if it wants to outline the conditions of the possibility of the experience of God. Kehl gives three reasons: ecclesiology as a discipline within theology on the one hand, and sociology on the other, have common ground; theology has to involve itself in the development of language to maintain communicability; sociology is enlightening because it interprets the real meaning and importance of faith in the awareness of the faithful, as opposed to the purely theological understanding (Kehl 1976:57-59). Praxis has its own fundamental right. It is not just applying a theory but a decisive and full theory emanates from a never fully reflectable practice (cf. Rahner 1980:148). Theology reflects on the given reality of the church (cf. Rahner 1980:154). This implies the need to respect the social sciences, to respect their autonomy (Boff 1987:51), and to make use of them.

The social sciences are not a monolithic block.[36] Theology will by no means limit itself to a particular branch of this science (cf. Kehl 1976:55). Social theories are diverse. They are not only in competition but also contradictory (Boff 1987:57). In selecting one of them one has to examine them to see which one explains most and responds best to the values considered (Boff 1987:57-58). That means finding out which method or methods are most fitting for the analysis here; I will discuss that more fully in the next section. The method will be used in an intradisciplinary rather than an interdisciplinary approach.

Boff (1987:60) expects interdisciplinary collaboration, among other things, on the part of the theologian.[37] We need to examine this term more closely since interdisciplinary work may mean different things. One may see it as a way of co-operation between disciplines which involves representatives of each of them.[38] Van der Ven (1990:116) outlined

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[36] Wijsen (1993:15) gives an overview over the diversity of pluralism within the social sciences.
[37] "Daß moderne Gesellschaftwissenschaften und Theologie miteinander reden können und sollen, ist selbstverständlich" (Rahner 1972:102). Reflecting more on the theology of the political, Rahner sees society and its history as condition and cause of the history of the church and theology.
[38] Banawiratma and Müller (1995:10) represent an inter-disciplinary approach since a theologian and a social scientist (with theological qualification) led the project that resulted in the publication of their book.

some of the difficulties one may encounter in interdisciplinary work. Social sciences have separated themselves irrevocably from theology. They have no need to refer to theology to carry out their work, while practical theology depends on the social sciences for its purposes.[39] Van der Ven (1990:117) therefore prefers to talk about *intradisciplinary* work.[40] This means that theology itself has to become empirical, developing its instruments towards an empirical methodology. Sociologists do not regard themselves as having a monopoly on the methods of sociology.

> One need not be a sociologist or subscribe to the Interactionist perspective to use it. What counts are the procedures and they are not discipline bound. It is important to remember that investigators from different disciplines will be interested in different phenomena – or may even view the same phenomenon differently because of disciplinary perspectives and interests (Strauss & Corbin 1990:26; cf. Glaser 1992:18).

Certain social qualities are involved in the church as *communio* (cf. LG 9; CL 18-20), these include openness, equality, leadership, authority, power. All these would remain hidden if one only looked at the church in its religious aspect (Van der Ven 1996:93). The loss of these characteristics would be detrimental to a deeper understanding and further planning. This also applies to a particular feature of a society like its leadership, the ministers, and in this study the funeral leaders. In terms of the leadership within the church, for instance, the conflicts between interests and power-questions would not be understood but easily covered up with pious phrases.

> The church as *communio* is anything but free from struggles of power and conflict; in fact, it is highly charged with power and conflict. That is why one has to involve the social aspects as well as the religious ones in a treatment of the church as *communio* (Van der Ven 1996:94)

In his critique of Tillich's rejection of empirical methodology as inadequate Van der Ven (1990:119) stresses that God is the direct object of faith but not of theology. The object of theology is faith. Reception, response, and reaction to the *selfcommunication* of God on the personal as well on the ecclesial level are subject to research (1990:120). Van

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[39] "Dasselbe gilt auf analoge Weise für die Geschichte der Beziehung der Psychologie und der Soziologie zur Theologie... Man mag das beurteilen, wie man will, die Theologie, die das Gespräch mit den heutigen Sozialwissenschaften anknüpft, begibt sich in eine ungleiche Machtbalance. Der Grund ist, daß die Sozialwissenschaften die Theologie für die Ausübung ihrer Disziplin nicht nötig haben, während die Praktische Theologie, zumindest im interdisziplinären Modell, gerade von der Zusammenarbeit mit den Sozialwissenschaften lebt ..." (Van der Ven 1990:116)

[40] Concerning the relationship between the science of the social and religion Banawiratma and Müller 1995:73-5) emphasise that revelation and its concrete form in socio-historical nature must be discerned. Religion wants to address people of a certain, particular social context. Religion has to develop within a society to avoid empty talk. Religion depends on worldly and societal forms to express itself.

der Ven responds to Tillich's rejection of an assumed objectivity in verification of statements by referring to critical rationalism. It presupposes a special point of view, perception, and judgement in all research. Instead of verification, Van der Ven (1990:121-122) prefers to talk about corroborated hypotheses. Taking into account Tillich's concern about negligence towards faithful self-dedication in quantitative methodology, Van der Ven (1990:123) explores the value of a qualitative-empirical methodology that takes the position of the researched into account to a greater degree.[41]

Though this kind of study has not been entirely absent in the history of theology, the Catholic tradition did not pay much scientific and systematic attention to it. Van der Ven quotes the three 'loci theologici' of Thomas Aquinas: the Bible, the apostolic tradition, and the church. The last comprises not only the teaching of popes and councils, but especially the actual, living ecclesial praxis. Thomas attributes high importance to it since the Holy Spirit leads it (cf. Van der Ven 1990:124; Holland & Henriot 1983:23). Boff (1987:151) states that

> it is more important to theorize "what the Spirit says in the churches" than to apprehend what the Spirit said "once upon a time".

Or, as Mbadu-Kwalu (1989:172; cf. Bate 1998:152-4, referring to Lonergan and Küng) puts it, theologians must listen to the revelation that unfolds within the living communities. The socio-cultural situation has already been taken into account (cf. Bertsch 1990:141). Ela (1987:69) demands that each query concerning ministries in the church must be done within the framework of reflection on the life of the people of God. The main concerns of the community of the faithful have to be taken into account by a lively theology (:70). All points to the need to choose a qualitative research design.

1.4.3 A qualitative research design

Acknowledging the importance of the social sciences for the theological work does not by itself indicate what concrete methods of mediation one should employ. In the South African context two recent studies chose different approaches.

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[41] Die qualitativ-empirische Methodologie "bezieht sich auf die Anwendung von Fakten von der eigenen Perspektive der Untersuchten her, von qualitativen Kodierungsmethoden, von induktiven Analysemethoden und von offenen Forschungsdesigns" (Van der Ven 1990:123).

Bate (1995:20) in his study on *Inculturation and Healing* is looking at the "lived experience of that faith within the community". He opts for a phenomenological approach "which considers a phenomenon as it manifests itself and as it is received and interpreted by an active subject" (:24). So he wants to avoid "lapsing into an introspective subjectivism or the illusion of positivist empirical objectivity" (:24). He chooses to look at his phenomenon through the lenses of different mediations such as philosophy, anthropology, sociology (:25) rather than to resort to questionnaires, interviews, and so on -- without denying their usefulness (:24; cf. Bate 1998:158-9).

In his research on the Bible study group in Amawoti, Philpott (1993:19) decided to follow the patterns of an *activist researcher* doing participatory research aiming at the constitutive participation of the researched in the research project (:20). He based his study on data mostly generated in group discussions (:26). In his conclusion he states that the desired emancipatory outcome of the participatory research was not achieved, and that it could even manipulate the participating members of a group to subscribe to the concepts of the researcher (:127-128).

This study still takes a different approach in its analytical part. I chose a *qualitative research design* as used in sociological research, based on the *grounded theory* (cf. Strauss & Corbin 1990) approach. Unlike a quantitative research design this meets a concern as expressed by Kvale (1996:11):

> Positivism conceived of the social sciences as natural sciences, to be based on objective quantifiable data, with the prediction and control of the behavior of others as a goal. Today there is a shift toward philosophical lines of thought closer to the humanities.

Van der Ven in his discussion of Tillich's position had already dealt with the fear of doubtful objectivity in a research approach based on structured questionnaires and statistics only. This is normally referred to as quantitative research. Instead he pointed out the importance of qualitative research.

The qualitative approach seems to be adequate to focus on the pulse of the local church's life. I use it to pursue what Luzbetak (1995:24) calls the goal of anthropology:[42]

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[42] Luzbetak (1995:27-34) gives more information on differentiations in anthropology: He distinguishes physical anthropology from cultural anthropology with its subdivisions of archaeology, linguistics, ethnology, and scientifically-oriented cultural anthropology. He sees (among other things) much overlapping between sociology and anthropology, though he attributes to sociology an emphasis on

to produce a composite, coordinated and fully living picture of the single entity called *anthrôpos*.

Building on the work of Glaser, Strauss and Corbin (1990) explain the basics of qualitative research in one of its versions, the grounded theory:

> A **grounded theory** is one that is inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents... Therefore, data collection, analysis, and theory stand in reciprocal relationship with each other... Rather, one begins with an area of study and what is relevant to that area is allowed to emerge... The grounded theory approach is a qualitative research **method** that uses a **systematic** set of **procedures** to **develop** an inductively derived grounded **theory** about a **phenomenon** (Strauss & Corbin 1990:23-24).[43]

Glaser (1992:5) sees the advantage of the grounded theory in the fact that it allows the phenomenon studied to be discovered in its perspective. In his critique of Strauss and Corbin he identifies the danger or working with preconceived questions, thus influencing the research (1992:4).[44] Nevertheless, he also admits that there may be questions that can be asked without forcing the data. He cautions that these questions should never be put directly to avoid preconceiving the emergence of data (1992:25).

A grounded inductive approach meets the dilemma: Should the open research design allow the initial statements on funeral leaders when outlining the purpose and the relevance of this thesis? Or should they be rather made as result of the research? Preliminary concepts exist anyway since nobody starts from scratch. Experiences and reflections as well as visions are present, though the point of departure is the very reality under study. Therefore I have spelled out at least some of the framework determining my thinking. Mouton and Marais (1996:43) mention that the major pitfall of

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interrelationships whereas anthropology includes all patterns of human behaviour. Sociology concentrates more on Western societies and anthropology on non-western societies. Sociology focuses on the present and anthropology includes the past. The most important difference he sees in the methods and assumes that sociologists take a more statistical approach whereas anthropologists prefer participant-observation and cross-cultural comparisons. They resort to statistics only as a secondary tool (cf. Luzbetak 1995:42).

[43] There is some criticism of a merely inductive method as originally proposed by Glaser. "However, the development of analytical ideas rarely takes the purely inductive form implied by Glaser and Strauss (heuristically useful though their approach is). Theoretical ideas, common-sense expectations, and stereotypes often play a key role" (Hammersley & Atkinson 1996:213). Without embarking on a discussion as a non-sociologist I am aware of different emphases and developments within this science. Glaser and Strauss's original work stems from 1967. Strauss and Corbin (1990) suggest for instance to the use of literature for the purpose of sensitising and gaining concepts.

[44] Glaser's strong rejection of Corbin and Strauss's *Basics of Qualitative Research* as "book without conscience, bordering on immorality" (1992:5) stems from this essential concern about doing justice to the data.

exploratory research is to allow preconceived ideas or hypotheses to exercise a *determining* influence on the direction or nature of the research.

The task of this study is to check assumptions, prejudices, and visions against the emerging reality: Is what was assumed about the leadership context really true, or did certain expectations and hopes blind one to a true perception of what was going on? The research question for this part of the study is reflected in the explication of the purpose as far as the understanding of the *intellectual puzzle* (Mason 1996:6) of the phenomenon is concerned.

> **The research question in a grounded theory study is a statement that identifies the phenomenon to be studied.** It tells you what you specifically want to focus on and what you know about this subject (Strauss & Corbin 1990:38).

Criteria that should be met by a grounded theory study are faithfulness to everyday reality and careful induction from diverse data, comprehensibility to persons studied and working in that area, and generalisability so that results should be applicable to a variety of contexts. The conditions to which it applies should be spelled out clearly, especially where there is action towards the phenomenon (cf. Strauss & Corbin 1990: 23). The question of generalisation poses a problem in a local study. Specification rather than generalisation is the concern:

> In terms of making generalizations to a larger population, **we are not attempting to generalize as such but to specify**. We specify the conditions under which our phenomena exist, the action/interaction that pertains to them, and the associated outcomes or consequences. That means that our theoretical formulation applies to these situations or circumstances but **to no others** (Strauss & Corbin 1990:191).

Chapter two will contribute to this specification. Poggenpoel (1998:349) points out that Sandelowski does not see applicability as relevant in qualitative research, since it aims at the description of a particular situation with particular informants and a particular researcher; Guba (according to Poggenpoel 1998:349-50), however, sees applicability if the research findings fit into similar situations. The transferability is more the responsibility of those wanting to transfer than that of the researcher of the original

study. This matches what Mouton and Marais call internal and external validity.[45] Mason (1996:6) does not think that

> qualitative researchers should be satisfied with producing explanations which are idiosyncratic or particular to the limited empirical parameters of their study.

Mouton and Marais (1996:31) confirm this:

> There may be considerable differences between the adherents of two research traditions or paradigms concerning what ought to be regarded as rational research decisions when the one group accepts a quantitative research model, while the other follows a qualitative model. Those in the first group would regard considerations of external validity (generalizability) as one of the most important requirements, while those in the second group would tend to regard them as being of less importance, if they were to be taken into account at all. Nonetheless, it is likely that the adherents of both these approaches would regard considerations of internal validity, such as making valid inferences and consistent conclusions, as essential conditions for the rational practice of science.

Mason explicates some specific forms of generalisation, for instance by widening the resonance of the explanations one arrived at by asking questions about the lessons for other settings. The inclusion of strategic comparisons to test and develop theoretical and explanatory propositions may bolster the wider importance of the results. Moreover looking for negative instances and trying an alternative explanation supports a special way of generalisation (cf. Mason 1996: 153-156).

Lofland and Lofland (1984: 51) offer

> the maxim that truthful observation/listening depends heavily upon the sincere good faith, open-mindedness and thoroughness of the observer. In the end, too, the readers of your analysis will also subject it to these same kinds of questions and thus decide what degree of trust to place in it.

From the point of view of a grounded theorist Glaser states four requirements for a well-constructed grounded theory: to fit, to work, to have relevance and modifiability. That means it must fit the realities in the eyes of the subjects and researchers in the area; if it works, a grounded theory will explain the major variations. If both are the case the

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[45] "We may therefore refer to a project as having produced internally valid results if the constructs were measured in a valid manner, the collected data are accurate and reliable, the analyses are relevant for the type of data, and the final conclusions are adequately supported by the data. The term *external validity* refers to a further stage in the research process, and that is that the findings of a given project are generalizable to all similar cases" (Mouton & Marais 1996:50-51).

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grounded theory has relevance. The last requirement adds some kind of flexibility to the theory: if new data bring about variations the theory should be modifiable.

> The theory is neither verified nor thrown out, it is modified to accommodate by integration new concepts (Glaser 1992:15).

The process of data analysis in the grounded theory approach requires the process of coding (cf. Strauss & Corbin 1990:63-69). Coding includes the step of conceptualising. The analysed concepts, then, are categorised. This means to group concepts that seem to pertain to the same phenomena. The creative process of categorising is grounded in the particular context. The names of the categories are expected to come from the researcher (cf. Strauss & Corbin 1990:67). This process can introduce new concepts or categories into the discussion. The inductive strategy employed in this study therefore produces categories like the "principle of locality" or that of "decontamination of death."[46]

While the qualitative research strategy provides the main prism for researching the phenomenon, some other forms of mediation will contribute in a secondary way to furthering the understanding of the emerging theory (or hypothesis), as the need arises. There can only be a selected choice from the bounty of possible mediations. They represent culture texts (a term used by Schreiter 1985); as units of human communication they are true for those who are within the context (cf. Bate 1998:161). Within the limits of the size of this study this includes research on rites of passage, bereavement, culture, history, biblical aspects, and leadership reflections from a managerial and in particular an African managerial point of view. This reflects the range from the local culture, management strategies, and certain theological disciplines to

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[46] One could also refer to concepts already used in pertinent literature. Strauss and Corbin (1990:68) weigh the advantages and disadvantages of this approach. "Such concepts have some advantages insofar as they are loaded with analytic meaning and may already be considerably well developed in their own right. In using them, you may contribute beyond your own study to add to the development of concepts that are of importance and concern within your own discipline or profession. On the other hand, we must remind you again that *use of borrowed concepts can have a grave disadvantage*. Borrowed concepts often bring with them commonly held meanings and associations. The concepts ... are perfectly good words. But the people reading your theory will expect you to define them in standard ways, or read these meanings into your work. You too can be biased by them and lay the standard meanings on top of your work, in essence stopping the inquiry in its tracks instead of opening it." These concerns may characterise the differences between the method chosen here and that of other approaches. This method offers a prism to look at the phenomenon in a conceptually open way.

specific sciences as mentioned by Bate (1998:160). Thus my study allows an encounter of both the emic and etic aspects (cf. Barnard 1996:182, Schreiter 1985:57).[47]

> An emic model is one which explains the ideology or behaviour of members of a culture according to indigenous definitions. An etic model is one which is based on criteria from outside a particular culture. Etic models are held to be universal; emic models are culture-specific (Barnard 1996:180).

Concerning an emic understanding,[48] Kvale (1996:49) mentions, in the hermeneutical canons of interpretation, the autonomy of the text. The text should be interpreted on the basis of its own frame of reference. This avoids the danger deplored by Bediako (1992:235):

> Missionaries, on the whole, saw in Africans and the African environment what they expected to find. In other words, what was observed in Africa was understood and interpreted, not in terms of Africa, but in terms of Europe, that is, of the European value setting for the faith.

Nobody, however, works without presuppositions (cf. Kvale 1996:49) and other systems of reference. Resorting to etic sources can even lead one deeper into the truth of a phenomenon (cf. Bate 1998:162-3). Both inner and outer descriptions are important. The former provide the sign systems making up the identity of people, the latter provide the link to the larger reality of the Christian church (cf. Schreiter 1985:59).

Drawing from both sides, such mediation will help one to understand the phenomenon of community ministry in a broader perspective (cf. Bate 1998:163).

Though not putting the main emphasis on it, this study bears traces of participatory research (cf. Schurink 1998b:405-18; Rahman 1993): The funeral leaders, committees, SCCs, communities, and pastoral workers have played an active role in the research process. In a variety of ways (see below) they actually become involved in efforts to analyse their particular situation and to address required needs actively after reflection. They contribute substantially to the explanation of their world. When this study was in

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[47] Barnard (1996:182) cautions that one must note that culture is much more variable than language, that there is no equivalent to a native speaker in cultural terms. No one possesses absolute "cultural competence" analogous to linguistic competence. Harris denies the possibility of emic models at all. Therefore questions remain such as whether there is a cultural authority; and if so, how can it be identified; what about the ideas of those who are not considered authorities but average members of their culture? Etic models also are under question insofar as one can ask whether the observer's objective model is not their own emic one. Lévi-Strauss, however, pointed out that people understand actions and words through the culture they possess. So the critique of an emic model as merely culture specific and not based on objective principles does not hold.

progress adjustments in pastoral practice already happened at certain stages in a kind of self-development (cf. Schurink 1998b:409;415). This shows that the study fits and works. It is comprehensible to those involved.

The points of departure in the qualitative research strategy are resources like experiences, knowledge, culture, and skills (Schurink 1998b:415). This study does not have as point of departure what Schurink (1998b:413) calls the admission of failure of a prior system or programme, and the consensus on a need of change.[49] I do not intend to follow an explicit participatory research design. This would exceed the available resources of time and money. This study is rather part of a longer process of self-development: clarifying and contributing to it.

Qualitative research serves to observe in a particular context what Van der Ven (1996:ix) calls the object of practical theology, "the self-development of the church". This applies here to the scope of community leaders. Within the parameters of qualitative research this study will represent what Mouton and Marais (1996:43) call exploratory research:

> Because exploratory studies usually lead to insight and comprehension rather than the collection of accurate and replicable data, the studies frequently involve the use of in-depth interviews, the analysis of case studies, and the use of informants. Hypotheses tend to be developed as a result of such research, rather than the research being guided by hypotheses. The most important research design considerations which apply here are, the need: (i) to follow an open and flexible research strategy, and (ii) to use methods such as literature reviews, interviews, case studies, and informants, which may lead to insight and comprehension.

The outcome of such research is regarded as hypotheses. This research strategy fits the purpose of this study: that is, concentrating on the particular group of funeral leaders in the context of its communities.

> On the one hand, phenomena or events are studied because of their intrinsic interest. On the other hand, events or phenomena are studied for the interest which they may have as representative examples of a larger population of similar events or phenomena. In the first case the phenomenon is studied in terms of its immediate context. ... we shall refer to the former as studies

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[48] With an emic approach we arrive at what Geertz (1975:6-7) called a "thick description" in contrast to a thin description which just confers "facts", but not meanings.

[49] This is valid unless one regards the facts triggering off the process leading to the vision of the Pastoral Plan (as lined out below) as such admission. The actual reality here reflected upon is, however, already a result of that former reflection.

> involving a **contextual** research strategy ... Typical examples of studies which are of contextual interest are those in the historical sciences ..., and theology..., and the social sciences where the aim may be to subject a single case, a group, or a sub-culture to a searching investigation (Mouton & Marais 1996:49-50).

Using a contextual strategy, this study, as I mentioned before, does not exclude practical considerations concerning a participatory research strategy. This contextual strategy of qualitative research is based on methods of data generation

> which are flexible and sensitive to the social context in which the data are produced (rather than rigidly standardized or structured, or removed from 'real life' or 'natural' social context, as in some forms of experimental method) (Mason 1996:4).

It is

> based on methods of analysis and explanation building which involve understandings of complexity, detail and context. Qualitative research aims to produce rounded understandings on the basis of rich, contextual, and detailed data. There is more emphasis on "holistic" forms of analysis and explanation in this sense, than on charting surface patterns, trends and correlations. Qualitative research usually does use some form of quantification, but statistical forms of analysis are not seen as central (Mason 1996:4).

Before detailing the method of data-generation I will briefly continue with aspects of the pastoral spiral by paying attention to theological reflection and pastoral planning.

1.4.4 Social analysis and theological reflection

The hermeneutic question is how to achieve the mediation of sociology and theology in the third step of the pastoral spiral. I won't go into an elaborate theory of the required hermeneutics. I just hint at some aspects that are relevant for this thesis. The *comprehension* of the results is required as a hermeneutic rule for the reception of sociological knowledge into theology (cf. Kehl 1976:59-65). This implies taking into account the theory of the empirical investigation (see above: qualitative research design), being clear about the concepts used and knowing one's prejudices and biases. The reception must be *justified*, meaning that the results should be important enough to be incorporated and to determine one's own perception, questions, and methods. Here one has to consider the purpose of resorting to the social sciences. Is it done merely to illustrate theology's findings, or is it done to make one more aware of one's own tasks and methods? This justification also implies that the results brought forward are correct

and appropriate. A third rule points to the reception as *ecclesial* reception. Theology is reflection of the consciousness of the faith of the church, which is based on its societal dimensions as scripture, *sensus fidelium*, and tradition and teaching, which are in themselves very differentiated. In this context theology needs to maintain communicability within the church. This does not mean that theology should be restricted to existing systems of knowledge. On the contrary it has to open existing knowledge to new questions and answers and to become innovative.

As in missiological anthropology, the scope and purpose of social analysis and theological reflection are missiological, and the processes and analyses are anthropological (Luzbetak 1995:43). The situation observed in this way will be interpreted in the light of the Christian faith-tradition (which is always contextually mediated) and the Christian faith-tradition will be reinterpreted in the light of the observed situation (cf. Wijsen 1993:19). This is the challenge of seeing the Spirit at work in forming the tradition in different contexts and being at work in the present situation.[50] Thus what Schreiter (1985:26-28) calls a local theology emerges.

> It takes the interaction of all three of these roots – gospel, church, culture – with all they entail about identity and change, to have the makings of local theology (Schreiter 1985:21).

Local theology is the theology of local communities. Schreiter sees it done rather by smaller groups than by a whole community, which in turn has to accept or reject what the smaller groups have done (Schreiter 1985:17). He sees a limited but indispensable role for the professional theologian as a resource and also a significant role for the expatriate in developing local theologies (Schreiter 1985:18). Wijsen (1993:159-160) discerns different levels with Boff and Boff (1987:12-14) who distinguish popular, pastoral, and professional theology. Popular theology can be seen as the theology of the people at the grass roots. One can further distinguish the theology of the pastoral

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[50] Wilken (1984) states that in the second century the interest of outsiders in the Christian movement arose. Though the comments appeared uninformed and distorted to Christians (:31), they give a clue how Christians were perceived by others. Pliny used the terms of *political club* or *association* to refer to the church (:32). Associations often assumed the responsibility of providing a decent funeral for their members, normally adopting a goddess as patron (:34). One type of association were funeral societies, providing burial expenses and a decent burial (:36). To the casual observer the Christian community appeared similar to an association (:44). This put the Christians into a familiar frame of reference. Though not referring explicitly to funeral places, Tertullian made use of the terminology of others, avoiding the internal church terminology. He applied their new terms to the church to talk (apologetically) about it (:46).

workers,[51] and the professional theology of – in our case - South Africa and beyond. This does not imply a judgement on their quality though one of them may be more sophisticated than another. In their interrelationship and by responding to each other in a more or less appropriate way, they actually contribute to a local theology. All three levels will be covered in the course of this study. This theological approach requires the awareness that different communities may very well construct different theologies (cf. Schreiter 1985:37).

To make best use of the raw material, Van der Ven (1996: xiii-xiv) sees three principles at work. The first is epistemological: to look at the church from the viewpoint of sociology. The second he calls complementarity, which means to look at the church from different viewpoints, which mutually supplement and correct one another. The third is the principle of non-competition. The sociological and theological aspects are not competing with each other.

> Applying this to "ecclesiology" it means that God calls people together in the church by the fact that they call each other together. He inspires the church by the fact that the people in the church inspire each other (Van der Ven 1996:95).

Banawiratma and Müller (1995:78) call this complementary relationship a permanent, mutual, dialectic one.

Van der Ven (1996:96) sees a nonsequential and a sequential research design. In the nonsequential model the sociological and theological approach alternate continuously. This, however, lacks a clear structure. In the sequential model one first studies the social aspects of the church, and after that one looks at the theological ones. Within the basic pattern of the pastoral spiral a form of this sequential model will structure this study.

To bridge the views of sociology and theology Van der Ven (1996:101-2) prefers to look for a formal bridging theory rather than for concrete concepts. Traditionally a link between an empirical science that deals with the explanation of reality and an alpha science that deals with its understanding seems impossible. However, from a complementary scientific view these contrasts do not appear.

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[51] The intermediate level of pastoral workers, bishops, priests etc. "serves as a sort of bridge between the thought of professional theologians and the liberating thought of the Christian 'bases'" (Boff & Boff 1987:11-2).

New hermeneutics proceeds from the insight that every scientific research is subject to the tension between two poles: the subject and the object of study (Van der Ven 1996:102).

The object cannot be approached separately from the involvement of the subject. And the subject has to be aware as much as possible of this involvement (Van der Ven 1996:103). Thus sociology and theology also become complementary. Though hermeneutics explains that the study of the social aspects and the study of the religious aspects of the church can be connected to each other it does not tell how (:104):

> We believe that the social and religious aspects can be connected to each other by regarding the social aspects as religious signs from the perspective of semiotics (:104).

The tradition of Peirce assumes that there are linguistic and non-linguistic signs like bodily attitudes (Van der Ven 1996:104). Four characteristics constitute a sign: (1) the sign itself – nearly anything can be a sign; (2) what it signifies – the item the sign represents. This denotatum is not observable. (3) The interpreter interprets the sign. The result is the interpretant. (4) The fourth characteristic is the code:

> A code is a whole set of rules, agreements, and institutionalized habits on the grounds of which we interpret something to be a sign of something else. It lies couched within the cultural tradition of which the interpreter is a part ... the social phenomena in the church (sign) refer to God's salvation (denotatum), at least to those who see it as a sign (interpretant), on the ground of conventions that lie within the religious tradition (codes) (Van der Ven 1996:106-7).

Everything can become a religious sign. In this study the social phenomenon is the ministry of the funeral leaders in their context:

> Social phenomena as religious signs can refer to this fifteenfold richness in God's salvation (Van der Ven 1996:107).

Following Bate (1998:168) the code on which to interpret the sign can be identified by asking the question: "What are the beliefs and values we share which are concerned with this phenomenon?" One can approach the answer from a huge variety of viewpoints (Bate 1998:168-9). In this study I will make use of the key criteria already outlined in the theological framework. Others will appear in the theological reflection. They depend on the findings in the analysis.

1.4.5 Pastoral Planning - Conclusion

Based on the cultural tradition (Van der Ven 1996:106) of the church and in its own way contributing to it, this study may contribute to "the church's culturally mediated pastoral response to culturally mediated needs" (Bate 1998:174). Holland and Henriot (1983:30) describe the aim of social analysis within a pastoral cycle as aimed at action on behalf of justice. In our case it is the matter of justice to be done to the needs addressed by the ministry rendered.[52] This is about practice: What incentives, what kind of ideas for further missionary work does the analysis and interpretation of the ministry of community leaders suggest? Here the purpose of the study becomes concrete. The fourth step of the pastoral spiral, pastoral planning, has to do with policy. It looks at what has to be done and how one can go about it (cf. Wijsen 1993:19-20). One can further ask why and by whom it should be done (Van der Ven 1996:368-9). Van der Ven (1996:363) sees policy formation as the object of reflection and discussion in the local church. Aspects of policy found in the phase of social analysis have to be built in here. Aims have to be looked at critically again and again, because of changes in the societal context (1996:368). Policy tries to give answers to demands and problems while influenced by interest groups, church regulations, and the means that are allowed to be employed (1996:365). The aim is to go beyond a policy making that is shaped by routine, habits, and rules of thumb (cf. 1996:366).

I do not intend to develop a sophisticated, elaborated policy. Rather I prefer to look at the impact the research itself has already had on the setting and to identify some further steps forward, both locally and in the broader church. Some items can be dealt with and be resolved locally. Those suggestions that need the attention of a broader body will be made known or at least accessible for incorporation into further discussion by this study. The broader body may be, for instance, the community of missiologists, theologians, fellow pastors, or a Bishops' conference.

1.5 Data generation

The question remains how to produce the required data for the analysis. Banawiratma and Müller (1995:51), in their contextual social theology in the Indonesian setting, suggest doing it by *live in* or by *exposure to the poor*. They emphasise the

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[52] On the relationship between leadership issues and justice see chapter 3.1.2.

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epistemologically-required close relationship between *knower, knowing,* and the *known* to achieve serious knowledge and understanding. To gain this in an adequate and responsible way one has to get involved. This poses the epistemological question: What kind of data will provide the information needed to best study the phenomenon of funeral leaders and their context? Do the epistemological questions match the ontological questions of the social setting (cf. Mason 1996:13)?

1.5.1 Access

The sociological literature referred to discusses the problem of how to gain access to the researched group. My contacts with the people concerned started in 1992. Since then it has been possible to establish some quite reliable rapport in a working relationship shaped by mutual trust and cooperation. This coincided with my increasing ability to communicate at least in one of the vernaculars, *isiXhosa.* My problem was not so much to gain access to the setting. It is rather the closeness that may interfere with the analysis. Lofland and Lofland (1984:16) caution in this regard:

> If you are already (or will become) a member of the setting, you almost "naturally" possess (or will possess) the convert stance. You have easy access to understanding. You need, therefore, to seek mechanisms for distancing.

Attention has to be paid to the way in which, for instance, favourite ideas, possible prejudices towards certain people and also the actual policy on leadership one is pursuing could affect observation, interviews, and their evaluation.

A variety of different data sources can give access to the phenomenon of funeral leaders. Mason explicitly emphasises that one should not limit oneself to one method too early. She encourages one to think as widely and creatively as possible "about possible sources of data, and methods of selecting and generating them" (Mason 1996:19).

1.5.2 Observation

The most conspicuous and obvious point of access is the observation of funerals. This is normally the first way to encounter the ministry of funeral leaders. Participant observation is one of the methods used in qualitative research (cf. Schurink 1998a; Lofland & Lofland 1984). Funeral-leaders will be observed at funerals, as will the people they serve and with whom they serve. This observation includes some short

spontaneous conversations or interviews with key participants on their perceptions, which can also gather deeper information (cf. Mason 1996:62). All the observations are observations from my particular point of view. Other observers were not explicitly employed.

As particular way of observation I recorded two funerals by video camera. This method helps to generate a better visual impression of the whole setting. Knowing that every camera position excludes many other views I tried to keep track of the actions of leaders and other role-players involved; this excluded the viewing of other – customary – actions happening concurrently. The recorded material was used during interviews with the leaders involved as a stimulus, by pointing out certain scenes of special interest. The viewer-interviewees thus had the opportunity to respond to and clarify specific issues as key informants (cf. Schurink 1998a:285; Mason 1996:73). Another video recording was made at the occasion of the unveiling of a tombstone. In the parts involving the church here too the funeral leaders become active. My experiences with the video recording show that the use of this medium had no observable interfering impact on the setting; people just continued undisturbed with their tasks. The fact that the pastor would act as cameraperson was introduced by the leaders beforehand and caused no unease on the part of the participants.

As useful as the observation of funerals may be, it does not reveal everything that lies behind the observable action. The observation extends to other events, such as the casual encounter with leaders, pastoral team meetings, parishioners, SCCs, training and formation sessions, local committee meetings, and the Pastoral Council. Some of these events are predictable and a result of planning, some just happen accidentally. I have to take into account the fact that participant observation took place during all the years since I too am involved in the ministry with the funeral leaders of the parish. All this actually means that one is observing the ordinary, the usual (cf. Schurink 1998a:280). It provides an opportunity for a more comprehensive understanding of the setting, the way "in which people usually make sense or attach meaning to the world around them" (Schurink 1998a:279). This implies that the matter becomes complicated, built into a complex network of relationships. This contributes to the awareness that it will never be observable and comprehensible in all its facets. It will remain a study from a certain angle that can be complemented by others.

1.5.3 Interviews

Interviews are the central method employed in this study. They are the most common recognised qualitative research method (Mason 1996:39). I produced and used for the analysis data based first on unstructured or intensive *interviewing*. Hage and Meeker (1988:183-184) prefer the term clinical interview:

> Two pieces or kinds of data can be obtained from the clinical interview. The first and most important is the nature of the respondent's perception of the causal network. The second and almost as important is discerning what is really important to the individual, the symbolic meaning attached to particular events and the motivation behind particular acts. One can ask the question why easily enough in a structured interview, but in a clinical interview – and this is why we like the name – there is an appreciation of the need to probe in a variety of ways to be sure that the answer one receives is correct.

The qualitative interviewing aims at in-depth, semi-structured or loosely structured forms of interviewing. "Burgess calls them 'conversations with a purpose'" (in Mason 1996:38; cf. Kvale 1996:5). The term "conversation" has the advantage of avoiding the risk of understanding an interview only in terms of questions, which in fact may be leading questions, determining the answers. I want to highlight a few of the characteristics of these interviews that Kvale discerns. They revolve around the life world of the interviewees and seek to interpret the meaning of central themes. They try to obtain nuanced descriptions with openness to new and unexpected phenomena. Focused on particular themes, they are neither strictly structured nor entirely non-directive (Kvale 1996:30-1).

Quantitative databases by surveys or questionnaires try to achieve a representative segment of the social strata being researched. A study with a very limited scope does not even allow a proper statistical representation. This qualitative approach has its particular advantage. It allows me to include people who are known bearers of valuable information and background information.

> Relative to causal networks a theorist can learn much more from a few well-chosen individuals than from hundreds who provide unconsidered answers to standard questions. This is why qualitative methods of data collection are not a handicap in the problem of constructing causal theories (Hage & Meeker 1988:186-187).

As limited as the scope of the selection may be, it is nevertheless deeper, as Tissa Balasuriya puts it:

A specific event/experience can be a microhuman experience that embodies
a universal value. By deepening the analysis of a particular context we can
arrive at more universal perspectives (in Healey & Sybertz 1996:49).

The disadvantage of the structured interviews is not only that prepared questions may
not match what is really wanted. They leave no space for variation and might even
upset the interviewees since the proposed answers do not match with their experiences
and assessments.

1.5.4 Sample size

The sampling in this study is limited. Mason (1996:92) describes the way in which a
relatively small sample of funeral leaders, pastoral workers, and people affected by their
service can be related to the wider reality. It will be a

> relationship where the sample is designed to provide a close-up, detailed or
> *meticulous view of particular units*, which may constitute processes, types,
> categories, cases or examples which are relevant to or appear within the
> wider universe.

This requires some theoretical or purposive sampling. Glaser and Strauss developed
the most well known theoretical sampling strategy in *The Discovery of Grounded
Theory*, advanced further by Strauss (1987). It means to construct a sample that is
meaningful theoretically because characteristics and criteria are built in which help to
develop and test the theory and explanation (cf. Mason 1996:93-4). This means a more
dynamic way of sampling on the basis of the evolving theoretical relevance of concepts.
The process of the research may require more detail on certain aspects for
corroboration or looking for variation (Strauss & Corbin 1990:178-9).

> According to Bertaux and Bertaux-Wiame, you sample until you reach theory-
> saturation point, that is until you know that you have a picture of what is
> going on and can generate an appropriate explanation for it. This point is
> reached when your data stop telling you anything new about the social
> process under scrutiny. Bertaux and Bertaux-Wiame have been criticized for
> this view on the basis that it is rather *ad hoc* and unsystematic (it raises the
> question of how the researcher can demonstrate that saturation point really
> was reached), but the principle that your sample size should help you to
> *understand the process*, rather than to represent (statistically) a population, is
> a good one (Mason 1996:97).

Theoretical sampling is based on concepts that have proven theoretical relevance to the
evolving theory. This relevance is shown in the repeated presence or notable absence
of concepts when comparing incidents. In the dynamic process of data analysis and

collection, theoretical sampling is cumulative. Mason (1996:100) speaks about data generation and data analysis being interactive. Based on this premise Strauss and Corbin (1990:192; cf. Mason 1996:100-101) assume that theoretical sampling goes on until the last stages of the research and may be even resumed when already writing to check or fill in some specific detail.

This method in itself does not say anything about the size of the sample.

> If you are using a theoretical or purposive sampling strategy, then whether or not the sample is big enough to be statistically representative of a total population is not your major concern (Mason 1996:95).

That does not mean that the sample has to be small. As a sampling frame (Mason 1996:102-103) for the unstructured interviews in this particular study the register of leaders served the purpose very well. My personal knowledge and that of my co-workers helped to identify those who could make valuable contributions to the research. I included community leaders from smaller and bigger communities, from villages and townships, men and women, young and old. Besides these, pastoral workers, priests, and catechists were the main interlocutors for this study. Apart from the detailed interviews, groups of leaders, members of the concerned communities, and SCCs were consulted. Conversations or interviews with them took place in a planned way or occasionally after a celebration of the Eucharist, at a funeral, in the car on the way to a particular community, at conferences, and at meetings. They were recorded in handwritten notes or by minutes from memory.

Even within the small scope of just one parish there is not enough time and money to interview all interested persons. It is a known fact that research finds its limits, especially when it comes to analysis, in the limits of the researcher's capacity (see Mason 1996:105). Some suggest 20 interviews for the research (see Lofland & Lofland 1984:62). Sixteen people, funeral leaders, catechists and priests have been interviewed in unstructured interviews.[53] More important than the number of interviews is the data saturation (Strauss & Corbin 1990:192). The systematic interviewing of sixteen people demanded more time than initially anticipated. It required some follow-up interviews (cf. Kvale 1996:181-90; on theoretical sampling Strauss & Corbin 1990:178) to gain more

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[53] In addition a few people from other areas were interviewed to gain more variation. The interlocutors of the intensive interviewing are introduced in appendix 1. Other partners in conversation and short interviews are briefly introduced in appendix 2.

depth. These secondary interviews bring some variation and are result of growing sensitivity towards the subject. I interviewed mainly single individuals in interviews lasting from 1½ to 2½ hours. One interview was done with two leaders. Some group interviews were done in a complementary way in order to reach still more people and to gain confirmation.[54] The interviews with the funeral leaders were mainly done in Xhosa, all the others in English.

1.5.5 Processing of data

The unstructured interviews were mainly recorded by tape-recorder; some were recorded by handwritten notes and later transcribed. The Xhosa interviews were translated into English.[55] Some caution is necessary as taped records and transcriptions never reflect the whole interview. The scope of these techniques is limited. For instance they do not record feelings and utterances which defy written recording (cf. Mason 1996:53).

The minutes from memory contain valuable information from conversations. This kind of data retrieval by minutes of the memory is similar to that used in clinical training. To evaluate visits to the sick one relies on honestly written minutes from memory to reveal the crucial elements from the conversation. Some may question the accuracy of the memory. In using this source it was and is important to write the minutes down as soon as possible.

> However it would be naive to suggest that researchers do not use their memories and unwritten interpretations from time to time in their analysis (Mason 1996:52).

Concerning the interpretation of the interviews Mason (1996:54; see also: 109) finds it helpful to determine whether one wants to follow a literal, interpretive, or reflexive way of reading the data derived from interviews.

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[54] I refer to these interviews, to personal conversations, and conversations at meetings by quoting them from their section in the bibliography. Observations, video recordings, events, and other locally produced documents will be quoted from the bibliography's sections on "local sources and productions" and "interviews and conversations". In very few cases I decided to keep the identity of a person or community anonymous by indiscriminately labelling them with "X". "X" therefore refers to different persons or communities.

If, for example, you wished to derive data in a *literal* sense, then you would probably be interested in aspects of the interaction such as the literal dialogue, including its form and sequence, or the literal substance. If you wished to derive data in an *interpretive* sense, then you would be wanting to 'read' the interviews for what you think they mean, or possibly for what you think you can infer about something outside of the interview interaction itself. And if you wished to derive data in a *reflexive* sense, then you would want to 'read' something about your role, and your interface with the interaction.

The nature of this study demands that one reads all the data in an interpretive way. The reflexive sense may also sometimes play a role, especially when it comes to the active involvement the researcher has in the research process as a member of the group being researched.

Working with data retrieved with different methods requires some thought about how to integrate these data since they differ in substance and form. Data emerging from different ontological entities like groups, individuals, and files require some examination to determine the extent to which they are comparable or complementary (Mason 1996:27).

The organisation of the data and their subsequent analysis was primarily done in the holistic, non-cross sectional way (or *vertical analysis* - Banawiratma & Müller 1995:65).

This means that the researcher begins by analysing the holistic 'unit', or case study, to try to produce an explanation of processes, practices, or whatever, within that unit... Instead of then moving on to examine another unit... and to compare its features as though they were like for like with the first unit, the researcher compares the *explanation* of the first unit with the *explanation* of the second, both explanations having been derived from a holistic rather than cross-sectional analysis (Mason 1996:130-131).

A cross-sectional data organisation (*cross analysis* - Banawiratma & Müller 1995:66) was applied to compare the results of the vertical analysis of the respective units in order to analyse similarities and differences.

The logic of the cross-sectional data indexing is that you devise the same set of indexing categories for use, cross-sectionally, across the whole of your data set (Mason 1996:128).

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[55] "The first interviews and field notes should be entirely transcribed for coding and analysis, and subsequent notes also. But after time the coding and analysis provides guidance through theoretical sampling to delimit further field observations and interviews. Later theoretical sampling also provides guidance as to how much to select for transcribing of tapes and interviews remaining and being collected. Thus transcribing portions of a study's data for coding and analysis is built into the method as theoretical sampling, saturation and density occurs in the generated theory" (Glaser 1992:20).

Thus two alternative ways of "slicing" data were used (Mason 1996:111-131). Inferences will be drawn by the close scrutiny of the data.

> The data are analyzed and interpreted by means of inductive abstraction and generalization (Mouton & Marais 1996:103).

Banawiratma and Müller (1995:58) suggest structuring the data for the analysis according to the three dimensions of a society as political, economic, and socio-cultural, which in turn may have subsystems and permeate each other in a dynamic relationship (:61). Referring to Parsons, Van der Ven (1996:67) mentions a complex of four problems for groups: (1) What are their convictions, values, and norms? (2) What holds them together socially? (3) What are their aims, programmes, and projects? (4) How do they find the necessary means such as personnel and money? What Parsons named as latency stands for the cultural life, what he calls integration for the social life, goal attainment stands for political life, and adaptation for the economic life. Without these characteristics groups lose meaning and foundation, togetherness, goal-achievement, and the means of existence (Van der Ven 1996:68). Latency and integration aim at the intra of the group, whereas goal attainment and adaptation aim at its extra (:69).[56] Applying these dimensions to the church Van der Ven prefers to call latency, identity.

> Identity has to do with the convictions, vision, and mission of the church (Van der Ven 1996:78).

He keeps the term integration to refer to cohesion, uniformity, and pluriformity of the church. Goal attainment he calls policy, which points towards the development of church policy, programmes, and projects. Adaptation he replaces by management. It includes the financial and personnel conditions, and the means of the church (Van der Ven 1996:78). Banawiratma and Müller may subsume this fourth dimension under policy. These four areas informed the guideline for the unstructured interviews and so the organisation of the data in chapters three and four. Here I intend to avoid too idiosyncratic an approach and to offer an interface to make it possible to compare studies.

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[56] "Combining the structural and functional relations, one may call Parson's model a structural-functional one. Therefore, his theory is sometimes indicated by the term *structural-functionalism*" (Van der Ven 1996:70). Knowing the critics of Parsons, Van der Ven prefers to use his model in the form of a critical functionalism (:73), paying more attention to the action and interaction of individual people and to social change (:74).

The coding procedures described by Strauss and Corbin (1990:57-196) guided the analysis of the data. In this inductive analysis, inductive inferences lead to probabilities whereas deductive inferences would lead necessarily to true conclusions, which depend on the premisses.[57] While deductive validity may be threatened if the conclusion does not follow the premisses, with inductive inference

> the researcher should constantly ask himself or herself whether an alternative conclusion could not have been arrived at on the basis of the available evidence. As long as an alternative, or equally plausible, conclusion can be arrived at with the same data, the researcher does not have adequate evidence for the conclusion" (Mouton & Marais 1996:118).

1.5.6 Other data

Further data are available from mission reports and other relevant documents. Data retrieved from the parish files and the parish computer were used as well. These quantitative data were compiled for the parish work and not for research purposes. They may support or question findings achieved with the qualitative method. I also refer to some questionnaires, which were used in the formation work in the parish.

Other evidence also was taken into account. This includes material used by the leaders and the people such as prayer books, Bibles, funeral programmes, or obituaries. For background information, sayings, proverbs, and other expressions of their culture may also be regarded as important.

1.5.7 Validity and Triangulation

To control effects on the analysis caused by the researcher (e.g. image, affiliation, orientations), the participant (memory decay, omniscience syndrome, interview saturation), the measuring instruments (e.g. item or question sequence effect, fictitious

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[57] "Definition of induction: In an inductive argument, genuine supporting evidence (as expressed in the premisses) can only lead to highly probable conclusions. In other words, in an inductive argument supporting statements merely lend gradual support (from a little to a lot) to the conclusion(s)" (Mouton & Marais 1996:112).
"Definition of deduction: In a deductive argument, true premisses necessarily lead to true conclusions; the truth of the conclusion is already either implicitly or explicitly contained in the truth of the premisses" (Mouton & Marais 1996:112).
"Induction refers to the actions that lead to discovery of an hypothesis – that is, having a hunch or idea, then converting it into an hypothesis and assessing whether it might provisionally work at least a partial condition for a type of event, act, relationship, strategy, etc. Hypotheses are both provisional and conditional. Deduction consists of the drawing of implications from hypotheses or larger systems of them for purposes of verification. The latter term refers to the procedures of verifying, whether that turns out to be total or partial qualification or negation" (Strauss 1987:11-12).

attitudes effect), and the context (in what framework the research is done, for instance at home, at the working place etc.) the variety of methods mentioned will help to achieve what is called *triangulation*. This means using a variety of complementary methods, for example, by combining more reactive methods like observation with less reactive like documentary sources (see Mouton & Marais 1996). Concerned about the validity of results Mason (1996:148-149) advocates the use of triangulation. She cautions that it is difficult to approach the same phenomenon with different methods since these will throw light on different social or ontological phenomena. In the first place the concept of triangulation was not used to describe a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods but to increase the reliability of observation (cf. De Vos 1998:359). Since I am not going to employ some sort of quantitative strategy of data collection besides the reference to available data in the mission, the sort of triangulation used here is reflected in the variety of interviews, observations, and other ways of collecting qualitative data as mentioned above. In the course of their analysis it will be determined how to interpret and how to weave the sections of data together, cross-sectionally by theme or holistic by case (cf. Mason 1996:150).

Another measure of reliability of the findings is seen in their applicability (cf. De Vos & Fouché 1998:83-86; Poggenpoel 1998:349). The condition that under the same circumstances another researcher should arrive at the same findings (Mouton & Marais 1996:79) applies in particular to quantitative research working with exact measurements. Though I did not choose the explicit approach of a participatory action research, this study has already changed the setting to a certain extent. This is not unexpected. Kvale states clearly in view of interviews that statements may be ambiguous due to contradictions in the world of the subject. An interview itself may bring new insights so that interviewees may change their descriptions and meanings. Different interviews, then, can produce different statements on the same theme. Another important factor is that the knowledge produced is obtained through interpersonal interaction in the interview (Kvale 1996:31). The reproduction of some of the findings will always be difficult in the same context, let alone in a different one. All observable entities are never the same at two different points of time (cf. Hage & Meeker 1988:14). In qualitative research reliability may be expressed in the assurance that the data generation

> have been not only appropriate to the research questions, but also thorough, careful, honest and accurate (Mason 1996:146).

In regard to reliability and validity (cf. Mason 1996:145-152; Poggenpoel 1998:348-352) it will be unlikely that the findings of this study will be applied directly to other situations. It is rather the perspective and the approach that will be a worthwhile invitation to take similar steps in a different context to end up at a differing local theology that fits well into the diverse unity of Christian theology.

So far I pointed out the reasons for referring to the methods of the social sciences in this study on funeral leaders. The particular strategy of qualitative research in a grounded theory mode will be used. The methods for the data generation were outlined as were the implications of using them. This methodological outline already anticipated to a certain extent what will now be briefly presented in the parameters of the study.

1.6 The parameters of this study

Strauss and Corbin (1990:231) recommend visualising the architecture of the outline. The architecture of this thesis could be represented by the structure of a Roman atrium house. This hints at my European origin. It is also a reminder that we are entering the house of the Roman Catholic Church. This church came to Africa in its very European shape. However, most of the house's inhabitants are African and give it its special appeal. This building is quite a huge structure with an entrance area. From there one enters the atrium, the inner yard with an open-air place in the middle. From it one gets access to all the other rooms.

We have already entered the entrance area [1]. The banners in the entrance area made us curious and called to mind the purpose and relevance of our visit. We saw the information boards indicating the intellectual orientation in this particular house. We heard quite briefly about the mission and vision. We were equipped with the tools we would need for the procedures.

From there we move in chapter two into the atrium to receive a briefing on the general local situation in the area and in the church [2]. We will analyse one funeral and look at pertinent cultural parameters. These include ancestors, meals on behalf of the ancestors, and their Christian equivalent, the Eucharist. Research on rites of passage, ritual, and bereavement will complete the framework.

Then we will move on to four rooms in succession. In two rooms, chapters three [3] and four [4], we will use the tools of the qualitative research method in order to discover key

concepts concerning the ministry of the funeral leaders. Chapter three will concentrate on the external framework: the origin of community ministry in general, some general features of community ministry, qualities of ministry, selection, and formation of leaders.

Chapter four goes further into what was observed in chapter two. It analyses the rendering of the concrete ministry. This includes making decisions on funerals, preparing for them, and doing what has been prepared. Particular attention will be paid to the delivery of the message of faith.

Chapter five [5] brings the theological reflection. The local theology will meet selected aspects of the tradition. This will be done following the pattern of the model of pastoral theology. First we will take a theological look at the ministry rendered (as shown in chapters 2 and 4), and then at the ministry as such (as it emerges mainly in chapter 3). This leads to other areas such as management theory and church history, which also have attributing and mediating aspects.

Chapter six [6] will close the turn of the pastoral spiral by contributing to pastoral planning. It will briefly outline the corroborated findings, the discoveries, the change this study already brought about, and pending tasks.
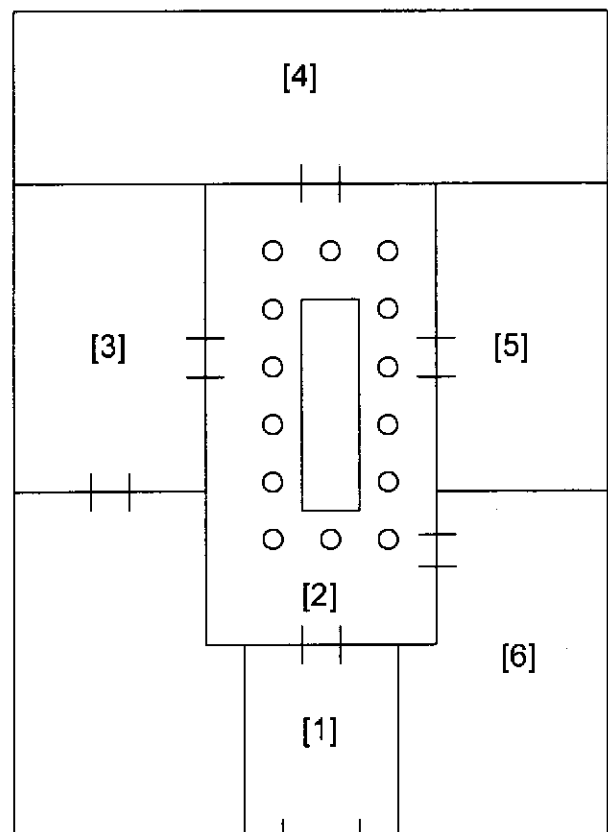
Figure 1.3. The architecture of the outline: a Roman atrium house

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2 Chapter 2 – Initiating Analysis

This chapter initiates the analysis into the background of this study and serves as the specification (see chapter 1.4.3). It gives the recorded observation of one example funeral. Then it initiates the analysis itself by analysing the funeral. This will require looking at the needs that a funeral is expected to meet. These needs are influenced by cultural perceptions of the ancestors and meals, and so I will discuss them. They also call for a reflection on the culturally-determined longing for the Eucharist within the context of funerals. The analysis in turn calls for some input from research on rites of passage, ritual, and bereavement. After establishing some of these central concepts, in chapter three I will move on to the analysis of the community ministry itself.

2.1 The location of the research: specification

This section locates the milieu. It will briefly introduce the local background and some general conditions in which the funeral leaders are operating. It is not possible to take into account all the factors that affect their work. The most important ones will quite naturally reappear in the analysis proper in the next chapters.

2.1.1 The area: Herschel district with Lady Grey and Barkly East

The whole of Sterkspruit parish[58] is part of the province of the Eastern Cape. It comprises the Herschel district with its administrative centre now in Sterkspruit. The district was part of the former homeland of Ciskei and later part of the Transkei until 1994. Sterkspruit, 27^0 22' East and 30^0 31' South lies south-west of Lesotho near where the borders of the South African provinces of the Free State and the Eastern Cape, and Lesotho meet, with the Orange and Telle Rivers marking the northern boundary and the southern Witteberge the southern one. Adjacent to the southern boundary lies Lady Grey and Barkly East lies to the south-east.

2.1.1.1 Rudimentary statistics

The number of inhabitants of the Herschel district is locally quoted as some 270000. This figure does not include the area and townships of Barkly East and Lady Grey. Accurate statistical data is quite difficult to come by. Data from the 1996 census are not

available at the local administration. IEC files for voter registration, which I saw in 1998, gave a total of 58678 eligible voters. The concrete figures available do not tally. The chart below compiles the figures provided by Horn, Lloyd, and Levin (1995) and from the IEC (1999) made available to me by the Drakensberg District Council in Barkly East. The IEC distinguishes the figures of *population census* and *population actual* and takes into account only the electorate, people over the age of 18. To arrive roughly at the figure of Horn et al. or at the locally quoted number one has to take into account also the significant number of all those under the age of eighteen.

	Barkly E TRC	Barkly E TLC	Herschel TRC	Lady Grey TRC	Lady Grey TLC	Sterkspruit TLC	Rhodes TLC	GRAND TOTAL
IEC census	2114	4499	61410	1382	2942	645	227	73219
IEC actual	1781	3791	51784	1166	2482	544	192	61740
Horn et al. total	8604	8609	140211	9762	6276	1578	0	175040

Figure 2.1. Figures on population (Source: IEC 1999; Horn et al. 1995)

Data about the denominational distribution were not available. Also the figures provided by the church are vague and not quite accurate. There is an estimate of some 7000 – 10000 Catholics in the area of Sterkspruit parish. The rough estimate of the Catholic population amounts to 6-8% of the whole population. Within the parameters of this study this vagueness seems acceptable. The statistical data indicate the grand total of the population and establish the minority status of the Catholic community in relation to the total population.

2.1.1.2 Ethnic groups and languages

With the lack of detailed statistical material I can only refer to material compiled within the parish framework. It shows a predominance of Xhosa people, followed by a significant number of Basotho, followed by Hlubi, and a small minority of Puthi. All speak their own languages. Most of the people are able to communicate in more than one language. The knowledge of English among the majority of the African people is

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[58] I use the term "parish" to refer to Sterkspruit mission and other missions though they are not established as proper parishes.

rather limited. In the rural areas, especially, people pay much attention to their cultural values and practices; they give them priority and allocate time and energy to them.

The few (7) practising white Catholics live in and around Barkly East. They communicate in English or Afrikaans. This group is well below the limits of a community. Without community leaders it prefers to rely "on Father" in matters of the church. This study therefore ignores this group as not relevant to its scope.

2.1.1.3 Some demographic highlights

The estimate of some 270,000 people contains a huge number of children. In the Eastern Cape the total population from 0-19 years is 3,210,553 as opposed by 3,091,972 people above 19 years of age (Census In Brief 1998. 2.16). This cuts roughly half the number of community members eligible for leadership.

The gender distribution is uneven. The provincial total counts 2,908,056 males as opposed to 3,394,469 females (Census In Brief 1998. 2.2). In the local ministry women are significantly over-represented by two-thirds. This reflects not only the generally observed fact that women are more likely to commit themselves to church matters. It is also a relic of the abandoned apartheid system, whose consequences are still felt, with the former "homelands" providing a migrant labour force to other parts of the country. Most of the men who are able to work are working in industrial areas like Sasolburg, Vereeniging, Johannesburg, Secunda, Ceres, and Cape Town. Many of them return home only for occasional visits at Christmas or Easter, and for funerals. This leaves an observable gap within their age group in the Christian communities. Young skilled people regularly leave the district after finishing school to further their education or in search of work. In a recent development more women, too, have started moving to the economic centres looking for work. If they are community leaders in the church this causes a brain drain of a particular kind. When we tried to build up a parish register we time and again found that migrant workers were included as members of the local church community though they spend most of the year away from home. In the perception of the people, the sense of belonging seems to be more important than statistics.[59]

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[59] This reflects the observation by Mayer and Mayer (1971:283): Some of the migrants may become urbanised while others may regard themselves in a kind of permanent or temporary exile.

2.1.1.4 Economic background

The Herschel district provides few work opportunities. Shopkeepers, taxi-drivers, hospital staff, police-people, and teachers: it is mainly the service sector that employs people. One local bakery, tailors, dry-cleaners, shebeens, and some small businesses as well as an increasing number of hawkers provide additional work as do some development agencies. The provincial data count 395,893 people out of 786,818 employed with an income between 201-1,500 Rands per month (Census In Brief 1998. 2.36). A huge number of people are pensioners or depend either on the pensioners or on migrant workers as their actual breadwinners. The unemployment rate is high with no proper percentage available. Province-wide it around 48.5% (Census In Brief 1998. 2.30).

The pension system, since it uses cheques, sometimes puts some strain on pastoral work as pension pay-days may coincide with scheduled formation events. People queue at the pay points, wait for their cheques, and have to organise for their conversion into cash. This process often involves not only the pensioners but also those who assist them.

Farming plays no significant role as an economic factor for the market. As subsistence farming, however, it is important at the family level. People keep some life-stock, goats, sheep, some cattle, and grow vegetables, sorghum and maize. Stock theft is rampant. The care of animals, attempts to retrieve them, and work on the fields sometimes clashes with pastoral appointments.

There is decent but simple housing. Few shacks are found. Most houses are solid but simple structures. Migrant workers invest in renovations and extensions of their homesteads. There is considerable growth in Sterkspruit itself, with new quarters mushrooming.

2.1.1.5 Topographical features, infrastructure, transport, health, crime, and climate

Most of the villages in the area of Sterkspruit parish are scattered in the Witteberge Mountains. The only tarred road in Herschel District leads from Lady Grey via Sterkspruit to Zastron. The remainder are dust roads in mostly poor and deteriorating condition. To travel the 66 kilometres from Sterkspruit to Dangers Hoek takes more than two hours in one direction. This means transport problems for the parishioners and the

pastoral workers as well, the latter depending on pick-up trucks, the former on money-consuming minibus-taxis. For people with little income the journey to Sterkspruit as administrative and parish centre is quite an expensive undertaking. Some villages, which do not lie on the main roads in the district, depend on private pick-up truck owners for transport since taxis do not take these unprofitable and damaging routes.

Electrification has been taking place since 1997. By January 2000 it had reached many remote places, though not all. Electrification affects the meeting patterns in the communities. Meetings can now easily and without discomfort be continued till after dusk. In the townships, however, people express the fear of crime, mugging, and rape as reasons to finish meetings early enough to get home before sunset. Taxi violence is insignificant, though sporadic incidents took the lives of some leaders who, as passengers, just happened to be at the scene, causing gaps in the leadership that are not easily filled.

Public phones are available at a number of villages. This development promises improved communication patterns in the parish area, too, reducing the dependence on messengers and letters, which often arrive late, get lost, or are misinterpreted. Vandalism, however, threatens this development in a number of places.

The villages in front of the main mountain range are supplied with water by a dam next to Jozanas Hoek. All the other villages depend on wells and rivers. This means that quite some time is taken up in fetching water, as it is in collecting firewood.

The winters are dry and cold, with temperatures dropping well below zero and occasional snow. The summers are moderate, warm and sometimes hot summers with irregular, sometimes heavy rainfalls. The climate also influences pastoral work. The cold period from about May till August lowers attendance at meetings and workshops. Rain disrupts transport by making the roads muddy and slippery and preventing people from crossing swollen rivers. After the rain, resumed work on the fields limits people's availability for church meetings.

Illiteracy is still widespread among older people. The rural background with less emphasis on schooling and the results of the apartheid policy of providing poor education to blacks have their impact on the performance of leadership functions.

Special death cases are important as a background to the ministry of funeral leaders. Murder by stabbing is not uncommon. People attribute this to the abuse of alcohol and

dagga, the local form of marijuana. Some loss of life is reported to be related to the search for *muti* (traditional medicine). In one case this caused a fierce longing for revenge exacerbated by the perception of the justice system failing to restrain notorious perpetrators. According to estimates by the local doctors, in the beginning of 2000 about 52% of patients admitted in the local hospitals either in Sterkspruit or Umlamli were HIV positive.

2.1.2 The Roman Catholic Church in Herschel District

Two Catholic parishes are located in Herschel district. The older, Teresa parish (started in 1928), is confined to a significantly smaller area than Sterkspruit parish. The latter started at Umlamli in 1932 with a mission hospital. It comprised the cluster of the communities of Umlamli, Voyizana, Mfinci, Rietfontein, Tyinindini, Phelandaba, Mkunyazo, Bebeza, Upper Telle, and Dangers Hoek. In 1987 the communities of Mokhesi, Tapoleng, Jozanas Hoek, Hlomendlini, and Kwa Mei from the then Herschel parish were incorporated. In 1995 the rest of Herschel Mission with Emvakwentaba and Thabakoloi, as well as the communities of Lady Grey, Barkly East, a number of farms, and Rhodes as the furthest outpost were included in Sterkspruit parish (see map in appendix 3).

2.1.2.1 History of the Catholic mission

In looking at the history of the communities I focus on issues related to leadership questions. When mission work commenced there was no thought of anything like community leaders. The patterns of ministry at that time form the historical background to the present situation and are still known to the older parishioners.

The available sources for the first years of Umlamli parish mention 1929 (Silver Jubilee Aliwal Vicariate s.a.:34-36; Dischl 1982:310) as the beginning of the Catholic mission activity with the erection of the mission hospital. The first priest still served Umlamli from the neighbouring Teresa parish. Around 1947 two priests were working in Umlamli, one of them serving the outstations as well. The small section dealing with the priests sees them as builders extending the hospital structures. Simultaneously with the hospital, a school was built and then run by sisters.

In Barkly East (Silver Jubilee Aliwal Vicariate s.a.:28-29) the Catholic church was opened in 1909. The church for the African people in *Inkululeko* township was opened

in 1947. The first resident priest was appointed in 1938. He was also entrusted with the care of Lady Grey, where the church for *Kwezi-Naledi* township was also opened in 1947. The activities mentioned were establishing a dispensary for *the Natives*, and a commercial school for *Europeans* in Barkly East, run by sisters. Prior to the opening of the church there the people received a course of instructions by the priest. In 1947 a mission school was opened in Barkly Location with *Catholic Natives* as teaching staff. For Lady Grey, the monthly conducting of services was mentioned. A catechist had been present since 1947.

No further mention is made of the pastoral work and its vision, strategy, and structure. The few hints given let us assume that the emphasis was on Sunday services. The teaching in the school included religious instructions by sisters. A course of instructions was held as preparation for a special event. The staff involved were priests, sisters, and a catechist. There was a kind of specialising for certain tasks with one priest going to the outstations. Either there was no other staff at that time or it was not mentioned. Much of the time of the priests must have been spent in building activities that were financially backed by the generosity of donors. There is no word of any kind of contribution of the people for the maintenance of the church and the running of pastoral activities.

In his chapter on Catholic parishes with underdeveloped self-supporting ministries, Lobinger (1973b:12-13) dedicates one section to the Herschel district. He mentions three Catholic primary schools, one secondary school, and the hospital, which was taken over by the government of the new homeland of Transkei a short time later. A steady growth of the Catholic communities was noted. However, there were only few signs of community ministries. The five priests of the district and fifteen catechists exercised the pastoral leadership. A map (:13) shows two of these priests stationed at Umlamli parish. The five catechists working in this area were unevenly distributed: one in Umlamli, three in Mfinci and one in Dangers Hoek.[60]

Lobinger (1973b:10) describes the situation as similar to that of the Catholic Church in Lady Frere District. There, too, were Catholic schools that contributed to the growth of

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[60] This underdeveloped leadership structure was not a nation-wide feature. Lobinger (1973b:62) reports on the Mofumahadi waKgotso parish, where the *matona* (right hand men) were also conducting funerals: "This is always done by at least three matona together, who wear cassock, surplice and cross for the occasion. Neighbouring matona assist each other." About Taylorville and Makhoba he wrote: "In Taylorville the priest conducts 10% of all funerals, while 90% are conducted by Catholic men" (1973b:51).

the church, but not as a decisive factor. In his view, the visits of the priests and the catechists, their systematic instruction courses and the social work with its appeal to those who felt left behind by other, long established churches were the important factors in growth. The priests, catechists, and sometimes the sisters did instructions for children and adults, all funerals, and most house-visits. In the absence of the priest, catechists conducted the Sunday services. With a very low rate of financial contributions the church was totally dependent on overseas support in personnel and finances.

> Almost all the priests come from overseas and it is they who make all the important decisions in the running of the parishes (Lobinger 1973b:12).

Lobinger then cautions how remote the whole structure was from the people and how difficult it would be to achieve more participation in decision-making and to hand things over to local leaders.

The dependence on outside workers and paid local church workers (catechists) has certain disadvantages. Among others Lobinger (1973b:19-20) points out that people were told to "be the church" while the leadership structure was financially and organisationally remote from them; the strong emphasis was on passive (like obedience) instead of active charisms; the temptation was to think that people joined the church to be cared for instead of becoming caring themselves; the creation of a beggar mentality was favoured, which easily submitted to outside ideas instead of searching for their own initiatives and ideas. These factors have been delaying the process of incarnating Christianity in a new environment. Moreover, highly trained theologians do work that any other person could do. Occupied with this they find no time to do more important work like the stimulation of the encounter with the local culture, to mention only one task.

Lobinger's look at the time shortly after Vatican II reveals a heavy dependence on overseas resources and very little involvement of lay people except for the catechists. His observations, however, indicate the growing awareness of the need for local leaders and community ministries, which were not yet a reality. The usual procedure for the people regarding funerals was to depend on the pastoral personnel. The church policy concerning personnel seemed not to look beyond employing catechists.

It was not within the scope of the Jubilee publication to deal with the local culture. The reflective view of Lobinger, however, points towards need for a true incarnation of the Gospel. In Lobinger's view inculturation did not exist in this particular phase of the

history of the local church. There was, however, the perception that human resources for its implementation should be made available.

My interviews show that in the beginning some individual people were entrusted with the task of conducting funerals. It was the run up and the launch of the Pastoral Plan in 1989 which set on course a new development. It brought about a major shift towards the systematic introduction of community leaders. So far the Catholic Church had been shaped by the characteristic features of what Prior (1997:7-8) describes as the *provided-for church*: decisions, responsibility, financial power, and property administration lay in the hands of the priests.

2.1.2.2 The pastoral team

The Pastoral Team of Sterkspruit parish came into existence in the early 1990s. By 2000 it consisted of three priests, all of them expatriates, one from Lesotho, one from Switzerland, and one from Germany. They had worked together since 1996. The other members of the team are the trainer-catechist who stems from one of the villages in the area, and the animation team staffed by three sisters from Lesotho. The most constant figure in the team is the trainer-catechist who commenced his work in 1960. A second trainer-catechist was pensioned in 1997. The priests changed frequently before 1996. I myself began my work in August 1992, Pitso from Lesotho arrived in May 1995 and Mathis from Switzerland joined the team in January 1996. The sisters of Lesotho started to equip their animation team in 1995. The pastoral team meets every Thursday for common reflection and planning.

The missionaries initially used catechists as assistants to help with translations and later on to teach the faith and to instruct people about the liturgy. It was only at a late stage that they took over conducting Sunday liturgies and funerals. This was because of the age of the resident priest. In a general development in Southern Africa catechists became redundant or were phased out.[61] Attempts were made to retrain some of them to become trainer-catechists. They were supposed to do skill training and formation work within the local Catholic communities, with community leaders, the SCCs, and occasionally with sodalities. Because of the lack of local priests the catechists were still

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[61] Pöllitzer (1997) told me that in Namibia the decision had already been taken by 1970 to phase out this profession for two main reasons. Financially they were expensive though they received a small allowance and were supposed to earn the rest on their own. This system in itself was seen as promoting the danger of ill feeling. Then the idea of lay involvement was awakening.

often used as direct assistants of expatriate priests. They helped firstly with translations and assisted cooperatively in the formation work done by the priests. These paid full-time workers and the ordained ministry have in common that they work in a variety of fields. Whereas the latter also perform tasks and services which otherwise are done by community leaders, the former are supposed to refrain from actively carrying out these tasks. They are mainly meant to serve as instructors and supervisors.

The animation team of sisters is stationed in the parish. It is meant to train leaders, supervise SCCs, and to assist the local catechism teachers. The training of the team members for their task differs. Some attended Lumko courses. Others have brought along their professional education in various fields or had no specific training at all. The animation team as such does not play a significant role in training funeral leaders. It is, however, a source of information providing pertinent insights in the team meetings. The sisters do not conduct funerals.

2.1.2.3 Diocese of Aliwal

The diocese of Aliwal comprises the districts of Venterstad, Steynsburg, Sterkstroom,
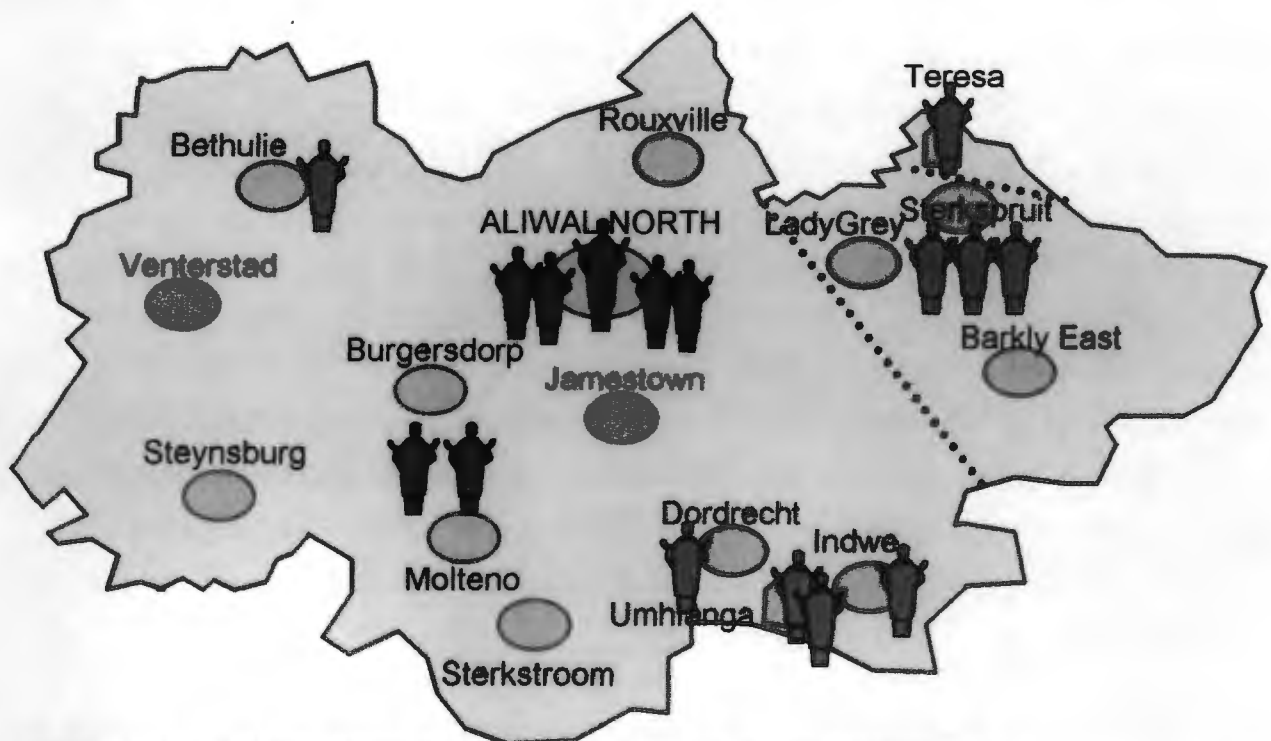
Figure 2.2. Map of Aliwal Diocese indicating the allocation of priests (Lobinger s.a.c)

Molteno, Woodehouse, and Macuba with Jujinganga Hills, Indwe, Barkly East, Herschel, Rouxville, Bethulie, Aliwal North, Burgersdorp, and Lady Grey. Among a total

population of some 380000 people live about 45000 Catholics in an area of 31200 square kilometres.

Entrusted initially to the German branch of the Institute of the Priests of the Sacred Heart (SCJ), the diocese itself so far has not yet brought forward a single local diocesan priest. The four diocesan priests ordained since the 90s come from neighbouring Lesotho (2), from Kwa Zulu Natal (1), and Uganda (1). The other priests working in the parishes are Sacred Heart Priests (SCJ) from Germany (2), Poland (1), and South Africa (2), and *Fidei Donum* priests[62] from Germany (3), Uganda (2), and Switzerland (1). Not all of the 17 parishes mentioned in The Catholic Directory are staffed with priests. By the beginning of 2000 three of the parishes were served by small teams of priests. Three parishes lie in the area of the former homeland of Transkei, with Teresa and Sterkspruit in the Herschel district and Umhlanga in the district of Cacadu (Lady Frere) (cf. SACBC 1998:94-99). These figures show that there is still heavy dependence on overseas personnel, and only a few priests have been exposed to team work.

The conditions for pastoral work within the diocese differ significantly. Township situations like that of Aliwal North are different from a tiny farm community or the cluster of communities in a former homeland. It is easier for a township priest to attend to funerals and other pastoral commitments like formation events than it is for those in the vast rural areas. Space, time, and a different state of infrastructure play a crucial role in communication and convening meetings. Passing a message and calling a conference is much easier and can be arranged more quickly in a township, whereas it sometimes takes weeks in the rural areas. This sets a different pace.

Several structural changes have been made to improve communication within the diocese. The diocesan senate meeting incorporates all pastoral workers. About ten times a year the pastoral personnel meet to discuss diocesan and pastoral matters. This meeting plans common tasks. It includes the bishop, the priests, and animation teams. The Community Week and the Regional Meeting extend to the leaders and the communities.

The annual Community Weeks (CWKs) in the parishes were gradually introduced by Bishop Lobinger in 1990 to safeguard the formation and training of community

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[62] *Fidei donum* priests are priests lent by other dioceses in response to the encyclical *Fidei Donum* by Pope Pius XII.

leaders.[63] He assumes that without CWK formation would be in constant danger of dying down (Lobinger 1991:43). Formation should be continuous, and should be led by the local priests and other pastoral workers (:7;9). The formation is not meant to happen once and for all. To be properly absorbed it is intended to happen continuously, building on the emerging experiences of the leaders (:11). The emphasis on ongoing formation aims to enhance standards of leadership, increase depth and commitment, and serves as an "immune system" against undesirable leadership styles (Lobinger 1991:15). As a standard event it should belong to the regular parish life (:17). CWK is the climax of the annual formation season in a parish and can take different forms when adapted to different situations. The emphasis may shift between matters of SCCs, leadership, and issues of justice (:4;23). An important feature of the CWK is the annual blessing of the leaders as an act of (re-)dedication by the leaders and of commissioning by the bishop, who blesses them (:19). This gives an opportunity for new people to put their charism at the disposal of the community (:43). The initial idea of CWK foresaw three steps: the first step being the selection of the leaders by their communities, preceded by an evaluation of the ministries by the Parish Council (:43). After that the parish staff offers training to these leaders in form of skill training and spiritual formation in the weeks before CWK. The last step is the blessing by the bishop (:20-1). The quality of formation is expected to grow over the years from initial skill training to deeper forms of formation (:36). In the process of developing local leadership, the CWKs are supposed to provide a learning process for all concerned: priests, communities, and leaders (:37). The overall aim is to achieve self-ministering communities and community building, based on the principle of subsidiarity with the changed role of a priest as enabler (:39-40).[64]

Regional meetings are regular meetings happening two times a year in the three regions of Aliwal diocese. "They fell from heaven" (Lobinger 1999d). Regional meetings are actually a by-product of the diocesan consultation meetings. They were held for the introduction of the Pastoral Plan. The experience of this method made one priest say: "Let's continue". Since also the people felt their value, the regional meetings were

[63] In response to the Motu Proprio *Ministeria Quaedam*, Lobinger (1973c) had already suggested the blessing of lay ministries at that time. Going beyond the narrowed perception of *Ministeria Quaedam*, which referred only to the ministries of lectors and acolytes, Lobinger suggests that many be involved in lay ministries (:238) and advocated a repeated rite of installation or renewal (:241), blessing all sorts of leaders.
[64] Though *Bongan' iNkosi* (:170-6) provided for a ceremony of dedicating leaders, this idea was not picked up till the systematic introduction of CWKs.

introduced to deal with a variety of topics of common relevance.[65] They include diocesan policy making such as designing guidelines for funerals. All leaders are invited to participate on a Saturday morning for some four hours. Topics are suggested by the senate and the Aliwal Diocese Pastoral Council (ADPC) and finally chosen by the senate. The meetings are prepared by changing groups, including animation teams and leaders. Local teams of leaders conduct the meetings in the appropriate local languages.

2.1.2.4 Ecumenical conviviality

Among the huge number of churches in Herschel District, the Methodist Church is the largest of the main-line churches. Because of the lack of proper statistical resources the denominational map depends on information from the trainer-catechist (Timati, J. 1998) (see map in appendix 4). It matches with information provided by other church ministers (Belu 1998). Varying from village to village, different churches form the majority. The Roman Catholic Church is the largest in Umlamli and Mfinci.

Lobinger (1973b:25) mentions four Methodist ministers at three centres at the time of his research. All of them were Africans. An average community of 500 persons had about 10 lay-preachers. They build a team which conducts almost all affairs of the congregation (:22). They follow a plan that allocates them not only to their home congregation. Those leaders are also meant to act as class leaders, for the instruction of new members and the revival of old ones. Though it is expected that the minister buries full members of the church, the preachers assist at or conduct many funerals (:22). Besides the preachers, the Methodist Church has full-time evangelists whose task it is to evangelise; among other tasks they also bury. These evangelists were formerly called catechists. A tendency within the Catholic Church is to call their catechists *Evangelists* (:23), a term still used to refer to the one remaining trainer-catechist: *umvangeli*. The financial contribution of church dues was about four times higher among the Methodists than among Catholics.

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[65] The topics dealt with the Pastoral Plan in 1987, Vocations for Priesthood 1988 and 1996, Parish Council 1989, SCCs 1990, 1995, and 1998, Workers (*Rerum Novarum*) 1991, Sodalities 1992, Financial self support of the church 1992, Democracy 1993, Funeral guidelines 1993, Marriage 1994, 1994, and 1995, Abortion 1996, Leadership 1997, Inculturation 1997, the situation in schools 1998, Healing 1999, Year 2000 – preparations 1999, AIDS 2000. This broad spectrum of themes indicates that the formation of the leaders is not narrowed down to their particular task.

The Anglican Church (Church of the Province of Southern Africa) follows a similar pattern to the Roman Catholic Church. The Anglican priest of Sterkspruit reaches out to each community once a month for the Sunday service. On the other Sundays the communities are led by licensed lay ministers. Though the priest likes to attend funerals he is unable to make himself always available. Lay-ministers conduct funerals, men and women alike. They are trained by their priest and supposed to continue with ongoing training. The approval of the Parish Council for these lay ministers is expected. They should be active members of their communities (cf. Belu 1998; Diocese of Grahamstown:s.a.).

2.1.2.5 Community leaders involved in the affairs of the broader local community

Hirmer (1973:133) noted the insignificant involvement of lay-people in secular affairs at that time. It appears at present that things done by lay people beyond the confines of the church are just not easily conceivable. They happen beyond the control of or observation by the immediate church structures. A number of community leaders are involved in political organisations or trade unions like ANC, Nehawu, PAC, SADTU, Sanco, TLC, and others. Some are involved in the local tribal structures, some as *iinduna*, the counsellors of the local chiefs. In the villages the participation to *imbizo* or *pitso*, the local meetings, is imperative for adults. An evaluation in the PPC showed a great interest in social and developmental matters. These notions help to avoid the impression of an all-consuming and too churchy an approach towards leadership. Sofield and Kuhn (1995), for instance, reflect on the manifold involvement of lay people rendering their leadership in fields beyond the umbrella of the church.

Summary: The local Catholic Church comprises less than 10% of the general population. It is made up mainly of Xhosa and Basotho people. The representation of women is quite strong. Locally it is a relatively young church and has a history of heavy dependence on expatriate personnel and foreign financial support. In this, and with the late introduction of community ministries, it differs significantly from other churches. There were fears that these characteristics of the Catholic Church could have an adverse effect on the development of a mature spirituality and vision of the church. Poor economic conditions cause the continuation of migrant work. This results in a loss of human resources in the Christian communities. Recently it started to affect also qualified women. The topographical features of the mountainous area affect transport. A poor infrastructure, coupled with the climatic conditions, affects daily life and pastoral

planning and activities. The same applies to cultural practices. The increasing spread of HIV/AIDS has also begun to affect the work of funeral leaders.

2.2 Observing a funeral

After describing the context of the community ministry, I will now describe one funeral and make a preliminary analysis. This will provide the framework for the further analysis of the ministry of funeral leaders in chapters three and four. The method of purposive sampling draws on the observation, interviews, and formation events and leads to reflections on the needs addressed by the ministry, on ancestors, cultural meals, and subsequently the Eucharist. Research on rites of passage, rituals, and bereavement will further contribute to a holistic foundation for the understanding of the ministry.

2.2.1 Some general features of funerals

Most of the funerals in the area are held on Saturdays.[66] Whoever arrives at the scene of a funeral at about 10am to attend the programme will already have missed several events. In the weeks following the death, people, the sodalities, and other groups from the whole range of denominations visited the bereaved family. The SCC and the committee of the Catholic community were meeting, the funeral leaders were commissioned and met for preparation, the priest was informed. The family had to organise a lot of things from choosing the coffin and informing relatives to buying groceries. If the deceased was a member of a funeral society like *ooMasingcwabane* (the "Let's bury together") or *ooMasakhane* (the "Let's build up together"), they had to meet to discuss their form of support.[67]

For a participant observer it is difficult to observe the whole procedure of one funeral because of time constraints. Though funerals of adults are planned ahead, with often about two weeks elapsing before the burial, they clash with other appointments. Communication problems cause another limitation: messages do not arrive in time, local needs mean arrangements have to be made before a priest can be consulted. Sometimes the distances do not allow for prompt contact even if a message arrives. So

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[66] Some funerals are held on Sundays especially if several funerals are scheduled for the same weekend in the same village. This is a cause of contention in several denominations since it affects the Sunday services. Children are normally buried during the week.
[67] The burial societies cover a lot of needs of the bereaved. Gamede (1998:26) names these as: to buy the coffin, to pay the hearse, to hire a car, to buy groceries and beast, to provide pots, and to offer assistance in slaughtering, cooking, and washing up.

one may, for example, not be able to attend the Parish Council (committee) meeting concerning one particular funeral, but only the funeral itself, while on another occasion one may just be involved in the committee procedures, meet the leaders, or just receive a report from the committee. Even purely physical limitations like exhaustion demand their tribute in the mammoth programmes of funerals. This disadvantage of partial observation is in my opinion quite compensated for by the advantage of being present, often by chance, at parts of these events in a variety of cases, while a scheduled presence would not have been possible. A holistic picture therefore emerges not so much by the observation of single cases, but by observing similar processes in a cluster of cases.

2.2.2 A case: The Funeral of Jamani Mbovu

I base this description on the video-recorded observation of the funeral of Jamani Mbovu[68] on 15/16 May 1998 (Wüstenberg 1998c). It focuses on the role of the funeral leaders. The video recording includes the procedures in fetching the deceased at the mortuary, and the welcome scenes at home on Friday. It continues with the cultural practices of slaughtering, the programme, liturgy, and the burial on Saturday. The Eucharistic celebration preceding it and the night-vigil itself were not recorded. The video-footage was evaluated on 20 February 1999 with the funeral leaders Richard Nzilo Mpambani, Edmund Mrhelu Mdange, and Paulos Madela Mbovu, who was involved as a family member.

The time scheduled for fetching the coffin at the mortuary in Sterkspruit was Friday, 15 May 1998 at 1pm. Members of the Mbovu family and their *abakhaphi*, those who accompany them, actually arrived shortly before 2.30pm because of delays at home. Two *mortuary ministers*, as they are called by the people, are present. The mortuary provides them to address the bereaved regardless of their religious or denominational affiliation, unless the bereaved arrange otherwise. One of them is Methodist; the other is a Zionist.[69] The Zionist is dressed in a blue liturgical garment; the Methodist wears a suit with a ministerial collar. Two of the Catholic leaders, RN Mpambani and Mbovu are

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[68] Jamani Mbovu was born during the first German war (1914-1918), his name marking the historical event at the time of his birth. He was the head of his family.

[69] The term Zionist is used to refer to a group of African Independent Churches (AICs or African Initiated Churches) that took root in South Africa in the early 20th century. There are many different Zionist denominations, though they hold certain beliefs in common.

present among the people. They do not play an expressive role as leaders in the mortuary.

At 2.30 mortuary workers wheel the coffin into the hall. The Zionist minister stands behind the coffin and opens the religious ceremony with a prayer beginning *Egameni lika Yise*... (In the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit). Everything is said in Xhosa. After his prayer RN Mpambani intones from among the people the *Our Father*, which all join singing. Then the Methodist minister takes over. He stands behind a lectern. He starts with a song and continues with a short reading from Jer 51:50. Then he preaches in his particular way changing six times between soft voice and loud screaming in a kind of controlled hyperventilation. The sermon lasts ten minutes.

The Zionist minister continues with a very short address and ends it with a prayer. At
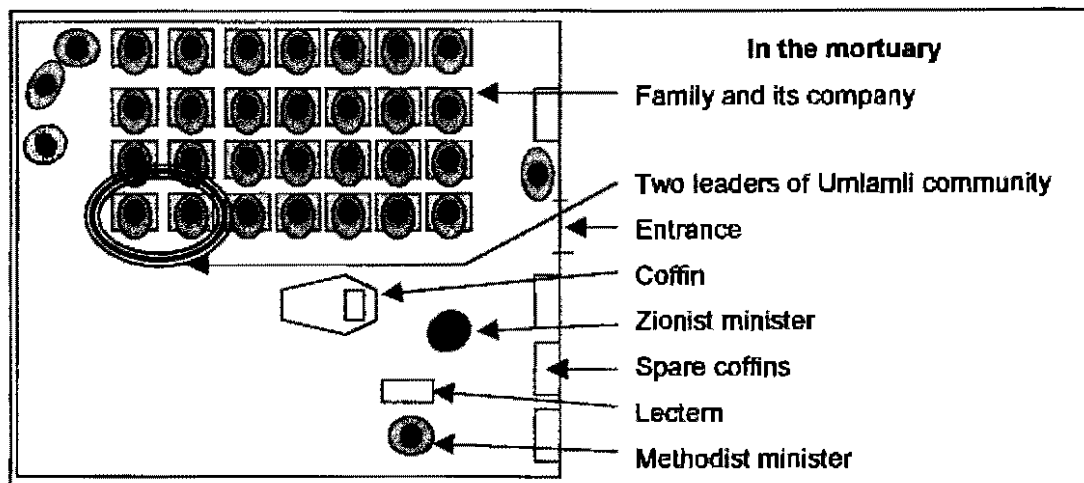
Figure 2.3. The arrangements at the mortuary

2.50 the *ukumbona* (to see him) starts: All people, first the men, then the women pass the coffin to see the deceased after one mortuary worker had opened the lid over the head. Meanwhile the congregation sings *Eloi Baba lamasabakatani* (My God why have you forsaken me), the verse of Ps 22, used by Jesus on the cross according to Matthew (27:46) and Mark (15:34).

At 2.52 the head of the family, *umninawe*, his brother, commences a customary ceremony with traditional beer which was brought along in tins. He approaches the coffin's top. Mbovu is with him as a family member, remaining silent. The brother addresses the deceased directly, saying: We have all prepared, we worked for the family. All have arrived, from Bebeza and as far as Ceres. Now we are ready. We take you home. *Makaphakame* (may he get up), do not linger around here. This is the bucket with beer to bring you home. You, drink! *Makasele uJamani* (Jamani may drink). We will

drink with you (*Siza kusela nawe*). The tobacco is here. Your pipe is also here, and the matches. Then the brother sips a bit from the beer to pass it on so that all may drink. RN Mpambani gives some instructions from the background about the smoking of the pipe. Some start lighting and smoking their pipes.

Towards the end of the beer ceremony, which is done in silence, a woman starts packing *impahla*, the luggage: the blanket, the pipe, both lying next to the head of the coffin on the floor. Then *umninawe* pours a bit of the beer on the ground without words.

At 3.06pm the ceremony has almost ended when another coffin is brought in. This is an extraordinary interference due to time constraints in the mortuary partly caused by the late arrival of the Mbovu group. The Methodist minister holds again a short sermon, after which all dance around the coffin singing. Then the coffins are brought to the hearses.

At 4.30 the people with the coffin arrive at the home of J Mbovu in Umlamli village. A
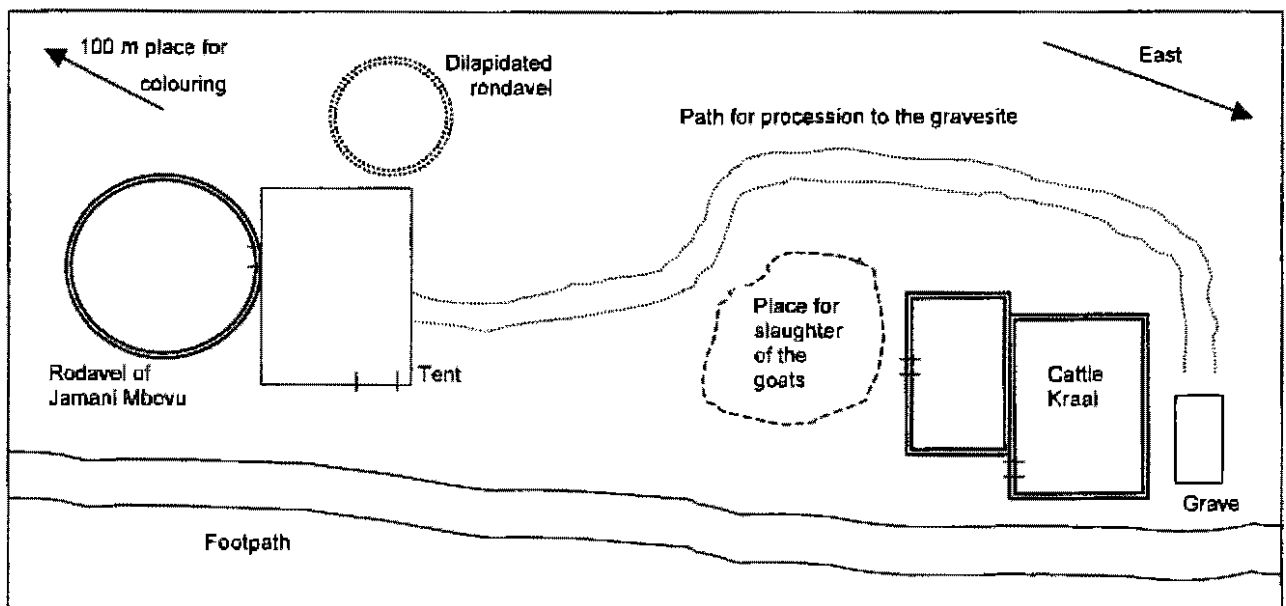
Figure 2.4. The arrangements at J Mbovu's homestead

tent is erected in front of his rondavel to accommodate the participants of the funeral Mass, the night vigil, and the programme in the morning. The coffin is carried to his house. In front of the door they put it down. *Umninawe* briefly addresses Jamani again: We have arrived at your home. "We want to go in. Go in!" All those accompanying the deceased enter the rondavel. The men gather on one side, the women sit on the other side of the hut. The coffin is put down on the men's side next to the wall, candles placed close to it.

Inside the house RN Mpambani in his capacity as funeral leader introduces a short prayer service with a song. He invites a former leader, Meshack Sedidi, to say the prayer. The leaders are not dressed liturgically. At the same time one man lights the candles next to coffin on the ground. M Sedidi starts *Egameni lika Yise ...* and asks the Lord in a freely formulated prayer to be with them, to give them power, to be with those who came from far.

Concluding the prayer RN Mpambani intones the *Our Father*. He closes the short ceremony with a vote of thanks for the prayers and makes some announcements: The next thing to happen is the Eucharist in the tent. *Umfundisi,* the priest, is here with us. The night vigil will begin later the evening.

Mbovu continues with a custom. As a member of the family he points with subdued voice at the bucket of *ukuphuthuma,* the beer to fetch the deceased: *AmaNqabashe amphuthuma,* the clan of amaNqabashe fetches him. First the beer is stirred by pouring it into another bucket and back. Then the beer is drunk in absolute silence. Within about nine minutes the bucket has been passed to all present including those outside the hut.

Then the men and some of the women vacate the hut. They leave behind the women who will spend the whole night there. Signs of emotional distress were not noticeable during the whole procedure.

Then the Eucharistic liturgy[70] is celebrated in the tent attached to the rondavel. Some 50 people attend the Mass. A number of women, mostly those related to the deceased, sit according to

Figure 2.5. The arrangements for the Eucharistic celebration

tradition in the rondavel. Most of the attendees are Catholics. Some are just onlookers. Simultaneously quite a number of people continue with preparations for the funeral. Two leaders assist the priest. They give an introduction, lead the penitential rite,

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[70] The Eucharist may be celebrated if the deceased was a practising Catholic provided a priest is available. There are variations concerning the timing: It may be done on Friday before the night vigil or also on Saturday before the programme of speeches begins, or after this programme.

and read the scripture text. The priest, who also chose the gospel text, preaches the sermon. The leaders guide the incense ceremony during the intercessions: after each intercession some grains of incense are thrown into an informal fireplace. The leaders sing the response verses in the Eucharistic prayer. Together with the priest they offer the sign of peace to the participants in the tent and to the women in the hut. Special attention is paid to family members. The whole assembly in the tent enters the hut for the greeting of peace to offer the sign of peace to all present. One leader is helping with the distribution of communion, offering the chalice with the Blood of Christ. The communion is also distributed in the hut.

After the Mass the programme breaks until the night vigil starts at about 9pm.[71] Three leaders, RN Mpambani, Makgohlwana Ponoane, and Kgotso Sedidi, lead the vigil. After a chant one of them opens the ceremony by welcoming the people, another says a prayer. Then Job 19:25 is read: *I know that my Redeemer lives*. The leaders as MCs invite all those who want to do so, to witness, to preach. A song follows these sermons; some preachers start their sermon with a song. The leaders are not dressed in liturgical garments. Around midnight the reading is changed. The Methodist leaders were invited to choose and read the second reading. This reading from Genesis is followed again by preaching and witnessing, led by the Catholic leaders. The vigil ends with prayers, *izicelo*, the intercessions, and a blessing at about 4am.

On the fresh, dry, wintry Saturday morning quite a number of people are around at the time of my arrival at 7.51am. At 8.09 am a herd of goats is driven into the kraal of J Mbovu's place. Only men are present on this site. Some fifteen of them go into the kraal. The head of the family chooses three goats. He looks next to the exit of the kraal for a place to speak from so that the women may also hear his words. A kind of herald some distance away boosts the message by repeating it for the women who are preparing food. *Nantsi ibhokhwe yokuphuthuma*: This is the goat for fetching him, he announces and the goat is led to a place near the kraal to be slaughtered. *Nantsi enye ukumkhapa*, this is another one for accompanying him. *Nantsi enye kwakhona ukuhlamba abantu izandla*, this is again one for the washing of the hands of the people.

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[71] This paragraph is based on the report by the leaders, especially by RN Mpambani.

All the goats are slaughtered in the vicinity of the cattle kraal.[72] The funeral leaders appointed to officiate at the funeral liturgy have not yet arrived.

At the same time women are colouring the white blanket of the deceased with *imbhola* (ochre) on the other side of the house. They pour the powder on the blanket, fold it, and beat it with sticks. They keep absolute silence. The preparation of food goes on in different groups of women and men.

The MC and, then, the leaders at the table; space for people inside and outside the tent and the hut
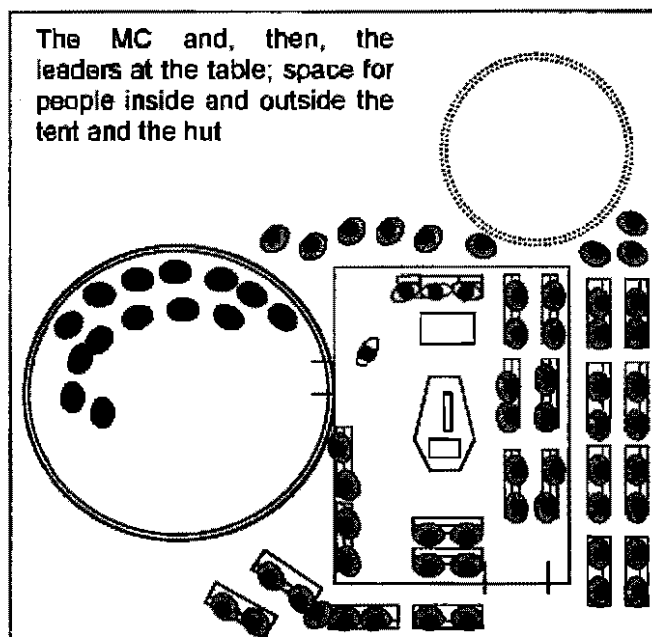
Figure 2.6. The arrangements for the programme and the church service

At 11.43am (1¾ hours behind schedule because of the late arrival of expected participants) RN Mpambani starts the programme[73] with a prayer service in the rondavel standing next to the coffin. He wears no garments since he is going to be the MC for the programme.[74] Mdange is dressed in church garments. One person looking like a Zionist minister with a gown and a kind of stole is also present. The leaders do not know him. RN Mpambani intones the song *Khawusilungise...* and sprinkles Holy Water on the coffin while all are singing. Then he starts with the opening formula *Egameni lika Yise...*, which is sung in the locally known way three times, twice in Xhosa, once in Sesotho. Watuwatu Otto Giladile reads the

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[72] Note that these slaughtering customs differ from ethnic group to ethnic group and from place to place. The Sotho slaughter on the eve of the funeral. The Xhosa in the township of Barkly East, who are still used to slaughtering in their yards, do not know about these three goats and the meaning of their slaughtering. Baai (1991:128-130) mentions the slaughtering for accompanying and washing of hands. Mayer and Mayer (1971:151) in their investigation are proof for variation in the customs when they refer to *ukukhapha* and *ukubuyisa* only: "The preference of the spirits for sacrifices offered at the homestead in the country applies especially to the important mortuary and commemorative rites for the father – *ukukhapha*, 'accompanying' the father, and *ukubuyisa*, 'returning' the father. These are performed in the cattle-kraal near the grave. A Red man wants to be buried at his country homestead so that he can have these rituals performed for him there. 'A man who dies in town is like a man who dies by the roadside.' The solemn duty of *amakhaya* to send their comrade's body back to the country for burial is directly connected with the fact that *ukukhapha* cannot be done 'properly' in town." By "red" man they refer to the traditional Xhosa, who normally wear red blankets (cf:21).
[73] The term "programme" refers to the programme of speeches held at the funeral.
[74] The master of ceremonies (MC) is not necessarily a Catholic funeral leader. It can be any person chosen by the family. The MC leads the programme. He introduces speakers and assures that the procedure is carried out properly. He does not preside over the liturgy.

prayer for the relatives from the prayer and songbook *Bongan' iNkosi* (1986:537).[75] He is a former funeral leader dressed with a black cassock. His prayer ends in the "Our Father". Mdange continues with the actual greeting from *Bongan' iNkosi* and the prayer for the deceased (:536-7). All are facing the coffin. After the prayer Mbovu starts a song (in Sesotho). He is present in his capacity as family member, traditionally dressed with a blanket. At the instruction of RN Mpambani at 11.56am the coffin is carried to the tent and put in front of the table while the small choir leads a song. The tarpaulins are now lifted up so that all can attend both inside and outside the tent. The *ikhuko*, the straw mat of the deceased is laid down on the coffin.

At the table are now present RN Mpambani as MC, and Mdange and Giladile already as funeral leaders. At 11.59 the MC opens the programme,[76] after receiving some instruction by a family member. He hands a note to the choir. It refers to the song the deceased liked most, *Yatsh' intsimbi yengelosi, ... Ave Maria*. The MC announces its number in the *Bongan' iNkosi* (no.152). The small choir of the Catholic community's youth, present in the first row next to the table joins in. After the song the MC hands over to the *umongi*, the person who relates the circumstances of the death. Then representatives of different branches of the family, neighbours, and the headman hold speeches. In between the speeches the choir starts various songs. At 1.13pm Mdange speaks on behalf of the *ibandla*, the Catholic community. At 1.17pm this part of the programme draws to a close with the *Ave Maria* intoned again. A woman reads *ubomi bakhe* (his life), the obituary.[77] While the text is read all hum the melody *Lala ngoxolo, Nqabashe. Lala ngoxolo, Jola*, rest in peace. At 1.20pm Ambrose Sithetho Mpambani, dressed in the leader's garment, joins the leaders sitting at table. The MC invites the girls to read the *ingatha*, the wreaths. AS Mpambani joins the two girls reading the cards of condolences. Afterwards the MC thanks all those present, who contributed the food, including those not present in the tent.

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[75] People like to refer to *Bongan' iNkosi* with the shortened form *Bongani*.

[76] The programme and the following liturgy may also take place in the church, depending on the circumstances.

[77] The obituaries at the local funerals provide usually a short summary of the data of the deceased concerning birth, family tree, marriage, children, work, survivors, and clan-names. They are quite different from elaborate biographies read at the rite of passage as described by Lawuyi (1991) for the Yoruba in Nigeria.

Quite a number of people are present outside the tent, even in some distance. Women are cooking around the hut. Men have some fireplaces for cooking in the vicinity of the cattle kraal. Some are just looking on.

At 1.36pm also RN Mpambani is dressed in a leader's garment. He joins the leaders and starts the liturgy *Egameni lika Yise...* In the tent are mostly members of the Catholic community. *Ufefe lweNkosi Yesu Krestu, uthando lukaThixo uYise maluhlale nathi sonke amaxesha onke* (The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father may be with us all the time), he says. All respond *Mayibongwe iNkosi* (blessed be the Lord). He then addresses the assembly with opening words: We all know that Jamani lapsed once, but came back again to the church. With this service we now want to say *alale ngoxolo*, may he rest in peace. When he goes now with his people where he is going to, may we think of him and be at peace. Now let us ask for forgiveness for the sins we committed. RN Mpambani is speaking freely, and follows the liturgy outline.

Mdange starts the penitential rite, *Masivume* (let us confess). The choir intones the appropriate song from *Bongan' iNkosi*. The leaders follow now the liturgy outline of the Sunday service when a priest is not present (*Bongan' iNkosi*:232-244), departing from the liturgy outline for funerals.

At 1.40 AS Mpambani says the formula for forgiveness of sins. The choir sings *Morena u re hauhele* (Lord have mercy) in Sesotho while RN Mpambani sprinkles the people in the tent with Holy Water. He then says the opening prayer by heart: "Be with us, Lord. We invite you, good God. Help us here. Strengthen us, strengthen the leaders, and strengthen our neighbours." He asks the choir to start the Alleluia. Mdange tries quickly to involve AS Mpambani in reading the verse in between the Alleluia; but he does not find it in the Bible. So Mdange does it himself *UYesu uyalila eYerusalem* (Jesus cries over Jerusalem) and then proclaims the Gospel from Matthew 23:37-39, starting *INkosi mayibe nani* (The Lord be with you). After the Gospel the choir starts the song *Sishumayela iVangeli, akanamandla uSathana* (We preach the Gospel, Satan has no power), while Mdange elevates the Bible and turns it around to show the open pages to the assembly.

Mdange preaches freely, speaking in a normal voice. He has no written outline. His sermon will find some attention later (chapter 4.2.2.2). It lasts ten minutes. Then RN Mpambani invites the intercessions. The choir starts singing *Senze nenceba, Nkosi*, (Have mercy on us, Lord). Giladile starts the petitions with *Bongan' iNkosi* and pours

some incense into the glowing charcoal next to the table as all will do after raising their petition. AS Mpambani prays by heart. Mdange finishes with the concluding prayer (*Bongan' iNkosi*:234).

Following the *Bongan' iNkosi* RN Mpambani begins the preface provided for the Sunday liturgy in the absence of a priest with its prologue (:234). He starts the first section and concludes it with the exclamation *Camagu!* (Be gracious!). The people reply *Siyakubonga, sikubulela* (We praise you, we thank you). The second section (:235) is read by AS Mpambani and closed with the exclamation *Camagu!* and the third (:235) by Mdange. RN Mpambani ends the preface with the provided verse (:235). The preface concludes with the common singing of *Uyingcwele* (You are holy, my Lord).

RN Mpambani opens the ciborium. Then the leaders genuflect. The sacrament has been on the table since the beginning of the service. One of the leaders fetched it from the tabernacle in the church. AS Mpambani says the introductory prayer from *Bongan' iNkosi* (:236) after which all sing the *Bawo wethu* (Our Father), joining hands mostly with their small fingers. RN Mpambani starts the prayer for peace which is not provided for in *Bongan' iNkosi* here. All join in. He invites everyone to exchange the sign of peace *Uxolo lweNkosi malube nathi sonke* (The peace of the Lord be with us all). While exchanging it the choir sings *Eli, Baba, lamasabakatani* (My God, why have you forsaken me)? Then Mdange signals to the choir to start singing *Mvana kaThixo* (Lamb of God).

At 2:10pm the whole community prays from *Bongan' iNkosi Nkosi* (:237 [1]), *uyasibiza...* (Lord you call us): Come to me you who are burdened as preparation for receiving communion. RN Mpambani elevates one host and starts the prayer *Nantsi imvana kaThixo* by heart (This is the Lamb of God). The choir leads the responding song while RN Mpambani gives the communion to the other leaders. They consume it before the community receives. Then RN Mpambani announces: We distribute to the family and all those who want to receive. He and Giladile distribute communion going along the benches and into the rondavel. Thereafter all say together a thanksgiving prayer from *Bongan' iNkosi* (:239 [1]). RN Mpambani says the concluding prayer returning to the liturgy outline for funerals (*Bongan' iNkosi*:539) while Giladile prepares the incense. Mbovu starts a song; RN Mpambani now censes the coffin walking around it with the thurible. AS Mpambani simultaneously sprinkles Holy Water on the coffin while Mbovu clears the table.

Then all the leaders gather around the coffin. Mdange starts a prayer from *Bongan'* *iNkosi* (:539) with responses by the people. AS Mpambani continues with the following prayer (:540). Then Mbovu intones a song. At 2.20pm RN Mpambani announces that they now would go to the grave. All those who still want to see the deceased pass the coffin with the lid over the head opened. Then they leave the tent while the choir sings various songs.

The grave for the head of the family was dug in the morning, next to the cattle kraal according to the custom.[78] At 2.26pm all start the procession to the grave site, some 150 metres from the tent. The leaders lead the procession. Some men carry the coffin.

At 14.28pm the leaders gather at the foot-side of the coffin which rests on a lowering device above the grave. The men gather around the grave. The women gather in a distance away from the grave.

Mdange says a prayer from *Bongan'* *iNkosi* (:543). RN Mpambani hands the vessel containing the holy water to AS Mpambani. He walks around the grave to sprinkle it. Then RN Mpambani censes the grave leading the thurible deep into the grave, underneath the coffin while all keep
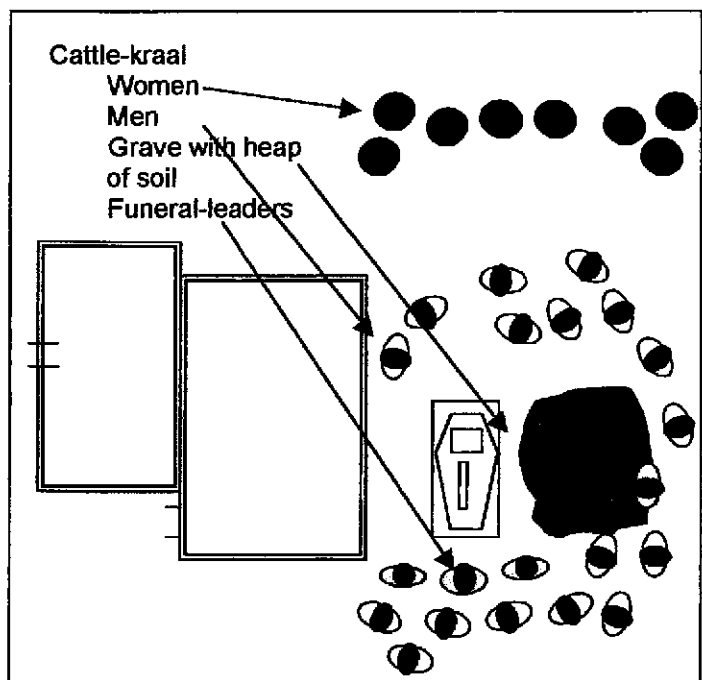
Figure 2.7. The arrangements at the burial site next to the cattle kraal

strict silence. He invites the choir to start the song *Hamba kakuhle* (Go well), while the coffin is lowered slowly by the lowering device. The mortuary workers then immediately remove this device. The leaders start to pray the intercessions from *Bongan' iNkosi* (:543-4). AS Mpambani reads in unintelligible speed the prayer omitted for the song while lowering the coffin and goes on with the provided prayer for one paragraph, when Giladile continues. Mdange and RN Mpambani follow. Then Mbovu intones the response: *Sive, siyakucela* (Hear us, we ask you). The leaders continue each in the same sequence with one intercession. After that RN Mpambani starts the *Bawo Wethu*

(Our Father). AS Mpambani concludes it with the prayer from *Bongan' iNkosi* (:545). Then RN Mpambani blesses the grave with the cross. He invites all *abangcwabi*, funeral leaders from the different denominations, to come to the grave to pour the soil. The men gather around the grave and receive some soil by a spade. RN Mpambani says the accompanying words, pausing three times for pouring the soil down. Then he prays the concluding prayer. M Sedidi, who is not dressed as leader, gives the final blessing. RN Mpambani starts singing the Amen. Afterwards he directs some concluding words and hands over to the family: *Ngoku sinikela usapho* (Now we hand over to the family). The leaders then withdraw a few metres and gather in a circle to say a prayer of thanks together.

Some men start covering the coffin with flat pieces of sandstone. While they are doing this a man climbs on the little hill of soil to announce the next funeral on the following Saturday. At 3pm the *ikhuko*, the mat, is put on the stones above the coffin. Then the head of the family starts throwing some soil into the grave, followed by other members of the family in due course according to their position in the family. At 3.02pm, after a layer of soil is on the coffin, the papers of the programme are thrown into the grave. The women follow the men throwing some soil on the grave. Then all go back to the homestead to first wash their hands and then to receive some food. The leaders and ministers are led to the hut to get the food served there, while all other people queue and eat wherever they like, men and women gathering mostly separately.

2.2.3 Preliminary analysis - the observed funeral

The analysis of the funeral just described will be the starting point for the further analysis of ministry of funeral leaders. Though it lacks variation, the observation of the single event of this particular funeral provides some general leads. It invites questions on what is not directly observable but pertinent to the phenomenon which needs scrutiny if one wants to understand what is going on. The immediate observation reveals nothing how the funeral leaders came into their function, how they were qualified, came to specialise in it, and prepared themselves for the funeral. It says nothing about how they understand themselves in the context of their church, their motives, and how they experience themselves at the interface of religion and culture.

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[78] The burial places differ. It is the privilege of the head of the family to be buried under or next to the wall of the cattle-kraal. Other burial places in this area are some other places in the homestead or a graveyard.

The observation also reveals nothing directly about the needs addressed by the ministry offered, the expectations of the people, and their satisfaction.

Following the death of a person the funeral leaders are involved in and provide certain liturgical ceremonies at the culmination of the liminal phase of a rite of passage. They alternate with family members who conduct the cultural requirements in its preliminal, liminal, and postliminal phases. The three goats slaughtered for fetching, accompanying, and washing culturally represent these. Both leaders and family members are acting for the deceased and the bereaved. Among them we see at different stages participants of different kind: members of the immediate family, relatives, neighbours, friends, and members of the Christian community, to name but a few. Various people of different background perform a ministry of comfort while following distinct cultural or religious patterns. They participate in a shared ministry of comfort in a very broad sense: family members comply with the customs of their particular culture and family, the community leaders act according to their church procedures. The latter share in the comforting ministry of their faith. In the overall ministry of comfort this church ministry is distinguished by offering religious, spiritual guidance, and leadership.[79] It is not limited to the Catholic leaders. Members, leaders, and pastors of other churches can take their share in the ministry of comfort.

This community ministry is exercised at different stages. There seem to be rather marginal stages where one or several funeral leaders may be present or not. At these stages others may act, for example a Methodist minister in the mortuary or when welcoming the deceased into his house. The vigil, the Eucharistic celebration, and the funeral service with the actual burial itself can be identified as core stages by the presence of funeral leaders in liturgical dress. At the core stages the leaders act in teams, their composition changing. This is partly also due to the trajectory of the whole funeral procedure making it virtually impossible for an individual to be present the whole time. On the side of the participants the core stages enjoy higher and broader participation.

These stages coincide with specific locations where the ministry is exercised. The core stages in this case took place in the tent next to the house and at the cattle kraal. This is

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[79] "The responsibility for the ministry of comforting rests with the believing community..." (NCCB 1990:926, no.9). No. 14 and 15 mention the diversity of liturgical ministers (NCCB 1990:928).

at home.[30] The procedure at the mortuary is less important for the leaders. The same applies also to some events at the home, like the welcoming back home.

The shared ministry of these individual community leaders, priests, and family members is in fact a collaborative ministry in a very broad sense.

Since the funeral procedure begins with leaders just present among the family one may infer that collaboration on a particular level takes place between the church leaders and the family. In mutual respect they work together in two distinct, complementary areas.

Collaboration takes place interdenominationally, both in an active and a passive way. The Methodist minister acts and preaches in his style without prior arrangement and particular knowledge of the case at the mortuary. At the vigil the interdenominational character of the comforting ministry becomes still more evident with many people preaching. In this particular case leaders of the second largest community, the Methodists of Umlamli, were deliberately invited to choose and read the second reading, with many again preaching on it. The orchestrating remained in the hands of the Catholic leaders. Since most of the people are baptised it is unlikely but possible that non-Christians and catechumens may preach and render comfort at this occasion, based on their faith and even on scripture.[81] An unknown Zionist minister was visibly present and participating, though not in an active way.

Intradenominationally the observable collaboration with the priest was limited to the celebration of the Eucharist, sharing roles wherever possible.[82] The visible liturgical collaboration between priest and leaders may be complemented "behind the scenes". At the funeral it is a kind of complementary collaboration where the priest does things either expected from him, like the sermon, or reserved to him. The consecration of the gifts of bread and wine depends on the priest exclusively. This implies that this service will not be offered if a priest is not available. The observation that the Eucharist was celebrated in the evening preceding the vigil and that the consecrated species were distributed at the funeral service by leaders may indicate two things. Firstly, some

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[30] If the church is used for the core stage of the funeral programme and service, this expresses on the side of the church that the deceased was at home in church.

[81] A Muslim or Hindu may also preach there, but not in the actual service (Elia, MP 2000b).

[82] This happens in accordance with no. 58 of the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* "Thus in carrying out this function, all, whether ministers or laypersons, should do all and only those parts that belong to them, so that every arrangement of the celebration itself makes the Church stand out as being formed in a structure of different orders and ministries" (The Roman Missal. 1985:29*).

importance is attributed to this celebration in the context of funerals, and secondly there may be some kind of flaw in the exercised ministry since a duplication occurred.

Collaboration occurred among the leaders when acting as a team with different roles. At all the core stages two or more leaders were active, though theoretically one leader could have done everything alone. Those arriving late were integrated immediately. They share in the same scope of roles. The composition of the cast is different at the vigil and at the funeral service. This suggests sufficient human resources in this case.

The differentiation of roles depends partly on ability, which may in turn depend on age or literacy. One leader is presiding and co-ordinating the whole procedure, for instance advising the choir, while another one preaches the sermon. Some of the leaders are actually retired leaders but still included according to their ability by leading prayers. They are dressed liturgically at the service like Giladile, or appear in plain clothes at the welcome at home like M Sedidi. Others join the leaders as trainees. There is no discrimination, rather an inclusive openness.[83]

This inclusive openness is limited here in the gender representation. The leaders are exclusively male. Though the choir consists mainly of women, they are not found among these funeral leaders. Collaboration happens with the choir. The choir fulfils its task on its own and on advice from the leaders.

The spiritual leadership rendered is embedded in a ritual. The leaders follow a ritual provided by the prayer book *Bongan' iNkosi*. It is the specific liturgical procedure of the Catholic Church as laid down for the core-stages of the vigil and the funeral service. Following the liturgical outlines the leaders show creativity in two directions: The leaders act on their own accord at stages that depend on the local culture like the welcome of the deceased in his house. There *Bongan' iNkosi* does not provide any suggestions. They show creativity when skilfully inserting desired parts of another, the Sunday – liturgy, into the funeral procedures where these are omitted in the liturgical outline.

Collaboration takes place against a broader background: the use of the prayer book *Bongan' iNkosi* shows agreement with the wider context of the Catholic Church. The leaders follow its liturgical structure, which differs from the procedures of other

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[83] The phenomenon of including others is not a feature only of Roman Catholic community ministries. Becken (1972:141-2) mentions that the AIC minister is a leader-in-community, who does not monopolise but gives others the chance of active participation.

denominations. At the same time they adapt it to the local situation. The use of the Bible shows that the collaboration happens within the still wider community of the Jesus followers: While differing from other denominations, the Bible indicates the common ground with them.

Though conducting the ritual for a Xhosa-family, the leaders are communicating in different local languages. They also include, and thus respect, Sotho, the second language of the place. The specific genre of language is religious language, recognised by the vocabulary used with the frequent reference religious terms such as *uThixo*, God, *uMoya oyingcwele*, the Holy Spirit, *uYesu*, Jesus, and the concrete community of believers, *icawe*, the church. This religious language is spontaneous as in prayers and the sermon. It is formalised when using the ritual and provided prayers. Points of reference are the Bible, used as source of quotation and inspiration, as well as the life of the people.

The language implores, as in prayers asking for the comforting presence of God. It is narrative, referring to the life of the deceased. It is appealing, calling for conversion. It is proclaiming, in telling the Good News of Christ. It is integrating, concerned about the community. It is tolerant, by showing respect for other denominations. It is convinced of the truth of its own message, thus witnessing to the conviction or faith of the preacher.

The communication goes in different directions. To use a traditional perception, on a "vertical" level the leaders address God in prayers, provided and printed in the ritual and said spontaneously. As communal prayers, offered on behalf of the assembly, they are also perceived by the community. So they are part of the comforting strategy. They convey in their particular mode a message to the assembly. Thus the vertical and horizontal dimensions intermingle.

On the horizontal level the communication then also happens in the proclamation of the word of God by the reading or readings chosen. The leaders chose the readings, with the exception of the Gospel for the Eucharistic celebration.

A central part of the communication is the preaching of a sermon with a message of faith and spiritual guidance. As the proclamation of the word of God this horizontal event bears vertical traits: It is God who is communicating here if it is the message of faith. In the vigil the leaders usually start to deliver a sermon, followed by a number of other people of different background. It is an interdenominational event. At the funeral service

only one sermon is delivered, done exclusively by a Catholic. The same applies for the Eucharistic celebration where the priest delivered the sermon. The sermon addresses the bereaved, family, neighbours, friends, the Christian community, and the assembly at large. The style of the sermons may differ significantly. The sermon of the Methodist minister in the mortuary and that of the funeral leader at the funeral liturgy differed in content and form. The style may depend on personal liking and skill and on denominational practice. It therefore indicates identity to some extent. The leader draws the content of the sermon from faith, the Bible, and the life of the deceased.

The spiritual leadership reveals a certain world view. This world view is shaped by sense of community with one another and with God. It reflects the conviction that the deceased is present, finding some clear parallel in the customary practice of addressing the deceased directly as present. It finds its expression in the use of real symbols, which contain what they signify: the meal, the cleansing rite, and the language.

Songs form a part of communication. By conveying a comforting message the choir collaborates in the comforting ministry. The songs are chosen mainly by the choir, based on *Bongan' iNkosi* and *Lifela tsa ba Kriste* (1995), the Sotho hymnbook. The leaders may include certain songs of specific importance, like the favourite song of the deceased.

The ritual communicates by the use of special symbolic expressions and gestures. The garments are worn as expression of community and the official acting in its name. The leaders as representatives of their community enact in this context the mission of this community. Different styles of partly worn-out church garments could either indicate less concern or that the community cannot afford new ones. Both may be the case. People are used to worn-out garments. There may be a hidden hint at the economic condition of the community. There is a saying that there is one thing for sure in the church besides the Amen and that is the collection. If this is true then one may be astonished that there was nothing of this kind at this funeral. This and the absence of any stipends may indicate a certain independence from financial worries when working with voluntary community leaders. On the other hand this may hint at a hidden problem: how are funds generated to maintain the whole church structure?

The treatment of the Bible, held high after the proclamation in veneration, the sprinkling with water as a cleansing rite, and the use of incense are further ritual expressions. In the case of the Eucharist they extend to the ritual consumption of food. While the priest

celebrated the Eucharist, the leaders distributed the consecrated species at the funeral service. Thus they provide access to sacraments. The cleansing rite and the consumption of food find parallels in the cultural ritual.

The cultural ministry of comfort, which is distinctly related to the specific, local brand of culture, in this case the Xhosa culture, is accompanied by a broader ministry. The spiritual leadership embraces and actively includes all the cultures in accompanying their members. It respects and gives room for the cultural practices while recruiting and deploying the leaders from the church community irrespective of their cultural background. So Xhosa and Sotho leaders alike were involved in the funeral procedure.

Leadership thus happens in leading through the rite, including many to participate, and by giving spiritual guidance.

All the individual leaders involved are black African people, of different nations, Xhosa and Sotho. All of them are locals from Umlamli. The only white person involved was the European expatriate priest.

The ways the leaders act suggest that they are familiar with their task. Their way of collaboration in the ministry implies self-sufficiency and independence. With the exception of the celebration of the Eucharist they conduct a full Catholic funeral service. The general performance of the funeral procedure allows one to assume that a certain standard of formation is involved. The leaders demonstrate it by having the necessary skills, knowing the liturgy, even skilfully merging parts of the funeral liturgy with that of the Sunday service liturgy, by preaching, and in the choice of readings. The individual performance differs. Some leaders seem to be more trained and gifted, while others are less so.

The leaders are of different ages, ranging from the 20s like K Sedidi to over 80 years like Giladile. The older ones actually act with limited roles like taking a prayer.

External factors influence the leaders' work. Some leaders are very efficient in using the books; others have difficulties with reading due either to bad eyesight or poor schooling, or both. Their self-esteem was not visibly affected by this limitation. People seem to accept them. There was no mention of dissatisfaction and there were no complaints. My impression was that there was more sovereignty with the old leader praying by heart than with the one trying to cope with the book indicating his limitations in the use of

books. One of them seemed to overplay his limited reading skills by speeding up to an unintelligible speed.

The participation at the funeral procedures is somehow differentiated. Though all belong to the same set-up, they do not and cannot participate in all parts. Those slaughtering and cooking for instance won't attend the programme with the speeches. The same applies to the Christian liturgy.

Summarising conclusion: We see that many share in the ministry of comfort. It is offered collaboratively. Focusing on the role of the Catholic funeral leaders they collaborate with the family that conducts the cultural requirements. The leaders act as team, at times co-operating with the priest. Local people representing their Catholic Church do the full funeral procedure at a locally accepted standard. The concern is the conveyance of the religious message, based on the Bible. This is communicated by the liturgy including symbolic acts, prayers, Bible readings, sermon, and singing. The leaders offer a self-reliant and self-sufficient service with no financial contributions demanded or offered. They are local people speaking the local language with no need for costly transport. Though the weather was fine on this occasion they would also have been available under rainy conditions. The collaboration with people and ministers from other denominations seems amicable and in part intentionally inclusive.

So far two areas may give rise to concern: The Eucharistic part seems to be the most vulnerable, prone to omission if no priest is available. In a situation with most of the active parishioners and leaders being women their absence among the funeral leaders is conspicuous.

2.2.3.1 Excursus: Change in the cultural funeral practices

Cultural practices differ from ethnic group to another and even from family to family. Though the cultural funeral practices are not the focus of this study, a brief look at former funeral customs will reveal that significant changes have taken place. In the course of change the people continue calling newly developing forms their customs and insist on adhering to them. In the midst of cultural change they maintain their identity: It is their thing.

Soga (s.a.:319-322) describes the traditional funeral rites of the Xhosa. When a person was about to die most of those present left the hut while the women began to wail. Sometimes the dying person asked them to stop it. This wailing was interpreted as

expression of both mourning and informing the neighbours. After the person died, the arms of the deceased were bent with the hands to the shoulders. The legs were bent at the knees and pressed upwards. Eyes and mouth were not closed. The grave was dug sometimes while the person was still breathing. As soon as the person died the body was wrapped in its blanket and taken to the grave for burial. Four men brought the corpse to the resting-place. They took off their clothes lest the dead contaminate them. Every person and what they wore was regarded unclean when touching the dead. They had to wash immediately after the burial.

> No religious ceremony takes place at the grave, and no words of condolence or sympathy are uttered. A precatory sentence, however, is often addressed to the departed, such as "remember us for good from the place to which you have gone" – "*Uze usikumbulele apo uya kona*" (Soga s.a.:320).[84]

The grave usually contained a recess in one of the sides to receive the body. Since arms and legs were bound up it did not take up a lot of space. The clothes of the deceased, their sleeping mat, pillow, blanket, goat-skin bag, pipe, and personal articles were put into the grave first before burying them. The clothing was used to cover the floor of the recess. The body was put into the recess facing the home if the deceased died from natural causes, so he could still watch over the family and ward off evils. In the case of accident or other unnatural causes of death, the deceased were buried with their back facing the home in order to avoid further similar occurrences in the family. Special cases were treated differently. A warrior was simply put to a secluded spot and left to the elements. Drowned people were buried next to the accident scene. The graves were closed with stones and layers of branches from thorny bushes to prevent wild animals from digging up the grave. A chief was buried near to the gate of the cattle-kraal.

In the case of people of wealth, immediately after the burial a goat or an ox was slaughtered as propitiatory offering and cleansing sacrifice. The cleansing, *uku-hlanjwa kwezandla*, was done on behalf of all those who attended the deceased during illness and burial. All who come from far and near partake in this ceremony. Every bereaved family performs shaving of the head as a sign of mourning (cf. Soga s.a.:320-323).[85]

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[84] Soga uses an old version of Xhosa orthography. The introduction mentions 1931 as year.
[85] Pauw (1975:100) got to know the slaughtering for washing and accompanying. "The one means purification, the meaning of the other one is not very well established" (:100). In our context the latter

	Formerly	**At present**
Funeral time	Instantly	One to several weeks after death
Funeral place	At home	At home or in graveyard
Place of celebration	At home	At home or in the church
Funeral done by	Men	Funeral leaders, at some places including women, family-members fulfilling customary ritual (men)
Religious ceremony	None	Service of the word or Eucharist
Container	Cow-skin, later blanket, later simple box	Coffin or casket
Position of deceased	Facing home (or turning the back), depending on circumstances	Facing east, interpreted by faith
Presence of the deceased	Present, addressed directly	Present, addressed directly
Speeches	None	Many
Mortuary	None	Certain practices
Slaughtering	After funeral – one beast – in case of wealth	Before funeral – several goats - also done by poor
Status	Display of wealth if given	Pretended wealth
Meaning of slaughtering	Cleansing of hands	Fetch, accompany, wash
Gathered community	Family, friends, neighbours from immediate vicinity	Many also from far, broadening
Political message	Not mentioned	During the struggle: Encouragement. Now developing: Cope with violence and AIDS
Burial gifts	Personal property	The mat, the blanket in the coffin, sometimes the programme leaflets

Figure 2.8. Changes in funeral practices

During the time of the struggle against apartheid, certain funerals became politicised. They became an affair concerning the community, the *polis*, political events that gave an opportunity to address important matters. When all kinds of gatherings were banned they became the place for venting sentiments, to convey messages, and to reassure hope.

> Hence the extraordinary importance of funerals. Funerals are celebrations of new life. Those who have died in the struggle must be honoured. They are heroes and martyrs. *Hamba kahle*, go well, comrade. We shall carry on the struggle until we die too (Nolan 1988:201).[86]

Amandla ngawethu, ours is the power, was the unifying call. Funerals became a prominent place of hope against hope, a proof of the inherent power of the officially powerless. In a secularised sense they represented a kind of eschatological dimension within the situation of the "not yet" to paradoxically exclaim the "already" within the

appears as an expression in a rite of passage. Pauw noticed the family and the church acting as separate entities (:104).
[86] Keteyi (1998:27) states that the funerals of those who died at the hands of the apartheid system "have come to be understood as acts of commitment and a source of hope."

context of the struggle. Many films about apartheid South Africa include scenes of funerals depicting desperation, power, and traces of reconciliation.[87]

The attribution of prominent importance shaped the way of celebrating funerals. After the struggle the powerful expressions seem sometimes to be oriented at mercantile means, the display of wealth by expensive coffins or caskets. Some fellow priests, and some from the Anglican Church, complain about the waste of money at these occasions and the spiral that draws poor people to spend a fortune if they want to keep pace. Tlhagale (The Southern Cross 1999:1) mentions the military gun-salute gangsters receive at their funerals in the huge urban townships, the ritual of spinning cars and occasionally setting alight a stolen car as a modern-day sacrificial lamb to accompany the dead.

This short outline shows that funeral practices undergo dynamic changes. Within the changes the constants seem to be the communion of people, the concern about cleansing, the perception of the deceased as present, and the meal with different emphases. Re-interpretation plays a role, as for instance with the position in the grave. The message in the speeches can assume political dimensions as in the time of apartheid and policy dimensions with issues like crime and AIDS.

Changes are also due to technological contextualisation: The introduction of refrigerating technology allowed corpses over a long period and helped to create and accommodate the desire for many participants at a funeral.

The changes are also open for abuse as with criminals or the extreme commercialisation of funerals. A contemporary comparison between rural and urban areas would reveal still more differences and variations. The people from a rural context know very well about a number of variations by their participation in funerals in urban areas and by the reports of others raising new expectations and assumed necessities. All this leads one to expect further developments in future.

2.2.4 Funerals respond to many needs

Acting in the context of a rite of passage the ministry of its leaders is supposed to be a response to actual needs, as any ministry is (cf. Bate 1998:176-177). The needs vary

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[87] For instance "Cry Freedom", "The Power of One".

since they depend on various people, and arise from personal or relational crises (cf. Van der Ven 1996:338;377). There are needs on the part of the recipients of a service. Kanungo and Mendonça (1994) look at the needs of those who render the service, the motivating needs of the leaders, while Sofield and Kuhn (1995:121-130) have both in mind. Béguerie and Duchesneau (1991:106) still differentiate as criteria for establishing ministries the needs of the recipients as parochial needs and needs of the local community. The quest for needs is further broadened by the search for the reasons why the ministry-providing institution feels compelled to establish the kind of ministry to meet a human need. Though there are other criteria,[88] these needs provide an important criterion for assessing the quality of the service rendered. It is assumed to be high if there are few or no gaps between the needs and the service (cf. Van der Ven 1996:469).

The needs or motivation of the leaders and their institution will be covered in the next chapter. I concentrate here on the needs of the bereaved concerning the ministry of the funeral leaders. These needs are hardly accessible by observation. I base my analysis on statements made by people and leaders, mainly at workshops on funerals given to various communities in 1999/2000.[89] The results of their deliberations were recorded on newsprint or as notes written from memory. The workshop talks did not aim at painting a complete picture. Items omitted by one group and mentioned by another may nevertheless also be valid for the former; thus they complement each other.[90] The participants discussed their own experience and convictions about bereavement in groups. These experiences express needs and give rise to expectations. The needs identified correspond normally with both the naming of the means and of the people expected to meet them. Of course, not all needs match every case and appear to the same degree. The funeral of an old man like J Mbovu described earlier in this chapter took place in an emotionally balanced atmosphere. The highly emotionally charged

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[88] Van der Ven mentions, besides the "user criterion", also the transcendent (determined by the convictions), the technical, the content, and the economic criteria. The last is regarded as not so relevant in church (cf. Van der Ven 1996:463); this notion deserves attention in the context of a poor church with scattered church communities. This need is then not about financial gain but saving costs.

[89] The workshops on funerals were conducted on four consecutive days in the afternoons or evenings. Each session took about three to four hours. In Mkunyazo it was held also for leaders from Phelandaba in March 1999 (Wks-Fnl Mkunyazo), in Umlamli April 1999 (Wks-Fnl Umlamli), in Barkly East in July 1999 and April 2000 (Wks-Fnl Barkly East), in Lady Grey also leaders from Tapoleng and Mokhesi took part (Wks-Fnl Lady Grey); in Lekau also leaders from Rietfontein participated in August 1999 (Wks-Fnl Lekau), in Emvakwentaba leaders from Thabakoloi attended in November 1999 (Wks-Fnl Emvakwentaba)

[90] Real differences between communities were not observable at this stage and in this regard.

atmosphere at the funeral of the young murdered girl Thandeka Lahlo calls for a different assessment. This analysis will help to locate the ministry of the funeral leaders from the point of view of its recipients.

The need that brings people together at a funeral is very simple and obvious: to bury the corpse of a person, to dispose of it.[91] This act within the rite of passage ends all possible ambiguous, negotiating thinking and feeling and spells out most clearly the finality of the event, thus challenging the ability of family and friends of the dead person to cope with the death emotionally. The feelings of bereaved people as described in the workshops were generally pain, which includes (unspecified) weakness, worries [*Ubuhlungu kakhulu, sityhafile, sikhathazekile* (Wks-Fnl Barkly East 1999)], loss of power, crying [*Ndiphela amandla,*[92] *ndalila* (Wks-Fnl Lady Grey 1999)], and material aspects.[93] They correspond with the always-mentioned longing for comfort. Comfort, as quite general a term, sought after and provided by many, gains its profile in the closer analysis. During the workshop in Umlamli comfort was initially described as help. Only the following discussion qualified the concept by means like prayer, sermon, word of God, songs (Wks-Fnl Umlamli 1999).

The individual cannot be seen outside its social context. *Umntu ngumntu ngabantu*, the conviction that a person is a person by other people, is part of the African world view of *ubuntu*, a concept known by younger and older people alike.[94] The death of one person puts a question mark if not a threat to the survivors, since they were human also because of this deceased person. The mourning community is differentiated and affected in different degrees. There are the family, the clan, friends, neighbours,

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[91] Of course, the need goes far beyond this, as we will see. "To have 'died well,' and to die well, means to die a 'natural' death, full of years, after having delivered one's message to one's own, and to have had a funeral and burial" (Kabasélé 1998:118).

[92] Anderson (1991:65-74) elaborates on the power-concept, understood as a relational reality, which may be compared with the power, *dynamis*, of the Holy Spirit (:68): "God loves and desires the welfare of the whole person; and so he sends his Spirit to bestow a divine, liberating ability and strength which enables a person to continue" (:68). Power in this focus is in the service of restoring community.

[93] It may be worth recognising, especially when the loss of power and the longing for prayer is mentioned, that the Xhosa word for power, *amandla*, occurs most frequently in Isaiah (103x) and Jeremiah (145x), followed by the prayer book of Psalms (99x).

[94] Discussing the concept of *ubuntu* with various people, the results were always similar. The youth and the committee of Barkly East see *ubuntu* expressed by concepts like: *ubulungisa* (justice), *intobeko* (humbleness), *uthando* (love), *ukulunga* (goodness), *inceba* and *imfesane* (mercy, compassion), *uvelwano* (sympathy), *ukunyamezela* (tolerance in their own translation), *ububele* (kindness), *ufefe* (compassion), *intlonipho* (respect), *ululamo* (meekness), *usizi* (compassion), *umonde* (patience), *ukungenzi into embi* (to refrain from evil deeds), *intsebenziswano* (collaboration), *imvisiswano* (co-operation in their own translation), *ukuncedisa* (to support), *umanyano* (union), *uxolelaniso* (reconciliation) (Barkly East 1999a; 1999b).

Christian churches, colleagues, members of organisations, sodalities, to name but a few.

For all of these life itself in its manifold dimensions has been destroyed and is still threatened. Death may leave the life of a family in shambles by destroying the material foundations. It creates material needs, especially for the family of the deceased. Many people belong to a burial society to be able to cope with burial expenses. The catering has to be organised. Family, neighbours, and SCC members are instrumental in this regard. If the deceased was the breadwinner, there is an even greater need to secure the future. The family, the clan (*izizalwana*), also neighbours (*abamelwane*), friends (*abahlobo*), and SCCs (*amaqelana*) are often able to contribute bridging finance for the immediate future, including care for children, till life gets re-organised as far as possible. This assistance includes the supply of clothing and food [*Ukubanika impahla nokutya* (Wks-Fnl Barkly East 1999)].

The loss of someone involved in societal life like development work, political life, and upbuilding of communal structures may affect the life of the local community. It has to tackle the problem of how to carry on, so that they do not abandon the important matters [*Bangayeki izinto ezibalulekileyo* (Wks-Fnl Barkly East 1999)].

The quest for life was expressed for the deceased: *aphinde avuke*: he may rise again (Wks-Fnl Umlamli 1999). And within a world view of *ubuntu* this restoration of life includes the survivors as well. The implicitly longed-for restoration of the status quo ante is beyond the capacity of any person as long as we disregard a certain theological understanding of the afterlife. But even taking this into account the longing for the status quo ante may be dealt with by striving to establish a liveable and worthy new status quo after the experience of life being contaminated by death in many of its fibres, as we will see. This contamination by death, as I put it, and subsequently the longing for life, affects not only the deceased, but in many ways the survivors.[95]

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[95] Hammond-Tooke (1989) uses the terms *pollution* and *purification*. He claims, however, that the concept of *pollution* is not always clear (:91). For the Sotho he states that, among ten mentioned life situations, the death of a close relative (:94) or the handling of a corpse (:96) causes *fisa*, the state of "hotness", indicating pollution. Theron (1996:113) states that, among other things, death causes an impure status. Persons in such a state "must perform certain purifying rites to restore harmony and the state of purity" (:113). I prefer to use the term "contamination". It appears to me to be a more comprehensive concept than that of "pollution". Contamination affects all the living and the (living) dead indiscriminately, and all strata of human life including faith and hope. It is a dreadful, all-embracing experience. The related decontaminating action is, therefore, quite complex and manifold. It goes beyond the washing of clothes

Psychological needs, depression, and distress arise, leading to the loss of the will to go on: *Ndibhubile nam*: Wish I was dead (Wks-Fnl Lady Grey 1999; Wks-Fnl Emvakwentaba 1999). This is specifically mentioned in Lekau: I would like to die if the pain becomes too much [*Mna ndifele xa ubuhlungu obuninzi* (Wks-Fnl Lekau 1999)]. *Ukothuka*, to have a fright, also expresses the psychological stress (Wks-Fnl Umlamli 1999). Support is seen as help, as is the spiritual support by all kinds of people on their grass-roots counselling visits.

The communal life of people, their communion, is threatened by death. The close relations of a dead person may feel abandoned and lonely [*Isithukuthezi* (Wks-Fnl Umlamli 1999)].[96] The yearning is directed towards being re-incorporated into the communion with others. Here the whole scope of people encountered is involved. In Lady Grey they mentioned the church community, the sodalities, the SCCs. These are experienced as offering help, for instance by visiting, omnipresence [*ngokuhanjelwa, abantu behlele nathi amaxesha onke*: by being visited, the people stay with us all the time (Wks-Fnl Barkly East 1999)], and doing some grass-roots counselling. The maintenance of communion is tackled in other ways, too. Cultural and church customs and rituals aim at re-establishing the relations of people with the deceased and with one another.

The cultural rituals I observed aim at reassuring the community, for instance by talking directly to the deceased. In the culture the common consumption of food is understood as instrumental in creating unity among the people [*sibe nobunye*: that we have unity (Wks-Fnl Lekau 1999)], between the deceased and the ancestors [*adibane nezinyanya zethu*: he meet with our ancestors (Wks-Fnl Umlamli 1999)] and all.[97] The slaughtering

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and body, mentioned by Soga (s.a.:319-320) as a means of getting rid of the *contamination* by the dead. The use of this concept is not unusual. Newman (1986:101) quotes a translation of a letter of St Hilary to Constantius. Hilary's concern is that the laity must not be polluted and *contaminated* with execrable blasphemies. Here *contamination* clearly goes beyond the bodily realm and extends to the spiritual realm.
[96] Bame (1991:150) explains these feelings in the African context: "It is this break in the chain of relationships and performance of roles, which before the death bound members of the family together, that, among Africans, generally throws members of the family groups into psychological confusion that calls for their corporate effort and the support of friends. That is why in Africa when a person dies, it is obligatory for all the members of his family group to assemble, not only to perform the rites indicated above, but also to fulfil the position left vacant by the deceased. This same reason underlies the presentation and exchange of gifts at African funerals." Magoti (1991:179) stresses the importance of community for life: "By thus integrating oneself into the group, one gains fullness of life. For the community is the source of life, or, to put it differently, life is a gift from the community."
[97] Schutte (1991:188) notes with regard to the *ubuntu* principle of *umntu ngumntu ngabantu*: "First and most simply, humankind constitutes one family. Separation in space and time are secondary... We enter the family at birth; we do not leave it by dying."

customs differ to some extent between the tribes, as we saw earlier on. This procedure is led by the family with its head verbalising the intentions [*Utata, usapho lonke*: the father, the whole family (Wks-Fnl Lady Grey 1999); *umntu omdala*: old person (Wks-Fnl Lekau 1999)].

Another way of culturally enacting the communion is the drinking of beer. It is done together and as such is a source of joy [*uvuyo* (Wks-Fnl Lady Grey 1999)]. The drinking of beer is meant as a welcome of the deceased at home (Wks-Fnl Lekau 1999), as establishing community between the deceased and the survivors [*Simanye naye*: we are one with him (Wks-Fnl Umlamli 1999)]. Similarly, the smoking of the pipe, if the deceased was a smoker, is an expression of unity: we go together [*Sihamba kunye* (Wks-Fnl Umlamli 1999)]. The family handles this matter. It expresses the ambiguity of feeling, joy intruding in the feeling of sorrow and pain.

Related to the concern of ongoing community is the concern to express respect for the deceased.[98] The family does this by, for instance, pouring the soil into the grave as sign of accompaniment (Wks-Fnl Barkly East 1999). Also the special way of dressing, with *incawe* (traditional blanket) worn by men and the *isikhakha* (skirt) worn by women, is understood as an expression of respect and a way to unite the deceased with the ancestors [*ookhokho noQamatha*[99] (Wks-Fnl Barkly East 1999)]. The words addressed to the ancestors that they may welcome the deceased are spoken by the head of the home [*Umninikhaya* (Wks-Fnl Lady Grey 1999)]. A broader community is thus established, including the deceased who is at home, and the ancestors. Also the cultural provisions for expressing mourning, for instance by shaving of the heads by some and slaughtering, are signs of respect (Wks-Fnl Lady Grey 1999).

The defilement, the filth of death, has to be removed from the concrete possessions: cloth has to be washed by the women of the family [*Amakosikazi osapho* (Wks-Fnl Barkly East 1999)]: *sihlamba intsila yokufa*: we wash the filth of death. Family members wash the contaminated tools normally a week after the funeral: *ukuhlamba irharafu* (Wks-Fnl Lady Grey 1999). Beer - re-establishing community - is also used on that

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[98] Skhakhane (1995:108) stresses the point that one ought to receive proper burial rites before becoming an ancestor. The whole person has to be given a sending off.

[99] One woman inserted this traditional name for God, *Qamatha*, on the newsprint. Others objected at this point and wanted him erased, since he is not one of the ancestors but as God above them. This objection can be seen as an indication that among culturally grounded Christians an understanding is emerging

occasion. People also have to wash their hands if they handled the deceased [*Sihlambe izandla kuba siyaphatha umfi* (Wks-Fnl Lekau 1999)]. In Umlamli the washing of hands was for the decontamination of death: they must not go with death (*bangahambi nokufa*). It is also an expression of letting go by "forgetting" and "giving up" [*Sikwazi ukumlibala, sibonisa ukuncama* (Wks-Fnl Umlamli 1999)]. Washing the hands by all as expression of the ultimate farewell, giving up, ending the pre-occupation with the deceased, reaches the stage of a postliminal rite: *sincamile* (Wks-Fnl Lady Grey 1999). This indicates both safeguarding and restoring life by washing as well as facing and accepting the reality of death to carry on in life.

To clarify people's expectations of the leaders and the needs they are expected to meet, one may need to ask why an explicit Christian involvement in funerals is needed at all. The funeral leaders and priest are expected to act, especially in the ritual part of the funeral. In some of the workshops the participants were explicitly asked why they wished to have a distinct Christian involvement if there are and were cultural provisions to deal with mourning and the burial.

The participants seemed to be well aware of a kind of paradigm shift. With the arrival of the Christian faith things have changed. They are Christians now and as such they want to do funerals according to their faith as the new overall world view. Before there were no services, but now there are (Wks-Fnl Lady Grey 1999). We got Christianity [*Safumana ubuKrestu* (Wks-Fnl Barkly East 1999)]. As Christians they need to be refreshed in faith (*ukuvuswa*) by uniting themselves with God [*Sizimanya noThixo* (Wks-Fnl Barkly East 1999)]. The service reinforces faith [*Inkhonzo iqinisa ukholo* (Wks-Fnl Umlamli 1999)]. The church does away with the fear of death [*Icawe iphelisa ukoyika ukufa* (Wks-Fnl Umlamli 1999)].

These responses indicate clearly that the service rendered is understood as a service not only for the dead, but also for the living. It is a service of Christian faith for Christian faith. A claim, however, that the church had to come in since formerly there was no faith [*Kudala belungekho ukholo* (Wks-Fnl Umlamli 1999)] was met with opposition:

> "But there was faith before Christianity arrived." "But it was not the faith." "When they referred to the ancestors, there was faith." "But that was not like ours." "The people referred to *Qamatha*. We should better say faith in the

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which respects the presence of the ancestors but limits the mediating role of the cultural practices when it comes to God.

Christian God or in Christ." "Yes, there is *Qamatha*. And our ancestors referred to him." "In the Old Testament they also did not speak about Jesus, it was just Jehova." "And there is *Undikhoyo*." "*Undikhoyo* means Jahwe, Jehova, as it is put in the Xhosa Bible." "But we build on Jesus. It is not just faith. But it is faith in Jesus." "Perhaps one could even say, *Qamatha* is like Jehova." "Ok, then let us say, faith in Christ" (Wks-Fnl Umlamli 1999).

As result of this discussion *kuYesu* was added by the group on the newsprint: *Kudala belungekho ukholo kuYesu*, formerly there was no faith in Jesus. It would exceed the scope of this study to go deeper into the cultural implications of this discussion and to discuss continuity and discontinuity with regard to the concepts referring to God. With the arrival of the message of Christ faith has changed and this new overall system or world view has to be present in a crucial time of life.

In context of different clans and tribes one important contribution of the Christian service was expressed in Umlamli: It brings unity among the different nations or ethnic groups [*Kuqinisa ubudlelwane phakathi kweentlanga* (Wks-Fnl Umlamli 1999)]. To this note on the newsprint the participants remarked that the people came from different ethnic groups with their own customs. The church ceremony, however, makes them one. In other words: those who have *uThixo, uQamatha* in Xhosa and *Modimo* in Sotho (God) in mind are unified in the understanding of the people as followers of Jesus.[100] In Barkly East the same perception of unity emerged when dealing with CCC on the Eucharist at funerals. Mangaliso remarked there was only one Paschal mystery, but many customs (Wks-Fnl Barkly East 1999). Here the community and community building aspect are expressed.

Communion is longed for with the Christian community strengthening the shared faith. This community includes various groups, people in general, neighbours, fellow Christians. They are expected to overcome loneliness by perpetual presence and to render spiritual support by means of prayer [*Abantu bakhonze benze umthandazo, Ummelwane wenze umthandazo athuthuzele, Ukuncedwa libanda ngomthandazo,*

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[100] With cultural practices prevailing, the familiarity with the "old faith" is vanishing. A short discussion on this exchange of words with RN Mpambani (1999) gave witness to the consummated paradigm shift: "What was it about *Qamatha* yesterday, when it was said that there was faith before Christianity?" "Yes, there was faith before. But is was different. It was the old faith, not so strong, The new faith is much stronger. The new faith *luyakhanyisela*, gives light." "What do you know about *Qamatha*?" "I don't know so much about *Qamatha*. Perhaps there are still some old people around. But I don't know. I know our faith."

AmaKrestu akhonze nathi siwabone[101] (Wks-Fnl Barkly East 1999)]. Those who worship together are experienced as supportive [*Bona endikhonza nabo bandikhuthaza* (Wks-Fnl Lekau 1999)]. *Abantu beCawe*: the people of the church were a help (Wks-Fnl Lady Grey 1999).

For the living people the church service may be a lesson and light [*Inkonzo ibe sisifundo kwabaphilayo; ibe sisibana kwabantu* (Wks-Fnl Lady Grey 1999)]. The perspective widens and also includes those who do not believe in Christ: The weak and non-followers may hear the word of Christianity [*Balive ilizwi lobuKrestu abatyhafileyo nabangalandelileyo* (Wks-Fnl Barkly East 1999)]. It is also an opportunity for the church to "make people convert" [*Icawe yenza abantu baguquke* (Wks-Fnl Umlamli 1999)]. With the concern about community it witnesses love and sympathy [*Sibonisa uthando novelwane* (Wks-Fnl Barkly East 1999)]. The proclamation becomes what it stands for: the real symbol of unity.

Pitso (1998a) brought a note of caution. The general context requires a Christian funeral and people want a colourful funeral. Such standard expectations can lead to some undesired consequences for the church community. Some people join the church and the sodalities for the sake of the funeral and subsequently lapse from attending church services and paying their church dues. This may affect even SCCs negatively if participation in them becomes a criterion for deciding on the proper funeral. People may just join them when they feel their time has come, contributing rather to the ossification of SCCs. These attitudes pose a threat to the community.

Leaders are aware of this problem. In the evaluation talk on the funeral of T Lahlo (Wüstenberg 1999a) the leaders indicated that people compare and notice the differentiations made in funerals. For quite a number of people the thought of their own funeral arises. They may long for their own funeral being an attractive one. At the same time they may examine themselves by asking, what am I doing? It is a call for self-reflection, self-examination. The leaders are apparently aware that the church is not a funeral society in charge of beautifying a rite of transition, but a faith community expressing their all-encompassing faith at the occasion of the funeral as well: "We are being sent by God. We have been sent to come and work. And once we have worked

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[101] The people may do the service and pray, the neighbour may pray and comfort, to be helped by the church community by prayer, the Christians may celebrate with us that we see them.

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here we have to take the fruits home to heaven" (sermon of Mdange in Wüstenberg 1998c).

The active care for community with a Christian celebration includes concern for the deceased, that he may have a good journey, that his spirit goes to heaven by a ceremony complying with his faith. At the same time it is an expression of faithfulness to his good example (Wks-Fnl Lady Grey 1999). This includes the intercession for the deceased [ukuthethelelwa (Wks-Fnl Barkly East 1999)] and to bring him together with Christ [Simdibanisa umfikazi noKrestu (Wks-Fnl Barkly East 1999)] since eternal life is wanted [ubomi obungunaphakade (Wks-Fnl Barkly East 1999)]. This implies the need for an active intervention of the community of fellow-believers and those acting on their behalf, to give the deceased to a good place.

The church community expects respect as one aspect of persisting community with the deceased by conducting the last service. It is a way to enable people to bury in dignity [Amandla ukungcwaba ngokundilisekileyo (Wks-Fnl Umlamli 1999)]. The funeral service as the last service of the deceased is perceived as very important. It is at the brink of the postliminal phase and helps to give the assurance and dignity required.

Spiritual needs arise from the loss of hope [Saphelelwa lithemba (Wks-Fnl Barkly East; Wks-Fnl Umlamli 1999; Wks-Fnl Emvakwentaba 1999); Ndilahlekelwa lithemba, ndancama (Wks-Fnl Lady Grey 1999)]. Prayer in general is experienced as remedy. Sodalities, the leaders, priest, preachers of whatever denomination offer it, in particular the SCC. Faith is also affected. The feeling of betrayal by their faith leads some to contemplate leaving the church [Ndilahlekelwe lukholo: I was lost by faith; ukuyeka iCawe: to leave the church (Wks-Fnl Lady Grey 1999)]. Doubts about God's presence can arise (Wks-Fnl Emvakwentaba 1999). The question was varied by asking whether God wants us [Ndacinga uThixo uyasifuna (Wks-Fnl Lekau 1999)]. The corresponding longing was for the Spirit of God to enter the heart [UMoya kaThixo ungene entliziyweni yam (Wks-Fnl Lekau 1999)]. The word of God helps to re-establish strength, with the priest, leaders, and people from different denominations being of assistance [Abafundisi, iinkokheli, abantu beenkonzo neenkonzo (Wks-Fnl Lady Grey 1999)].

Prayer is expected as an important means of establishing community with God, with one another, and of the deceased with God. It is a way God helps (Wks-Fnl Umlamli 1999; Wks-Fnl Emvakwentaba 1999). He is experienced as helping with his power, mediated by others and their active prayer (Wks-Fnl Emvakwentaba 1999). The prayer

is a source of strength, the support gives power [*Umthandazo wandomeleza, inkhutazo inikela amandla* (Wks-Fnl Barkly East 1999)].[102] It is a way of interceding for the deceased: that he may get eternal rest and peace with God [*UThixo umphe umphumlo olungunaphakade; simxolelanisa noThixo* (Wks-Fnl Umlamli 1999)]. Restoring peace is one aim of the mediating activity, by interceding for the deceased and for their failures [*iziphoso* (Wks-Fnl Lady Grey 1999)]. Peace returns to the bereaved when others pray for them: restoring community with God by submitting themselves. In Emvakwentaba one participant expressed it this way: May the chalice pass and I approach God [*Mayidlule lendebe ndisondele uThixo* (Wks-Fnl Emvakwentaba 1999)]. As a common prayer it has an effect on those present: on the family to accept the pain and on those gathered to share the pain with the bereaved [*Sokha usapho luyamkele intlungu; sobelana nababhujelweyo ngeentlungu* (Wks-Fnl Umlamli 1999)]. It is offered by all sorts of people, as for instance the SCCs [*Amaqelana andinceda kakhulu ngomthandazo* (Wks-Fnl Barkly East 1999)], leaders, priests, and people from other denominations. It is a real source of comfort for the bereaved, *ukuthuthuzela ababhujelweyo* (Wks-Fnl Umlamli 1999), of strengthening them together.

Preaching is expected as a means of restoring faith and hope. As support to the mourning people it is expected at the vigil, *umlindo*, by all that have the right to preach. The leading role lies with the leaders. It is done by preachers from all denominations [*Abashumayeli benkhonzo nenkhonzo* (Wks-Fnl Barkly East 1999)]. More specific were some when it came to the preaching of the leaders: Bringing the word (of God) and preaching is to strengthen and to give the hope of Christ. It becomes a comfort by making the family submissive [*Silulamisa usapho* (Wks-Fnl Umlamli 1999)] and linking them up with Jesus and God by the message of the Gospel [*Sidibanisa noYesu noThixo ngomnyaleza weVangeli* (Wks-Fnl Umlamli 1999)].

If death shrouds joy, it has to be restored. Singing is perceived as a loved way of support in this regard. Here the church choir as a leading group as well as the whole community (*ibandla*) comes in (Wks-Fnl Lady Grey 1999). The singing lifts up the hearts

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[102] The reflections of Schutte (1991:192-6) in the context of the philosophy of *umntu ngumntu ngabantu* on the concept of *seriti*, power, help to understand the connection between prayer, power, community, and God. Power "can even be identified with God (*Modimo*) insofar as he is present in everything as its creator and its inmost being" (:192). It depends on community. "It is the essential personal energy that is produced by interpersonal contact" (:192). "Here, in the field of inter-personal forces of *seriti*, autonomy and dependence, individuality and community, are not opposed in any way, but grow together and entail each other" (:194).

[*Umculo uyaphakamisa iintliziyo* (Wks-Fnl Lekau 1999)]. The night vigil is also seen as a source of joy by which one accompanies the deceased.

For restoring confidence and hope, the leaders are expected to use ritual symbols and gestures like holy water to bless the coffin and grave (Wks-Fnl Barkly East 1999; Wks-Fnl Lekau 1999).[103] The position of the deceased in the grave differs from former cultural practice. Now they face East. This is interpreted meaning that the Lord is in the East: *iNkosi isemphumalanga* (Wks-Fnl Umlamli 1999). Likewise the position the funeral leaders take at the grave is a matter of concern: whether facing with him East or facing the deceased.

Some needs have not even been mentioned so far, though they will appear in the closer look at the funeral leaders' work. Some situations constitute a specific threat to life and therefore also to the community. These may appear where the murder of a loved one causes feelings of hatred and a desire for revenge. There are ostracising events like suicide or death related to AIDS. Situations like these pose a threat to social and physical life. Other needs can be linked to guilt, when someone feels involved in causing death, even by satisfaction with death of an adversary.

Reflecting on needs led to the emergence of a kind of preventive method of faith support. This is the method of remembering previous encounters with the word of God. Words that gave strength are recalled. Knowing where those who have departed are going is experienced by people as comfort: come let's go home to Jahwe [*Ndikhumbula amazwi athi: yizani sibuye kuYehova* (Wks-Fnl Lekau 1999)]. So one leader saw the primary source of comfort as God himself, before he continued with his agents. *Ningakhathazeki,* (Jn14:27) "do not be afraid" is his helping key term from the Bible. This indicates that the process of comfort can take root long before bereavement occurs, whenever anchoring in faith happens. When faced with actual bereavement the memory helps to carry one through. It is of course reinforced by all the other measures: the word of God, prayers, songs [*Umthandazo, ilizwi leBhayibhile, umculo* (Wks-Fnl Lekau 1999)].

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[103] Though it could be interesting I will not do it here: to draw lines between the cultural and Christian use of symbols to enhance their understanding in a process of inculturation: Water for cleansing and farewell and for blessing and opening the way.

Like the local community, the Christian community itself may also feel a need. It is occasionally affected by the loss of a leader, when the deceased was an active role-player whose expertise, experience, love for the church community, and ability to care for peace may be missed. The smaller the community, the more dramatic the loss may be. The expectation here is that others feel challenged to fill the gap in leadership to maintain the church-community's life [*Balandele intshumayelo nencebiso yomfi, abanye bathathe inxaxheba* (Wks-Fnl Barkly East 1999): They follow the preaching and advice of the deceased and commit themselves.

Both cultural and faith rituals aim at closing the chapter with the deceased, the final farewell, *sibonisa ukuncama* by washing by the people culturally (Wks-Fnl Umlamli 1999), *sincamile*, we give up (Wks-Fnl Lady Grey 1999). The same is said about the Christian rituals, in particular about the Eucharist. The dictionary translates *ukuncama* as to give up hope, give up. The explanation I got from various people was that it meant to finish with something entirely in order to go on, to conclude or consummate, to accomplish in order to get on. The verb *ukuncama* is used in the Xhosa Bible (IBhayibhile 1996) for instance to express self-denial (Mk 8:34) or laying down life in hope (Jn 10:17): "The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life - only to take it up again." With these connotations it is an expression matching the meaning of the postliminal phase in the rite of passage. It is about acquiring a new position for both the deceased and the bereaved and going on free from worries in peace.

Summary: The ministry of funeral leaders appears to be a response to contamination by death. Within a culture with the cultural concept of *ubuntu*, where people live in the equilibrium of community, death affects the community of people: The community with the deceased, and the community with one another and with God. The exposure to death has the power to isolate people. It can threaten the very material background of life, in different degrees the commonly lived world view of faith and hope, the will to live (to go on). Peace with the deceased is threatened by unreconciled guilt, living together in peace by revenge, or by ostracising people because of special circumstances of death like AIDS or crime. These experiences culminate in the celebration of the final farewell. With many people involved in addressing the threat of life, agents of the cultural realm and of the church take their particular share in the ministry of decontamination of death at the public core stages of a rite of passage. By offering a respectful dignified celebration they are expected to contribute to the restoration of the lost equilibrium. Their responses are also communal when re-establishing in a very

communal way what is threatened or lost. It is accepted and expected that many share in this ministry. Even with a broad ecumenical openness denominational identity is maintained. Though many acts of the funeral leaders are similar to those rendered by others, their prayers, readings, sermons are attributed a special purpose. They should explicitly bring in the view of faith, superseding the mere cultural response. They are expected to unite the different people. They are expected to link the congregation and the deceased with Jesus Christ. They are witnesses of faith for all those present. As members of their religious community they re-affirm and re-establish it, thus restoring hope, faith, faith in life, community, peace, and reconciliation. One central symbol of celebrating unity in cultural and church rituals is the common consumption of food, in the church context the Eucharist. The ministry is a ministry of unity in a community threatened by death. Faced with the ambiguous paradox of grief and joy, extreme loneliness and extreme community, rising and letting go, letting go and togetherness, loss and gain, death and eating, paralysis and activity, powerlessness and power, trouble and peace, desperation and hope, shattered world view and faith, the feeling of God's absence and presence, the funeral-ministry is expected to reflect somehow the vision of Romans 8:38-39: Neither death nor life can separate us from the love of God. The comprehensive care for community can become an eschatological sign of concrete survival of people bereaved, contaminated by and decontaminated from death.

2.2.5 Cultural background of ancestors and meals

The ancestors play an important role in the cultural world view of the communities. The deceased is going to join them and to become one of them; this is at present celebrated with the ceremony of the "unveiling of the tombstone". Both culture and church provide meals to create unity that includes the forebears. Both address the "living dead" as present, the ancestors, and Christ. Both have their distinctive contribution. Each informs the other. The method of theoretical or purposive sampling leads to the exploring encounter with the "living dead" who are present, and to an understanding of the Eucharist informed by ancestral meals. A comprehensive care for the living and the "living dead" makes the meal in both realms imperative. In a culturally-rooted approach the Eucharist becomes so intrinsic a part of the church's care for the bereaved and the deceased that it is requested by the people. Through the prism of the qualitative research method we can see the Eucharist as one essential means of comfort. This broad theme demands at least some attention in this study in order to gain a

comprehensive understanding of the ministry provided by the funeral leaders and to understand its tragic shortcomings.

2.2.5.1 Jesus and the ancestors: Widening the scope of unity

A brief look at the way the local people see the ancestors and Jesus will precede the comparison of ancestral meals and the Eucharist. In the juxtaposition a sort of culturally-guided Christology emerges. Though some people are known to be sceptical about ancestor beliefs (Elia, MP 1998a), the perception of the ancestors being present is generally strong.

W: Now, where actually are the ancestors?
Elia, A: They rest in the grave.
W: And that is all? They are nowhere else?
Elia, A: No, it is their bodies which are in the grave. Their souls are here.
W: So what does this mean in the case you have a traditional celebration?
Elia, A: The ancestors will be with us.
W: Though the bodies are in the grave?
Elia, A: Yes. But their souls (*imiphefumlo*) are there (Elia, A 1998b).

As in the other workshops on funerals, the workshop in Emvakwentaba (Wks-Fnl Emvakwentaba 1999) dealt with the role of ancestors and the role of Jesus, determining similarities and differences. The participants emphasised his role in asking forgiveness for ignorant people, as part of redemption. Ancestors are not redeemers. The participants in Barkly East (Wks-Fnl Barkly East 1999) put it this way: The ancestors' commemoration is important as they influence life, attribute in their way blessings, good fortune (*amathamsanqa*), and offer protection like angels (*zisikhusele njengeengelosi*) and guidance for the good way (*zisikhanyisela uhambe endleleni elungileyo*). They accompany the deceased.[104] They turn away if one does not attend to them. They communicate, talk in dreams[105] (*bathetha ephupheni*), occasionally interpreted by a third party. The participants emphasised that there were no bad ancestors for them.[106] The result in Lady Grey (Wks-Fnl Lady Grey 1999) showed the ancestors as supportive, showing the right way, granting fortune/grace (*amathamsanqa*), causing misfortune (*amashwa*) if one does not follow their advice.

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[104] Lapointe (1995:42) quotes the Sotho prayer: *Modimo o mocha, rapela oa khale*, New ancestor, pray to the old one.
[105] Theron (1996:31) names different ways in which ancestors appear to family members, among them dreams and visions.
[106] Hammond-Tooke's (1989:63) findings affirm this perception: The influence of ancestors is essentially benign.

Jesus' role is perceived as above that of the ancestors. His work includes them and comprehensively addresses all people, not only one clan or family as the ancestors do. He speaks through the Bible, through prayers, through the words of others. He acts through people, and in the case of the Eucharist through the ordained priest. In all this he is present in a mediated kind of way. He is seen as communicating, helping with his word, influencing life by offering comfort, loving his people, giving direction, strength, attributing new life, offering help exceeding that of the ancestors' (*usinceda phezu kwezinyanya*). He also rules the ancestors (*ulawula izinyanya nabantu bakhe*). He gives life to them [*zivuswa nguYesu* (Wks-Fnl Barkly East 1999)]. Jesus is more powerful than the ancestors are. Jesus is seen as messenger of God, the revealer, and teacher. He brings the Good News, teaches his followers. He brings faith by teaching prayer, and by giving the Holy Spirit. Pneumatologically he is the one who left us the Holy Spirit, *usishiyele uMoya oyiNgcwele* (Wks-Fnl Lady Grey 1999). He is the source of peace: he challenges us to reconciliation with our persecutors. He is the redeemer from evil; he raises us from death. He is really present: he goes with us now. His presence includes what he means for them: life-giving power, reconciliation, redemption, and speaking the powerful word. He is present as people eat his supper.

A spirituality of the presence finds its concrete expression here. The conception of the real, active, and influential presence of Christ seems to be unproblematic before the cultural background of the believed real presence of the ancestors.

2.2.5.2 Unveiling of the tombstone: Incorporating among the ancestors

The community leaders and sometimes the priests are requested to take part in the final stage of an extended rite of passage. Traditional cultural elements, modern funeral customs such as erecting tombstones, and faith rituals all merge in the ceremony of the unveiling of the tombstone.

Elia, MP: Could you please come for the unveiling of a tombstone next week. It is the first time we do it here. In the Catholic community we never did it. Now the family of the deceased asked the leaders to do this unveiling of the tombstone. We are Basotho. We are going to slaughter for *ookhokho* (ancestors) to make *isikhumbuzo* (memorial-service). *Sixhela impahla* (We slaughter the beast). It is the first time now we do it here. Until now it was not done. Most probably for lack of money since these things are expensive. We do this one year, sometimes five or more years after the death of a person. It is the time to slaughter *impahla*, that means that the deceased will be counted among the ancestors now. The cow skin we actually keep. We don't give it to the deceased, though we say it is their blanket. Some keep it on their bed. We slaughter and then we say a short prayer to God. But actually it is the old people who know these things; the young ones don't know them. Now the children want to do the unveiling of the tombstone. And we ask you to be there to celebrate the Mass. Because the deceased was a Christian, always attending Mass, and a member of St. Anna. We think we cannot just make a prayer. We want to remember her, *ababehamba naye*, all those who accompanied her in her lifetime. And if the soul goes out with the Mass it goes out easily. It

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goes to a comforting place, to Abraham's chest, so to say. And this is the last chance to celebrate without crying. At the time of the funeral there was a lot of crying and some could not even properly speak. After years now we shall remember her whom we were working together with in the church and in the community (Elia, MP 1998c).

Though *Bongani' iNkosi* provides for the unveiling of the tombstone, it is rather a recent development to do it, and to request the church's involvement. A culturally rooted celebration acquires a church-related trait for similar reasons as the funerals. The committee approaches the priest if needed for the Eucharist. Otherwise the leaders are able to do a rite on their own. The arrangements for the date of the unveiling of the tombstone lie with the family concerned. They sit down and decide on their own accord. Only when it is late, after eight or more years, it may be a dream (*bayaphupha*) that moves them to follow the omitted procedure.

The *impahla, ingubo* (blanket) - or whatever name is used - custom is combined with the unveiling of a tombstone.

W: Is it important to do the unveiling of the tombstone?
Timati, P: It is very important because we do the customs. They remember the departed. The unveiling of the tombstone is the opportunity to give him *ingubo*. The name is different but it is one thing because the *ingubo* is given to him then. There is no difference. We do it with the leaders (Timati, P 1998).

The respect for the ancestors is the driving force, no matter what personal history they have. Makautse stressed, when asked provocatively what customs he would abandon when forced to so, that he could abandon almost all of them, everything related to the ancestors excluded (Makautse 1997).

W: But what happens to your ancestors. We know that some of our forebears were good people and others were not so good or even bad.
Jonga, BE: But when they pass away, then all of them are equal.
W: And you pay respect to both of them?
Jonga, BE: Yes, we respect them all, *siyabahlonipha*.
W: Though some of them were bad you respect them?
Jonga, BE: Yes, because we do not judge. God alone is the judge. We respect all of them.
W: And you have to do *ukubuyisa* for them, the welcome back home among the ancestors.
Jonga, BE: Yes, we celebrate this, regardless of their past (Jonga 1997).

While some see no difference between *ookhokho* and *izinyanya*, both terms relating to the ancestors, Makautse (1993) sees *izinyanya* as the term to refer to ancestors in general, even to those who were bad people, whereas *ookhokho* is used to refer to those whom one can regard as role models. Their role is to mediate. Mrs Jonga does not see a specific individual. They are referred to by the clan name, *isiduko*. In case

respect is denied they will react by causing sickness, especially sickness affecting the head. They communicate by dreams (Jonga 1997).[107]

For the leaders conducting the unveiling of the tombstone the procedure is also provided for in *Bongan' iNkosi* (:148-153). The provision of the liturgical outline is experienced as helpful:

Makhobokoana, JM: You see, *Bongani* has this *ukutyhila ilitye, umthandazo wokuvula, isifundo, izicelo* (Unveiling of tombstone, opening prayer, reading, intercessions) and all that. This book is very rich. I must say really. Because it has got all these things. If you follow this procedure you cannot go wrong (Makhobokoana 1999).

The performing of the ritual of the unveiling of the tombstone is done in collaboration with the family. The leaders work in teams. In the case of ML Elia (Wüstenberg 1998a. Video) the vigil was done by one team, the programme and then the Eucharistic celebration by another team and the priest. The slaughtering and the meal are similar to the funeral celebration. What differs is the time. The unveiling of the tombstone is usually done early in the morning.

2.2.5.3 Ancestral meals: A metaphor for approaching the Eucharist

In a culture where common ritual meals play a distinctive role, these can be a valuable tool when dealing with the Eucharist. In the workshops on the Eucharist[108] the participants compiled lists on newsprint comparing elements of the traditional meals and the Eucharist.

	AMASIKO (Customs)	ECAWENI (Church)
How does the invitation happen	*Ngokukhumbula, ephupheni.* By remembering, by dreams	*Ngelizwi likaKrestu, iBhayibhile isimema noMoya oyiNgcwele.* By the word of Christ. The Bible invites us and the Holy Spirit
Why do we do it	*Ukukhumbula ookhokho Ukukhumbula ababhubileyo, nookhokho nezinyanya.* We remember the ancestors, the dead.	*Ukukhumbula uYesu nabangcwele nababhubileyo Sikhumbula uYesu noThixo noMoya nabangcwele nababhubileyo.* We remember Jesus, the saints, the dead and God and the Holy Spirit.
Who is invited	*Simema bonke.* We invite all.	*Simema ibandla namaKrestu nabangekakholwa. Simema bonke.* We invite the community and Christians and

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[107] On the differentiated relationship with ancestors see also Hammond-Tooke (1989). He finds an insoluble paradox when some say the rite of *ukubuyisa* is done for the head of the homestead in order to be created as ancestral spirits. Yet it is also maintained that all dead are ancestral spirits. "There is, in fact, no indigenous answer to an indigenous non-problem" (:63).

[108] The workshops on the Eucharist were held in 1998/9 with the communities of Umlamli, Barkly East, Mkunyazo, Upper Telle, Lekau, Mfinci, Herschel, Thabakoloi, and Lady Grey. They were partly a reflection and reaction on the ongoing discussion on whether the Eucharist should be celebrated at funerals or not.

		not yet believers. We invite all.
Kind of dress	*Sinxiba izinxibo zesintu Sinxiba isiXhosa okanye isiSotho.* We dress customarily as Xhosa or Sotho	*Sinxiba izinxibo zeCawe. Sinxiba ngeendlela ezahlukeneyo.* We take church garments. We dress differently.
Who speaks	*Umnini mzi uthetha egameni losapho.* The head speaks on behalf of the family.	*Umfundisi uthetha egameni likaKrestu neenkokheli.* The priest speak on behalf of Christ, and the leaders
Show of reverence	*Ngengubo. Sihlonipha ngokunxiba nokuthetha.* By the blanket. We show respect by the way of dressing and speaking	*Siyahlonipha ngokuthozama nokuthandaza.* We respect by being quiet and by praying.
Food	*Inkomo, igusha, ibhokhwe, inkuku.* Cattle, sheep, goats, chicken	*Isonka – umzimba kaKrestu* Bread, the Body of Christ
Drink	*Utywala, sibugalela.* Beer, we pour it	*Iwayine – igazi likaKrestu.* Wine, the Blood of Christ
Participants in meal	*Sitya kunye* We eat together.	*Sitya sonke.* We all eat.
Can one withdraw	*Bafanele bonke batye Akavumelekanga ukungatyi.* All have to eat. It is not acceptable not to eat.	*Sitya sonke abanelungelo. UYesu usimema sitye.* All who have the right eat. Jesus invites us all.
Gain by participation	*Impilo, amathamsanqa, uxolo, ubunye nookhokho, noQamatha nabakhoyo bonke, intsikelelo yezinyanya, amandla.* Health, good luck, peace, unity with the ancestors and Qamatha and all those present, blessing of ancestors, power.	*Ubomi obungunaphakade, uxolo, impilo, ubunye noYesu nabangcwele nababhubileyo, nokholo, intsikelelo kaThixo, amandla kaMoya oyiNgcwele, uthando ebantwini, ukuqinisa ukholo lwethu.* Eternal life, peace, health, unity with Jesus, the saints and dead, faith, blessing of God, power of Holy Spirit, love among people, strengthening of our faith.
Consequence of omission	*Ukugula, ungaphumeleli, amashwa abhubhe liphela, asokole* Falling sick, no success, misfortune, death, being finished, struggle	*Ukufa, ukutyhafa, siphelelwe lithemba, amashwa.* Death, weakness, loss of hope, misfortune

Figure 2.9. Comparison of cultural meals and the Eucharist

This chart compiled from the workshops in Mfinci (Wks-Euch Mfinci 1998) and Lady Grey (Wks-Euch Lady Grey 1998) shows many common features of both the traditional meal and the Eucharistic celebration. They are rituals with fixed role-players, the head of the family or the minister of Christ; they speak on behalf of the concerned group. The celebrations happen on a certain kind of invitation, dream and memory, or because of the Bible and the rules of the church. They use a clearly limited range of foods: cattle, goats or sheep and traditional beer on the customary side and bread and wine on the church's side. They serve a certain commemorative purpose, for the dead and the ancestors of the family or the memory of Christ and others. They have an effect on the participants, which seems similar: unity with the ancestors, health, power, joy, happiness, grace, peace. On the side of faith they are specified as unity with Christ, faith and blessing. The omission of such meals has negative consequences, in

sickness, fighting, death, or in misfortune and faltering hope. There are ways of showing respect by dressing in a certain way and by speaking in a certain way.

The SCC in Barkly East (SCC Barkly East 1999) reflected on customs they were reminded of when receiving communion. Mrs Maruping mentioned instantly *ishesheya*, when they meet in the cattle kraal *ukwenza ingubo*, to slaughter for the blanket for the ancestors. There an old mama says: *Licamagu*, which is the appeasement of the ancestors. Mrs Motemekoane adds: "We kneel down, the men inside the cattle kraal, the others outside, when we eat. It is like in church. We are given a small piece of meat. That is like with communion."

Timati, J: But let's say we slaughter two beasts. One is for the ancestors and one is for something else. Then we call this one *inyama yezinyanya*, meat of the ancestors. And you can see it. When we deal with this meat then the old men will take their *ingubo* (the traditional blanket).

W: So though you speak in general about the food of the ancestors, you refer to certain meat especially as meat of the ancestors.

Timati, J: Yes. The food may mean all the things like coffee or tea, which are used at this occasion. But the ancestors *aziphungi* (they don't drink hot beverages; M.W.), *ziyasela* (they drink cold beverages, meaning beer; M.W.). But the meat is the meat of the ancestors. And this we show by *ukuhlonipha* (respect). *Asihloniphi* (We don't show respect to) all meat or food. Here we use *ingubo*.

Ndubane, J: It is *ingcawe* (the red blanket of the Xhosa) we use. That is *ingubo ebomvu esetyenziselwa isiko* (the blanket that is used for customary occasions) (Ndubane & Timati 1998).

The meat slaughtered for the ancestors is treated with special respect, expressed by special dress.

The differences are mainly in the scope of the meal. The traditional meal addresses the family first and foremost. It is the family gathering for the meal. The men eat in the cattle kraal. It is open for all, all are welcome. The church celebration is open to all, and widens the perspective to God and the wider scope of all saints, deceased and ancestors of all. The frequency is also different. The cultural meals happen irregularly, sometimes once a year, depending on dreams or the memory, whereas the Eucharistic celebration happens more often. The normal frequency should be every Sunday but in many places it is once a month and on special occasions such as funerals.

The fruit of the cultural meal on behalf of the ancestors is peace. The same fruit is expected from the Eucharist. It includes the scope of the traditional practice and widens it by the inclusion of God. The talk with Elia and Mangaliso specified peace through the concepts of unity and reconciliation with one another, with the ancestors, and with Jesus. In the case of Jesus the meal turns into the expression of the fulfilment of the promise of eternal life.

W: If we think about the funerals you are doing a lot according to your customs. For example you are slaughtering.

Mangaliso, FT: Yes, on Friday evening, so about this time, we normally slaughter a sheep or a beast.

Elia, MP: We slaughter *impahla*.

W: What does this mean?

Elia, MP: No, this animal we call *impahla*. It gives the skin for the blanket. You know this blanket is for the deceased. And on Saturday we may still slaughter more sheep if there are many people.

W: Their meat is different from the impahla of Friday, isn't it?

Mangaliso, FT: Yes, that is a very special meat.

W: Could you just leave to slaughter it, let's say because you are stingy?

Mangaliso, FT: Never.

W: What would happen, if you would nevertheless do it?

Elia, MP: We would not find peace with the deceased.

W: So what is it actually what you gain or aim at when slaughtering?

Mangaliso, FT: We accompany the deceased to the ancestors. *Siyamkhapha kwezinyanya. Yena abe nobunye nezinyanya*, we want the deceased to be in unity with the ancestors.

Elia, MP: And we ourselves, we want to be in unity with him.

Mangaliso, FT: And we call this *inkomo yokukhapha*, the cattle to accompany him or her.

W: And is there anything else you want to achieve?

Mangaliso, FT: We want to be in peace with the deceased, *sixolelanisa*. By slaughtering we reconcile ourselves.

W: Is this being in peace just assumed or do you express this in any way?

Elia, MP: When we slaughter one has to speak and to explain the situation. So we do this *ukuxolelanisa* – making peace.

W: And in the church. I heard that people want the communion at funerals.

Elia, MP: Yes, they do. And they are sad if there is no priest.

W: Can you imagine why they want the Eucharist?

Mangaliso, FT: I think that is because they want to be near to Christ.

Elia, MP: We want to be one with Christ. We want communion among us and with him.

Mangaliso, FT: And we want to get his strength. *Ebumnandini nasebunzimeni.* In good and bad times we want community with him.

W: And do you gain that by eating?

Mangaliso, FT: Yes, by receiving the Eucharist. *Ebumnandini nasebunzimeni* we want Jesus in us. Didn't he say so? I in you. And who receives him has eternal life, gains *ubomi obungunaphakade. Andithi?* Isn't it so? And the deceased has it now. He himself ate this bread.

Elia, MP: It is the body of Christ, the *inyama kaKrestu*, the flesh of Christ.

Mangaliso, FT: We receive it. And also the deceased receives it. Though we cannot see this. So we have communion with each other. We accompany him on his way to the angels and to the ancestors and to God. He is part of the celebration.

Elia, MP: That is why we want the Eucharist (Elia & Mangaliso 1998).

The traditional slaughtering aims at peace with the deceased. To omit the celebration would threaten the peace. The Eucharistic celebration revolves around unity with Christ and the community. It is a reassurance of the promise of eternal life, given to the deceased who received the Eucharist during his or her lifetime. The unity extends to the deceased, who is accompanied by the congregation and who is part of the congregation. The celebration expressly assures unity in good and bad times. It is not a flight from the burdens of life, but a means to cope with them. To omit the Eucharistic celebration causes unhappiness, a repercussion of the disturbed peace as seen when omitting the traditional cultural ritual.

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There is a common perception that people who do not follow the customs will fall sick, experience *amashwa*, misfortune.[109] The same applies to the church customs like the Eucharist to which Jesus invites. A dialogue-sermon in Mfinci made it clear that the sickness contracted as a result of not receiving communion is a sickness of the soul, *ukugula emphefumlweni*. Mrs Letsoso (1997) confirmed the conviction of becoming sick in the soul. Since Jesus wants to strengthen us, those not receiving will fall sick and weak. The symptoms of this sickness are not praying and not going to church. It is a community-related sickness: Those affected do not attend the SCCs where the word that makes one active is shared. It is a characteristic of this sickness that it is an unperceived sickness: The sick won't realise their sickness, they will miss nothing. But it has its effects: Things that could be done are not done. This sickness is not so much a threat but a consequence, with real effects. It is not a gimmick to get people back to church. It is a social sickness: *ubudlelwane* is missing. For those sensitive to it, it must become essential to receive. The Eucharist is perceived as having an effect on unity.

There is a variety of customs for celebrating community with the ancestors. They not only include solid food, but also drinking. On the occasion of *ingubo* slaughtering people eat the cooked blood, *ububende*. Blood, *igazi*, is mixed with the fat of the intestines, *umhlehlo*. The aim is to be in union with the ancestors and to gain life. This custom among the Puthi is slightly different from the practice of the local Xhosa.

W: Some told me that blood is important. What do you do with it? Do you drink it?
Thibinyane, GC: We eat it. We mix *igazi* (blood) with *umhlehlo* (the fat from the intestines), so we get *ububende*, the cooked blood. We do it to be in union with the ancestors, to gain life (Thibinyane 1998).

The SCC in Barkly East (SCC Barkly East 1999) studied chapter two of *Our Journey Together*. It deals with the traditional customs in the light of faith. When looking for customs I asked at the end whether they knew the custom called *umhlaba* in Xhosa or *Mohlaba* in Sotho. First they linked it to the throwing of soil into the grave at the funeral or at the occasion of the unveiling of the tombstone. Assuming that a wrong intonation may have misled them, since *umhlàbà* means soil, I repeated overemphasising *umhlábá*. Mrs Maruping and Motemekoane easily identified it now. Mr Masina then

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[109] Hammond-Tooke (1974:352) stresses the need for re-integration. The omission of this has certain consequences: "These are rituals, usually involving the sacrifice of an animal or the making of a libation and accompanied by some invocation of the spirits, which stress amity between kinsmen, and the neglect of which is a potent source of ancestral wrath. Often the diviners' explanation of ancestrally sent illness or misfortune specifies the ritual which has been omitted, perhaps most commonly the non-observance of the re-integration ritual for the spirit (Xhosa: *guqula*; Zulu *ukubuyisa*)."

intervened claiming this was a Hlubi matter. Others said the Xhosa also did it. It is *ibhekile*, the bucket, which is left at night with the ancestors, that they may drink from it or be with it. The next morning the whole family will drink the beer, *umqombothi*. Mrs Maruping: *Yibhekile yabantu abalele ukufa*, it is the bucket of the deceased (the people who sleep death). And they explained that with the Basotho and amaHlubi the children start to sip, *bayaphuza*, till they reach the head of the family. Mrs Motemekoane: "We make a procession like with *umthendeleko*, when receiving communion in church." With the Xhosa the head of the family starts drinking from the bucket and all follow in order till they reach the children, all children, also the very small, the *iintsana* would be included. The committee in Umlamli (1999c) added: *Ekuseni sithethe ngomcimbi*, in the morning the head of the family talks about the occasion; some do this in the evening. After its particular form of consecration, a dedication to the ancestors, the drink becomes the symbol of unifying the whole family with their ancestors. They are participating and present when the family acts respectfully. Some verbal utterances are required to interpret the event.

The important matter is that drinking is an expression of unity and communion. A remark on an SCC note (Sterkspruit Parish 1996b)[110] stated that the receiving of the blood of Christ means that people are one with their ancestors and the saints by being united by the blood of Christ. By drinking from the one chalice in church they show that they are the family of God (SCC St Elizabeth). A culturally informed awareness may question the usual restriction of the chalice to the priest. The impressive symbol of the blood of Christ, the drinking of the chalice, is excluded when communion givers distribute only the body of Christ from the tabernacle. This does not go unnoticed. At a workshop in Barkly East (Wks-Fnl Barkly East 2000) the leaders attempted to improve the ceremony of distributing communion by designing a solemn song to proclaim the belief in the Eucharist at the time of its distribution. This was also meant to help members of other denominations to understand the Catholic practice. A response could be sung: "Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him" (Jn 6:56). One leader protested against the incomplete form of distribution: How can we sing that if there is no chalice that we give to the people?

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[110] SCC notes are pamphlets dealing with a special topic. SCCs are invited to reflect on them and sometimes to return a response. These notes are often produced locally.

2.2.5.4 Eucharist in context: A pivotal link for comprehensive communion

The cultural comparison has already alluded to the importance of the Eucharist as a means of expressing and creating an encompassing unity. Following the principle of "Listen to the people" (see chapter 3.2.10.1) the co-operative reflections of leaders, communities, and priests contrasted with some doubts whether people are able to express exactly what they want (Mpambani, ZP 1998).[111] They reveal a comprehensive, culturally rooted need and subsequent request for this celebration.

W: Why do you like to celebrate the Eucharist at the funerals?

Mbovu, PM: By celebrating the Eucharist we show our unity with the deceased: *Ubunye bethu nomfi*. As faithful we do the service as the last greeting for the deceased, *ukubulisa umfi*.

Mdange, EM: And we celebrate if he loved it. We do what he liked, *ebeyitanda le nto*. If he didn't attend the Eucharist, we wouldn't do it.

Mbovu, PM: And by celebrating the Eucharist we renew our faith; *naxa ubhubhe ukhona*, though he died he is present. We examine our conscience at this occasion. Also we must die. *Sizibandakanye*. If the deceased didn't give a good example, *idini* (the Eucharist) will not be done. With his good example, *idini* will be done. One day it will be also done for Mdange if he was faithful.

Mdange, EM: It comforts. We know it will be done if we were reliable (in Wüstenberg 1999b).

A SCC in Barkly East (SCC Barkly East 1999) was aware of the longing of their community members for the Eucharist at the occasion of the funeral:

"It is important since it is like a memorial service." "It is *iMissa yokugqibela*, the Last Supper." "*Sisikhumbuzo somphehlelelo*, it is a memorial of the baptism." "If we don't do it the family of the deceased will be very upset, even when he was a lapsed member of the community. They want them in church since they were members. It is a problem. We don't like it. But people want it."

The SCC members themselves, personally wanted the Eucharist at funerals:

"*Siphilile ngegazi nangumzimba*, we lived by the blood and body [of Christ; M.W.]." "I get life. It gives me strength." "We want to become strong in the name of God (*somelela*)." "I want to overcome the devil by getting power by the body of Christ." "*Ndinoxolo xa ndamkele umthendeleko*, I find peace if I receive the body of Christ." "It gives strength. God supports us. *Upha amandla, uThixo usikhuthaze*." "*Ndiqinisekile elukholweni, ndikhululekile*, I am reaffirmed in the faith, I'm set free." "*Ndonwabile*, I am glad." "When Jesus died he did this with his disciples to remember. Now we follow him" (SCC Barkly East 1999).

The participants in workshops widened the scope of meaning attributed to the celebration of the Eucharist at funerals.

The Eucharist means communion with God: *Ukudibanisa noThixo*, to bring together with God (Wks-Fnl Lady Grey 1999). This affects the deceased and the bereaved. It

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[111] The focus on the meals of Jesus and Eucharist varies already in the Bible, depending on the context and the purpose. They were meant to nourish people (Lk 9:17), to forgive sins (Mt 26:28), to seal a covenant (Mk 14:24), to remember death and the coming of the Lord (1 Cor 11:26), and to open eyes (Lk 24:31). A variety of complementary views will emerge here already with the focus narrowed down to the Eucharist in the context of funerals.

strengthens the hope of the bereaved with the reassurance that God does not leave them (Wks-Fnl Umlamli 1999). "We receive his body. We will be one with him whom we follow" (Dlephu 1998).[112] *Bangahlala ithemba bamise uYesu njengethemba lokugqibela*: they establish Jesus as the last hope (Wks-Fnl Barkly East 1999).

The Eucharist is the pledge, *umnqophiso* of Jesus. It is a token Jesus himself gave when he was together with his disciples (Wks-Fnl Mkunyazo 1999).[113] In Lekau the participants hinted at 1 Cor 11:25: Jesus invited us to do this in memory of him (Wks-Fnl Lekau 1999). Gqalaqha expressed a similar thought with reference to traditional culture:

Gqalaqha: I want to say, it is similar. Because with the body of Christ we remember our ancestor Jesus Christ. Like when we drink we remember our ancestors who were drinking (Gqalaqha 1999).

The Eucharist is an expression of the witness of faith of the deceased, of his example (Wks-Fnl Mkunyazo 1999). It is the Last Supper with him, doing what they always did together: *Into ebesiyenza naye* [something we did with him (Wks-Fnl Lekau 1999)]. By celebrating it the congregation expresses respect, *imbeko* for the departed witness. In some way it is the faithful fulfilment of an expectation through the community of faith: "If I die my celebration should be like this."

The conviction of the unity, *ubudlelwane* with the deceased is understood in terms of a real presence: *Idini lisikhumbuza sitya kunye naye*, the sacrificial meal reminds us that we eat with him. Consequently attendees at the workshops time and again emphasised *ubudlelwane* with the deceased as the key-term in CCC 1684 (Wks-Fnl Umlamli 1999; Wks-Fnl Mkunyazo 1999). The notion of CCC 1684 that the funeral does not confer a sacrament or sacramental to the deceased caused some protest. If people are convinced that even outside the realm of the church there is real community with the deceased, then the sacrament of the Eucharist must be celebrated: we believe he eats with us. It is the deceased that eats and drinks with the congregation: "If we receive, he also receives" (Wks-Fnl Mkunyazo 1999). *Umfikazi utya umthendeleko wokugqibela. Utya ngoMoya nobunye nathi* (The deceased eats his Last Supper. He eats in the Spirit and in unity with us); though the dead do not receive sacraments, they eat with the bereaved (Wks-Fnl Barkly East 1999).

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[112] The word *idini* with the adjective *elingcwele* (holy) means the sacrificial meal (for the ancestors). Congar (1959:146) understands with reference to Augustine "every work done with the aim of uniting us with God in a holy fellowship" as sacrifice. Sacrifice is thus a relational concept.

[113] Schillebeeckx (1981:58) similarly names the Eucharist the farewell gift of Jesus for the whole community, which has therefore a right of grace for it.

The deceased gains peace by the Eucharist. Peace is accepted with the body of Christ. The blood of Christ washes the sins and gives strength (Mangaliso 1998a). The Eucharist is understood as an interceding process: asking for eternal life (*sicela ubomi obungunaphakade*), and end of pain (*sicela aphume ezintlungwini*) (Wks-Fnl Lady Grey 1999). The celebration is seen as asking for mercy by proxy. The Christians ask for the mercy of God by receiving on behalf, in the name of, the deceased [*ngokwamkela egameni lomfi* (Wks-Fnl Umlamli 1999)]. *Simcelela kuThixo aphumle ngoxolo*, we ask God for him that he may rest in peace (Wks-Fnl Lekau 1999). By opening the way with the Eucharist the deceased receives good fortune, *amathamsanqa*. He gets united with Christ [*amanywa noYesu* (Wks-Fnl Lady Grey 1999)]. "If the soul goes out, with the Mass it goes out easily. And it goes to a comforting place, to Abraham's chest so to say" (Elia, MP 1998c).

The gains of the deceased depend also on the action of the bereaved. The perception indicates that the bereaved have a role to play, which is quite essential. In this role they are empowered to do something in the overall paralysing experience of death.

The participants gain strength by eating sacred bread and drinking the wine (Wks-Fnl Mkunyazo 1999). *Linikela usapho namakhaya namaKrestu amandla*, the Eucharist gives power to the family, the home, and the Christians (Wks-Fnl Lady Grey 1999). It gives peace of mind to the bereaved by the assurance that Jesus accepted the deceased. It is the really present Lord who says: I take you home (Bebeza 1999). Moreover the peace is help for the deceased since everything is done as it has to be done; this is important with the cultural rituals, too.

The Eucharist is a thanksgiving to God. Mbovu (1998c) asked for the Eucharist at the funeral of Thandisizwe Q. who hanged himself at the age of 16. He was baptised in 1996. The main reasons to ask for the Eucharist were rooted in the commitment of the deceased. He was active in church and received the foundation of faith in his family. He remained active after baptism and was a sign of hope: *Makakhatshwe ngedini*, may he be accompanied by the Eucharist (note the allusion to the goat of *ukukhapha*).[114] His peers added: It is our thanks to God because he made him the light to enlighten his home and gave it a heritage by which they will live eternally (*Umbulelo wethu kuThixo kuba emenze wasisibane sokukhanyisela ikhaya lakhe walinika ilifa abaya kuphila ngalo*

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[114] *Ukukhapha* becomes *ukukhatshwa* due to palatalisation in the passive voice.

ngonaphakade) (Umlamli 1998b). The kind of thanksgiving envisaged pays respect to faith as an aspect of life that plays no prominent role in the traditional cultural rituals though it is informed by culture. Before the funeral of one of their peers the youth group reflected:

Mbovu, PM: And why, then, do you want the Eucharist?
Girl: *Sithi sibelana kunye noThandisizwe. Sifumane ubunye naye.* We share with Thandisizwe. We get unity with him.
Boy: *Sifumana ukuhlaziya elukholweni.* We gain renewal in faith.
Girl: *Sihlaziya emphefumlweni senza ubunye noThandisizwe.* We renew in the soul and create unity with Thandisizwe.
Mbovu, PM: And then *umthendeleko,* the Eucharist does help?
Girl: Yes.
Girl: It gives new strength.
Girl: It gives direction.
Mbovu, PM: How does it give strength?
Girl: It happens at the time of the celebration.
Girl: And if I die my celebration should be like this. I learn from this celebration. I know that I will be remembered as well (Umlamli 1998b).

The penultimate contribution hints at the importance of the celebration. In itself it is a source of strength. It results in unity, strengthening, opening perspective, and coping with one's own death. The Eucharistic meal indeed has an eschatological trait. Laden with all its meaning it points into the future for the participants, and not only for the deceased, and it gives some comforting assurance: It will be done for me as well. In this eschatological community it will happen again, and it will happen to, or better for and with me. Mdange states: "It comforts. We know it will be done if we were reliable" (in Wüstenberg 1999b).

What was said generally about the funeral also applies to the Eucharist. It is a witness to others. The awareness of this causes the kerygmatic request. *Eso sisifundo nakwabangekaguquki,* it is a lesson for those who do not yet repent (Wks-Fnl Mkunyazo 1999). The participants specified this by saying that the celebration teaches something about the faith.

The group interview in Mkunyazo also stressed the identity aspect: The Eucharist is the celebration of the Catholics. The identity aspect is not seen as contradictory or counterproductive to the overall ecumenical orientation.

Magibili, B: The people love it. They remember that the deceased was here. And in the Eucharist we remember death and resurrection of Christ. And we remember that the deceased will resurrect with him.
Mangcotywa, MJ: The Eucharist is the last *inkonzo,* the last service for him.
Magibili, B: *Iyafana nesintu,* it has similarities with our customs.
Magcotywa, MJ: The Eucharist is similar. For example, the beer will sleep over night. In the morning we drink *ibhekile,* and the Tata of the house speaks. He speaks about the ancestors, *ngookhokho.*

Matros, DN: If we have it, one leader says *amaRoma masondele*, the Catholics may come forward to receive. Since it was the celebration of the Catholics. But we are one, one work.
Magibili, B: We didn't discuss this matter. We simply have our way; they have their way (Mkunyazo 1999).

The group in Lekau put it this way: we were together in church. This togetherness prevails (Lekau 1999a).

The Eucharistic celebration fits well into a rite of passage. While parting with the deceased, the Eucharist is understood as giving the last honour: *Simnika imbeko yokugqibela* (Mbovu & Mpambani 1998). This parting is at the same time the opening of the way: *sivula indlela yakhe* (Wks-Fnl Lady Grey 1999). We part today with you (Mbovu & Mpambani 1998). It is the *idini lokugqibela*, the Last Supper. The Eucharist is like the sacrificial goats of the church. It is the bread by which the church accompanies the deceased (*siyamkhapha ngayo*) (Mbovu & Mpambani 1998). Teaching and encouragement shape this culturally-informed perception.

Mpambani, RN: Fr Zolile, when he was talking about that thing in Rietfontein, by giving the Eucharist it is the goat of the church. It is the being accompanied by the church. It is our goats of the church (Mbovu & Mpambani 1998).

The Eucharist is the ultimate viaticum, *Idini ngowona mkapho mkhulu womKrestu* (Wks-Fnl Umlamli 1999); the Eucharist is the very great company of a Christian. As part of a rite of passage it is linked to the occasion and cannot be postponed. One workshop showed in the comparing study of CCC and local customs, that Western culture tends to orient itself towards a calendar, whereas the African approach is steered by experience, for instance by dreams. The need for celebration arises from feelings rather than from a rhythm of months and years, of anniversaries. This may indicate why the suggestion to have the Eucharist some time after the funeral itself was rejected. The celebration has to happen when it is needed, in the actual procedure of accompanying and parting with the deceased.

With this culturally informed reflection the Eucharist appears in a comprehensive way to be a very appropriate response to the needs of the bereaved faithful. Nevertheless, we have to look at some objections and obstacles concerning this celebration.

2.2.5.5 Reservations about the use of the Eucharist at funerals

There are some reservations about asking for the Eucharist. In a more general way I heard the claim that Africans scarcely receive communion on Sundays and this raises the question why one should have it, then, at funerals. Though this does not reflect the entire local situation, there is still a remnant of the past when people were taught that

they must go for confession before receiving communion. I encountered this conviction before funerals when questioning the demand for the Eucharist and the practice of some not to receive. This acquired practice seems to be based on misunderstandings or misteachings.[115] The requirement of confession before receiving by the council of Trent (Decree on the Eucharist, canon 11: DS 1661) refers to people in mortal sin (cf. Moloney 1995:246). The actual confessions, as far as one can judge it, were not about mortal sins.

Another reason for the reluctance of people to receive communion was the practice of priests of excluding from it those who pursued traditional cultural customs. That created the feeling of not being welcome, with the inherent dynamics of young people staying away. This attitude of priests was based on the misapprehension that people would simply leave their customs. It resulted in marginalising the Eucharist by creating the feeling "it is not for us" (Mathis 1999a). The practice of receiving the Eucharist hence differs regionally, depending on the local history and the experience and exposure to the power of particular missionaries.

Other objections, also raised by some bishops (cf. Lobinger 1999c), revolve around the funerals as such. The main reasons given for refraining from the Eucharist are:

- To avoid people being hurt: Some Catholics may not receive, while members of other denominations are coming forward to receive.
- To avoid injustice for instance for catechumens who may not receive while members of other denominations are receiving.
- It is appealing to people to say: Who has the right in their church may receive here. Africans tend to intercommunion. Is it that what we want to happen?
- We do not want to say: only Catholics. That is too hard. Rather leave the Eucharist out altogether.
- People want simple solutions, not so sophisticated with a lot of "ifs" and "thens".
- The discontinuance of the celebration in the home parish.
- People want to show off, solemnise the funeral by all means, including the Eucharist.
- It is rather single cases (like in Sterkspruit) who report on this importance; others want to abolish it.

The tendency seems to be to avoid the Eucharist altogether and to make use of other forms of celebration. The objections in their ambiguity are reflected in a discussion that developed in the workshop on funerals in Umlamli.

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[115] Canon 916 CIC states the need for confession prior receiving communion for "anyone who is conscious of grave sin ... unless there is a grave reason and there is no opportunity to confess." It clearly puts receiving communion above confession.

"We don't chase anybody away who comes forward." "Sometimes we announce that Catholics may come only." "Some don't even come forward." "It is painful if one has to refuse." "But others may not come." "You could announce it after the sermon." "But now we want unity. Let's say the deceased is a Catholic. What is about the Wesleyans?" "We just have different customs. The Catholics do it this way, the other churches do it another way." "We Catholics have our reasons. And all are welcome to join us in prayer and singing. It is just receiving that is for Catholics only." "All communities have their own customs. The others don't know what they receive. Our children get instructions about what they are going to receive." "I think the Catholics only should receive." "Or the Catholics and Anglicans only." "But that would offend the Wesleyans." "Some of them respect the communion." "But what will their congregation say if the recipient is not behaving well there and is excluded from reception." "We are one in prayer and singing. The communion may be respected." "No, it is not right when all receive." "But Jesus invited all to come." "No, I am against that." "We have the confession before communion and now we want to invite?" "At funerals there is no confession." "The Anglicans could join in. I saw that in Umtata at an Anglican funeral. Anglicans and Romans were invited to receive" (Wks-Fnl Umlamli 1999).

These remarks reflect the inner conflict arising from a celebration intending to create unity while excluding certain sectors of participants. The practice reflected upon indicates the determination to adhere to the general rules and the intention that nobody should be offended. The discrepancy between unity longed for and offered with the Eucharist and the actual practice of exclusion of some is felt in different degrees. For some it is painful, others just see the legalistic fact that these are the rules. The people's own identity as Catholics and the peace with the own members is of concern. The disputing people knew about the difference in practice between different denominations. The final point made is the hint at experienced practice: elsewhere Anglicans and Catholics went together – and there was no problem with that. This practice puts in no recognisable way a threat to identity. On the contrary, it is quotable as a hint for possible future developments.

Dissatisfaction with the present practice remains. It is a specific problem that the meal Jesus invites people to has acquired an exclusive character. An experience of inconsistencies remains: You aim at community of Christians and with all people and at the same time there are barriers (Morar 1998). Some priests just stopped commenting on admission rules – like giving legal advice in a liturgy – and left it to the people, giving an example also for the leaders.

Ntaka, M: Unity for whom? *Ubunye*, unity? And then you say, *abanye*, some no. It is a very tricky thing (Ntaka 1999).

The exclusivity of the Eucharist, its reservation for Catholics, forms a continuing challenge, with the tension between legal formalism, the pain of the excluded, the concern about community, and the expectation of a more inclusive practice in future. This tension seems to be influenced by the concept of *ubuntu*, of which *ubunye*, unity, is a part. *Ubunye* is reduced to *abanye*, some participating if they are invited.

Mdange, EM: We invite the *amaRoma* for this, *abanelungelo*, those who have the right to receive.

Mpambani, RN: Before we distribute we say we invite the *amaRoma*, we want them only.

Mbovu, PM: Yes, we distribute only to those who have the right to receive. We don't force anybody to come just because it is a funeral: *amaRoma kuphela*, the Catholics only. The Methodist and Zionist for example we ask for pardon that we have it for Catholics only. It is not a form of apartheid.

W: Do you know how they feel about it?

Mbovu, PM: *Banobuhlungu, bayafuna*: They suffer, they want it. But we tell them this is the way we do it. But they think they gain something by receiving. They have the belief that there is a difference if they receive in the Roman Church. In the Hospital we have that problem too. When we go there to distribute communion to our people also the others want to receive. When we make a funeral, the lapsed don't demand. And we are attached, *sichukumiswa* to *umfi*, the deceased and to God. Some say, all are welcome, or those who receive in their respective churches may come. There is confusion. There is a misinterpretation. All are welcome. But we distribute to Romans only. If we say all are welcome today, all will come.

Mdange, EM: Some complain, *amaRoma ayakhetha*, the Catholics choose. I don't like them to receive.

Mpambani, RN: We have the rule. If we don't stick to it we will spoil the people.

Mdange, EM: Some never come for Mass but then they come.

Mbovu, PM: Perhaps they were disciplined in their church and now they come here.

Mdange, EM: The Zionists don't even know the Eucharist.

Mbovu, PM: We don't know whether they have.

Mpambani, RN: We don't want them to feel pain. We have to explain it nicely. And they understand that.

Mbovu, PM: In 100 years the problem may be sorted out. There is some hope. But for now the community has its customs. And one must not spoil the customs. As Mdange said: He left his own church and now he comes here. We rather look for the good example of the deceased, on the qualities of the Christians. The guidelines make a difference. They will say what, there are no garments with the leaders? His funeral is not like that of a faithful member? What am I doing? They do a certain thing. No, in this case it is complete. May my funeral be like this. *Inkonzo yomngcwabo iyafundisa kakhulu*, the funeral service teaches a lot. What is the work of the church? *Ukuguquka*, to repent. Where does it lead to (in Wüstenberg 1999b)?

In the celebration of unity, leaders at times ask members of other churches for pardon. While they somehow try to indicate that this sacrament is for Catholics only, they also have to convince them that they do not pursue a sort of apartheid. The people who believe that they gain by receiving are left with pain. Some of them complain: *amaRoma ayakhetha*, the Catholics choose in a discriminatory way. The leaders exposed to this claim that a nice explanation helps. There is no intention to inflict pain. But an extended invitation would be welcomed: A change may come in a distant future.

One can observe an unfaltering loyalty on the side of leaders with the intention not to mislead their own people. They try to apply the rules and feel, on the side of the people as on their own, the discrepancy with all the connotations the Eucharist has from the cultural background. They are suffering leaders who could become the catalyst for improving the present practice according to a demand, which arises when one inserts faith into an environment that is going to inform and enrich its comprehension with the cultural world view.

A cultural practice stands in stark contrast to the exclusive church practice and may influence the feelings of people. When participating in the celebration of a certain family the visitors are regarded as members of that family. At the funeral of S Mofokeng all

present were addressed by the speakers as Bafokeng. I learned that this also included me as a European. After the event all were again regarded as part of their own family (Mpambani, ZP 1994). One could speak of a temporary membership in another family.[116] In church - what a contrast - the members of other denominations remain for the time being officially excluded.

2.2.5.6 Summary: The cultural grammar determines expectations

The relationship to the ancestors is an essential cultural feature. Unity with them is crucial for the wellbeing of their descendants. It is expressed by the consumption of food and drink. The world view of traditional culture informs the theological understanding of the people with regard to Jesus and their unity with him. This unity finds its special expression in the celebration of the Eucharist. While culture and faith have a lot in common, the difference between them is recognised. While cultural practices are a family affair they serve well as foundation to express the unifying faith in Christ. From a denominational point of view the Eucharist poses an ambiguous opportunity. It appears as expression of Catholic identity and challenges skills of leaders to explain the exclusivity of a unifying meal.

The Lord's supper is requested as a culturally-informed response to the needs of the bereaved. It is contextualised on two levels. The local culture with its communal traits, ancestral philosophy, and meal celebration provides the first level. The second is the sphere of the funeral. There it addresses all-encompassing unity, overcoming the feeling of abandonment. It restores peace with God and one another. As a celebration it gives the bereaved the opportunity to act in an efficacious way for the deceased. It expresses eternal life and restores ultimate hope by setting the living Christ present among those participating. It makes eschatology an event.

The reception of the Eucharist at the event of the funeral is important. In this very context it is unthinkable to postpone its celebration by, for instance, remembering the deceased in the next possible Sunday Mass. This specific celebration is at home in the context of a rite of passage and loses meaning beyond it. It provides an immediate

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[116] Further investigation of how this idea of a temporary membership could contribute to the deliberations about the togetherness of the denominations and Eucharistic sharing seems worthwhile. The mutual acceptance and respect while retaining identity could form an African contribution to this discussion.

response to immediate needs. That explains the urgency in demand which may differ from the urgency attributed to the Sunday Mass.

2.2.6 Funerals as rites of passage

The ministry of the funeral leaders is located within a rite of passage. Rites are performed when life changes form and condition. Ceremonies and rituals accompany these changes. They aim at successfully passing the transitions and alleviating disturbances (cf. Onuh 1992:142). The rituals often have spiritual traits; they involve seeking spiritual assistance for the transition from one stage of life to another (Kraft 1995:116). These rites, when an interplay of the profane and the sacred is involved, can be very complex. In these cases, in some cultures everyone is bound to follow the traditional rituals on account of their obligatory nature (cf. Onuh 1992:143).

A key concept Van Gennep uses is that of liminality (Barnard & Spencer 1996:489). In any rite of passage one can discern three stages: the previous stage, the actual passing and the new stage. The rites accompanying these stages of separation, transition, and incorporation can be called with Van Gennep preliminal, liminal, and postliminal (Van Gennep 1960:11). These stages are not equally important in every rite.

The experience of death raises the ultimate questions about life and its meaning. There are a lot of different customs surrounding death and funerals (cf. Bujo 1986:132). Funeral rites mark the stage of transition and separation from the world of the living. According to Onuh, death rituals serve to ensure the permanent separation of the dead from the survivors, to re-establish a solidarity among the survivors, to clear the obstacles from the way of the dead person, and to ensure solidarity of the dead person with the world of the dead and the dead ancestors (Onuh 1992:158). For Onuh rites of separation are important at funerals (Onuh 1992:144-145; cf. Barnard & Spencer 1996:489). The separation aspects are death itself and the subsequent mourning. Van Gennep includes, for example, rites such as procedures for transporting the deceased outside, burning the tools and the deceased's possessions, washing, and purification in general. Physical aspects of the separation rites are the grave, the coffin, the cemetery, and the closing of the coffin (Van Gennep 1960:50). Though the emphasis at funeral rites may appear to be on the separation aspect, the other aspects play an undeniable role.

With Van Gennep's distinction within the rites of passage the funeral concentrates on rites of transition (cf. Van Gennep 1960:146):

> Transition from group to group and from one social situation to the next are looked on as implicit in the very fact of existence... For every one of these events there are ceremonies whose essential purpose is to enable the individual to pass from one defined position to another which is equally well defined (Van Gennep 1960:3).

These rites mark the passing of one stage of life and the entry into another, like birth, puberty, marriage, initiation to priesthood, and death (Barnard & Spencer 1996:489).

During the liminal period the characteristics of the ritual subjects are ambiguous. They pass through a phase that has few or no attributes of the past or future state (Turner 1969:94). Turner (1969:96) points out that liminal phenomena offer a blend of lowliness, sacredness, homogeneity, and comradeship. They present a "moment in and out of time". Two models of human interrelationship seem to be juxtaposed and alternate. The first is that of a structured, differentiated, and often hierarchical society. The second, in the liminal period, is a society as an unstructured or rudimentary structured and relatively undifferentiated community, "or even communion of equal individuals who submit together to the general authority of the ritual leaders" (:96). Turner prefers to call this entity *communitas* to distinguish it from an area of common living (:96).

While funerals deal with the separation from the deceased, for the survivors they have to lead to a new status. Van Gennep noted that funeral rites do not concentrate so much on rites of separation, but those of transition (Van Gennep 1960:146). It is a transitional period for the survivors, entered by rites of separation and emerging with rites of reintegration into society (:147). The transitional period is marked physically by the stay of the corpse or coffin in the deceased's room. It may, according to Gennep (:148), include long periods, up to years, with celebrations of commemoration.

The incorporation aspect is celebrated in the meals during or after the funeral or the commemoration celebrations. The assumption is that the deceased partakes of this meal with all those gathered.

> The purpose of this communion is to reunite all the surviving members of the group to remain in solidarity with one another, and sometimes also with the dead person. It may also be seen as a symbol of the last commensalistic union with the deceased (Onuh1992:160).

Rites that lift regulations and prohibitions of mourning such as wearing special dress and having shaved hair should be regarded as rites of reintegration into the life of the society (Onuh 1992:160).

Conclusion. Four aspects in particular seem to bear on our subject. (1) None of the three phases of the rite of passage are a prerogative of a particular group. In our context we see the agents of culture and church involved in elements of the three phases of separation, transition, and re-integration. They are not always as clear cut as when it comes to the slaughtering of the three goats of fetching, accompanying, and washing by some. I would prefer not to emphasise any of these phases as especially characteristic. All three, in an alternating and interpenetrating way, play a role. (2) There are target-oriented responses to needs. The meal is incorporation into community and at the same time a last farewell: letting go within a community that carries on with acts of integration for the survivors and of separation from the deceased. (3) The ritual leaders play an important part in establishing what Turner calls *communitas*. (4) The trajectory of time required for the completion of the rite of passage exceeds a single event and emphasises its character as a process. In our context one can assume that the celebration of the unveiling of a tombstone, often years after the funeral, is the final step in the re-integration of both the living and the dead, the living with each other and the dead finally regarded as being among the ancestors. This suggests that the success of the process cannot lie in the hands of a few leaders. They offer their contribution in the important rite within a broader process with many involved. The unveiling of the tombstone, in contrast to the funeral, which comes as something unavoidably imposed, is the final step, and is determined by the bereaved, indicating that they are in control.

2.2.7 Funerals as rituals

The realm of funeral leaders is a rite of passage. Its comprehension is further advanced by contributions from research on rituals in general. The local context attributed importance to rituals. This research corroborates their importance. Rituals are a stereotyped sequence of activities. They include gestures, words, and objects. They follow a standard protocol. As social actions they require participation. They structure a transition and provide markers for bringing an individual into a new status. Within the life of a cultural community rites develop and are assigned their meaning (cf. Onuh 1992:147; Béguerie & Duchesneau 1991:47).

Although rituals are social actions, yet each ritual is characteristically bound up with the sacred, since the crucial moments that are dealt with by rituals are sacred moments (Onuh 1992:147).

A rite is action, it is a process. It is a programmed operation, planned beforehand to arrive at the effect wanted. It is repetitive:

> In connection with the dead person one embarks on the long chain of what happens when someone dies. In the short term this repetitiveness could seem as a weakness. But on closer inspection it reveals the amazing dimension of the rite. By being repetitive the rite says that human beings are not human beings all by themselves, and above all that they are only human beings by integrating themselves into a humanity which is more than they are. Through rites, individuals receive their human identity from beyond themselves and maintain it by integrating themselves to it (Béguerie & Duchesneau 1991:47).

For Mitchell, Kerzer defines ritual as action wrapped in a web of symbolism. "This assumes that a ritual has a communicative role... There is assumed to be a purpose, a function, and a meaning behind ritual action" (Mitchell 1996:490). Uzukwu (1997:43) specifies the meaning when stating that "religious ritual assembles the community to reaffirm its foundation."

The importance of rituals lies in their function of cushioning critical moments in life and bringing their harmful effects under control. Furthermore, a ritual reinforces the solidarity within a community by

> strengthening the basic moral precepts on which social life is founded and endowing them with a compelling authority which appeared to derive from outside each participant (Durkheim in Onuh 1992:148).

This feature of rituals explains the psychological effect by which people are compelled to participate. This applies especially to cultures characterised by community solidarity and common belonging (cf. Onuh 1992:148).

Mitchell (1996:490-3) contrasts the positions of Durkheim and Turner. Émile Durkheim argued that the function of a ritual is to strengthen the bonds of the believer to God. Since he understood God as the figurative expression of society itself, the ritual serves to attach the individual to society itself. Turner then argued that long times of liminality in rites of passage lead to a transcendent feeling of social togetherness, which he called *communitas*. Durkheim saw ritual as representation of a social structure whereas Turner sees it as a process that transcends it. "This approach sees ritual and social structure as part of the same process, mutually informing each other. Ritual does not merely

represent social structure, nor conceal it, but acts upon it, as social structure acts upon ritual" (:493).

Referring to Grimes, Turner and Turner (1978:244) describe ritual as a transformative performance that reveals major classifications, categories, and contradictions of cultural processes. It holds the generating source of culture and structure. It is not a bastion of social conservatism, condensing cherished cultural values. It is associated with social transitions. Ceremony is linked to social states. It is a phase in the social process by which groups adjust to internal changes and adapt to their environment.

For Mitchell (1996:490), contrary to a static perception of ritual as supporting a social structure, the turn towards an anthropology of practice sees the actors in a ritual as conscious agents rather than playing out mere eternal patterns. Practice-oriented approaches to ritual build on the assumption that symbols involved in ritual can be re-interpreted, depending on different points of view (:492). "Because they involve symbols, rituals are particularly evocative, but they are also particularly malleable. They can therefore lead to change, as much as they evoke tradition and continuity" (:493).

Though they ensure stability within a cultural group, rites also undergo dynamic change because of the changes in life. Those in charge of controlling rites endanger their value if they deny change and cut the rites off from real life. They become "fossiled" (Onuh 1992:149). Walsh states:

> New generations with new life-experiences have to be told in a new way how the rite can have a bearing in their lives. Otherwise they will not find in the rite a way of dealing with the crucial moments of their life and a way of making appropriate choices about them. When rites and words that go with them are not affecting choices about the serious issues of life they gradually lose their status, first for individuals, and eventually for the whole people. They drift towards being fable and folklore, while life begins to look elsewhere for ways of dealing with its crucial moments and expressing its goals (in Onuh 1992:149).

The subsequent proneness of societies to change with borrowing new rituals opens the field and chances for inculturation.

> Rituals for the rites of passage often involve seeking spiritual assistance for transition from one stage of life to another. ... It is best if indigenous forms are used and Christian meaning is given to them. Care must be taken to bring in as few foreign forms as possible, lest Christianity be seen simply as a foreign religion (Kraft 1995:116).

Involving all five senses, a ritual follows several generative grammars. They produce the actual observable rite. It is the art of the officiants to relate the interconnected grammars and vocabularies to the immediate circumstances (Turner & Turner 1978:244). The rite addresses the whole person: there is something to feel, to touch, to see, to hear, to undergo, to eat, to drink... (Béguerie & Duchesneau 1991:47). Lévi-Strauss (in Béguerie & Duchesneau 1991:47) states that one must see in rites "the means of making immediately perceptible a certain number of values which would affect the soul less directly if one tried to introduce them solely by rational means". This irrational element is not opposed but complementary to the rational. A rite is a way of communicating with the occult, with what is hidden, secret, mysterious: the meaning of life, destiny, origin (Béguerie & Duchesneau 1991:47).

Conclusion: This short overview highlights some key issues concerning the community aspect of funerals. Rituals (1) emphasise the belonging to wider humanity and invite to integrate into it. (2) They communicate and strengthen moral precepts. (3) They reflect community, the social structure, and act on it.

Concerning the actors, rituals are seen as demanding. They are conscious agents, creative in re-interpreting symbols and challenged to adapt to new situations. So they are contextualising. This creativity is needed to maintain the life-bearing importance of the rite and to avoid its deteriorating into folklore. We saw already the tremendous change in the cultural practices, yet people regard them as their own customs. Creativity requires cultural competence in order to use comprehensible forms, which speak to the people in a holistic way.

Concerning society: I share the view that rituals are not mere reflections of society but actually act on it (evocative). This notion needs attention. If there is a criticism of church-insider-leadership one should not underestimate its possible transforming contribution to social life.

2.2.8 Funerals as response to bereavement

Research on bereavement deals with the needs arising from it. It shows the healing power a ritual may assume. Parkes and Weiss (1995:17) cite Gorer, for whom the decline in accepted ritual and religious guidance after bereavement – in a European context – is responsible for maladaptive behaviour like lasting depression, impaired relationships, and irrational attitudes towards death and destruction. Parkes (1986:34)

sees grief even as a cause of death. Rituals help the survivors. Physical death and social death do not take place simultaneously. Grief is a process of realisation. Though, for instance, a mutilated person may dominate the memory, the memory of the funeral may mitigate this experience (cf. Parkes 1986:175). This means that a funeral ritual can be a directed, influencing process.

Different models of stages of bereavement show its process character. Spiegel (1978:59-83) outlines some models: Bowlby names three stages (protest, disorganisation, reorganisation), Oates has six phases (shock, numbness, struggle between fantasy and reality, breakthrough of mourning, selective recollection connected with stabbing pain, acceptance of loss and reaffirmation of life itself). Fulcomer sees four stages of bereavement. Spiegel himself assumes four stages (shock, controlled stage, stage of regression, stage of adaptation).

Sprang and McNeil (1995:6-9) show that Kübler-Ross, Doyle, and Westberg identify stages of grief, of which some may run concurrently for one person and in different order. Stage one attempts to limit awareness: Shock, denial, and isolation. They protect the mourner from experiencing the total extent of reality at once. In stage two of awareness and emotional release, feelings of anger, guilt, resentment, along with psychological symptoms like distress become evident. The closer the relationship, the greater the feeling of guilt can be. The feeling of failure may appear (e.g. at a child's death). Stage three of depression appears when the mourner sees the situation as hopeless. In a normal grief response the individual is open to support and comfort. A clinical depressive may be unwilling to accept support. For the normal mourner there may even be moments of happiness. In stage four, acceptance and resolution, one comes to terms with reality. There is reinvestment in social activity. The mourner begins to feel hopeful for the future and becomes involved in new relationships and activities.

Sprang and McNeil (1995:3-7) indicate some reservations about presenting such models. They are based on small, non-representative samples; comparison groups were not included. Since not all run through the stages or take some at a time some people may feel urged to judge their grieving as dysfunctional. Sprang and McNeil state that, traditionally understood, the process of grief is relative to attributes such as the relationship of the bereaved to the deceased, the age of the deceased, and the personal characteristics of the survivors. Moreover, the mode of death is an important factor in the conceptualisation of bereavement. Bereavement means the emotional state

that results from the loss of a (loved) person. The expression of suffering is defined within a cultural context. Grief generally refers to the emotional components of the bereavement process. Its essence is multidimensional, reflecting not only the loss of a person, but also a loss of identity and purpose. Mourning is the behavioural component of bereavement and is most influenced by socio-cultural influence and expectation. The process of grief is understood as a progression through stages or tasks. Referring to Ochberg the tasks are: expression of affect, understanding of the meaning of the lost person, the elucidation of ambivalence in the relationship, the eventual freedom to attach trust and love to new significant others and to new replacement objects. Traditionally family and friends, religious rituals, and social traditions and customs facilitated the grief process.

Sprang & McNeil (1995:9-10) cite Worden who describes the tasks of mourning, supplementing the bare descriptions of grief with specific mourning behaviour. Instead of enduring grief passively, the grieving person will be empowered to progress through the grieving process. They imply that grieving can be influenced by intervention, thus providing hope.

Traumatic death cases know a particular symptomatology of grief. The affective responses range from anger to rage, terror, depression, irritability, numbness, affective flooding, frustration at the criminal justice system and society, emotional constriction, feelings of hopelessness and helplessness. Cognitive responses include rumination, thoughts of revenge, memory impairment, confusion, disorientation, and denial. Behavioural responses are social avoidance and isolation, self-protective behaviour, phobic avoidance of painful and benign stimuli, efforts to pursue and capture the accused, interpersonal conflicts, substance abuse. Physiological responses such as sleep and appetite disturbance, physiological arousal, physiological re-experiencing of the trauma, somatisation, and physiological changes in functioning also appear (cf. Sprang & McNeil 1995:90).

> Human capacity for change is considerable, though limited by the individual who must acquire healthy adaptive processes from trial-and-error effort to regain dynamic equilibrium. Processes underlying human change and adaptation are nonlinear and complex, preventing absolute predictions of the course of any adaptive process (Sprang & McNeil 1995:119).

One phase of the intervention process is crisis intervention with an accent on stabilisation of the individual's emotional, social, and physical environment (Sprang &

McNeil 1995:120). Treatment goals are to help to vent feelings, to identify symptoms of distress, to educate (e.g. offering comparisons validates the process as normal), to restore control (make them active, regain power), to offer support (create trust for acceptance), to reduce self-blame, and to help regulate physiological symptoms of arousal (Sprang & McNeil 1995:128-9).

Stigmatised grief, when death was caused by AIDS or suicide, for instance, falls under the category of "blemishes of individual character" (Sprang & McNeil 1995:139). "AIDS victims are looked upon pejoratively because of their assumed lifestyle" (:140). In cases of suicide the survivor may be castigated for not having taken some action to prevent the event. The grief of suicide and AIDS victims is disenfranchised, by denying usual means of bereavement (:141).

Concerning the rite of passage, Spiegel (1978:102) quotes Hertz saying that a "primitive" society can neither believe in the necessity of death nor consider it final. "Exclusion is followed by reintegration".

"The application of the ritual of the *rites de passage* occurs when the status transition of an individual is performed within a social group" (Spiegel 1978:110). It does not replace the grief process but rather shows that the dead, the survivor, and their social environment have to cope with it. "The ritual is an expressive act which in the ideal case aids the implementation of the process" (Spiegel 1978:110). The ritual helps to keep the goal in mind that an individual must reach a new position. It allows the expression of emotions and limits them at the same time by bringing them into definite, approved forms (:112). It reduces anxiety by conveying the quieting certainty that the status transition will succeed. Though the process takes more time, the ritual grants the status and makes it public. The ritual, though performed for an individual, follows the pattern of the many rituals. This affirms common values, which were threatened by this transition. (:113). The ritual generalises the experience of loss. There were others before and others will follow. As a group they overcome the crisis, in the light of faith (:133).

The advantage of the minister presiding over the ritual (in a European context) is that he may know the family, at least by one visit (Spiegel 1978:140). He is an outsider, at an emotional distance, seen as a representative of moral values and as a specialist in religious questions (:141).

Conclusion: This brief look at a small selection of relevant literature gives a deeper knowledge of the needs of people coping with bereavement. The context of the bereaved and the deceased plays an important role for the bereavement process and also determines the kind of psychological reactions. What the diverse attempts to identify stages of bereavement have in common is the attempt to show that bereavement is a process and aims to arrive at the goal of coping. One could try to establish culturally informed stages of bereavement. This, however, lies beyond the scope of this study, which also works with too small a sample in this regard. Instead of reflecting on stages, the identification of tasks of mourning, including respect for the deceased and re-attachment, intends to activate the bereaved. As part of the grief-process, rituals have an important function: They help the bereaved to adapt, they create a new (counter-) experience, reaffirm values, grant a new position with the process still in progress, reduce anxiety, provide security, and generalise the experience of loss.

The distinctions brought about by the emic approach are of some importance and show how imperative it is to observe locally. It is not only the expression of suffering which is culturally mediated. The whole perception of (contamination by) death and the related expectations for coping are culturally mediated and point unmistakably in the direction of community. Here, there seems to be one main difference from the Western experience reflected in the referenced literature, though community also plays a role there.[117] The notion that, in a "primitive" society, exclusion is followed by re-integration may well miss the whole point of a continuous, though transformed community on the local background. "The community itself is a comfort", a parishioner said. The basic understanding of the people, however, bears heavily on the resulting ministry of rendering appropriate service.

The minister, who is welcomed and known to the family by at least one visit, an expert in his field and emotionally distanced, can probably render a quality-service in the Western context. He does not, and does not have to, match his rural African colleagues. The local funeral leaders are neighbours familiar with the circumstances, emotionally concerned, but distanced in at least two ways. They are normally not members of the immediate family. Their cultural background with an understanding of ongoing

communion allows a more composed approach towards death as part of life than in societies prone to understand death as accident. These leaders are experts in their own right: by faith and as culturally fully initiated people. The concern to render a quality service alerts us. We have to consider the extent of the cultural initiation of the ministry.

2.3 Summary: A culturally inserted ministry calling for further research

The ministry of the funeral leaders of our research is happening in a mostly rural area still strongly influenced by the local cultures of the Sotho and Xhosa. Local funeral customs and cultural perceptions with regard to the ancestors and meals inform the ministry and the expectations directed at it. Within the process of bereavement the funeral leaders share their commitment to the bereaved with many others. Their ministry can be described as a specific response to a manifold contamination with death. It is specific insofar as it is limited to the ritual core stages of the rite of passage. In a kind of parallelism the cultural and religious procedures aim at decontamination of death by re-establishing community and thus re-establishing life. The specific task of the religious activity concerns community with God and the public, official witness. The religious ritual conducted by the leaders is closely linked to expectations of creating unity and giving spiritual guidance as a response to the contamination by death. The Eucharist, though not always provided for, is understood as a prominent means of dealing with this.

This ministry serves community and provides or reinforces the shared world view. It can be partly shared with the priest, depending on the circumstances. It is mainly done independently.

The mere observation of funeral leaders leaves many things undetected. We do not know about what we have not yet observed. Even after the description of a funeral and the subsequent initial analysis we still do not know how the funeral leaders came into existence, since formerly only the priests or catechists officiated at funerals. We do not know why their ministry was actually introduced. We do not know how the individual funeral leaders come into their office. We do not know how they are anchored in their community. We do not know about their formation. We do not know how they see their

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[117] The tendencies, for instance in Germany, to bury with the immediate family only, to ask people to refrain from condolences, and the trend to have anonymous graves indicate the more individualistically oriented culture and society of the West.

task and the collaboration in the shared ministry. We do not know about the others in ministry like the priests and catechists. We do not know how and with what purpose decisions on funerals are taken. We do not know about the immediate preparation for the proclamation of the word. We do not know how the frequent omission of the desired celebration of the Eucharist is received and dealt with. For exploring these questions we will now employ the conversation with a purpose, the interviews and talks with funeral leaders and other stakeholders.

The chart shows the manifold contamination with death impacting on the community. The community contains family members and church members with family members either belonging to the church or not. Not all of them on both sides are bereaved. The broader community of the village is not reflected. In the core phase of the rite of passage both the family and the church provide agents, the role bearers, mostly the head of the family or the funeral- leaders, the latter normally not belonging to the immediate bereaved, whereas the former do. Both respond in their specific ways by building up the threatened community and re-affirming their respective values, both processes seemingly interrelated. So they decontaminate the threat, leaving the community back somehow on a higher level, having coped and (hopefully successfully) integrated the threat.

Figure 2.10. Decontaminating ministry at the core stage

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3 Chapter 3 – Management of Ministry

The prism used to study the phenomenon of funeral leaders comes from the qualitative research method with a grounded theory approach. The analysis of some 1700 code-notes produced some central concepts and categories. This chapter explores some of the pertinent categories concerning the leadership as such. It analyses the origin of the local community leadership as a created matter and the motives for its introduction. It reflects on the role changes this ministry brings for pastoral workers and looks at the diocesan support structures. It then concentrates on general features of funeral leaders, among them their local origin, the under-representation of women, the frequency of their acting, and the deployment in teams. It considers the demand for priests at funerals as well as ecumenical influences. It looks at the quality expectations and the motives of the leaders, their sources of support, and their spirituality. Then it examines the process of their selection/election. Finally it addresses the quality management by formation. The following chapter will continue to examine the ministry rendered, its general implementation, and the decontamination of death by the proclamation of faith.

3.1 Introducing and maintaining the vision of community ministry

In the past leadership roles were taken only by the priests and catechists. In this sub-section I shall concentrate on the question how the community leadership as observed came about and what shape it took locally. We will look at some international and national developments within the church that influenced the development of local leadership structures. These include the Second Vatican Council (Vatican II) and the developments that led to the Pastoral Plan. However, great ideas do not always translate easily into a local context. The reception there ranged from welcome to resistance. The role players had to adapt to role changes. We therefore need to look at the local conditions in which the ideas of community ministry and the structures to support it were received.

3.1.1 After Vatican II – a worldwide movement

Vatican II (1962-1965) brought a deep-rooted change to the leadership structure within the church and its mission.[118] It rediscovered the idea of the church as the people of

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[118] Chapter five (5.3.2.13.1) will provide more on the vision of the church as community.

God and the role of the laity within it. Lobinger (1998b) states that in its aftermath doubts about the role of the catechists arose. In 1969 he conducted a survey among the bishops of the Xhosa Region whether to base the future pastoral work on catechists or community ministries. All shared the impression that the role of catechists made people passive. In 1971 Lobinger (1973a) wrote a thesis on the catechists as an interim measure. After completing it he joined the Lumko Institute, which was then a catechist school in need of transformation. However, its direction was not clear. Subsequent visits to selected parishes provided insights into existing community ministry (cf. Lobinger 1973b). Balink in Kroonstad was already doing systematic training of community leaders. The methods of group dynamics and skill training used there were then tried out with the catechists in Lumko. In 1974 the training of new catechists was suspended and the retraining of existing catechists as trainer catechists started. "But I was too optimistic that they can all be retrained as trainers" (Lobinger 1998b). While Lobinger and Balink conducted some 100 workshops throughout South Africa on the issue of how to train community leaders, in Aliwal Diocese there was just a one-day meeting with the bishop, and no real training (Lobinger 1998b).

Though they were reluctant about the changes, the catechists didn't dare to say this loudly. With the priests

> it was only at two workshops where I met opposition. Otherwise I perceived a resounding Yes. There were perhaps fears like: "Will I manage?" The opposition was rather based on fears about the priesthood. One sister exclaimed: "My brother is a priest. It is his priesthood", others feared disorder, claimed that people had no time for this ministry or that is was unfair not to pay them, that they didn't know their faith or were illiterate (Lobinger 1998b).

The broad reaction of acceptance was supported by the general euphoria after Vatican II, the new perception of the church as the people of God. It was facilitated by a simple method of putting it into practice. Lumko paved the way by giving self-confidence to priests:

W: That sounds a bit easy for this major shift in pastoral work.
Lobinger, F: There was a huge euphoria after Vatican II. There was the awareness we are the people of God. And here was now the instrument and a simple method to put this idea into practice. This idea cannot be realised in a handout fashion as with catechists. Lumko offered easier an access as a profound winterschool could do. It gave self-confidence to priests (Lobinger 1998b).[119]

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[119] The letter "W" in the interviews refers to the initial of my surname.

3.1.2 Towards the Pastoral Plan – a Southern African thrust

These workshops resounded in the ETSA report. Archbishop Hurley stimulated the research on Evangelisation Today in Southern Africa (ETSA). In the year of its publication the SACBC made its "Declaration of Commitment", committing itself among other things to advance blacks in the church.[120]

> Lobinger, F: This report was influenced by the development which had taken place before. The whole emphasis of Lumko was on leadership. Our publications predominantly dealt with leadership issues. The idea of Small Christian Communities actually came from AMECEA in East Africa (Lobinger 1998b).

The ETSA report influenced the Consultation on Social Justice and Reconciliation in 1977. Two major issues were identified: Justice and leadership. While 72% (in 1970) of the membership of the Catholic Church belonged "to the poorer classes, to the class of the oppressed, the disinherited with no voting rights in the land of their birth" (ETSA:4) only 13% of the clergy were South African born. The Methodist clergy in contrast was 85% and the Dutch Reformed clergy 100% indigenous (ETSA:23).[121] A survey disclosed that the post-Vatican II role of the laity was not yet widely accepted by clergy and by laity (ETSA:29). So the issue of leadership became an issue of justice (Lobinger 1998b).

The lack of dedication among priests, brothers and sisters, teachers, and leaders was mentioned as one of the problems experienced by the church (ETSA:53). The Diocese of Aliwal issued a memorandum on the animation of the faithful to accept their responsibility, for instance through different ministries (ETSA:163).

In its reflections and recommendations ETSA stressed the formation of the laity with the emphasis on catechetics, Christian community building, and leadership formation (:183) within a ministerial church (:188). Africanisation of the church was understood as a process that went beyond some liturgical adaptations to one in which the faithful were allowed "to live their Christian life in their own milieu, within their own culture" (:196).

At the Inter-Diocesan Pastoral Consultation in 1980, however, Tlhagale deplored the fact that the idea of shared responsibility was still merely talk, since the 1977

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[120] cf. Bate (1999b:174). For a more detailed account of the process towards the Pastoral Plan see also Connor (1991).

[121] Hence it was suggested that a greater identification with the black majority should contribute to make the church a church of Africans (cf. Bate 1999a:182).

conference did not create structures to translate its commitments into practice. He expected that common consultation, decision taking, and execution of certain tasks by church leaders and laity would have a thrust on liberation (SACBC 1980:32).

> If we are to consider the question of shared responsibility in the future, then the question of church structures must be examined ... so that further practical steps can soon be taken (...) to give permanent effect to the concept of shared responsibility and leadership. This should constitute a real expression of justice... (J Barratt in SACBC 1980:35).

For the local context one should note that no diocesan delegates of Aliwal diocese were present at the Inter-Diocesan Pastoral Consultation (SACBC 1980:58).

Lobinger (1998b) sensed that at this Consultation the need for a Pastoral Plan was felt, though the word was not yet being used. The bishops got the idea of writing a Pastoral Plan. After rejecting two drafts they chose to involve the people. The question "Where do we want to go" was put to all. The diocese of Aliwal did not respond. Some 100 responses from many parts of South Africa were condensed in the search for a slogan. While Lobinger, under the influence of Puebla, suggested something like Participation and Communion, Connor coined the emerging vision as *Community Serving Humanity*.

3.1.3 Breaking down to a local configuration in the Aliwal Diocese

It may be this process of consultation that Ntaka remembers when he recalls that he was approached by the bishop of that time to contribute to it.

Ntaka, M: But at the beginning when we were collecting ideas and, it started like that. People were asked where do you want the church to go. I was involved. I was in St Francis at that time. I came there 1974 and I left in '82. It was long before the Pastoral Plan, just when they started. We had meetings.
W: Do you remember what you could contribute? What was your dream of the church that time?
Ntaka, M: No, at that time, really, I wasn't dreaming myself. But my work was to find out what the people were dreaming about... One old Lady got up and said, no in this case you could tell the bishop to buy us a bus. Then we all just laughed and we continued with the survey. But my work at that time was to find out what do people think, what can be done? Where is the vision, where are we going? And this type of thing. That is where I was in involved.
W: Do you remember what people said that time?
Ntaka, M: A few things I still remember. Things like people wanted to be more united. In what sense? In the sense that when you come to another Catholic church you must feel at home. You see what they had in mind is not exactly the Pastoral Plan as we know it. But what they had in mind I thought at the time, something like visiting other parishes and knowing one another.
W: Do you think this idea of oneness is reflected in the Pastoral Plan?
Ntaka, M: I think so. In the sense that we are the people of God, we, all of us (Ntaka 1999).

Though this local involvement seemingly never reached a higher degree, it indicates the intended grass-roots approach. The priest, himself not really knowing what it was all about, involved the people in extracting ideas for formulating a vision. In grass roots

terminology a still rather superficial idea of creating a broader communion emerged. It was a kind of rudimentary preview of the vision to be formulated more clearly in the Pastoral Plan as a *Community Serving Humanity*, being an expression of the people of God.

Dissatisfied with the few responses from the dioceses bishop Brenninkmeijer suggested a different methodological approach. He wanted to involve the people with a few posters and questions. This resulted in the Pastoral Plan Kit (SACBC 1987)[122] by which the dioceses were invited to respond (Lobinger 1998b).

By then Lobinger was bishop in the Aliwal Diocese. Contrary to the intentions uttered ten years earlier (ETSA:163) there were few community ministers at that time. No real formation was going on. Lobinger (1998b) remembers that faces froze in the first priests' meeting when the word *justice* came up. From other dioceses he knew of reservations like selling out to communism, or the bishops inciting people to rise up. He sensed a state of confusion about the linking of justice and leadership. Those concerned about justice didn't think about leadership and those concerned about leadership did not worry enough about justice. When a priests' meeting in 1988 suggested introducing community ministries like Sunday-service leaders and communion givers one priest did not care at all while another one, observing the development, had started already in 1980 to phase out the catechists in favour of community ministries.[123] The introduction of community ministry was a matter for the individual priest.

For the Sterkspruit area the catechist J Timati remembers that he was sent with the other catechist and the assistant priest to Lumko around 1987 to receive training for their new role under the vision of the Pastoral Plan (Timati, J 1999). Further training was provided locally in the diocese, by the bishop and others (Mpambani, ZP 1998).[124] The old priest of Umlamli parish was not sent there. Those two catechists experienced the new role as trainer as enjoyable. To refresh their former education, to gain new knowledge, to hand on the new experience to the people, and to gain again new

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[122] cf. Bate (1999a:27-32) on ETSA and the development of the Pastoral Plan.

[123] Henriques (1999:259) mentions the gradual disappearance of full-time employed catechists.

[124] The catechists who indicated that they would not go along with the new development resigned from their commitment.

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experience in return, "that made our work nice" (Timati, P 1998).[125] Timati was rather happy to see that the church can work on its own.

3.1.4 Varying reactions to the vision of the new Plan

Ntaka states that he was enthusiastic about Vatican II, unlike some older priests who didn't have time for it (Ntaka 1999).[126] In the Diocese of Aliwal the clergy were divided on the issue of community ministry. Some opposed it strongly, especially some of the expatriate priests. Some others stood in between and the few African priests were enthusiastic, supported by some whites.[127] This was reflected in the incidence of community leadership. While leadership was new to Sterkspruit, when confronted with the idea in the immediate run-up to the Pastoral Plan the people from Umhlanga were already familiar with it (Lobinger 1998b).

On the side of the priests the interviews show a rather different picture compared with that of the catechists. Not facing any kind of consequences no matter how they adapted to the Pastoral plan it was met by some with enthusiasm, enkindled by the observation of Vatican II. However, ZP Mpambani notes that the pastoral work in one region and even within one parish was grounded in diverging theological approaches, working unreconciled next to each other. The implementation of the Pastoral Plan in fact depended on the priest's individual preference (Mpambani, ZP 1998).

The younger priests had the advantage of experiencing the new approaches, including that of Lumko, during the time of their training. Moreover, they were familiar with Vatican II (Mpambani, ZP 1998). The whole context of Vatican II, liberation theology, and seeing his own bishop (of De Aar) unexpectedly excited about the idea of the Pastoral Plan were an incentive for Morar. They brought about satisfaction with the new role:

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[125] Passed away on 11 June 2000, his obituary reflects the change of role and its acceptance within the family: "*Emveni koko uphangele eMlamli njengomvangeli de kwaba ngu1972. Wasuka waya kuphangela eSt. Martha eSterkspruit Mission noFather... selephangela njengeTrainerCatechist*" (Timati, P 2000) (After that he worked in Umlamli as catechist till 1972. After that he went to work at St Martha in Sterkspruit with Fathers... He was working as trainer catechist). Noteworthy too that it reads that he worked with priests, not under priests (*phantsi koFather...*), indicating a new way of collaboration. The correct date is 1992 instead of the misspelling as 1972.

[126] This rather euphemistic statement may disguise what Ugeux and Lefebvre (1995:30) state: "No doubt there are priests who are unwilling to lose their privileged positions of authority and control. The option for the church as 'communion,' with maximum co-responsibility and participation, can only be lived if there is respect for the principle of subsidiarity."

[127] The mixed reaction to prospective collaboration with ministries is nothing peculiar, only the context is. Kerkhofs (1995:152) reflects from the European context: "... many priests are not prepared to work in

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Morar, MK: I think I was quite excited about it. Because reading the Vatican documents I got very excited about it. And then I can remember when I met my bishop De Palma, coming back after the seminary training. He was quite excited. And I was surprised by that. May be I didn't know him that well... But he was so excited by the Pastoral Plan ... And of course for me, with the whole idea about liberation theology and to see the church in terms of liberating and caring for those who are oppressed. And then to see that the Pastoral Plan is actually part of it. Part of this role of bringing about a change. So I was excited about it. I was very happy about it (Morar 1998).

A major contribution to the openness to change of the people was the changes introduced after Vatican II, especially in the liturgy: "The priest was facing the congregation" (Makhobokoana 1999).

For Pitso, as a priest coming into ministry at a later stage, the approach of the Pastoral Plan was different from all he had experienced till then. The personal shock was cushioned by his familiarity with the Pastoral Plan, the compulsory exposure to the Lumko programme on community ministries, the introduction to it by the bishop at an early stage during his studies, and the exposure to the new pastoral style before commencing his studies. Moreover he attributes the lack of shock to personality traits. The seminary training as he experienced it, however, was not designed in a holistic fashion to address these issues at stake: "In the seminary, lay leadership, no, I don't, no, no, no" (Pitso 1998a).[128]

A different mind-set of a younger priest manifests itself in finding it interesting that others do something in church and vitalise it by informed participation. This leads to independence of parts of communities which become able to serve themselves. On the contrary he finds it frustrating if people do not participate and want Father to do everything (Pitso 1998a). This enthusiasm has to be maintained against some old expectations, the lure of an elevating piety, granting some status:

Pitso, TG: I think there is a kind of clericalism in the mind of the people. They really experienced the priest in the past. A funeral is a second class funeral if the priest is not around. And then it may be tolerated, there is nothing else to do... It is not the real thing. And the moment the priest is around that will be the best funeral. It gives it solemnity, that is the word I think. That it now is very solemn (Pitso 1998a).

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teams with laity, whether professionals or volunteers, above all if these are women. They are too clerical, or have not assimilated the emancipation of women."

[128] Barrow (1999:1006) notices a role change in parishes for clergy and laity as well. To assume that future changes mainly revolve around married priests and possibly female priests seems to be dangerously narrow a thought. With the position of the church (in Britain) radically changing he sees the mission of the church carried forward more than ever before by lay people. The possible forms this may take are enormous. From the European angle he identifies an urgent need for the training of laity to take place in conjunction with the training of the priest to achieve an effective collaborative ministry. This will also affect the curriculum.

Morar understands that the simultaneous political changes made him more ready to accept the changes on way in the church. The independence celebrations in neighbouring Namibia (in 1990) were "firing" him up. They provided an example that things can change. He assumes it may have influenced the people too, creating a willingness to do something new. A similar effect a short time later he attributes to the signs of possible change in SA and the negotiations with CODESA (Morar 1998).

Though enthusiastic priests at the later stage involved themselves, the local incumbent, an old priest, had the power to exercise a preventing influence (Mpambani, ZP 1998). With his rejection of the ideas and his omnipresence at the central village of Umlamli the leaders trained by the younger priest got no chance to act. The only possible counterstrategy employed was to introduce leadership at other communities, which were not visited by this priest. The training for the leaders was, however, conducted in Umlamli to give the parishioners at least a chance to see what was going on. For Ntaka the long home-leave of the old priest was the opportunity to spread the news: "And then when he came back after three months of course the whole thing did not function because he was not keen. But somehow people had tasted it, had seen it" (Ntaka 1999). What appears is the impression of a process of constructing and obstructing at the same time. One could call the whole set-up as adverse to counterproductive to any convincing introduction of a new pastoral approach. It could even be an invitation to form allegiances between priests, catechists, and people with similar affiliations, thus preparing the ground for splits and fights.[129] The frictions and deep differences in acceptance and therefore the possibility of resisting its introduction were at least known: "But Father didn't welcome that thing so much, he didn't understand it nicely" (Timati, P 1998).

A local leader attributes the partial resistance of people to the missed participation in the process, which, as we saw, was a diocesan feature and locally determined by the reluctance of the priests.[130]

Makhobokoana, JM: As a result some of the people resisted it because they were not involved in the whole process. They resisted it. Some apparently had entertained some fears of some kind. That perhaps they are bringing rapid changes within the Catholic Church. Probably they thought that

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[129] We will get to an example for such fractious action. The area of collaboration among priests and its rejection could well be an objective for further study.
[130] The extent to which the resistance of some people was rooted in a kind of previous local theology may be investigated elsewhere. Schreiter (1985:142) assumes the possibility that such local theologies, sticking to pre-Vatican II times, may hinder development.

when things change now, the church would be diluted in its own laws and that kind of things. Because if they had involved them to participate in the formation of the process they could have come to the community and explained to them that this thing is not dangerous. A thing like this has some good points here (Makhobokoana 1999).

Ten years after the introduction to the Pastoral Plan Makhobokoana still remembers the method of introducing the new ideas in an area that had till then been left out of the development. People from the whole region met in Teresa parish, with some of them involved in conducting the introduction. A demonstration with bricks was used to indicate the need for the involvement of everybody to build up the church. This helped to alleviate some fears and to show the positive development even to a sceptic who is reported to have said at the same occasion: Did the church have no plan up to now:

Makhobokoana, JM: The people there, the ideas there, some were a bit reluctant, some were positive. This Pastoral Plan, well, it was nice, because it says that everybody must be involved when it is been done. Because in the past the community was not involved. It has some good points of its own. That I cannot deny. There were good points, which went along with this Pastoral Plan (Makhobokoana 1999).

Some priests were not necessarily objecting openly: "He just didn't believe" (Mpambani, ZP 1998). But some did. Repeatedly people referred to the symbol of bricks used to introduce the idea of togetherness. The very same symbol was turned upside down by one of the priests:

Ntaka, M: But the next Sunday Fr Sahr is quoted as having said: You see on Tuesday in here, and on Saturday in that meeting in there, they were trying to build the tower of Babylon. It didn't work. It collapsed. So he had no clue at all what we were doing. But, astounding, the people got some idea: If we don't work together there is nothing we can do. And that actually was the message (Ntaka 1999).

This statement cautions us not to overestimate the power of priests since the people got some idea of the new vision. The situation of parallel practice of different systems seems to work, as we will still see repeatedly, within a system of accepted diversity. The successful introduction of shared leadership depended, however, on the priest. Some fellow priests conducted a workshop for those who rather rejected the new development. It aimed at creating a commonly shared approach (Mpambani, ZP 1998). History shows that this happened to no real avail.

In the more practical area too, the collaboration with the priests was ambiguous. Its probability depended on their commitment. Some were convinced, others blocked. The blockage is attributed to the perception that the new way would fit into an urban rather than a rural environment. There was also the experience of real reluctance of co-operation in a team of priests and catechists, leaving the lower level employees

stranded and in need of support by another priest, calling in the bishop to guarantee the progress of the work.

Timati, J: If we had that time a strong priest, things would go right. Because that time Father was very weak, this is why things just became difficult... It was difficult to work with him at that time because he was just blocking. He was blocking because when we were teaching something he said no; these things will not be right with the people. Just go there the old way. Also with this *Uhambo Lwethu.*[131] He said *Uhambo Lwethu* is too difficult, too much. Also SCCs. He said no, these things can happen in the towns. Not in places like here because the people are not staying together.

W: And the leadership, how was he about this? You educated leaders at that time. Did he co-operate with them?

Timati, J: It was scarce with him. He was working alone. Because I remember the time when he was working with Tata Phillip, myself I was working with Mokesh, on our side things were going right. On the side of Father there was a big block there. And there was no co-operation between Phillip and himself. This is why Fr Mokesh wanted the bishop about this. Tata Phillip said that he couldn't work with Father. He came to our side. Now Fr Mokesh said it is difficult when Father will be alone. Because he got a problem about this Pastoral Plan. And then the bishop called me to Aliwal North and asked me to work with Father. Because something was not going right on this side. Now I did work with him.

W: Did it change then or how was it when you were working with him?

Timati, J: Yes, it was changing because the bishop also called him. So that he may leave me so that I would go on. Then there was some change to these places.

W: When you went to these places and educated leaders, was Father accepting them?

Timati, J: No, he was accepting them (Timati, J 1999).

The problems within the pastoral team were addressed authoritatively with and by the bishop in this case. They affected the implementation of the Pastoral Plan. The restructuring of the pastoral team helped to assist its further implementation. The people were more and more actively involved in the process, empowered by the growing spirit of dialogue.

Timati, J: Some things changed through the people because they did a lot of work by themselves. And they are open to talk if they got some difficulties. Because at that time there was no chance to talk with the priest. He just did the Mass and after that he disappeared. Now they have got a chance because if they didn't understand something they got a chance to talk with us, also with the priests (Timati, J 1999).

Priests - with their reservations - and the catechists introduced the Pastoral Plan. After the central introduction in the region in conjunction with the Pastoral Plan Kit (SACBC 1987),[132] the process went local. In the communities the Pastoral Plan booklet was used. This introduction happened in both group-meetings and meetings with whole communities (Elia, A 1998a; Mbovu & Mpambani 1998).

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[131] *Uhambo Lwethu* refers to *Uhambo Lwethu Kunye,* the Xhosa-version of *Our Journey Together* (Hirmer:1987).
[132] The material provided in this workbook contains a brief outline of the history of the Pastoral Plan (SACBC 1987:6).

The time around 1989 with the official launch of the Pastoral Plan (SACBC 1989) was a turning point. As a kind of mirror it was the trigger for parishioners to discover their own dependency and the value of teamwork to overcome possible new dependency:

> Mbovu, PM: We started with the Pastoral Plan. We discussed what it was talking about and what it required to be done. Then we did a kind of evaluation. What did they see? They saw that it was only one person who did all the work. The others just were there. The faithful were just waiting for one to do all things. Because perhaps they think if the priest is not there then the church service will not be done, and then the funerals will not be done. They will wait till that day when the priest is there. Then they say they collect their opinions now, how the people see that thing. Some people saw it and understood, really that the work goes easy. Is must be done together. There should be a group which does the work and to help. One must not depend on one person only. It took a very long time till the people understood exactly what was going on. Then they understood (Mbovu & Mpambani 1998).

The study of the Pastoral Plan helped to widen a narrowed perception. While formerly - and in some few instances even today - the active participation was seen as a prerogative of – mostly untrained - sodality members, this view was abandoned now in favour of all church members.

> Mbovu, PM: That was a misperception before. The new sodality members believed that they were also leaders for the Sunday service, for funerals and fit for preaching. This misperception came from other churches. Our people just took customs from other churches. For example with the Methodists the members of the men's union become automatically leaders. They train their people for that on trial. But now it changed here with us. But we don't know about all communities.
> Mpambani RN: It is important to be trained for the task. Especially when you visit other places. The Pastoral Plan is the Pastoral Plan all over. We go together and have to adhere to it.
> W: When, then, did it change?
> Mbovu, PM: It came 1989 with the Pastoral Plan. With it we learned that we all are the church. And all of us have to take our tasks, not only sodality members. And we are trained before we take over a certain commitment. Not only sodality members. And there is one more big difference: I am now elected for a certain task. The Pastoral Plan helped *ukuhlenga-hlengisa*, to sort, to attribute certain tasks to certain people (Mbovu & Mpambani 1999).

The Pastoral Plan was thus understood as a common rule, at least at their place. The new perception of the church as "We are the church" opened the way for wider involvement of the laity, which is backed by two-fold competence through training and election.

The ecumenical exposure in this regard misled some Catholic communities to the perception that membership in sodalities of untrained people was sufficient to take over roles in the church. It was, however, actually the example of the Methodist Church, which set into motion the overhaul of ideas for Lobinger when he was still serving as parish priest in Umhlanga. It triggered off his wide commitment to the cause of community ministry:

> Lobinger, F: In Umhlanga the lay leaders then were called *abashumayeli* (preachers). This in fact is the term used in the Methodist Church for voluntary ministers. Then the term *iinkokheli* (leaders) was introduced. It was, by the way, the practice of the Methodist Church, which gave me the idea about

lay leadership. When I still was in Umhlanga I noticed that in our church the priest or the catechist did everything. And if they were not around nothing happened. Whereas in the Methodist Church all things went on, done by their voluntary lay ministries. This unpaid work actually made me a bit envious (Lobinger 1998b).

Elia (Elia, A 1998a) remembers that the Pastoral Plan brought the introduction of Small Christian Communities and leadership. Coincidentally the RCIA programme of *Our Journey Together* (Hirmer 1987) was introduced. This observation of a leader indicates that the leadership issue is not a natural consequence of the development of SCCs.[133] ZP Mpambani (1998) stated that SCCs, though introduced, were not really working well and the leadership was not elected by them but by the whole community. This insight confirms the development as outlined by Lobinger. The ideas of leadership were around[134] when there was no thought yet of SCCs whose introduction was inspired by the development in East Africa while there the lay leader issue was closely linked to the catechists:

Lobinger, F: 1976 the idea with SCCs came up. AMECEA invited observers. I went there with Bishop Hecht since I was the secretary of the pastoral department of the bishops' conference at that time. We heard the first time about SCCs and noticed the enthusiasm. They were talking a lot about the use of the Bible. But they had no method. At that time plenty of articles were published. But one main perception was that the lay apostolate was with the catechists. Others, however, said they were not the real lay apostolate, they rather make people passive (Lobinger 1998b).

The concurrent systematic approach to introducing SCCs and shared leadership with the launch of the Pastoral Plan indicates that the emergence of leadership was a policy decision, not something developing from a rising awareness among the SCCs, let alone from the laity as such. Only lately the leaders of Lekau confirmed: Leadership derives from the SCCs, not from the sodalities, which are supportive, not constitutive. "No, we come from the SCC, not from the Sacred Heart. But the Sacred Heart supports or encourages us to take the role" (H Lekau in Lekau 1999a).[135]

Gospel Sharing was introduced concurrently with the introduction of leadership and SCCs.[136] It helped to give the whole approach a biblical foundation. Bible sharing on the Acts and the Gospels was a help as well as the authority argument that the Pastoral Plan came from the bishops. Both facilitated acceptance by the people. It contributed a

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[133] Lwaminda (1996:80) quotes from the AMECEA plenary assembly 1976 that these communities "are simply the most local incarnation of the one, holy, Catholic and Apostolic church."
[134] It is interesting, then, that leadership gets less attention than SCCs. Brain (1997:207) lists as activities of the Lumko Missiological Institute language courses, teaching catechesis, fostering African music, and SCCs, but makes no mention of leadership.
[135] H. Lekau from Lekau refers to the sodality of the "Sacred Heart".
[136] On the different methods of Gospel Sharing see Hirmer (s.a.).

sense of credibility and created a well-understood independence from the priests (cf. Morar 1998).

The fact that too many things were introduced at the same time caused some confusion on the part of the people. Some saw it as too speedy a process. There was fear of losing identity as Catholics and becoming Protestant now, by "chasing away the customs (*amasiko*) of the church" (Timati, J 1999):

> Timati, J: We trained this week priestless service, next week SCC leaders, next week no follow up. We just trained. Even *Uhambo Lwethu*. This is why for some it is still difficult. Because we didn't just stick to one thing. We just put something, which we did not evaluate, whether the people like it or whether something is growing, we were just going on (Timati, J 1999).

The trainer catechist indicates that both the hastiness and a lack of reflection in this process of introduction affected the acceptance by the people. This impression of lack of reflection receives still another qualification in the eyes of Mpambani. The training was mainly technical and missed a real implantation and deepening of the vision (Mpambani, ZP 1998). The aims were not clear-cut and the general idea of leadership was missing. Anastasia Elia expressed that in a very simple way when asked what was still needed: "What kind of things we can improve which we must go on with? About faith, about teaching, or about visions (*imibono*)" (Elia, A 1998a). Training on leadership as such was neglected: what it means to be a leader and how to behave in leadership (Mpambani, ZP 1998). The community theology as background to the Pastoral Plan was not well known to the people and no real attempts were made to introduce it at that stage. Here the practice fell victim to time and spatial constraints. The short time available for the local training, which happened at quite long intervals, did not allow concentrating on this. The emphasis was on practical training (Morar 1998). A holistic approach is needed to convincingly introduce and maintain the value of the community-based ministry, which is not only to serve as a stopgap. The personnel shortage also hampered this approach. It appears that community ministry does not solve the problem of the lack of priests. On the contrary, community ministry requires them for crucial quality enhancement.

Financial considerations (apart from Lobinger's notion of the unpaid Methodist leaders) played no role when introducing community ministries into a church heavily dependent on overseas funding and personnel. The priority lay with the pastoral concern:

> Morar, MK: I mean. It could have come up, that we say we cannot afford to travel to bury somebody. At that time, when I started there, we didn't even talk about self-supportive church. The idea was just to make people aware about leading the church, building the church themselves (Morar 1998).

Though there was talk about financial independence it was never connected to the question of leadership.[137] The affordability of transport for funerals, for instance, was never questioned. A fear in a transport dependent situation then could have been that only nearby places would have been served (Mpambani, ZP 1998). That local leaders would be a more affordable means was never mentioned to me, let alone ecological considerations concerning pollution and so on caused by the use of cars when other means like local leaders might be available to meet the needs of the bereaved.

The perceived lack of priests is scarcely mentioned as reason for the introduction of community ministries. Morar (1998) assumes, however, that the lack of priests helped people to accept the idea of change. One finds this reason among some leaders, expressed by saying that the work has to be done. The trainer-catechist mentioned that the people were mostly unaware that the growth of the communities did not coincide with an increase of priests (Timati, J 1999).

> Mathis, W: Perhaps it is something we have to repeat again and again, that it is not only because of the priest. Well to justify that and to explain why they should do that. Then I think the deeper reason will be that of the participation in of the priesthood of Christ since they are baptised.
> W: What kind of reason would be most convincing for them?
> Mathis, W: In the community there are needs. And there are talents enough to feed these needs. But if nothing is happening and they don't take seriously their talents and their call, then the community lingers on like for instance in Hlomendlini. I think that is the reason. And then you have to justify that, this responsibility for being baptised. Because just to explain to them you have to do it because the priest isn't available, that's too weak... And I think that is the only way for communities to survive... But you have to remind them, to get them aware of their responsibility... If they don't fulfil it, that is very, very serious. They don't only fail in their private life but as well in their community (Mathis 1999a).

In a situation with few priests the remarkable point in this argument is the concern for raising awareness for the participation of all in the priesthood of Christ, and their responsibility towards their community. This applies in particular in cases where there is rather a lack of community, at least in terms of size. The correlation and hence the angle of view changes significantly: it is not the need of a community for a priest but of the community for the talents among its members. The task of the pastoral worker seems to become that of an animator towards a vision.

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[137] Bühlmann (1976:263) indicates the priority of personnel resources over finances: "With a minimum of Church structure, personnel and finance but with a body of laity fully aware of its own apostolic mission, we could probably obtain better results than the whole costly apparatus of the Catholic missions of the last few centuries." He calls the financial dependence an abnormal and humiliating condition (:374). The threat the financial dependence can do to the prophetic role, as Cochrane et al. (1991:46-7) point out, will not be deeper investigated here.

Adverse conditions to the introduction of community ministry were in some places male dominance, which went unquestioned since people were used to it (Morar 1998; cf. Mpambani, ZP 1998): the catechists were men, the priests were men. The co-operation with the catechist was partly hampered by a kind of "Yes-Father" spirit. Whatever question was asked, it would be answered with "Yes", no matter whether the answer was meaningful or not. This didn't allow priests to know what the catechists really thought (Morar 1998).

Mpambani, in a time of change and having experienced change himself, for instance concerning the liturgy, understood that change could have a shocking impact on people. So he saw his role in undoing the shock:

Mpambani, ZP: So for me, when these changes came in. well, I felt it was me who was supposed to support and – support the people. You know, from getting a shock or when they get a shock how to, you know, undo the shock. Because, for me it was easily accepted. That is why I was even able to explain it much better (Mpambani, ZP 1998).

3.1.5 Role changes for pastoral workers

The observable collaboration between leaders and priest at the funeral of J Mbovu was limited to the celebration of the Eucharist. Their collaboration, however, reaches far beyond that and is indeed the cornerstone of the whole leadership issue, besides their involvement in its introduction. The potential of community ministry depends on the co-operation between bishop and priests, bishop and leaders, priests and priests, priests and leaders, leaders and leaders, and in all directions with the remaining trainer catechist. Where it goes well, the ministry will be done well. Where there appear interferences, the ministry will be hampered, threatened, and less effective. Collaboration will run like a central thread through the following chapters, concerning quality management, project management, and communicating the message.

A considerable role change is taking place for the priests[138] involved, expressed in the statement of some priests: "Will I be able to manage?" Priests, who are used to being mainly suppliers of sacraments, assisted by catechists in teaching the catechism, turned into animators.[139] This change may be welcomed in different ways, depending on personal commitment. Mathis, one of the priests in the team, expressly wants this new

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[138] I concentrate here mostly on the priest, though the role change affected (and brought about) the whole pastoral team, including trainer catechist and animation team.
[139] As deacon M Nsamba (2000) discerned after a short period of observation in the field: formerly there were priests of the altar, now there are priests of the people.

style of work:[140] enabling people to do things on their own, thus assuming a new role with a new profile, serving people to serve. He accepted his deployment on condition that he be allowed to do such work:

W: Being in the system, how would you describe your own main task?

Mathis, W: For me it is facilitating. Animating people to do it, helping them to discover talents. Facilitate to make them self-sufficient. This type of things. And it's linked very much with my work as a fidei donum priest, I think. You have to plan. You know you will remain for one, two, three, five years. Then you leave. What do you want to remain after that? Do you want to be a service minister for the sacraments, or do you want to build up something and help the community perhaps to be able after that to perform many services on their own? In the beginning the priest has to do many things.

W: For you it seems to be a meaningful vision to proceed this way.

Mathis, W: The only way for me is this. It is meaningful. And that was the condition when I talked to the bishop. I wanted to know what is our task, our duty in this diocese. Are we only for the service, the sacraments, and any kind of religious action or are we educating people to become self-sufficient.

W: If one thinks about ministry, I could think that some people say that it takes something away from us as priests if things are done with lay-people.

Mathis, W: No. I think, animation and discovering talents and uniting people, co-ordinating, I think that is a task we will never be finished with. But it is a completely different picture, I think, of priesthood. I remember roughly the former times during my studies. That is, things which never finish (Mathis 1999a).

As key concepts of the new role of priests emerge the building up of self-sufficient communities, by animating and facilitating. This expatriate missionary displays a specific determination. His temporary deployment forces him to focus and to set goals. This entails examining his self-image as either a service provider or an enabler, intending to build up something that lasts after his departure. This led to a conditional co-operation in terms of aiming at the future self-reliance of the people. The expatriate priest as well as a local priest can accept this new role, albeit with different emphases. The animation work can be perceived in a rather structured way or in an informal talk-style way:

Ntaka, M: I look at myself as the animator of the leaders. I do it in the way that I sit down and discuss these things with them. Basically I know that I know more than they do. But, lets find out, in a case like this. How would you do it? What should we do in here (Ntaka 1999)?

The new role entails facilitating independence from priests in the concrete implementation of particular tasks while depending on the facilitation process as such. It takes the form of formation by opening up new understanding and competency in matters of faith in order to achieve a satisfactory service delivery. The observation of the results has a satisfactory effect on the facilitating priest himself:

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[140] W Mathis was working for nine years in Colombia in much more demanding circumstances concerning the so-called lack of priests. He had a long history of exposure to that kind of collaborative ministry when the Pastoral Plan was introduced here.

Pitso, TG: My role there is I facilitate the process that people become able to do these things by themselves without any dependency on our presence. That they may feel at ease in conducting these funerals themselves. And also that they grasp the meaning of the whole thing as we see it in the church as Catholics. And that they grasp, that they get the message that should be presented at the occasion. Also my role is to give confidence to those who are struggling to get used to it. And I am also pleased when I got a funeral where the lay people are confident and know what they are doing. And they are happy; they do the task well. I have seen quite a number of funerals, which were conducted by lay-people, which were absolutely dignified. Very prayerful, a meaningful way of parting of the deceased (Pitso 1999a).

The new concern of a priest is involving many people: "The new role, you know, of a priest, to have to involve new people" (Mpambani, ZP 1998). The priestly ministry experiences a stronger emphasis on teaching and animating. Animation aims to enable leaders to perform in a competent and self-confident and prayerful manner a ritual of their church and to convey a meaningful message.

The new role includes that of supervisor. It is an indispensable role in the community. By maintaining the vision and being actively involved in it, it may assist in alleviating power struggles, which are crippling other church communities:

Morar, MK: Right. I think it is one of the problems you have with other churches. Where you have lay people leading the church. It can go off on a wrong tension. And that's where you have that power struggle. People end up fighting each other instead of working for the church community. I think this is one of the advantages of the Catholic Church. One advantage is you have priests and the Pastoral Plan; they would show even into one direction; not everybody fighting each other (Morar 1998).

To maintain the vision the priests and the whole pastoral team monitor the situation. This leads to the consideration and planning of training, formation, and awareness programmes. With its knowledge the pastoral team is involved in enhancing conflict resolution. This includes encouraging communities to deal with conflicts caused, for instance, by domineering leaders, and to offer training (Pitso 1998d).

The role change of the priests had a distinctive effect on the leaders and the communities. Mangaliso pointed out:

Mangaliso, FT: Formerly Father was like a superior, difficult to approach, doing just their work. There was no opportunity to talk. Now there is dialogue. Father is at funerals; he sits down and talks with people. It is an open dialogue: the climate of co-operation opens up for constructive correction: Father can say what is wrong and it will be accepted. Formerly he was not ready to listen. That made it difficult. Now he pays attention, is among people, interested in customs. That has effects. It encourages, enhances co-operation. Formerly the community was inactive. People came and sat down. It was a one way dialogue: Father athethe, athethe, athethe (spoke, spoke, spoke) (Mangaliso 1998a).

The former procedure and model of ministry favoured uneasiness: The priest was superior, the people felt inferior. The new way results in respect and community: The

priest is not taken as a high person any more, untouchable. "He is one of us, of the community, but distinct in overseeing (*usongameleyo*)" (Mangaliso 1998a).

Overcoming dependency and enhancing dialogue actually means enhancing the community: "We gained a higher level" (Jeremia 1998a) with the priest listening and the laity being able to carry on on their own. What is remarkable is the persistent emphasis on dialogue on a partnership level, which nevertheless knows distinction. The role has become a new one. Instead of being outsiders, the priests are considered part of the community by the dialogical co-operation.

The role change also affected the catechists. Some left their work. A few were retrained to work as trainer-catechists. This required awareness of the challenges of the new task with regard to their own formation. Trainer-catechist J Timati spoke of the need to avoid confusing old and new things. Formation helps one to become acquainted with the new matters, to become more self-confident when training people, and to do really people-oriented work, heeding their needs. The formation led towards a more dialogical method. The rate of acceptance differed between those able to become trainers and those who were not:

Mpambani, ZP: Some of them were not well, or rather they were not the training kind of people. People who want to talk and talk and talk, whereas we were saying, what do you call this method, anthropological method. You let the people share and then you extract the answers from the people. But they were never properly trained. It was difficult for them to extract the answers. They wanted to give the answers all the time (Mpambani, ZP 1998).

The trainer-catechist recalls:

Timati, J: I like this style. Because at that time we were taught like children at school. Now we sit down and discuss. Now I am sitting with others; I gain something. Because at that time I was training alone. When I came here I was working alone. Now I am advising, now I was sitting down with what I gained at Lumko. Now I found there, when I am talking to people I am free to talk with them. Even if I am training *Uhambo Lwethu*. I train something of which I know that these things will be easier to these people. I will have to look to these people: maybe this thing will be nice to these people. Because I have to see the need of the people. Whether the people like this thing. Not to force them. To talk with them before and to see that this thing is working. Because I am sitting down with the people. And we are talking with these leaders which I train then. And they are talki

operation of this catechist with the people and in the avoidance of force or power. The style of teaching as he describes it is a dialogue of partners.

The catechists' co-operation with the people is supported by their co-operation with the priests. Especially in the initial phase, when still unfamiliar with the new style, it took the form of common preparation and evaluation.

Timati, P: Fr Ntaka came here to help Fr Holzenkamp. We sat down with him. We tried; we looked at it. We came back we sat down, we showed each other how to start, what to say, what to do. Then we got it right and said let's go ahead (Timati, P 1998).

The priest became an enabler for the catechist who in turn experienced *amandla* (power) to train people. The new dependency emerging is that on collaborative formation. This supports the assumption of Mathis that the correlation is not so much that between the needs of a community and the priest's service but between the needs of the community and the talents within the community (Mathis 1999a). In other words: the new roles aim at enhancing the inner-community collaboration.

Timati, P: The co-operation went well. It was quite easy. There was nothing difficult. Now we catechists (*abavangeli*) had a work we had never done so much. But, in the beginning, when all people were taught to teach catechumens, we met here in Umlamli. We began to renew them. Since even if the Father is not there, they have the right to be baptised. That thing now gives us power (*iyasinika amandla*). Let us train with power those people who will teach the people. They should have knowledge. They know the co-operation, a co-operation that will help other people (Timati, P 1998).

Following the vision of the Pastoral Plan was enjoyable (Timati, P 1998). The acceptance of the new role as trainer-catechist is corroborated by one of them who understood well the need to integrate himself into his local community after retirement. Though free to involve himself now in leadership he offered his service as voluntary local trainer for the local leaders:

Timati, P: Yes, they elected me. They said, let me help them to teach the people who want to be funeral leaders. And I am a funeral leader. But I teach them, I don't bury. I am just present (*Ndibakhona nje*). But they carry on. I give it to the people whom we taught that they lead the funeral. On Sunday when we meet, now at this place we carry on this way. I show them only how to do it. I teach only (Timati, P 1998).

The case of a former catechist who lived in his working area illustrates some of the problems. He did not go along with the changes. Having received only little training for his task (Timati, J 1999) he just continued the old way:

Morar, MK: He was a catechist. And very resistant to the ideas about the changes. He really, when there was training, he wouldn't turn up. If there is a funeral, he would long to be the one conducting it (Morar 1998).

The local genesis of community ministry brought a role change for the office holders. Where accepted, this role change changed the face of the communities. This depended on the bishop, the priests, and in part on the catechists as the most influential people.

3.1.6 Supportive structures: Regional co-operation

The maintenance of community ministries is supported by diocesan structures such as the regional meeting. Within the diocese the communities, leaders, priests, and bishop practise a new form of involvement in decision making that leads to higher acceptance of decisions. The regional meeting in September 1993, for instance, concerned the work of the funeral leaders. In his introduction the bishop stated that he was asked to give a ruling how to deal with the funerals of lapsed Catholics. For that he wanted the opinion of all Catholics though he could give a ruling on his own.

The regional meeting followed a consistent approach. It reflected the concern about involvement by method and content. With its structure the regional meeting became something like a formation event (cf. Aliwal Diocese 1993b).[141] Methodologically it was designed to involve the participants as much as possible. The main concern expressed in the role-play was that of church discipline and subsequently of community maintenance. Acknowledging a bad example by giving lapsed Catholics the same kind of funeral as members in good standing could discourage others from their present practice. The real participatory structure of the regional meeting is indicated by the significant change the draft of future funeral guidelines (cf. Aliwal Diocese 1993a) underwent in the process of consultation.

As policy-making bodies, the regional meetings prepare for informed common decision making. In this particular case the decision making went through several phases. The phase with the leaders aimed at widening the circle of participants by attempting to enable the leaders to conduct a similar discussion in their parishes in order to include as many as possible in the process. Thus the regional meetings aim at community-oriented decision making. They prevent leaders from separating from their communities in this regard.

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[141] A role-play as code served to initiate an evaluation talk on the problem raised. Then draft guidelines were read. In groups the participants discussed possible additions and alterations and report back. Then small groups were asked to practise doing the same discussion in their communities.

Years later when some people complained about the "bishop's guidelines" leaders simply replied by saying it were not the bishop's guidelines, but those of the diocese. They were worked out with the contributions of all. In this way collaboration brought about the acceptance of a common policy developed by involving the people of the grassroots.

3.1.7 The senate of the diocese: A wider web of collaboration

The diocesan senate meeting also affects the ministry of the funeral leaders. Regional meetings are linked with planning and follow-up discussions in the senate meeting. In seven years the senate meeting dealt with funerals from four different angles. From 1992 to 1994 it focused on the practical question of the burial of lapsed Catholics. In 1998, for the first time, the faith question of how to deal with the Eucharist at the occasion of funerals was discussed. Then the interfering practice of one priest burying people of another parish needed attention. In 1999 funerals came back on to the agenda during a discussion on financial contributions.

Date	Senate meetings on funerals
02.11.92	Sharing of practice – how parishes deal with the funerals of lapsed Catholics.
08.12.92	Funeral service for lapsed: A draft of guidelines is announced for the next meeting.
09.02.93	Draft of funeral guidelines. It shall be studied in PPCs. A report back is expected the followin meeting. The question is raised "Who is lapsed"?
08.03.93	Report back from PPCs. No proposals for changes so far. Should the issue become a topic fo regional meetings?
01.06.93	Attempt to finalise the guidelines is hindered by few responses from parishes.
03.08.93	Report on preparation for regional meeting on funeral guidelines.
07.09.93	Programme for the regional meeting on the burial of lapsed Catholics
05.10.93	Evaluation of regional meetings on funeral guidelines. Common concern: awareness what is Catholic, who is lapsed. The financial aspect was not decisive in Aliwal, but it was in Bloemfontein. Second draft of guidelines was distributed.
09.11.93	Final text was distributed. It was to be discussed in SCCs, PPCs, and Sodalities.
01.03.94	Final text in Xhosa becomes available.
03.02.98	Funeral with or without Mass and distribution of communion
04.05.98	Priests conducting funerals in other parishes
03.08.99	Stole fees at funerals. Reports on the situation to be submitted at the next meeting.
05.10.99	Stole fees at funerals. Reports were not submitted

Figure 3.1. Funeral-related topics of the diocesan senate meetings, compiled from the minutes of the senate (Aliwal Diocese 1992-2000)

The discussion on funerals for lapsed Catholics is an example of the dynamics of collaborative ministry in policy making. It includes different levels of participation. Collaborative policy making is a time consuming process because it involves many and implementation is slow. In the concrete case a report to the bishop triggered off a sharing within the senate meeting. First the bishop and the pastoral workers were

involved. Guidelines for dealing with the problem were then drawn up. Then the scope was widened to the Pastoral Councils; it remains doubtful, however, whether all of them really got involved. They depend on the commitment of the priests to convey the topic to their parish, as on the frequency of meetings of the pastoral council. Some meet regularly every month, others only three to four times a year, depending on the local circumstances. It took some four months to realise that no proper feed back would happen. The involvement of the communities, however, seemed indispensable in this crucial matter affecting them. The suggestion was made that the leaders be involved by means of regional meetings. The parishes involved got the opportunity to give a feed back on the final draft via their pastoral workers in the senate meeting. In the evaluation of the regional meetings it appears that, in contrast to what happened in another diocese, the question who is lapsed was not so much linked to the financial contributions of a person but to their participation in church life. A second draft of the guidelines was distributed. One month later the final draft was handed out for further discussion in pastoral councils, SCCs, and sodalities. Four months later the final draft was made available in Xhosa. The process took more than 16 months. This involving process depended in its implementation on the pastoral staff.

This somehow slow process of collaborative decision making was welcomed by some in the evaluation on ten years tenure of the bishop (Aliwal Diocese 1996). For others it is a test of patience, especially when quick decisions are needed. The guidelines gained acceptance by this kind of process. The avoidance of rushing through and imposing decisions gave a chance for broad participation and considerable quality enhancement. This is demonstrated in the development of the different drafts for the guidelines. The slow pace is not only caused by the participatory process. The delay is also due to the delaying factors among the pastoral staff, such as possible lack of commitment to the cause, time constraints, and local communication structures.

In 1998 the question of how to deal with the Mass at funerals was raised. There are different perceptions on this topic. In some parishes priests had encouraged the communion givers to distribute the Eucharist kept in the tabernacle in his absence. The senate discussed the matter but reached no final conclusion. It was left to the discretion of the priest how to deal with it. This raises the problem of the ease with which pastoral staff can be transferred when they are working with stable local leaders. If the intention is to avoid a relapse into clerical domination there will be a need to adapt to the local

requirements in an open dialogue, making them part of the discretion. Otherwise transferred priests could change anything arbitrarily at their discretion.

A break down in collaboration among some pastoral workers in 1998 required the re-affirmation of the funeral guidelines. Competencies had to be made clear after one priest conducted the funeral of a controversial person of another parish. Clear regulations (Aliwal Diocese 1998b) by the bishop were issued to protect the rights and work of the local priests - and the leaders - and to avoid the impression of what people could perceive as unjust exceptions. Collaborative ministry appeared as a vulnerable matter. Violations against it threatened it, since it affects all involved, and not only the priests. The bishop's role here was to safeguard the vision and mission of the church and to do this with the knowledge and consent of the senate in a collaborative manner.

The 1999 discussion on the introduction of stole fees to improve the financial self-support of the communities also reflected the concern about the ministry of funeral leaders. The comparison with other denominations showed that these did not charge fees. Most of the denominations distinguish between lapsed, non-paying members and committed members by sending the leaders to conduct the funeral of the first group and their minister for the last. The senate then refrained from the whole matter in favour of searching for other ways of fund-raising in order to respect and re-enforce leadership. Not to collect fees in the case of leaders conducting the funeral would have meant to make an unwanted and unfitting distinction. It would counteract the policy of leadership and indicate that funerals conducted by leaders were somehow a second-class event. Leadership policy has to be consistent and needs to be reflected on as many levels as possible.

The 1996 evaluation (Aliwal Diocese 1996) of the diocesan work after ten years with the bishop shows the awareness of the senate members about the development and their stance towards it. The compilation of the anonymous evaluation sheets does not allow a contextualised insight, as to what parish situation is referred to in the individual statements in a variety of differing situations. Only those notions relevant in our context will be discussed. A common note was on co-operation, communication, common decision taking, and consultation, including several levels including the laity, and "no rush in making decisions". The acknowledged means of achieving this are the senate meetings, the regional meetings, community weeks, and the Diocesan Pastoral Council. Generally, these features seem to be welcomed. They indicate a positive development.

These repeatedly-mentioned features indicate that structures for an all-encompassing collaboration are in place on the diocesan level. "Involvement of the laity in the affairs of the church is becoming marvellous" (Aliwal Diocese 1996).

This conviction of this marvel is not completely shared. There is the impression that "the Bishop and Priests leave it to the Laity to discuss and solve problems that are beyond their competence" (Aliwal Diocese 1986), a statement made with reference to decisions such as those on funerals of lapsed Catholics. There was no further investigation, for example, into what kind of competencies are competing, how they are related to each other, and how they could be enhanced if possible. Another statement reads "There is a lack of training of leaders by some parishes" (Aliwal Diocese 1996). Put together both utterances in this evaluation could rather point at the possibility that there could be a lack of competence enhancing formation activities in some parishes. If concerned about collaboration this could indicate a need to evaluate not only the tenure of the bishop, but also that of the priests, and to develop a common profile.[142]

Another statement recommends enhancing the style of co-operation among the clergy in order to improve co-operation with and among the parishioners:

> Certain lack of enthusiasm about the apostolate: non-attendance at functions and meetings, undue delay in responding to stipulated requirements resulting in incompetence in the Diocese. This carries over to the attitude of parishioners. We should be more single-minded and give ourselves completely to the Church. The bishop could be more insistent that we all toe the line (Aliwal Diocese 1996).

This notion links the lack of competence and possible mal-performance of the parishioners to the conduct of the pastoral workers themselves and their commitment. The lack of training and the reduced commitment to or rather avoidance of the structures in place may be the very causes of the assumed lack of competence.

The suggestions of the evaluation later speak of re-enforcing the vision of the Pastoral Plan among the pastoral staff. The direction taken so far seems to be right to some: "Promotion of the Leaders should be encouraged and strengthened", and the key to this is identified as "it needs to be worked out through commitment and real sense of urgency and diligence especially by the Priests" (Aliwal Diocese 1996).

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[142] Another possible issue involved here could be the question of power and power sharing. By handing over decision making to leaders the priests of course abandon part of their power.

3.1.8 Summary: Community ministry depends on many conditions

The introduction of the local community ministry is a result of many influences. It was a long process that began locally some 22 years after Vatican II. The Council and subsequent developments like Puebla root it within the context of the broader, worldwide church. Theologically it was supported by the Council's theology of the People of God. The need for a change towards community ministry leadership was seen as a matter of justice. The intention of Africanisation was already understood in an early phase as going beyond liturgical adaptation, including leadership.

Among the supporting factors were the euphoria caused by Vatican II. The influence of liberation theology was felt by some. Methodologically, the observation of first steps taken towards community ministry was important as was the use of new methods such as group dynamics, and the exchange of ideas. A contributing factor for the implementation was the existence of a powerful tool, the Lumko Institute, itself in a state of transformation. The method further included the involvement of the people in the planning. Employing user-friendly material enhanced their initial poor response. Concerning the priests as crucial links, workshops were held for them.

The experience of the possibility of change through simultaneously occurring political changes was helpful for some priests. The same applies to the positive effects the first - liberating - changes had on the people. For the communities it was helpful to discover the biblical roots of the development and the fact that the bishops were behind the process, a scriptural and an authority argument. Another factor was the discovery that people could overcome their dependence on priests, and the experience of similar practice in other denominations. The vision of the Pastoral Plan itself played no significant role for the people. This is partly attributed to the speed with which the Pastoral Plan was implemented.

For the Diocese of Aliwal it is noteworthy that it was scarcely involved in the process of the development of the Pastoral Plan. In its implementation the priests played a pivotal role. Their involvement ranged from obstruction to construction, depending on their personal preferences and education. It appears that the kind of leadership envisaged appealed especially to the younger priests trained after Vatican II. With regard to policy it appears that priests unwilling or unable to cope and agree with the new vision remained in office, whereas catechists who were not willing to go along with it left.

The introduction of community ministry brought about a change in the role of priests, who became animators, co-ordinators, facilitators, monitors, and planners. The catechists' role changed mainly to that of a trainer.

Diocesan support structures and inclusive, broad dialogue contributed to the acceptance of the new way of being the church. This support extended to subsequent diocesan regulations, reflecting the intended way of ministry and the holistic approach in decision seeking in the senate, as in the case of stole fees.

The introduction of leadership was a process initiated from above, which soon attempted to include the grass-roots level and tried to improve this inclusion. It appears that in the beginning the SCCs did not play a significant role in producing leadership. The emergence of SCCs and leadership are rather two parallel movements.

There does not appear to be any ground for the fear that the introduction of community leadership could contribute to a destruction of the traditional authority. The increasing independence of people from the priests in the actual execution of office coincided with increasing dependence on them for the introduction and maintenance of community ministry.

3.2 Some general features of the ministry of funeral leaders

Funeral-leaders have a task of particular importance in their communities. After the initial observation some questions arise. Where do these leaders come from? Why were they all male? How often do they act? What is it about them serving as teams? How well do they co-operate with the pastoral workers or priests? How does the relationship with other denominations take concrete shape? What about the Roman Catholic orientation? What qualities are expected from the leaders?

3.2.1 The local origin of leaders - the principle of locality

Funeral leaders emerging from their local Catholic community are the normal and desired feature. The workshops on funerals in 1999 indicate the principle of locality. People prefer to have their own leaders. When asked about sources of hope in these workshops the general replies were God, Christ, Holy Spirit, and Prayer. After the reading of 1 Thess 2:19-20; 3:7-9 they added "the people" and "the leaders" to the list on the newsprint. As familiar and faithful people, they were recognised as source of hope:

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For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you? Indeed, you are our glory and joy... Therefore, brothers, in all our distress and persecution we were encouraged about you because of your faith. For now we really live, since you are standing firm in the Lord. How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy we have in the presence of our God because of you? (1Thess 2:19-20; 3:7-9)

The witnesses of hope and faith should come from the local community. For the participants in the Lady Grey workshop (Wks-Fnl Lady Grey 1999) the familiarity with life and faith were the main reason. Barkly East (Wks-Fnl Barkly East 1999) and Umlamli (Wks-Fnl Umlamli 1999) mentioned their acquaintance with the deceased. In the ideal case the funeral leaders come from the SCC, otherwise from the community. Their closeness to the people was recognised by the shared faith in preaching or in Gospel Sharing in the SCCs. Their particular competence arises from the commonly-lived faith, which in my view supersedes the claimed competence of a pastor by a visit to the bereaved as stated by Spiegel (1978:140) in the considerations on bereavement.

In the Pastoral Planning meeting Pitso (1998b) reported on a funeral in the small community of Phelandaba and the difficulties he met there when arriving just for the Mass. He felt he was in some way a stranger among his parishioners since he was not part of the whole procedure. "To go there as a priest is often difficult. For leaders it would be much easier because they are around the whole day." The principle of locality takes the hue of permanent presence. With it comes the fact of being grounded in the context, being able to react and to respond to it accordingly. This includes the very local circumstances like knowledge about the majority denominations and expectations created by their style, concerning for example the style and length of the sermon.

Accountability is enhanced by the principle of locality. Leaders are accountable to their community, and no longer primarily to a priest. This was also emphasised in GaRankuwa: "Lay-leaders are accountable to their communities" (Vinco 1996).[143] A so-called Catholic Counter Reformation Movement, temporarily existing in the neighbouring parish and approaching some communities of Sterkspruit parish provides the negative test. It consisted of some disgruntled parish members, among them former catechists, who opposed the idea of leader-selection at the grass-roots level and complained about

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[143] "In the past, the catechist was the last link in the chain within the monarchical system of the missions: one bishop – one missionary – one catechist, and then below that the more or less passive congregation.

"old leaders chased away" (Ubuntu News 9.7.99:4). In a meeting called to ease the boiling conflict one parish member stood up and simply said, "if you perform well, you will be re-elected. The community will back its accountable leaders" (cf. Lobinger 1999f).

Accountability enhances the obligation to work for one's own community. One can regard it as a moment of identification. In the conflict mentioned above, publicised in a local paper, a leader knowledgeable in matters of print media, took the initiative and professional skills to get the conflict back to its real place:

> Jeremia, QML: Did you see that in Ubuntu News? That was a terrible thing. To see the bishop in this local paper. I went to the chief editor and told him straight away I can sue you for that. That is not journalism. You must at least check on that. That is a matter of the church. We have a constitution, the Pastoral Plan. And if they don't want it, If there is a problem we talk about it in the SCC, not in the newspaper. And then we talk about it in the committee. And if there is still something, then we get the priest in. No, but in the newspaper? He was shrinking when I told him that. I thought, the writer was a women. But I found out, it was this taxi-man. He must be mad. It is one with this problem from Teresa, these pillow-men. What they said about the women, at the Tabernacle. They don't know the rules of the church. They don't know the constitution. But no, the name of our church in such a way in the newspaper. That is bad. And the people are hurt. There in Tapoleng. They didn't like to find their name there. I can go to court over such a matter. I think he won't do it again (Jeremia 1999).

Led by her *sentire cum ecclesia* (feeling with the church), which includes the bishop and the communities hurt by unfounded accusations that were published unchecked, this leader took responsibility on public ground beyond the confines of a narrow leadership-section.

There are negative aspects of the principle of locality, too. Taking over a task like leadership also means a kind of exposure. Some people shrink from involvement out of fear of gossip by the people (Elia, MP 1998a). As desirable as the idea of SCCs as basis of the community is, and as supportive as functioning SCCs may be for the leaders, the fact remains that one still experiences and perceives an amorphous Catholic clientele with diverse interests and ideas of leadership. This applies especially to those not in touch with the changing reality of their community. Out of touch with the development, they tend to foster expectations from their outdated point of view. They run the danger of hurting leaders with comments resulting from their own disappointment, as when, for instance, they expect a priest to be at their disposal all the time.

He was paid by his leader, was accountable to him alone, and was his one and only representative at the outposts" (Bühlmann 1976:265).

The leaders normally ensure the Catholic presence at funerals, especially if the priest is not present. However, it is not always guaranteed in terms of availability and quality. Although all places are referred to as communities indiscriminately, they differ a lot in size and human resources. This difference is also reflected in the average Sunday service attendance. Several communities have between 150 and 200 or more people attending when the priest is present, others move around 50-100 people, some have less than 15. Though it is not easy to determine, there is a critical limit to leadership resources. The smaller the number of people in the communities, the more limited the pool of possible leaders. The number of eligible leaders is small and the number of available men even smaller, especially since the men normally engage in migrant labour and return only after being pensioned or laid off. The lack of young men because of migrant work sometimes aggravates the situation. In these instances what you see is what you get:

> Ntaka, M: We have a small number of people. We don't have much choice. Now you take a church like Bebeza. How do you get funeral leaders there? There might be one or two people who are eligible. So these people surely are going to vote for those two. It is a church of old men. And there are old men and old ladies. The young men are not there. You get them during Christmas. They are working somewhere (Ntaka 1999).

Such limitation of the ministries to old people is aggravated by their progressive loss of physical abilities like eyesight and mobility (Gqalaqha 1999).

> Mathis, W: There are some only elected but not able to lead like in Hlomendlini. The old men are struggling. They are not literate. But they are telling they have nobody else. They were formerly good leaders. But I think that the time comes when they should step back. But then they need somebody else (Mathis 1999a).

These limitations can also be viewed positively. They provide an opportunity: They pose a challenge to look for new leaders and may open up the possibility of bringing women in (Mathis 1999a).

There are different ways to tackle the problem of the local leadership shortage. In an early phase it was just the priest who took initiative and asked individuals to take a task. In the meantime communities themselves look for new leaders from among themselves. Some provide a kind of in-service training, instructing them in the basics and sharing roles with them (Lekau 1999a).

In the context of a township community MP Elia refers to shyness and lack of self-confidence as factors that reduce the pool of possible leaders. A local community, by its own commitment and active involvement in offering trust and enhancing self-esteem, can help in overcoming the fears related to and hampering ministry:

Elia, MP: I can't say they are afraid but they are shy. To be seen as leaders they are afraid of. They don't believe in themselves. It seems to me that they always want to look at the other people. Not to take part as part of the leadership.

W: How could this shyness be overcome?

Elia, MP: By entrusting a task. That means if they are shy, you say, see, let both of us practise that thing. Like the liturgy of the word (Elia, MP 1998a).

The leaders in Lekau emphasised the community involvement in overcoming fear. Teamwork, community support, positive feed-back, and the example of others are regarded as strategies to counter anxiety. Accumulating experience and training, which builds up knowledge and contributes to increased self-confidence, supports them (Lekau 1999a). The responses to an SCC Note (Sterkspruit Parish 1997a) dealing with support structures for leadership reiterated the issues of togetherness and being unanimous. This support finds its concrete expression during the actual performance of their task: People should be there when the service takes place. The same was said about the training. The community as such should participate in it. Moreover, people mentioned a spiritual perspective. As a community of faith they stressed loyalty to the faith and the need to unite in prayer with their leaders. The leaders who are supposed to support their community are at the same time supported by it.

Another remedy sought to alleviate the shortage of leaders is the effort of the priest actually to lead a community to take responsibility by looking among the catechumens for possible talents. In this way the catechumenate becomes the breeding ground for a self-reliant community. The priest concerned may serve as catalyst for such a process:

Mathis, W: In the group of the catechumens with the teacher, with the sponsors they should find out what is his or her talent. And they found out and they came on their own to ask whether they were available for next year for instance. Catechumenate is not only just some awareness, some prayers, I don't know what, you need, but it is ongoing care for our faith... Finishing the catechumenate is for me the best chance to get new leaders. Because here you have time to test these candidates. They are adults. I think then you have time to test them and they realise as well that they are talented. We talk about what would you like to do. Are you available? What is your business? What do you want to do after the baptism and the other sacraments? For me that is the starting point (Mathis 1999a).

The process of the RCIA is not only the basis for initiation into individual faith but also into active participation in the community of faith. That includes the discovery of talents and their subsequent development. Another resource is the youth. Their advantage is school education. They are literate and have a prospect of being around for some time. They can act like co-operators, apprentices. However, they need the acceptance of the community (Mathis 1999a).

Small communities without sufficient resources tend to resort to leaders from neighbouring communities.[144] In the case of the largest, Umlamli, it happens that they in the meantime express their dissatisfaction of being requested all the time by their *abazukulwana*, their grandchildren of Voyizana, who should have managed to become self-reliant in terms of leadership. Their reaction reinforces the principle of locality (Umlamli 1997). By resorting to leaders from neighbouring communities many problems remain unsolved; and new ones arise. There can be instances of disgrace to the community because the leaders appear drunk. Desperate for leaders these communities have no control over these leaders in the process of their election; they are not accountable to the host community.

Lacking men and having no female leaders a few communities resort to men or ministers from other denominations. Unlike catechism teaching, which can be skipped, a funeral has to be done. Though the people like to have it their Catholic way, some will resort to any man, while, as in Barkly East, the idea that "community comes before culture" allows female leaders and therefore a Catholic service.

The introduction of local leaders has an effect on the communities themselves. The Pastoral Council in Sterkspruit did a short evaluation of the effects of the Pastoral Plan (Sterkspruit Parish 1998a). At that time the introduction of Sunday Service leaders and the funeral leaders received special attention. The training of these has had two main effects: it contributed to the growth in faith and it built up community by bringing people together.

Some SCCs dealt with the same evaluation in preparation for Community Week. They appreciated the sharing in the tasks of the church (*ukwabelana ngemisebenzi eCaweni*), in co-responsibility (*ukuphathisana*). The involvement of many came with the introduction of leadership, thus activating the community. One expressly mentioned the self-perception as members of the Body of Christ.

Pitso (1999a) cautions that one does not have to see the local ministry as fully-fledged. It is in a continuing process of development with different grades of acceptance. Some are convinced of it, others, though informed, have not yet digested it fully. He regards attempts by some to abolish the leadership as an important test. Most people would

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[144] The principle of locality knows variations like in Oshikuku Pastoral Region, Namibia. Smaller communities called service stations are served by the larger neighbouring community (Leu 2000).

miss it though some still bemoan the olden times when the priest was the only leader. The majority gained self-reliance, and the happiness about it weighs too much in the meantime (Pitso 1998a; cf. Timati, J 1999).

The principle of locality, however, does not require an idiosyncratic or isolationist approach. On the contrary the local church becomes more open by networking through such things as regional meetings. The Pastoral Council helps to put the local problems of specific communities into perspective by sharing (Mathis 1999a). In fact, the very locality appears as the other side of the coin called Catholicity. The local community transcends the limits of the family, clan, and ethnic group and opens them up for a broader context, giving space to all:

> Mathis, W: You cannot work on there at one place or on the places on their own. It's related. The exchange is very important. I think that is the essential message all the time to be an open church, Catholic Church. And I think the community is able to give witness as Catholics. And they feel able to do that. I think it is very important to have a place where they are able to come together. Where everybody is the same. There is no clan, or there is no faction or friction or racial differences. You are all the same with same rights and on this level we are one clan as Christians or Catholics (Mathis 1999a).

A weakness of the principle of locality appears when an isolated community has a very closed set up, when one family rules it, and when the community is unable to deal with the power question effectively. This has a negative effect on the development of leadership. J Timati (1999) deplores the situation in one particular community. There are sufficient talented young men and even girls around who were good for preaching and had the courage to do it (*banesibindi*). But they get no chance. In a recent development, however, more men returned to church and seem to be accepted for taking over leadership positions. The weakness of depending on a few domineering leaders in this case could not be overcome by training programmes or formation on the evils of single leadership, but by the influx of human resources which is beyond the control of planned management. Not even an old-fashioned style of leadership could have resolved the problem.

> Ntaka, M: It is a closed community. They don't bother anybody and they don't want to be bothered there. That is one of the reasons, even if you invite them, if they come, they come, but they are not bothered at all. They have got their own church in there and they are doing their own things in it. With the result now, that we find there is some kind of uneasiness going on there. You know, they do just their own thing. I call that a closed community (Ntaka 1999).

3.2.2 Cultural reservations in admitting people to leadership

In traditional rural communities the shortage of leaders may also be aggravated for cultural reasons. There is a gender and adulthood related problem. In the case of

funerals women may be excluded generally and young men as long as they have not undergone the traditional initiation school.

Pitso, TG: I even remember our discussion in Voyizana during the Community Week. About those young men the old man said No, we cannot allow them. They are not circumcised. Those are conditions. So it is the culture which still steps in (Pitso 1998a).

The cultural restriction extends in still another way to women and men alike, even where women would be accepted as funeral leaders. MP Elia pointed at the problem arising from the encounter of Catholic faith and culture with regard to marriage. In a closely-knit community people know each other well. Talk in this case extends to the marital state. People familiar with the church regulations on marriage may discourage others from taking a leadership role, since they have not yet married in church.

Elia, MP: Maybe they are still preparing something. And then if they want to marry they will come to the priest. Some of our people say we have no right in saying this person is not married in church. Because we don't know what he is already thinking about his marriage (Elia, MP 1998a).

There is an understanding of the cultural state of a marriage among people and of attempts to be faithful to the rules of the church. The different perceptions of marriage, the western concept of ratifying a contract and the African concept of a process till *lobola* (dowry of the husband to his wife's family) is paid, are incommensurable but affect at least some communities in their quest for leadership. This problem seems to exist in places with better access to formation and education and longer exposure to a resident priest. Others may never have encountered this problem, as they do not encounter it in the course of their initiation into the church.[145]

3.2.3 Cultural parameters that limit the access of women to the funeral ministry

The link between justice and leadership issues is not always clear. This was the case when the bishops had to be reminded that the overwhelming majority of Catholics were black and most of the clergy were white. It therefore comes as no surprise that the issue of female funeral leaders is not seen as a matter of justice and pursued as such. The parish statistics (see below) indicate an under-representation when related to other

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[145] This indicates the need for a more comprehensive training of leaders by ongoing formation. This should not only comprise church regulations but also their skilful application under certain cultural conditions.

areas of community leadership.[146] Four women are among the 64 funeral leaders although otherwise 66.6% of the leaders are female and 33.3% are male. In other liturgical, ritual areas the statistics show a more balanced representation.[147]

"The *mamas* don't bury": The community of Voyizana rejects female funeral leaders, though the Anglicans manage to have a female funeral leader (Gqalaqha 1999); the people do not like it and they do not like the Anglican practice (Lekau 1999a). Belu (1998) confirmed this when asked about the Anglican female leaders, indicating that they were not very well accepted. Though the village is against women as funeral leaders, and although the minority church does not dare to change anything, Mr Gqalaqha personally would like women to come in.

The issue of the ministry of women varies according to different ethnic groups involved. The community of Voyizana is purely Xhosa. There the cultural restrictions are accepted also by the women, e.g. by Mrs Gqalaqha. Some women themselves decline (Makhobokoana 1999), while others yearn to take on this task; those in Mkunyazo, for example. Their own refusal depends on the cultural tradition, of which the women of course are part. While some say that in Umlamli the Xhosa and Sotho adhere to their tradition (*amaXhosa ayahlonipha amasiko*) (Mpambani, RN 1999), there are cases known from Lesotho where a woman has led the burial and this has been accepted (Timati, J 1999). The Hlubi people are more likely to admit women as funeral leaders. Ntaka explains that this is in line with their attitudes. They are more ready to adapt to new circumstances than the Xhosas.

Ntaka, M: In any thing you do, starting from education and what what, you will find that Hlubis have no problem.
W: Why is it so?
Ntaka, M: I don't know. You see from history, that is what we call amaFengu, the Hlubis are called amaFengu. I know they don't like that word. But we call them so. *Ukufenga*, that means not to be stable. They are too open actually. You see in school they are the majority. In church they are the majority. In Sterkspruit in the shops there, they are the majority. In working places. They go forward. They have no problem. While Xhosas will reserve themselves, *uyabona*, you see? And Sothos. They are slow in taking up. There is no problem with the Hlubis.

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[146] Brain and Christensen (1999:288-9) indicate as broad feature that women are involved in all sorts of ministry. Concerning the funeral leadership they write: "Funerals in townships and rural areas are now routinely conducted by lay ministers and, while most of these funeral ministers are men, women have been selected where they demonstrated leadership qualities which are recognised by the community." This does not apply in the local context of Sterkspruit parish.

[147] Ugeux (1988:143-9) dedicates a whole chapter to the women: "Les femmes, piliers des communautés ...". The high representation of women applies also to the independent churches: "Dans plusieurs diocèses, les femmes sont beaucoup plus nombreuses que les hommes à participer aux petites communautés chrétiennes. Elles peuvent former 65 p. 100 à 80 p. 100 des effectifs réguliers... Cette situation se vérifie également dans les Églises indépendantes" (Ugeux 1988:143).

W: But you are Xhosa.

Ntaka, M: I am a Xhosa. Ha, ha. I know. That's what I am talking about. The Xhosas are very slow. They don't want to commit themselves. And once they commit, they stick to that. Whilst, with the Hlubis, it is easy for them. Even in Dangers Hoek one lady came, a Hlubi. She was in Umlamli in there, in the Hospital. And then she met Fr Platten. All of a sudden she said Fr Platten I am glad to join your church. But you see, I want to say, that is a Hlubi: Fr Platten, I would like to join the church. Because I wouldn't come just like that. We would wait for you, to see shall we attend, would we like to join another church? The Hlubi has no time for that. They are too open for such things (Ntaka 1999).

The cultural perception supporting the reluctance to admit women rests on certain assumptions. In Mkunyazo it was understood as an expression of respect if women do not throw soil into the grave (Mkunyazo 1999). Some simply do not know why things are done the way they are done (Mangaliso 1998a); his assumption is the emotional reason that women are crying. "The men are sheep (*amadoda zigusha*). They don't cry. The sheep just keep quiet. They are not like goats. The women are like goats, they are crying" (Jeremia 1998a). They could wake up the deceased. "That is said so" (Mbovu & Mpambani 1998). Women could curse, *ukuthakatha*. "Well I suppose the main thing is witchcraft. They say probably the women are involved in witchcraft, ha, ha, ha. I don't see any other thing, Father, beyond that" (Makhobokoana 1999). Another possible explanation for the exclusion of women is the desire to protect them and children from defilement: "Women and children are not supposed to be there, I think. I suppose the reason is anthropological because it is a source of defilement, this work of burying a person. Women are to be protected against this kind of thing" (Pitso 1998a). The protective motive shines also through in what Ntaka reports as a custom not known to him:

Ntaka, M: Now, they said to me, you see, if somebody died like this, a car accident, women, Xhosa-wives, are not allowed to go to the graveyard. *Sisidumbu sengozi esi* (this is a corpse from an accident). You see, that I didn't know. But I saw it in Venterstad (Ntaka 1999).

The catechist, himself a Puthi, though knowing well about cultural differences, assumes that the driving force in retaining the practice is the men, not the customs. For him it rather is a gender issue.[148]

Timati, J: In some places there are no difficulties. Because most of them there are Hlubis. They have no objections.

W: Why is it with the Hlubi people?

Timati, J: Because Hlubi haven't got objection, or *amasiko*, *izithethe*. Because with their customs they could cope with Xhosas and Sotho. They haven't got just special customs for them. Now what I thought is, those are men, who are blocking this, the women. Not customs in these places (Timati, J 1999).

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[148] Donaldson (1997:262) traces western influence on male domination: "Southern African women analysts have stressed the colonial origins of male-dominant phenomena with respect to South African women."

Pitso confirms the strong patriarchal orientation.[149] The earlier attribution of leadership roles for instance was directed at men only. "The Sacred Heart women of course are not involved here. It is a strong patriarchal undertone" (Pitso 1999c).[150]

Besides these arguments one can hear "There is no need" (Lekau 1999a; cf. Mpambani, RN 1999) in communities with a sufficient number of male funeral leaders. It is the response that regards "need" as the mere non-availability of people. There is no idea that a need could also be qualified by reasons beyond statistics such as justice or equality. On the other hand this may leave space for further development, overruling the reasons against female leaders mentioned above.

Within the church Morar noticed the absence of the discourse about such issues. The priests, he assumed, kept different positions, from being agreeable with female funeral leaders to active rejection.

Morar, MK: I mean, I never had time to discuss it with Ntaka. I think Zolile, Martin, some of them, they would agree with it. There were others of course that would not agree with it and say, they think that is wrong.
W: Did you have the experience of priests acting counterproductive or just trying to counteract the whole development.
Morar, MK: Not in the area, not when I was there in Sterkspruit. I think the only problem was just Fr "X". He was formed by the area. Sometimes he would come and visit. And I think some of the stories got out that we agree to women. He would talk to the people this is not right. This is not what the church is supposed to be. But luckily, I mean, we did not have too much of that (Morar 1998).

While some priests were training leaders for the new tasks, including women, others outrightly rejected women in public:

Mpambani, ZP: Ok. I remember even then, when we were introducing this Pastoral Plan, also training the leaders in church, one Sunday it happened we concelebrated, Fr Holzenkamp, Matthias and myself. One lady went up to read. He exclaimed loud: Not a woman reading in my church. Ha, that was something. So, I mean, then, you know, at least he accepted that men would read. But not women (Mpambani, ZP 1998).

It appears that priests play a pivotal role not only in admitting ministry, but also in that of admitting women;[151] this is similar to the tensions of the times of change when male readers were admitted.

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[149] Ugeux (1988:149) refers to the progressive marginalisation of men in modern society which leads to a cultural disequilibrium with repercussions on the community life: "Par contre, la marginalisation progressive des hommes dans le société moderne entraîne un grave déséquilibre culturel au sein des familles, qui n'est pas sans répercussion sur la vie des communautés." Though rejected on the first view by J Timati the idea that male resistance to women's leadership could have to do with an – unconscious – male concern about preserving some kind of sanctuary and dignified role of importance could well deserve attention in future research.
[150] Brain (1997:202-3) reflects this reality of the men of the Sacred Heart Sodality assisting the priest.

The exclusion of women is not total. Women are accepted in the night vigil, *umlindo*. There they preach or lead the ceremony. However at the funerals in Voyizana *bahlala kude*, they stand far away (Gqalaqha 1999). In neighbouring Umlamli there are also no female funeral leaders. There, however, women are nearer to the grave. The distance is perceived as unfair since the women were in close contact when they cared for the deceased when still sick (Mbovu & Mpambani 1998).

In exceptional cases women were in the leadership from an early stage even before its systematic introduction. In one case the founder personality of a congregation could conduct funerals as a female leader without opposition. She started the church in that valley and assumed a natural leadership status there:

> Ntaka, M: I think what helped in Bebeza, there is that lady, Anna Sobalisa, who in the beginning was in charge of the church. She started it actually... And then eventually they were growing in numbers and then they told Father and Father started saying Mass for them. And then eventually he built that church. Even then she was still in charge. So that is I think, why there was not much of problem with the people. She was always there (Ntaka 1999).

Mangaliso sees space for change, as the township community of Barkly East has female leaders. As he sees it, the problem lies on the side of the people and the women. It also depends on their courage in accepting new roles. It became also one role of the priest to encourage and to invite them to take a role (Mangaliso 1998a). And at a time when they were still not yet supposed to read the Bible in church, the SCC prepared women for accepting public tasks (Morar 1998).

Outside sources influence the development. In a migrant society people travelling long distances to attend funerals easily experience the practices elsewhere.

> Jeremia, QML: It will change! For example, there at Monti (East London, M.W.), there are mamas who know to stand there. That means, also us, we will end up doing so, and say, *umhlaba emhlabeni* (soil to soil)... We must sit down, and say the year 2000 has arrived. Let also us say, soil to soil. But the things are changing. We begin now. The things change. They go with what? The Bible. There, Ecclesiastes three, there is a time, of what? Of laughter. There is what time? Of crying. There is a time of what? Of ploughing. And of the harvest. All these times are given, to be here. The time will come when we say: soil to soil. It will come. So it is (Jeremia 1998a).[152]

Jeremia presents here a biblically-based and contextually-informed patient expectation of change. In an earlier talk (Jeremia 1998b) she told me that change takes time but will

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[151] This involvement of priests is in line with the commitment of the Synod on Africa (CIA 121): "The Church deplores and condemns, to the extent that they are still found in some African societies, all 'the customs and practices which deprive women of their rights and the respect due to them.'"

[152] For politically conscious people such change is far from unexpected. Hassim (1998:77) notes the significant shift from an oppositional stance to the state to that of engagement to redress gender inequalities.

come and that the women want it. Experiences from elsewhere mix with the biblical experience of everything having its time.[153] Jeremia is also influenced, as we saw earlier with Morar, by seeing the powerful influence of the overall development of the country. With a politically lively mind she observes that culturally the chieftainess in Manxeba does everything. With the democratic change in the country women's awareness of new possibilities is widening: "*Mamas* say we can do everything" (Jeremia 1998a). In the interview she linked the admittance to this doing with the cultural basic pattern of dialogue by sitting down and talking.

Change comes gradually and at a different pace at different places. In Sterkspruit parish it is the townships and a few villages where female funeral leaders act.[154] The change will be determined by the culture and active involvement. One must expect, as it is already happening, that there are different stages of development existing at the same time, influencing each other. Mpambani cautions against a powerful imposed development forced by priests and prefers the patient inclusion of all the people:

Mpambani, ZP: Well, I mean, personally, I maintain people should not be pushed to do anything. I always remember at the seminary we were taught in our pastoral theology, if you want to implement something with the people, repeat it ten times at least. Or even more until they say we are sick and tired of this, when are we going to implement it? Then you know that they are ready. Aye, with the issue of women, I mean, if people, you know, revere, in the rural areas it's something taboo. What would be accepted by one community somewhere does not mean that one other community accepts it there. Wherein let them slowly grasp a thing. If they see like it is done there, maybe they can start thinking in their minds. Rather than saying: I mean there are no men in these churches, so women have to take over, even if it comes from the priests, then that is really impossible, it affects sort of the people's culture. They would rather let, you know, another man from another church to conduct the funeral. Well, Mike, I mean socially speaking, culturally speaking, you know women are not even allowed to come closer to the grave (Mpambani, ZP 1998).

The gradual change goes hand in hand with the principle of accepted diversity. What happens in one community does not have to happen in others, but is accepted and may well have an impact or influence on other settings. Magibili (2000) from Mkunyazo sees several steps for a future development: First women came in to lead the Sunday services. Now they are to be commissioned as extraordinary ministers for the Eucharist. And later one will get them as funeral leaders. At present the culture does not allow it, but it is changing.

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[153] It seems from the local findings that, with the exception of the – wrong – reference to church law, the rejection of women is rather culturally based, not biblically as Olu (1997:75) assumes with reference to 1 Cor 14:34-35: For men to be under the leadership of women would mean an act of disobedience to the word of God.
[154] Bishop Bucher (2000) told me that female funeral leaders were common in the diocese of Bethlehem.

If the women agree to take the role of funeral leaders then they need training in order to encourage them: "If the *mamas* are trained, they are stronger than *Ntates*" (Timati, J 1999). Two young women attending the workshop on funerals for Thabakoloi and Emvakwentaba gave a proof of this strength. The workshop used the pending funeral in Thabakoloi as example. Prior to the funeral it was established that there was no problem to have women in Thabakoloi involved. There they acted the first time, assisted by the priest. The people from Emvakwentaba said afterwards that they performed nicely, but that this was only possible among the Sotho from Thabakoloi, not among the Xhosa in Emvakwentaba.

Figure 3.2. Funeral leaders at the grave: M Yaphi, MP Elia, and A Elia hold the soil to pour it onto the coffin. Photo by M Wüstenberg, Barkly East 15.7.2000

Barkly East is one of the few places with female funeral leaders. Although they have been introduced, they need continuing support by training and by the community. The SCC is instrumental in supporting the women.[155] Consisting almost exclusively of women[156] it is a further source of strength, aware of the problems and concerned about new women getting into ministry:

"Now there is few women doing this task. You have one in your community." "We have no problem with that." "Other churches like the Anglican also have female funeral leaders." "But mamas don't like to take this task." "Why is that so?" "They are afraid of all the different churches present at funerals." "They fear to speak in front of so many eyes." "The old customs were against women standing above the grave." "When there was the funeral the woman had to stay at home." "But that has changed now. Also other churches have women." "*Kunzima, siyoyika.* It is difficult. We are afraid of that task." "But Mama Anastasia has taken it?" "Anastasia, *uyazama,* she tries." "We support her." "How do you do this?" "We encourage her to be trained." "We do this in our SCC." "How is that happening concretely?" "We talk about problems she has. We discuss them among us" (SCC Barkly East 1999).[157]

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[155] This feature is also observed by Ugeux (1988:147), though economic power becomes more determining: "La petite communauté chrétienne représente donc une étape importante dans la reconnaisance sociale de la femme, alors que son rôle économique est de plus en plus déterminant."

[156] Ugeux (1988:146) explains the lack of men in SCC within his context: "La majorité des participants sont des femmes, qui ont le même droit à la parole qu'eux, mais rarement le même degré d'instruction. En oute, l'absence des hommes africains de leur foyer est une plaie sociale don't se plaignent les épouses, et les pasteurs, depuis longtemps. En effet, dans une société qui practique la séparation des sexes, les hommes se sont toujours montrés trés indépendants et se réunissent volontiers entre eux, laissant le plus grande partie des charges du ménage e de l'éducation des enfants à leurs épouses. De plus, ils sont les plus nombreux dans le catégories sociales favoritées, don't le peu d'engagement dans ces communautés est étudié plus loin."

[157] Here happens what Oduyoye (1995:198) calls "Women support women."

Anastasia Elia, the first female funeral leader in Barkly East, reveals the sources of her courage: they are faith, character, the example of others, and support by the priest. She simply loves the work for the church, "to give to the living words of comfort." She is not afraid, "because I know the work of the funeral in the church" (Elia, A 1998a). The involvement needs the consent and conviction of the woman herself to overcome or transform the cultural patterns she is part of, as seen in Voyizana.[158]

First priority rests with the Christian community and its needs. In a township with female funeral leaders a woman buries and throws soil together with the other leaders (Mangaliso 1999a).

Elia, MP: Also Maria Maruping was elected one year. We have reasons. It is important to pay attention to
    the situation of the community. Although we look also at the culture. By that way of our situation as
    brown people (abantsundu) the women had not the right to lead a funeral. But the situation of our
    community forces us that we give the women the chance to be elected to lead funerals.
W: What do people say about that.
Elia, MP: The people discuss this. Some welcome that. Others oppose it. They don't like it. When we see
    the situation we compare how many do welcome and how many dislike it. What are the reasons?
    Those who like it are many. Those who reject it are few. They have their right reasons. But the
    situation and those who are in favour also have good reasons and therefore we follow the reasons
    of those who are many (Elia, MP 1998a).

Though culturally women didn't have the right to lead a funeral the situation demands the inclusion of women in order to satisfy the needs of the community. Community emerges as the culturally-rooted basic concept and concern here, this time as the church community. In a later talk MP Elia pointed out that the community wants the leaders to have the community as priority. And it is the women who want things to happen, bathatha umsebenzi (they take the work). He compared it with the family, where the man is the head of the house, but you see men looking down, and nothing is going on. This development also meets opposition. Maintaining cultural root-patterns, the important cultural aspect of the procedure is dialogue, seeking consensus while giving all the opportunity to air their views.

The winds of change are apparent. Irrespective of the personal attitude of women and men alike a rough idea of possible conditions for change appears. First of all there is the notion that culture changes. The speed of change depends on various factors, one of them is the readiness of women to get involved, another is general socio-political conditions. In a big community like Umlamli, where there are enough male leaders, the

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[158] Snyder and Tadesse (1995:181) emphasise that women take an active role in transformation: "Even when the external environment is favourable, an improvement in women's conditions does not follow automatically. Women must take the future into their own hands, and they do just that."

need for female funeral leaders is not seen. The good quality of the male funeral leaders is cause of satisfaction and pride. Women are, however, introduced in the area of Sunday services. In the township situation of Barkly East, where there is a shortage of leaders, a sort of guiding principle for change was formulated: the needs of the community come first. Formation and the support of the community and of the SCC play a role. Expectations in favour of including women in this kind of ministry are influenced by the political environment, which raises the issue of gender equality. A precondition for this is the awareness of and exposure to relevant experience. The role of the pastoral workers is pivotal insofar as it can positively encourage change by way of opening doors; it can also be obstructive. The role of the pastoral worker also in this context is to be a facilitator and encourager.

3.2.4 Interferences by violating the principle of locality

The general experience is that of loyal co-operation between the leaders and pastoral workers:

Ntaka, M: But generally speaking they are loyal. That is my impression. You know all those churches; there was nothing. The only church that I had to think twice before I go there, was at "X" (Ntaka 1999).

The more serious threat seems to come from pastoral workers directly as in the earlier mentioned case or indirectly by lack of supervision over their own leaders as was the experience of the community of Lady Grey. Its committee decided to apply the guidelines of the diocese to the funeral of a lapsed Catholic. The deceased was the friend of a priest of a distant parish. Leaders of that distant parish conducted a full funeral rite in the township-hall and made accusations against the local community (Pitso 1999c).

The effects, as noticed by the priest in charge, was the feeling of the community of being belittled by those leaders bussed in. The family of the deceased treated the local leaders rudely and the priest in charge was verbally attacked in absentia. The youthful new funeral leaders became despondent in taking up their ministry. Young leaders were discouraged. They assumed that they would not be able to resist the kind of psychological pressure when intimidated by elderly people in the gnawing division within the community and even between priests. Moreover, the whole community experienced a split since some of its members supported the family of the deceased. In general the

whole event meant a major setback for a community just recovering from another rift caused by troublemakers.

The major problem of this destructive conflict seems to be that leaders from another community violated the principle of locality. Consequently the bishop was invited to address the community concerned on a Sunday to talk about the matter. He also had a meeting with the leaders who interfered in the community of Lady Grey. They initially believed that their action was correct. After a while they understood their mistake and interpreted their own involvement in cultural patterns. They finally understood it as undue meddling in another family. They understood that leaders should confine themselves to acting within their own community only (Lobinger 1999a). As a means of correction the bishop stepped in to conscientise the parish. This should normally have been done by staff accountable to him. He offered to intervene in order to safeguard the vulnerable system of leadership.

In another case the family of a former religious sister asked a leader from another parish to conduct a funeral. He used the books and dressed in church garments. The family made the arrangements for the funeral without consulting the local committee. The leaders of the community were upset and complained to their priest, knowing that leaders are leaders for their own communities only (Pitso 1998c).

This case shows both the violation of the principle of locality and the loyalty of the local leaders to the pastoral vision, expressed in their complaint. It appears again that a major threat actually comes from (former) church personnel. The temptation in such a situation is to approach the priest and ask him to solve the problem. In this situation of a disturbed community it becomes the role of the monitoring priest to empower the community by analysing the causes and taking appropriate counter measures like formation. These cases of interference, however, are rather rare and thus are manageable.

Pitso, TG: But at the same time it is a very small number. That they manage to eclipse. Most of our people I think they don't get that kind of poison. So it is a few whom we manage to handle I think (Pitso 1998a).

3.2.5 Frequency of funerals and commitment

The frequency of funerals affects the leadership. There are about ten per year in a big community like Umlamli (so in 1999) or seven in Barkly East. For smaller communities it can be much less, even not a single funeral at all.[159] Therefore some leaders of small communities get little practice. For them a vicious circle develops. They are already hampered by limited human resources and the practise is missing. This makes them vulnerable to uncertainty, as in the cases of Hlomendlini and Jozanas Hoek.

In these cases there is a greater tendency to copy from other denominations whose practice they experience. One can observe this in the terminology used. Leaders use the words of other denominations when referring to pouring soil into the grave: Soil to soil, dust to dust, instead of referring to the words provided in the Catholic liturgy. This indicates less experience with their own rite and familiarity, by constant exposure in their neighbourhood, with the rites of other denominations.

One method of countering the lack of experience with their own procedures, even in a larger community like Umlamli, is the practice of the funeral leaders of meeting before the funeral in order to refresh and practise their roles. Frequent practice contributes to self-confidence.

The low frequency of funerals naturally affects the practice of the communities. It means there is less pressure to care about this area of leadership. They may rather be surprised when there is a death, realise the lack of leaders, and approach the priest or leaders from other communities.

A frequency of ten or twelve funerals per annum seems not to be too much and too demanding in terms of commitment. Over the years some seasons appeared to have a higher incidence. Easter week 2000 in Umlamli was an extreme example. With funeral leaders normally also involved in the normal liturgies, they had in addition to cope with two funerals. Even with more leaders available this led to a very high time commitment: Holy Thursday the liturgy; on Friday morning the fetching of the corpse, later in the morning the celebration of the Seven Words, afterwards the Good Friday liturgy, followed by the vigil for the first funeral. Saturday morning the funeral programme and

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[159] In a recent development there seems to be an increase in numbers due also to AIDS related death cases. The development is too recent to allow further inferences at the moment.

liturgy for the first funeral, fetching of the coffin for the second funeral, in the evening the Easter vigil, followed by the funeral vigil. Easter Sunday, then, first the Sunday Service and then the second funeral. This list does not even include the meetings in preparation for the various liturgies and the funerals. It was not always the same leaders who were actively involved, but most of them had to be present anyway in the context of their village. This admittedly quite extreme example shows the high degree of commitment and involvement of the leaders.

3.2.6 Acting in teams: Task groups

The priest and the catechist were used to mostly conducting funerals on their own, as did the few former helpers (Timati, J 1999).[160] "They didn't know anything about teams" (Ntaka 1999). So the introduction of teamwork was something unfamiliar to those involved. When the Pastoral Plan was introduced "we didn't know so well to work together" (Gqalaqha 1999).

The present observations showed that the funeral leaders are now not working as single leaders but in a team.[161] A team takes different forms. In some instances it is a team made up solely of funeral leaders, in other cases the team is led by a funeral leader who is assisted by others, for instance Sunday service leaders or extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist. Sometimes, as we have seen, the team is constituted by the inclusion of former leaders or other respected people. It can be regarded as a task group. Though it may not exactly represent what was envisaged as task-groups when the Pastoral Plan was laid down, it remains a fact that an important task is addressed by a group.

> 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 (Bate 1999a:31).

In this study our analysis will disclose a different picture. With the Renew process playing no role in the area under research and the SCCs appearing often weaker than expected, the outstanding feature of community building and serving humanity is rather

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[160] A witness to positive early reflections on community ministry in Transkei, Baumeler (1972:121) seems to assume single leaders in charge of different tasks in their communities, not teams. He writes mostly in terms of options, not description or its analysis.

reflected in the multifaceted reality of a leadership working in teams. Reading the report for Community Week 1999 (Sterkspruit Parish 1999b) the bishop (Lobinger 1999e) commented that it appears that the leaders actually form the kind of task group envisaged in the Pastoral Plan as means of community building. They have an indispensable role to play and are a catalyst in the ministry of community building when carrying out their task. They are not an arbitrary accessory, which could be left out, but an essential cornerstone in the vision of the Pastoral Plan.

The leaders' advantage compared to SCCs is the concrete task, their project, which brings the leaders together, especially if they are in a team ministry and in the group of leaders. Their training and formation reaches beyond the confines of the leadership, attracting many more community members. It is their concern to build up community, whether as catechumen teachers, catechism teachers, Sunday service leaders, or funeral leaders.

As response to power-hunger, and to the tendency of some to stay in a position for ever and to regard it as their own, it was a clear policy from the inception to get people to work in teams of leaders (Mpambani, ZP 1998).

The work in teams also helped to overcome initial fears when introducing leadership. There was a strange perception that ministerial work was the task of experts. Teamwork showed people that the work is actually easy by sharing tasks (Mbovu & Mpambani 1998; Timati, J 1999). For younger leaders the co-operation with experienced leaders increased their acceptance (Sedidi 1999). The inclusion of as many people as possible into the process helped to disperse fears and suspicions:

Mbovu, PM: Some people saw it and understood, really that the work goes easily. It must be done together. There should be a group that does the work. One must not depend on one person only. Then they started to explain so that all may understand. But it never took one week. It took a very long time till the people understood exactly what was going on. Then they understood. The campaign took more than six months (Mbovu & Mpambani 1998).

The process of understanding teamwork took time. It included raising the awareness of the need to avoid new dependency on single leaders as it existed before with the priests. Another fear in the communities was about position and that people could start dominating each other, aiming at higher positions. The introduction of teams and open,

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[161] The local teams are built as ad-hoc teams, whenever a funeral is pending. In Otjiwarongo, Namibia, a year plan is compiled with one team of leaders assigned as stand-by team for all the funerals during a particular month (Bostander 2000).

common training for all showed that these fears could be overcome. All were invited to watch the training and to comment on the performance (Mbovu & Mpambani 1998).

Though mostly welcomed, the reaction to team ministry was mixed in some cases. Gqalaqha (1999) himself liked it, whereas the older leaders of the small and close-knit community didn't like it: *Zihamba nzima*, they had difficulties. From their context it appears that it did not match their - culturally informed - style.

Teamwork has also community-related effects. It builds up the community as a whole and results in attracting others to the ministry. When observing the leaders at funerals some participants get the idea that they want to get involved in the ministry, too (Elia, MP 1998a).

The group of leaders in Mkunyazo added that the teamwork is supportive if one has to work in an unknown environment, for example conducting a funeral at a remote place. It also helps to adapt to unknown situations. With the sharing of different skills and gifts it widens the knowledge. Especially in the case of funerals, different opinions, examples, and experiences come in (Mkunyazo 1999).

Teamwork proved to be a contribution to conflict solving in cases of domineering leaders. Integrating them in a team avoids causing the feeling of being rejected. It gives relief when people feel overpowered or overburdened by their task (Ntaka 1999).

In the eyes of Fr Morar the whole new set-up was supportive of the team idea. The pastoral team[162] itself was leading by example when training as a team. Gospel sharing was taught to be done by involving many people in changing roles. The liturgy training, very intensively done with regard to the liturgies during the Holy Week, aimed at teams working together and different teams working at different days as far as possible. The formation material of Lumko and the *Bongan' iNkosi*[163] referred to teams in their illustrations. Moreover the reference to daily experience like singing and the example of the family show the idea of sharing and working together (Morar 1998). The workshops and the introduction of *Our Journey Together* were helpful for learning co-operation (Gqalaqha 1999).

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[162] It would be quite worthwhile an objective for further study to investigate the impact of the pastoral staff working as team on the design of the community leader issue.

[163] *Bongan' iNkosi* (:232-244) consequently works on three leaders, "K1-3", for the Sunday service, for the funeral, however, it indicates just "K" for leaders.

A threat to this community enhancing kind of teamwork is the perception of some that the leader is the right hand of the priest, *iinkokheli zizizandla zomfundisi*. This was said in a community where the leaders were reluctant to admit new ones to their ranks to the displeasure of their own community. In such rather exceptional cases the intention seems to be to reassert their own position and power with reference to the priest (Mfinci 1998). This perception was around, and is well remembered by Morar who left the area middle of 1993. Pitso reminds us of another threat deriving from the different talents leaders have. He sees it as necessary that leaders share their roles honestly without degrading some to being mere passive gap fillers:

Pitso, TG: Another thing is, the sense of sharing the ministry with others could also be emphasised. People have different gifts. One could be an excellent preacher at a funeral. To an extent that people will start demanding that one. Though there is a team, they are looking for that one. And if he is not willing to share then no, even though we are a team, then he starts preaching. That is another disadvantage... So sharing can be useful, but if one or two just accompany the other one, and do nothing but that, that could be a danger (Pitso 1998a).

3.2.7 Funeral leaders and priests – an area of confused expectations

The motivational power and qualification of funeral leaders has to stand firm against the former practice that the priests normally conducted the funerals. This raised certain expectations and perceptions of the roles taken in the ritual, both on the part of the priests and of the people. Historically there was a clear hierarchy: the priest was expected to bury all of the faithful. In his absence a catechist or a helper took over. In some instances the priest just came to celebrate the Mass and left the rest to the catechist. It was a complementary ministry with clear-cut roles:

Mpambani, ZP: Fr Holzenkamp, he wouldn't go to all the funerals. He believed in celebrating Mass. Then he would invite the family members to come for Mass either during the week or in the morning of the burial itself. Aye, then he wouldn't go to the graveside. I can't remember well. - The catechist, yes, the catechist would go there (Mpambani, ZP 1998).

Lapsed Catholics were buried by the helper (Elia, MP 1998a; Mbovu & Mpambani 1998). It was a hierarchy indicating different classes of funerals expressing the state of the deceased.

Morar, MK: There was a kind of hierarchy still, so to say, if Mokesh (the priest, M.W.) cannot come or Ntaka then at least Tata Joseph or Tata Phillip (the catechists, M.W.). And only if those are not available then for God's sake let's take the leaders (Morar 1998).

This model changed gradually over the time and with growing experience. By 1995, for instance, the community of Voyizana did not ask for the catechist any more, when the priest was not available, but turned directly to the leaders of neighbouring Umlamli.

The presence of the priest was linked to certain expectations. The celebration of the Eucharist was the thing Father offered. It was done for the faithful only. Some believe in the blessing of the priest (Gqalaqha 1999). It was only priests who assumed that people believed that their presence would provide a kind of "ticket to heaven" (Morar 1998). Morar swiftly added that he might be wrong in that conclusion.

The demand for a priest is not linked only to the request for the Eucharist. There is also the perception that his presence confers a special honour (Mbovu & Mpambani 1998). This honour is rooted in the understanding that the leader of the people is the priest. And at that special occasion the people want to see their leader. He gives dignity to the celebration and is seen as caring for those in need (Makhobokoana 1999). A special variety of this honour is that the presence of the priest is understood as a reward for people who belonged to the church for a long time, for some special people, especially for sodality members (Morar 1998). "They say, this person went to church long ago. They say, he should be buried in church. They say this person was going to church a lot of years, he deserves the priest" (Gqalaqha 1999). All this indicates that the perception of the role of leaders and the underlying vision is not yet clearly developed for some. Morar: "I mean, our idea about developing community and leadership was something new. So that is going slow. And I'm sure it is still going on" (Morar 1998).

The multi-denominational environment may have some pressurising effect on communities when they demand a priest, *umfundisi*, for the funeral. He is wanted because other churches have their *abafundisi*, although the leaders have often received a more thorough formation than some of the ministers (Gqalaqha 1999). With their garments and insignia the presence of these *abafundisi* is impressive in a time of troubled minds: "And for their ministers themselves the whole thing was about dressing up, you know, the cloak or mitre or whatever they have to impress the people" (Morar 1998). Circumstances suggest that in some churches the eminent role for an *umfundisi* is to conduct a funeral. The litmus test for Pitso is to look at their further activities. There is very little else besides the funerals, he assumes. At the funerals, however, they have to advertise themselves, also because of economic pressure to make a living. They bury anyone unknown to them and boost their community by this. The religious orientation is rather in the background. It is not a matter of evangelisation for them (Pitso 1998a). The widespread emphasis on ministers themselves conducting funerals sometimes gives rise to unease in a Catholic community. This happens especially if the

absence of the priest is not explained. Some tend to make jokes if no Catholic priest, *umfundisi*, is present, saying it is only the St Anna women (Bebeza 1999).

Doubts about the competence of leaders were mentioned by some in Voyizana. This, however, is a place where the attendance at formation is significantly low. At the same place some leaders from the neighbouring community of Umlamli, who occasionally assist, were regarded as on the same level as a priest (Gqalaqha 1999). Tiny communities request the presence of the priest simply as a qualified person. They lack leaders and are interested in a dignified procedure. Mathis (1999c) reported a very aggressive demand, indicating the high emotional charge attributed to the funeral. The demand for the presence of a priest is at times emotionally charged. Some people demanding the priest have foam at their mouth: *bayaxhapha amagwebu* (Gqalaqha 1999). The desire for dignity is also expressed in the dialogue during a workshop in a smaller community.

Leader: What is about drinking beer in the liturgy?
W: What do you mean by that? I don't know any liturgy where we drink beer.
Leader: What about men who drink beer at the funerals?
W: You must explain that a bit better. What is it about the beer?
Leader: There is some leaders who drink beer before the liturgy. And when they start to lead it, they are drunk.
W: That is happening here? Whom are you talking about? These two men here? I cannot imagine that they take their task not seriously.
Leader: Not those two. But there are others.
W: I don't understand. Why do you elect them? It is up to you to agree to them. And we wouldn't accept people of whom we know that they conduct in an undignified way.
Leader: It is not us, Father. But you see, we are few. And we cannot be around all the time. Then we have to resort to this leader from Blue Gums. And he likes to drink.
Leader: And then the ceremony is not nice anymore.
Leader: It is a disgrace. We want *umfundisi* to do the funerals (Wks-Fnl Hlomendlini 1999).

These notes from the memory disclose the problem of a community which is too small to provide sufficient leaders. It depends on other communities and has to borrow their leaders, having no say in their selection. If small or unprepared groups are regarded as communities, they are overburdened in an unjust way. It offers the pretence of a community whereas the resources are not sufficient to provide the vital leadership. At the same time it deprives the congregation concerned of a say in the leadership issues concerning itself since the leaders come from somewhere else. This makes real accountability almost impossible. The solution to the problem seems therefore not so much to give in to the demand for priests as to provide appropriate structures for accountable leadership.

This desire for priests and the emotions are realities the leaders are exposed to. Some have the strength to tackle this. It is their personal faith, rooted in scripture, that helps A Elia to overcome this: "I like the word that says, the field is prepared, it wants the workers. I like the works of the church. When it comes forward I must do it, as the leaders told us here we must do this and this, on this day it is needed. I like to do that. So I overcame that some like and others don't like it" (Elia, A 1998a). For others it may just be too high a profile and too scary:

Pitso, TG: Being the funeral leader he is *umfundisi*. It is an occasion where really the gift of *umfundisi* is highly respected. Highly displayed. A funeral without *umfundisi* will be really a bad one. So the role is too high. Too high for me. I can't see myself as *umfundisi*. That is a status, which could be a scare (Pitso 1998a).

To tackle this problem concerning the perceived hierarchy, the involvement of the higher levels of the diocesan hierarchy was helpful. The co-operation of the bishop at regional meetings was helpful because of his authority. Sometimes a young priest found it difficult to convince people. Too many remained unconvinced about the new way, but finally the acceptance by many was an encouragement for the others:

Morar, MK: It was reinforcing when we had these regional workshops. And then the bishop was there. And the people would ask, and then the people would discuss, you know, about the hierarchy at funerals and also hear that people can do the funerals.
W: So the authority of the bishop was needed to actually enable people to take their own thing up.
Morar, MK: Right. I don't think they would have made it on their own. And also to accept it from me as a young priest. I mean I appeared very young, so it made it easier when the bishop was there. Also with the other leaders in the workshops. I can't remember that anybody would speak, oppose any ideas. Sure there were a lot of people who were opposed to it. Reluctant to change. But because so many other people were willing to go ahead with these things they followed (Morar 1998).

In one important case the senate of the diocese rejected funeral stole fees and stated that the work of funeral leaders was equal to that of priests. Stole fees charged for funerals conducted by priests but not for funerals conducted by leaders would have clearly attributed a second class status to the work of the leaders.

In the practical field priests create a new awareness about roles when they exercise restraint when present at funerals. By leaving as much ritual as possible to the leaders and just doing what they are essentially required for and by active sharing they can reinforce the vision and avoid the impression of leaders as stop-gaps. "If we for instance go for a funeral, then I refuse insistently to bury. Because that is the duty of the leaders. And they can do that. What I can help with is the Eucharist" (Mathis 1999a). In this way a kind of complementary ministry emerges, the different tasks not alternating and

competing but complementing each other. The specific task of the priests is then only the celebration of the Eucharist.[164]

I experienced the effectiveness of this approach on several occasions, for instance at the funeral of N Ncindi in Umlamli. The ceremony started on Saturday with the Eucharist, followed by the funeral programme. When going to the sacristy after the Mass the leaders invited me to take off the liturgical garments, since I was not needed for the further procedure, which was done by them. The same happened with the committee in Mfinci (1999) about the funeral of one parishioner. They asked formally about the availability of the priest already assuming that he would not be able to attend and saying they would easily manage on their own. For priests, as for the people, it is essential to follow the new practice and to respect it. In all the questioning the leaders develop self-esteem:

Mathis, W: They are proud, they are proud of their duties. And they insist that they are taken seriously then. If they are the committee, if they are the SCC, if they are leaders, and I have to decide when they have to discuss and to make the decisions then they are proud. But they insist on being respected in that after all by the priest himself as well as by the people (Mathis 1999a).

Leaders themselves are involved in explaining the practice of funeral leaders as something normal. They know and point at similar practices in other churches like the Anglican and Methodist, the so-called main-line churches (Mpambani, RN 1997). Nevertheless, the change of mentality will probably remain a task for some time. For the many Zionist groups the most important task of the religious leader is the funeral. Catholics may for a long time suffer from the feeling that their own funerals have a lower status because they are "only" led by community leaders. They may also suffer from the fear that the ministers of other churches could engage in a kind of sheep-stealing by concentrating all their energy on the conducting of funerals. They hear the question: where is your *umfundisi*? (Pitso 1999a).

3.2.8 Supportive ecumenical influence

The plurality of denominations was outlined in chapter one. It affects families with members belonging to different denominations. Funerals as communal events bring people from all walks of life together. They present an opportunity for ecumenical encounter, probably the most intense one of all ecumenical encounters.

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[164] Some may regard this as a reductionist perception of the priest. In the context it appears rather as a measure in times of transition and awareness building with reorientation required from all.

The Catholic leaders are well aware of the practices in the other denominations. Concerning funerals it is well known that also the other denominations work with leaders. The most convincing reason for this is that with most funerals taking place on Saturdays, and with several funerals on the same day within a parish with many communities it is simply impossible for a minister to attend all of them: "And the funerals are also done by the leaders. Imagine: Every Saturday we have funerals. There is always several in one parish. How could *umfundisi* manage?" (Mpambani, RN 1997). This necessity contrasts with the also ecumenically influenced request for *umfundisi* being always present as in the case of the AIC ministers. The great number of funerals together with the example of several other denominations should make the work of local funeral leaders more acceptable in the long run. This hints towards an acceptance of their own practice, supported by the ecumenical exposure. This extends to the sharing of roles and the working in teams. Diversity is here also found among the denominations. Belu from the Anglican Church stressed still that he was mainly the trainer for the leaders, whom they call *abashumayeli* (preacher) or sometimes subdeacons. "I teach them to co-operate. And if I am there I share tasks with them. They read then for example certain prayers" (Belu 1998). Generally their *abashumayeli* work in teams. And if only one is present he or she will involve others: "Also the Anglican Church when they are burying they are a team on their own" (Timati, J 1999).

It is a known fact that in the main-line churches funeral leaders are selected by their communities together with their minister and accepted by their communities. The individual communities have their own leaders (Mpambani, RN 1997). This indicates that the "new" Catholic practice works within a well-known framework. Concerning the Eucharist the ecumenical practice is also known. RN Mpambani knows about the Methodist Church in Umlamli celebrating the Last Supper at the occasion of funerals.

Generally speaking the ecumenical togetherness is friendly. With the differences apparent for instance in the lack of Eucharistic sharing this oneness can most probably be understood as amicable togetherness. This sentiment may have been expressed by a Zionist minister after a funeral in Mfinci 1994, when he thanked in his speech the Catholic Church which he regarded as the oldest and the origin of the others.

The ecumenical togetherness contributes to the appreciation of formation both among the denominations and among the own Catholic community. The trainer-catechist J Timati attributes the former lack of proper training of the Catholic funeral helpers to their

tendency to invite rather a Zionist minister, regardless of the qualification, to do the funeral. He assumes that their status symbol, the collar, was the criterion. In the meantime this changed. The Catholic leaders are normally respected by the other denominations.

Timati, J: They say the Catholic Church now is growing. We know these people from the beginning. Because this church was looking only for *umfundisi* to do all things. They used to ask us. But now, we found now, they are growing. They are doing things by themselves (Timati, J 1999).

This respect for the Catholic leaders by other denominations is observed elsewhere (Elia, A 1998a). There seem to be indications that the acceptance coincides with the state of having trained leaders. When challenged by a somewhat disgruntled Catholic about the fact that priests are not always at funerals, RN Mpambani pointed at two features: the similar practice in other denominations and the training: "I just told him he should come to the workshops, since we work with leaders like the Anglicans. They also work with leaders. And the Methodists too. When the ministers are available, they attend. And in all other cases we do it on our own" (Wks-Fnl Umlamli 1999).

The ecumenical encounter contributes to the appreciation of formation. One of the better educated leaders points from her perspective at a difference between denominations, simultaneously stressing the desire for proper initiation and training:

Jeremia, QML: The others cry, they make a noise. They are not instructed, these people. There at these churches, you come in today. They write your name in the book. In the following week you are baptised. The next week you pay your money. And the priest is going to buy the garment. He comes with it and dresses you. You take two weeks, and in this third one you are dressed. Because you are a full member. At that time you don't know anything, you have not even the basic foundation about this church, you just walk in. You know nix. That is why, when they open the Bible, they make the big thing, the noise, they say liiiii. You see, we don't know to do that, us. It is necessary to stick to a topic. You make noise and do everything and tear the garments, these big ones. There is very big difference, a very big one.
W: I heard about some people complaining for example about being taught for a long time by *Uhambo Lwethu Kunye*.
Jeremia, QML: Those people, who come to our church? No, we make a long hunting excursion (*uphulo*), we advise them. We visit them. *Uhambo Lwethu Kunye* is the most important book. It is the very book to get the start, to get the foundation where to go now. Yes, you get it there, it is right, this book. And I, I didn't know to share the word. I said, when the opportunity there comes, I choose one word. I talk three times, after that I just keep quiet. I didn't talk; I didn't share with the people. But after some time I knew, when we worked together with this book and the SCC notes and the seven steps. I know. But now we must help here in our SCC. Those of our church want that we advise, we tell them. We are not lazy. Because if we don't want to study *Uhambo Lwethu Kunye*, we will end up as a Zionist. He! No, they want to be helped, straight. There is nothing against that (Jeremia 1998a).

It is a comprehensive approach in formation, mentioning all locally known means of formation, SCCs, SCC notes, Gospel Sharing, *Our Journey Together* (*Uhambo Lwethu Kunye*) (Hirmer 1987) which stands in stark contrast to the practice of some churches.

Comparative experience teaches the value of systematic formation for the quality of service delivery.

Ecumenical irritations arise mostly within Catholic communities with few or poorly trained leaders. It is noteworthy that the rare instances happen in the smallest Catholic communities. Leaders and priests share the experience. Pitso (1999c) reported about a funeral in Thabakoloi (27.2.1999) where the leader of another denomination greeted him with "*Molo mama*" since he wore his liturgical garments. Furthermore he was addressed as *young man*. He attributes this to the personality traits of this leader, not the denomination. The assembly, nevertheless, showed its respect after the completion of a "beautiful liturgy". Hence it was quality delivery that helped to contain this irritation and to gain respect. Completing the ecumenical picture with such incidents shows the need for leaders to develop a kind of resilience by sovereignty. The women in Thabakoloi demonstrated this. They were addressed by some other ministers present as "body-guards" of the priest and were, contrary to the local tradition, asked to serve at the table for the ministers instead of sitting down among them. When these remarks were made they just shrugged them off, brought some drink and sat down.

It remains a painful experience if, as the host denomination, one is ridiculed by other denominations:

Jeremia, QML: The problem of the ministers (*abafundisi*) who come from other churches, when they sit there at the table, they say, you see, there is no *umfundisi waseRoma apha*, there is no Catholic priest here, I am here, do you see that? That time we say, we dress with the Catholic garments we lead on behalf of the priest. This thing with the ministers is painful. He comes with two things, he is minister, he is (*engumbhoxi*) a disturber of peace sometimes, speaks superficially about other churches. They say there is no Catholic priest. It is the Zionists. They have a problem.
W: That is so, though our leaders are somehow similar to their *abafundisi*?
Jeremia, QML: Yes, Father, there is no difference. Because, if you look at it, the way they work, there is no difference. Because, we the Catholic leaders, we were trained, don't I say so, we know to share. It is necessary that you are sure when you speak to the people, you must know what you say. If you watch that there, they talk all kinds of things: *Bayaxeka*. At the time of the sermon. You will go to the grave, the hearts are painful (*iintliziyo zibuhlungu*). They choose. They carry on, they repeat this. Father, there is that problem, when he chooses, you don't know what to reply. So it is. It is necessary that you keep calm (*uthule*), and persevere, when he says his thing and does not stop, is it not so? You don't know to answer (Jeremia 1998a).

The pain caused by ministers speaking in a derogatory way about the other denomination is in contrast with the low quality that they deliver themselves in the eyes of some. There is no immediate remedy. The training mentioned earlier actually makes the difference. And while some churches try to take chances by snatching members from our church, there are others who share the joy about the developing ministry in the

Catholic Church and its quality, and who refrain from such hostile action (Jeremia 1998a).

The ecumenical incentives for change within the Catholic community have limits. The comparisons with the other denominations and the tendency to copy from them (which is sometimes observed) did not affect the attitude of the Catholic community to women in the ministry of funeral leaders. Cultural limits are given as reasons to refrain from copying from other denominations in this area.

There is a discrepancy where people are prepared to accept the ministry of illiterate Zionist ministers, but object to illiterate Catholics to conduct funerals, though many do not acknowledge that this is inconsistent. The reasons for this phenomenon can only be guessed at, and are difficult to evaluate. When Pitso mentioned this discrepancy at a meeting during Community Week 1998 there was no response. It may well be also a culturally informed problem of respect and self-respect. Though formation brought significant improvements, it goes together with a rather sophisticated liturgy, developed into several stages and usually conducted with the help of a book. Some illiterate people may refrain from resorting to a simpler rite, which instead of text uses symbols and pictures. This could give the impression of not doing the right thing in their Catholic context or of being perceived as using material (pictures) that is normally provided for children.[165]

3.2.9 Catholics buried by Catholics - identity enhancement

While the context is ecumenically friendly, and while Catholics are prepared to include leaders of other denominations at the vigil, and while Catholics sometimes resort to ministers of other denominations if no priest is available, the general longing is for a Catholic ritual. SCCs from various communities responded on SCC notes (Sterkspruit Parish 1997c) in 1997 to the question how they understood the burying of Catholics by ministers of other denominations:

Upper Telle: That is right
Jozanas Hoek: It is not good at all because the way we lead our funeral services is different from other churches. They even laugh at us saying we pay money but the priests and catechist don't bury the deceased.
Jozanas Hoek / Mrobongwana: No. Because other denominations say the Roman Catholics don't bury the dead. Our funeral service is different from other churches. Because of that difference they are not supposed to bury them.

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[165] On illiteracy see also the section on leadership qualities (3.2.10).

Bebeza / Makhumsha: Yes, it is right that preachers or ministers of other churches bury the dead Catholics to show we are one. We say so because our priests didn't come and we want him to show union with the Christians and the catechists in the time of pain. A friend in need is a friend in deed *(isihlobo senene sesikuvelela xa usentlungwini).*

Lady Grey: No, we don't agree, because we have our trained funeral leaders.

One: No it is not right. Because they don't know how the Catholic funeral is conducted.

Lekau: We are one with them but the Catholic funeral service will be conducted by a Catholic.

One: They have no right. Those who have the right are Catholics.

One: Catholics are buried by Catholics.

Lady Grey: We want to be buried by the Catholics. We don't want to be buried by other ministers.

Mokhesi: It is not right. Our funeral service is different from other denominations.

There is a general perception that ministers of other denominations should not bury Catholics. The SCC of a smaller community in Makhumsha (Bebeza) condones other ministers but gave a rather provocative reply. In the time of mourning they long for visible unity with the priest and catechist. Rather than actually inviting for other ministers they intended to put some pressure on their priest to attend the funeral. A friend in need is a friend in deed *(isihlobo senene sesikuvelela xa usentlungwini).*[166] The overall reason for wanting Catholic leaders is identity, unity with their own congregation expressed in the special ritual. The funeral procedures of other churches are dissimilar to the Catholic rite. The community-related identity is seen in different layers. Even the protesting SCC argued for inviting other ministers for the sake of the oneness with other denominations as Christians, actually demanding the oneness among Catholics. This identity feature is the overruling one. The SCC of Lekau, while also admitting oneness with others, insisted on the oneness among Catholics. A Catholic is to be buried by Catholics.

For most of the respondents the Catholic leaders are the ones who safeguard this denominational identity by their ministry. While the priest-centred replies remain with the smaller communities with limited human resources, a larger township community such as that of Lady Grey simply stated: We have trained leaders. There the leaders are seen as the real equivalent of the ministers in terms of funerals. This results in the strong statement there: we want to be buried by Catholics. The awareness of a Catholic identity seems to increase at places where there are qualified leaders. This is supported in Umlamli where leaders say, if we can, we do all the services ourselves, the core services anyway. The core area may well be the criterion for identity. This identity does not develop at the expense of ecumenical togetherness. As J Timati said, others were even happy to see the Catholics now conducting their services themselves.

This increasing awareness of identity by leaders coincides with their independence of priests. This identity is not so much anchored in priests, who are often unavailable but in the familiarity of the leaders with their own denomination and its procedures. In Lady Grey they just refer to their leaders as sufficient means for conducting funerals, in Umlamli they even excused the priest after he did the parts he was supposed to do. RN Mpambani (1998a) indicates the importance of formation: the fear of other ministers stems from lack of formation. Of course, this independence is a dependent one, intrinsically bound for its own quality and existence to the ministry of the priests. Shared ministry thus attains an invaluable quality: it is in fact identity supporting, contrary to complaints sometimes heard about the opposite effect.

Upper Telle draws its identity more from the priest, demanding him and at the same time favouring the invitation of ministers of other denominations; Mkunyazo, a larger community but with weak leaders with regard to funerals, has a similar phenomenon. They express it by saying: we are used doing things together. These communities that prefer to emphasise the general Christian community have in common a poorer training performance and some domineering leaders. They depend on other denominations with strong representatives as human resources to proceed.

3.2.10   Leadership qualities – demand and supply

Some ten years after its systematic introduction, community ministry is understood as related to the needs of the community and the corresponding qualities. The leaders find themselves confronted with general conditions like the needs of the bereaved for ministry, the needs of the community for leaders, the required qualities, and the qualities they are able to provide.

Pitso, TG: People need leaders. They know that they need leaders. They know that they cannot do without leaders. They want good leaders; but the importance that they attach is ability. Leaders who are able to execute some important roles, tasks. And also they want people who can represent them – where? In intercommunical circles. They are conscious of that. If you have an ecumenical thing like a funeral where someone says now, now we want any of our denomination to represent us, to say a prayer. They are pleased if one of their own comes and says the prayer on their behalf. If there is an ecumenical gathering for whatever occasion they are happy to have someone who represents them. So able leaders, respectable and who represent them well, really they appreciate it (Pitso 1999a).

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[159] This reply from Bebeza shows one of the limitations a researcher involved in his own area may pay attention to: people may sometimes joke and even challenge him, since they deal with a serious matter of common concern, not only with an objective of research.

The need of the people finds its response in leadership qualified by ability and respect. The respect extends to the community and the leaders themselves.

Mpambani, ZP: I think, for me, both, then in church both have worked. Both education as well as acknowledgement by the community. The community would acknowledge you if you are a respectable person in the community. You don't have to be educated, you know, to be respected by the community. So, even if you are less educated, but if the community respects you, both the way you behave, you normally do things, then they would skip an educated person for you the uneducated (Mpambani, ZP 1998).

The aspect of respect applies in particular if it comes to public events like funerals where leaders represent the community. The respect for the leaders is primarily based on their attitudes. They seem to be more important than formation though this does not deny the need for it.

Makhobokoana, JM: Honesty is one thing. And a person must be trustworthy. And at least a person must be able to do the jobs that the community wants them to do (Makhobokoana 1999).

The people themselves express the quest for quality individually, in workshops, and at committee meetings. The list of leadership qualities compiled by the committee in Barkly East refers to all sorts of community ministry. The English translation is informed by the discussion with the committee.

Iimpawu zeenkokheli:	Leadership-qualities:
Ezikhutheleyo (3x)	active, diligent
Ezikhuthazayo	encouraging
Ezihlakaniphileyo	cautious, brave
Nokusombulula iingxaki (1x)	avoid problems
Ezinomonde (3x)	patient
Mayizeke kade umsindo (1x)	to be patient before getting into passion
Zibe noxolo (1x)	peaceful
Zibe nothando (1x)	loving
Nomzekelo omhle (1x)	good example
Zinyaniseke (1x)	faithful
Ezithembekileyo (1x)	reliable
Zithobeke (3x)	attentive
Ziwuthande umsebenzi wazo (1x)	love the task
Ezisebenzisanayo (1x)	co-operative

Asifuni iinkokheli:	We do not want leaders:
Eziqenayo	lazy
Ezikohlakeleyo	wicked
Ezingenamqolo	without backbone
Ezinyabileyo	dull, apathetic, always saying "yes"
Ezichothayo	slow
Oozwilakhe	who always have the word
Ezingafuni inguqulelo	who do not want change
Ezingakholwanga	not believing
Eezingaqeqeshwanga	untrained
Ezixokayo	lying
Eziphakamileyo	elevating themselves

Figure 3.3. Leadership qualities, compiled by the committee in Barkly East (1997)

The qualities relate firstly to personal character traits, then to commitment, faith, and qualifications. The love for the work is seen as an indicator that leaders will not be a disgrace to their community:

Mbovu, PM: When we look for the qualities of the leaders, the reason to ask this question is that we are not disgraced (*singaphoxeki*) by the work they do. We select not just because we like somebody, but there are no qualities. We don't just elect because you are Michael Wüstenberg; he can join us in the work. By the time we have to work you are just doing your own things, not the work you were actually selected for. Something we have to pay attention to is whether you love the work you are going to be elected for. And are you afraid of this work?

Mpambani, RN: Once you are anxious you can do nothing. If you are not sure about your work you get fear. You are afraid. If you got fear, you will try to hand over to others. If you have no fear you will work through the funeral. You don't worry. You know that you are right (Mbovu & Mpambani 1998).

Personal qualities, qualification and the concern about the community and its dignified representation and henceforth its maintenance merge. The service quality includes the community aspect. Leaders, emerging from their communities, should be open for the needs of their community, familiar with them and available to give guidance when approached.

Jeremia, QML: Because the leader needs to know to lead the people. Don't I say so? It will be a person knowing to attend to the pains of the people. Because here in the community we have many problems. We want to get advice here by these leaders. When we elect the leaders, we don't elect them and say, we put you on a high chair so that you be up there. We say, be a leader, when we want to catch you, we must get you (Jeremia 1998a).

As personal qualities love, patience, humility, caring attitude, reliability, spirit of serving and impartiality were mentioned in Umlamli (Wks-Fnl Umlamli 1999) (*zibe nothando nomonde nokozithoba, mazikhathale, ukuthembeka, mazikhonze endaweni yokukhonzwa, mazingabinamkhethe*). In Mkunyazo (Wks-Fnl Mkunyazo 1999) many other qualities were jotted down on newsprint: *ukungabinakratshi* (not being selfish), *inthobeko* (humbleness), *ukululama* (meek), to persevere (*ukunyamezela*), sympathy (*uvelwano*), mercy (*inceba*), peace (*uxolo*), respect (*imbeko*), to be diligent (*ukukhuthala*), no anger (*umsindo*), no evil (*inkohlakalo*), not to be unbecoming (*ukungalungi*), not becoming angry (*ungaqumbi*), no laziness (*ubuvila*), not elevating themselves (*ungaziphakamisi*). Barkly East still mentioned that they would not like the shy ones (*ezinentloni phakathi kwabantu*). An important trait for them was the backbone of a leader; they didn't want those without backbone (*ezingenamqolo*).

In the area of service quality of the leaders the expectations are to deliver a message (*Mazingabhibhidli amazinyo*: they may not blow teeth out of their mouth), to be familiar with the procedures (*mazingathandabuzi ngentshumayelo nenkqubo*: not doubting the sermon and structure of the ceremony), to be prepared (*ukuzilungiselela phambi*

komsebenzi: to prepare themselves before the work), to be time-conscious (*mazigcine ixesha*: keep time), not to insult people (*mazingathethi igama eliphazamisayo*: they may not use disturbing words), co-operation (*ukusebenzisana*). In the service for the people the message must be clear. The same applies to the procedure, which is part of the message (Wks-Fnl Umlamli 1999). The requirement of training for achieving or supporting these qualities was not mentioned in the committee in Barkly East in 1997, but in the workshop of 1999, indicating a development that was also reflected in the significantly increased number attending formation events. "Listening to the opinions of the people" was also added as a quality there, together with the rejection of *oozwilakhe*, those who accept only their own opinion.

Pitso, TG: Because I mean especially for funerals, the quality, what makes one qualify for this kind of leadership, he must be a mature person, mature and sound. A respectable person (Pitso 1999a).

Regarding the active funeral leaders who are already installed, the workshop in Umlamli expressed appreciation when they follow the regulations in their project (*zinomgaqo*), that they are trained (*ziqeqeshiwe*), that they collaborate with the priests (*zisebenze egameni labapriste*), and that they build up the family (*zokha amakhaya ethu*). Familiarity with the scriptures is a prerequisite. To be knowledgeable about the scriptures (*ulwazi lwezifundo*) is therefore important. Of course the leaders have to be believers themselves, have faith (*ukholo*) and love (*uthando*). Concerning collaboration, the formulation *they work in the name of the priests* does not imply that they had to get always the go ahead from the priest for every single action or require the presence of the priest to work together with him. It rather means that they work together with the priest within the whole framework of the parish, by training, supervision, and formation. Negatively read it means there is no place for loners, detached from the rest of the ministry.

Jeremia underlines as important quality trait in terms of collaboration: the ability of the leader to acknowledge limitations in order to get assistance:

Jeremia, QML: It is necessary that a leader be a kind person (*ofikelelekayo*). That means, if one makes a mistake, you cannot say just, I am a leader here. They elected me. He must be sure with his work, for which he was elected... Our funeral leaders must be sure. If they want help, they must tell us their trouble. There is no help to say we can do nothing. We will wait for the Father who will come from Sterkspruit. We will struggle. And we really see, we really, I don't want to say it's a misfortune (*ilishwa*). We got a luck (*intlahla* – Zulu) (Jeremia 1998a).

The ability of leaders to adapt is expressed by "building up the family." Mbovu (1999b) explained that: The Christian leaders have to be sensitive to the situation of the family and to show empathy.[167] They are supposed to differentiate and to understand.

If one wants to put it in a rather traditional way, the leadership qualities correspond with the cardinal and theological virtues and their attributed fruits (CCC 1805-1829), either matching them when desired or opposing them in the case of negative qualities. "A virtue is an habitual and firm disposition to do the good. It allows the person not only to perform good acts, but to give the best of himself" (CCC 1803). As first of the cardinal virtues prudence (CCC 1806) is according to St Thomas Aquinas right reason in action. It is reflected, among other things, by concern for *Inyaniso* – truth, *Ulwazi lwezifundo* – knowledge of the readings, and strongly represented by the principle of "listen to the people". Justice (CCC 1807), fortitude (CCC 1808), and temperance (CCC 1807) complete the cardinal virtues. The contrary vices are matters like *Ukungabinakratshi* (selfishness), *umona* (envy).

The theological virtues of faith (CCC 1814-1816), hope (CCC 1817-1821), and charity (CCC 1822-1829) are likewise reflected in the qualities expected of leaders. They are understood in the sense of the commandment of love, which animates the practice of all the virtues (CCC 1827), and carries as fruit peace and mercy (CCC 1829).

Many of the listed characteristics of leaders were reinforced by the catch phrase of the year 1997 as the *Year of the Son* in preparation of the jubilee year 2000. "Jesus the servant leader" was an idea grasped in many communities. They were talking about it after the bishop preached on it during Community Week 1997 (Makututsa 1998). This indicates the growing awareness of leadership, its qualities, and the type of

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[167] As example he reported the recent case of a young man who was just staying in Johannesburg where he died. The people in Umlamli complained about the waste of money spent for the transport. He should have been buried over there. The leaders, then, preparing for the funeral, chose the story of the woman anointing Jesus' feet with perfume (Lk 7:38) and differentiated between waste and expenditure which here is an expression of the care for the body and the bringing home to the place of the forebears. It was not a full church funeral, since the deceased was lapsed. The preaching was reported as lasting very long, since after the main preacher others joined in the search for the meaning of that gospel. Mbovu's impression was that the people gained a lot of new insight. This procedure contradicts partly at least statements indicating that people tend to look for simple solutions. On the contrary, the expectation of care for the family was fulfilled. It applies irrespective of the state of the deceased. It means contextualising and taking into account a specific situation, refraining from premature perceptions, even resisting expressed general views as of the people complaining about waste. All this implies also a more specific preparation.

collaboration needed to support it, which is provided through the pastoral workers, in this case the bishop.

Respect for customs and traditions (*mazingachasi amasiko nezithethe*: they may not reject customs and traditions) is expected from leaders (Wks-Fnl Umlamli 1999). An elderly woman, E Thini, noted during a committee meeting that she would not like leaders who do not want change (*ezingafuni inguqulelo*). She was alluding to the attempts at inculturation within a church clearly shaped by European traits. A short dialogue arose on that issue:

Thini, E: We don't want those who resist all the changes. If we now pour beer in the church to remember the ancestors, that is nice.
Elia, MP: But there may be things we don't want to change. Not any change is welcome.
Someone: Put it in brackets.
Mangaliso, FT: There are the Methodist, Anglican and Dutch who don't do this to this extent.
Thini, E: But it is good if it happens. We should leave it there (Barkly East 1997).

Noteworthy is the love for the culture and the ecumenical context in which they see themselves. The sense of a differentiated approach to change is expressed when indicating that not every change is welcome. A day later I approached Mrs Thini to explore her previous statement.

W: *Mama*. You are one of the old members of the community. Please tell me when were you baptised?
Thini, E: Oh, that is long ago. I am very old now.
W: Yes, I know. That is why I was quite surprised when you emphasised yesterday the importance of leaders who were ready to change. Do you actually like changes?
Thini, E: Ach, you know, I saw a lot of changes. For instance when you are baptising now it reminds us of *imbeleko* (the traditional welcome of children in their family, M.W.). Or when we use the fire in the church for the incense or the procession with the water.
W: Yes that must be new to you. This was not done before. Do you like it?
Thini, E: Very much so.
W: And what do the other old people say? Would they rather stick to the old way or do they like the way we are doing it now?
Thini, E: Oh no, they like it very much.
W: Why is this important for you?
Thini, E: It makes one feeling more at home. These are things we know (Thini 1997).

The concern about culture makes people feel at home. Inculturation means the permanent endeavour to accommodate people so they feel at home in a situation where some may feel estranged by these changes. When wanting leaders who are able to adapt and bring about change a demanding quality trait is expressed.

Literacy plays a role as a quality requirement for the (prospective) leaders and the expectations they perceive. Illiteracy does not necessarily mean not being able to read and write at all, but to have poorly developed skills in this area. In a church with a liturgy

based on books, as one could observe at the funeral, literacy is seen as to some extent a prerequisite for ministry.

Pitso, TG: With others, non-Catholics, you have ministers who are illiterate. Totally. They preach about something they cannot read themselves. They just listen. They have no particular book or ritual to follow. They just know that from here we move to the grave and then we just know a kind of ritual. I think the reason that some could be uncomfortable with is that the ritual is demanding. It has a number of things which they cannot easily retain by heart. That is a problem for illiterate people (Pitso 1999a).[168]

Unwanted qualities indicate a wider range of experience. The unwanted qualities listed indicate some experience with these qualities. The mention of habits like drinking (*mazingaseli*: they may not drink) when doing their work indicate that there is a problem. It becomes an embarrassment for the community.

The committee of Lekau (2000) stated that they don't select rich people, because they didn't work by money (*asikhethi isityebi, asisebenzi ngemali*). They specified this by the attitude that they experienced and the danger of a loss of commitment. Those better off people they knew were only busy with their business and forgot about the community.

The qualities or virtues one never gets without distortions. Though the communities desire good qualities for their leaders they are well aware that their people combine both the positive and the negative traits. Some leaders have negative qualities. One cannot get leaders without them. Consequently one has to cope with them and to encourage improvement (Mkunyazo 1999).

3.2.10.1   Motives of leaders

While the communities have expectations of their leaders, these leaders themselves bring their own motivation along. One describes it as love for the church (Elia, A 1998a), another specifies it as encouraging people and contributing to a more lively community (Makhobokoana 1999). Mangaliso expressed his endeavour to work for the community, to help the people and to co-operate with them. The love for the work is reinforced by

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[168] To counter these problems picture leaflets were at first designed depicting the sequence of the liturgy. They never were really used. The real reasons for this never became clear. From a number of places, however, it is known that people do not like the *Our Journey Together* (Hirmer 1987) for its pictures. They say, that is material for children. To be treated like children means to experience a lack of respect. To expose oneself to it can scarcely be expected from a person. Another strategy employed was to trigger off a literacy campaign. It was incited by the problems of the leaders but targeted at all people in the villages. For different reasons on organisational level it unfortunately failed dismally. The problem of illiteracy will remain especially for the older people. It will gradually disappear with the younger, better educated, growing older and taking up their tasks.

the response of the community, if it loves the leaders and their work (Mangaliso 1998a). Common to these responses is the concern about the community.

A female leader is compelled not only by the frequent unavailability of priests, but also by the actual lack of leaders. The lack of resources made her volunteer (Elia, A 1998a). The maintenance of leadership from within the community rather than calling for help from outside resources, Catholic or non-Catholic, again allow one to infer the community-related basis of ministry in this case. A variation is the motive of Gqalaqha. He simply states that he was asked by the catechist to assist and was introduced by him (Gqalaqha 1999).

The concern for the community is further qualified by the essence of the community in question, faith. Formation-related reasons for the ministry are the sharing of knowledge and giving direction (Makhobokoana 1999). In a rather unobtrusive way MP Elia expressed his motive as his desire to deepen his own knowledge about the Bible and God and to learn about ways of conveying this to people (Elia, MP 1998a). In this case the motivation links up with the essential ministry of pastoral workers in providing means for deepening knowledge. In Mkunyazo Magibili explicitly gave a biblical motive: He was touched when he heard the gospel about the plentiful harvest and the few workers (cf. Mt 9:37; Lk 10:2). Others were just touched by the need, or felt compelled to help the priest (Mkunyazo 1999).

Morar felt a special kind motive during the apartheid time. In an environment with very few opportunities for young people, taking up leadership in the church had a special appeal: to develop and make use of skills (Morar 1998).

The motives of leaders correspond in some way with their gain. They experience some reinforcement by it. Mangaliso simply states that his ministry results in satisfaction, the gladness of having a role, seeing people happy again, being trusted by the people, and being regarded as competent when approached by the people (Mangaliso 1998a). There is also simple satisfaction with work successfully completed. The satisfaction has a spiritual character. The work is experienced as being done under the guidance of the spirit: "And my spirit cares when I work for the church. I love it when the work of the church goes on. I like it that every ceremony of the church is done as it should be done" (Elia, A 1998a). Satisfaction is felt when one observes the impact of one's own performance on the people: to see them happy and to be trusted by them. This influences the leader's own relationship to the church: "When you come to the church

you come here to be happy because you know that you come to the people who are also happy and understand you" (Mangaliso 1998a). The gain of the leader is the community, which he himself builds up with his ministry.

There are also personal gains. Mangaliso rejects the idea of gaining dignity, assuming that this has the connotation of being above the people. Gqalaqha happily states that he gained respect and knowledge by being a leader. The special status a leader gains depends on certain conditions. ZP Mpambani said that people discern very well those who listen and those who tend to turn out to be dictators. The appreciation is based on the performance and the use of power (Mpambani, ZP 1998).

This ministry directed towards the community contributes to personal growth. In its process it makes the leader sensitive to the needs of the people, helps him or her to listen to them and transforms both the leader and the community without denying their respective positions. It teaches endurance, and teaches one to stand back from one's own preoccupations (Elia, MP 1998a). It even results in the conversion of one's own ideas when listening to the people, abandoning one's own preoccupations without resentment:

Elia, MP: Because when you say to people please do this, please do this, they don't do it. Then you try to be harsh a little bit. And I believe in that. Sometimes I succeed but sometimes I fail. That is almost what is happening. But I try to listen what the people say. Then compare what I already thought is the best way. Then I say No. The people like this way, let's do it their way. Instead of saying, no, they don't see it my way; so I don't care for them and do it my way. I have to listen to the people, that is what I think I learned and what I gained. I only wanted to push according to the rules. Then I enforced that. So then I almost saw that I am discouraging the others. Then I tried and to talk this over with Fr Edwin. He said, no, you have to sometimes let them do what they want to do. But not almost leave them to go astray. But you have to guide them. Give them a chance to go forward and go astray a little bit and then bring them into line. Then I tried to practise and then he guided me how to do it. Then I almost saw now, ok there is at least unity. Instead of the way I was pushing them, I was almost destroying them. That's where I learned something; that I have to listen (Elia, MP 1998a).

The gain described is a refinement of the idea of leadership. That means being open to one's own conversion by attending to the people. This happens in a dialectical process of dialogue while providing guidance. The leading principle of this process can be called: "Listen to the people." In exercising this kind of leadership the experience in this case was that it leads to unity instead of destruction, which was feared in the first place when applying strict rules. This leader experiences unity as a result of dialogue and not of reinforcement of his own perceptions. The suggested "Bringing in line" applies to both the community and the leaders themselves. The leadership in collaboration with the priest in an advisory role lead to unity, not to the imposed application of rules.

The spiritual enrichment leadership brings extends to a greater familiarity with the Bible. It gives inspiration (Makhobokoana 1999).

The personal gain extends also to areas beyond the confines of the church. Skills acquired in training for positive ways of problem solving also help in commitments outside the church (Makhobokoana 1999).

The motivation of leaders can be affected by a lack of support in the parish. That is seen in a lack of interest among the community (not all go along fully), in lack of unity, in envy of the good performance of others, and in quarrelling (Elia, A 1998a).

The access to community ministry can, however, also be guided by rather undesired motives. They appear when personal interest overrules the community service aspect. Limelight seekers can come to the fore, people who avoid new leaders, or people who have a tendency to monopolise. They enjoy a position gained and try to prevent others coming in, thus distorting the community building aspect of ministry:

> Pitso, TG: If it becomes removed from sharing of faith to something of a limelight issue. Another thing could be if it is not done to pull others in, those who are still coming up. A certain group of men could be very excellent actors, could be the limelight for a few. And others don't have a chance. And also that the few who are a little bit more experienced could come to that and say that they don't share with others. Because it is not easy. So much importance is attached to especially the funeral leaders. One may not want to be out of the limelight one day. He may be tempted to say I am staying for ever. And if you introduce others it is like losing your job, you will be retrenched. There can be that kind of a feeling. So some may tend to hang on as long as possible (Pitso 1998a).

In the particular case of the ministry of funeral leaders there may also be motives linked especially to the high importance attached to funerals. This may attract people looking for respect, for being in the limelight, and attracting the attention of the priest if he is present:

> Pitso, TG: It is a matter of the importance attached to leading a funeral. During the week, the normal days people don't take much notice of you. But the moment you come in that crucial moment, you are in the limelight. And I think that could be an attractive thing for some people, now I am in the limelight. The people say he was called in to sit at that part of the table. Because that day he played the role of a funeral leader. He was all of a sudden important. But all the ordinary days they just make fun of him. And they don't see him as an important person. That could be also some kind of consolation or comfort for that day. He was recognised (Pitso 1998a).

The workshop on funerals in Umlamli revealed motivational support structures for leaders. The communities could support their leaders by respect for rules (*ukuhlonipha ngokulandela imigaqo*) and by submission to them (*ukuthobeka*). This is important because of the frustration due to people who try to get exceptions or leaders who cause rifts by not following the rules. Furthermore formation and training (*ngokuhlaziya*

ukuqeqesha), and religious formation, for instance in retreats, were mentioned as well as evaluation (*ukuvavanya*). The fellowship of those who want to go on gives patience and the will to co-operate (Elia, A 1998a). The priests can support leaders by the positive feed-back they can give (Mathis 1999a).

A particular personal support structure is that of the family of the leader. It plays a role when it comes to playing their role. The family can be supportive by encouraging, especially when a leader starts feeling weary of the task.

Mangaliso, FT: *Kakhulu*. They (the family, M.W.) love it. Sometimes, we are people, today you are lazy, then they say, no, help the people. May be, you see, I work too much. They say, no, man, help the people. I say, I buried at another place, now it must be another one. My wife says: The people love you. Help the people. When they beg for that. So I leave it to quarrel with them. They love your thing (Mangaliso 1998a).[169]

3.2.10.2   Driving force – spiritual roots in faith

The qualities expected from the leaders and offered by them already witness implicitly to their spirituality. We will now take a short look at some spiritual traits that are important in the context of funerals. Kalilombe describes spirituality as

> the relationship between human beings and the invisible, inasmuch as such a relationship derives from a particular vision of the world, and in its turn affects the way of relating to self, to other people, and to the universe as a whole (Kalilombe 1994:115).

He identifies as the most obvious place to search for spirituality the context of traditional religious practice: worship, ritual and prayer (:119).[170] Because of its all-embracing character, spirituality, reflecting the relationship to the invisible, the self, and the other, is not a museal approach. We are not looking at former times and in particular not at an ancient African spirituality, but at the lived spirituality of Africans, influenced as it may be by external factors.[171] It finds its expression in prayers:

> God of all our time. You are with us day by day. You go with us wherever we go. You are with us here today as you were with us yesterday. Now you are

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[169] This support is contrasted by other experiences. The group-interview in Bebeza showed that ministry also affects the families. The leaders reported also about family members complaining when they come back late from their task while the family was expecting them to cook (Bebeza 1999).

[170] I will concentrate here on the faith related aspect, not so much on the very important traditional aspect, for instance with regard of the ancestors, which have a key function (Skhakhane 1995:107) and were touched earlier in chapter two.

[171] Spirituality also changes. Kalilombe traces them from a traditional spirituality considering primarily the value of good human relationships and a new spirituality shifting towards the esteem of material goods, assuming the pursuit of personal ambition and self-interest through fair competition. He sees here the implementation of a positive value (Kalilombe 1994:133).

here with us in this training. Give us strength that we do your work. Amen (Opening prayer by Elia A) (Workshop on Night Vigil in Barkly East 1999).

The spirituality motivating the service of the leaders is shaped by the conviction of the presence of the Lord.[172] Community is the core of their spirituality.[173] It is biblically rooted. This is indicated, for instance, by one favourite quotation from the Bible, Psalm 139: "Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?" This spirituality finds a particular expression in the ambiguity of some songs, as we will see later on.

Timati, J: *Njengokuba sithetha apha, naye uYesu ukhona ngalamazwi esiwathethayo*: As we speak here also Jesus is present by the words we speak. Yes. They used to say *Apho kudibene abathathu uYesu ukhona,* where three are meeting Jesus is present (Timati, J 1999).

Jesus' presence materialises in the words spoken by Christians. Another way of experiencing it is the sacraments (Elia, MP 1998a). Within the Catholic context spirituality takes a sacramental shape.

Elia, MP: For me the sacraments are very important. Because from the first one to the last one they are meaningful. When you go back, when I sit down, starting from baptism, going up to marriage I know now, why this is done. What is the aim of the church in doing this? Where the church leads you by doing this. It is always, it says, the church brings you closer to God. Then you realise that God is not far away, he is clearly around you. Only what you have to do is to open your heart and accept God. That is how I see it as a Catholic; it is very meaningful (Elia, MP 1998a).

Both aspects, the expression of God's presence in word and in sacrament, form part of the funeral ritual.[174] This presence is the source of strength to pursue the task. It is the church that maintains the basics of faith and provides structural, meaningful elements like the sacraments to immerse people deeper on their journey of faith.

Elia, MP: For me, Father, I cannot say, how the others, how they see it. But for me to be Catholic you have some kinds of searching yourself. There are some lessons that say, search yourself deeply. There are things that you are taught in our church that guide you to be a good Christian. So then, our church, I can say, has many special teachings that give life to the church and to the person, to me personally (Elia, MP 1998a).

Often it is heard that things like sermons are done *emoyeni*, in the Spirit. He is likewise believed as omnipresent and enabling.[175] He is the gift of God that penetrates everything: *Yihla Moya,* come down Holy Spirit. He is acknowledged as the source of

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[172] Ela (1987:37) underlines that African people from the savannah or the forests perceive God as nearer to them than one was ready to admit in the past.

[173] This applies to both the African and the faith spirituality (cf. Skhakhane 1995:110): "The community is the core of African Spirituality."

[174] Cf. CCC 1688, dealing with the liturgy of the word, and CCC 1689 addressing the Eucharist.

[175] With view of the Independent churches Uzukwu (1996:109) notes the creativity empowering role of the Spirit: "The 'in' of the Sprit of God, who makes his home in the community and in each individual Christian, is also the 'opening out' of the spirit of the community and of individuals creativity."

power and the leading principle for the leaders as expressed in the *isibongo*, the praise song.

Unity with God through his presence affects the deceased as well. It allows one to express the paradox that the dead are alive by the mediator Christ. This ongoing unity makes the felt need of paying continuous respect to the deceased meaningful. Though "sleeping" they are "with us" through Christ:

> Mbovu, PM: Something we try, that the community or all the people gain at the occasion of the funeral, is, though the deceased passed away, let us give him dignity. We must know that he is not dead. We don't say he is dead. We say he is sleeping. We say, rest in peace. We say that word of God. Rest in peace. He did not die, he rests. So we must respect him. Let us pay him respect. And we must remember, as he rests only, he is still alive among us. He is with us and we must respect him. We are united with him. Those who are alive, here, we try to teach, though Jesus died, he rose. We believe that he did not die but is alive. And our deceased though they sleep in the cold, they are still alive and are together with him. They are alive with him. So we say the custom must not be apart from the church. We must go together. Because these deceased are together with Jesus. He sleeps in the cold soil with our ancestors, and he rose. So we got the hope that our ancestors are alive, they are waiting for us. So they are together with us. We will go one way (*Siza kuhamba indlela enye*) (Mbovu & Mpambani 1998)

The traditional convictions of unity and community have acquired a new quality through the arrival of Christian faith. The new faith is stronger than the old and gives light, *luyakhanyisela* (Mpambani, RN 1999). The present spirituality includes a deeper perception of life. God is the giver of life, of eternal life.

> Timati, J: Yes, at that time, when we said, at the grave, that these words, *ndim uvuko, ndim ubomi. Lo ukholwayo kum uza kuphila* (I am the resurrection, I am the life. Who believes in me will live). Then they say, *la ngamazwi awathethwa nguYesu* (These words were spoken by Jesus). And now this one which we bury today, *uza kuvuka, avukele ubomi obungunaphakade* (he will rise, he will rise for eternal life) (Timati, J 1999).

The spirituality allows an effective, prayerful dialogue. God renders effective help in listening to the prayers:

> Jeremia, QML: We speak about it. But when we pray, we ask God that he may help us. We have the hope that he listens to our prayer (Jeremia 1998a).

He is healing the wounds by the cure of his words. This happens especially where people become speechless:

> Jeremia, QML: Yes, Jesus comforts. We read the word of God, because the family may have a problem. Its all over, we don't know what to say there. Really, *geke* they must comfort. The very word of God, the word of God *lindoqo*, is a sure cure. It is the very great word of God that passes all things (Jeremia 1998a).

The healing role of God seems closely linked to judgement being reserved to him. The sole judge is the Lord. It is not the task of the leaders to judge (Timati, J 1999).

The close relation between Calvary and resurrection, of passion and life, of the power of the life in God is expressed in the celebration of Good Friday and Easter. More in a Johannine way Good Friday and Easter merge, not only in the participation in the services. While the Easter vigil is usually well attended, the services on Good Friday tend to be packed. Central, besides the elaborate Catholic liturgy, is the celebration of the Seven Words. Their introduction was locally influenced by the practice of the Methodist Church.

W: What makes these words so interesting, what are you preaching about?
Elia, MP: We preach about the Easter message. We try to pull out the Easter message from these words.
W: What does that mean, Easter message?
Elia, MP: The Easter message is about our salvation, our redemption. The Israelites celebrated their Passover and slaughtered *amaxhwane*, the lambs. But that was not for the redemption of the world. Then we celebrate our Passover. We don't slaughter. God gave his only son. He had to endure the pain (*ukuva iintlungu*) and to reconcile us. Here we got redemption. That is our Easter message. That we try to pull out of the seven words (Elia, MP 1999c).

The living Christ is the centre of comfort and hope. He is understood in contrasting similar cultural procedures and the Christian message. He is redeemer - again - in uniting, in creating community with God.

Mangaliso: Jesus comes in this way, he is the one who died for us at the cross. He is the one who brings us together with God (*osidibanisa*). He supports us though we are sinners. We, if we have pain (*ubuhlungu*), we also lose hope. The only hope we have is in Jesus Christ. He is the light if it is painful to us. We turn to him so that he may be the one to comfort us. He comforts this way, Father, there is written that there is nothing which can defeat him. That is the only hope we have. When there is pain, nobody can help you. Nothing can help you. But the only hope you can focus to is only Jesus Christ (Mangaliso 1998a).

This hope supports a realistic approach to death and allows a rather composed relationship towards death. Jesus is the example that death is not the end: he himself died and rose again (Mangaliso 1998a). Some may see this as a rather fatalistic approach.

Mbovu, PM: Oh, *umlindo* is important. The comforting happens there. There we have time and all those speaking will be involved in it.
W: How does this comforting happen? What do you do?
Mbovu, PM: We say to those bereaved: This happened before, this happened now, and it will happen again.
W: That is all?
Mbovu, PM: (smiling) And if I sit there as a bereaved one day they will say the same thing to me. And I know that.
W: And that is all?
Mbovu, PM: No, of course, then the Gospel comes in (Mbovu 1998a).

The message of faith moves beyond the general reality of death and becomes a source of joy.

Elia, A: We look at the death, how he died. We select the reading this way. And then when we get that reading we read and comfort the people of the home (*abantu bekhaya*) and tell them, what Jesus

shows us by this word; because he died and rose. And all of us will die. We say comfort by the words that Jesus Christ talks. We make them happy (*sibonwabise*) with the word (Elia, A 1998a).

The spirituality of the leaders is not limited to seeing death as something merely inevitable, but moves on to the message of faith. In a re-interview Elia pointed out that the family should take death as something ordinary, common, *njengesixhelo* (Elia, MP 1999d). Thus their spirituality reveals an important trait of the funeral leaders: that they consider it their task to be instrumental in reinforcing, reassuring, and proclaiming a vision to the bereaved. It is a shared spirituality maintained through the ministry of the leaders. Mangaliso sees the aim as helping the family to accept what has happened (Mangaliso 1998a).

Timati, P: Death is not a misfortune (*ilishwa*), because death brings us together with God. Death is possible since long ago. So that people say it is a rule of God. They will die. But before they meet with him. They are comforted this way. But our time is not ours. Each and everybody have their own time. With death we don't die one and the same death. One dies by accident, another one is sick, so all of us go our way... It arrived in the way; it comes at any place where you are. God works at all these places. We are praying only. God makes, that we shall avoid knowing the time we have on earth. When we are on earth we work here in the service that we convert, repent, that we pray, that we forgive his sins. We comfort this way. They may not mourn too much when they are bereaved (Timati, P 1998).

Believing that everything at every place rests in God bestows a fundamental imperturbability or composure on the faithful. The real task is to succeed with one's own life, converting, repenting, reconciling, and praying. One should refrain from judging others and instead aim at reconciliation and forgiveness, and at re-establishing community. This is part of one's ongoing commitment to life.

In this view what at first glance could appear like fatalism,[176] rather turns into grounded joy.[177] It is grounded in the community with one another and with God, giving the funeral a sense of joy beyond grief. The basis of this fundamental conviction is faith in the word of scripture.

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[176] Magoti (1991:177) states simply that death is an event of life. He points out that the perception of death and dying is changing among Africans, earlier on easily attributing certain kinds of death to certain causes and becoming more cautious about such causal linkages (:183). He hints at the paradox of funerals among the Bantu: "Here death is viewed with both joy and sadness. During funerals, people cry and wail... But they also celebrate... The first set of activities shows the negative aspect of death while the second illustrates its positive side, that life has found its fulfilment in death" (:184). He concludes: "a person does not live in order to die but rather lives to live life completely and fully. Death is therefore present only as an inner factor (not a determinant) of life" (:185).

[177] Following Rahner one could try to characterise the deeply rooted and lived spirituality of the leaders as kind of mysticism. Their commitment and perception allows us to identify an African line of mysticism: "The devout Christian of the future will either be a 'mystic', one who has 'experienced' something, or he will cease to be anything at all" (Rahner 1971b:15). The mystical approach, based on the experience of man's basic orientation to God, for instance is "the experience that he only becomes our 'happiness' when we pray to him and love him unconditionally" (Rahner 1971b:15).

Elia, MP: We have to motivate people to come to church, so that, when they are in the church, we can be proud as a whole church, as a whole congregation of celebrating a funeral. Making it a celebration. Not as a mourning time: Now we are crying, so and so has died. No, we have to sing, we have to be happy, because this person is not dead. We know exactly what the readings are telling us. Then we have to be happy around this. Then to motivate people to come to church. I think that is what I have, we have to focus on, to make it in a special way, saying some encouraging words about this. Not necessarily focusing on the dead, then we have hope. Jesus went to heaven to make us a place, our home there. Everyone who is dying has a place in heaven. We have to kind of make an invitation. Like the text that says: Go to the streets, to the junction, call them all to my *isidlo* (feast), so that we can celebrate together. So that then, when you preach then, we are all invited. Almost everyone of us is invited. There is a word that always whispers: come to God. There are things that are happening before your eyes that sometimes give you some questions. Why is this happening to me? God calls me. I have to go to church. I have to take part. I have to be part of the church. I have to encourage the others to go to church. Some things like that (Elia, MP 1998a).

The spirituality of the leaders needs maintenance. Some see it as a reflected spirituality, developed in collaboration with the spiritual advisors. Actually, one of the roles developing for the pastoral staff is that of the spiritual advisor for the leaders:

Elia, MP: I am able, because, you see, Father, some. I can say, the sisters are also motivating me, because I always sometimes sit down, why am I attending the church. Why am I doing this? This special prayer? Why do the bishops say, we should pray for the whole church around the world? Why should we pray this special prayer for the year 2000? You see all these things I try to think them myself. Then say, maybe, if I am wrong, I am wrong. But maybe bishop is trying to motivate us, the priests are trying to motivate us to our faith. What is so very important, what we should expect for the year 2000 and so on. And then we should prepare ourselves for that year so that we can celebrate the year knowing that we have gone a long way trying to make some kind of a reflection around our faith (Elia, MP 1998a).

Bühlmann (1998:413), understanding spirituality as life according to the spirit, discerns several forms it can take. Among them are the zeal for the reign of God and the zeal for the church (:415). We will also see exactly these two traits of spirituality emerging in the activities of the leaders.

3.2.11   Summary: Ministry rooted in community

The principle of locality implies that leaders come from their own communities. They are witnesses of hope, accountable and responsible within the framework of their community. As locals they have the advantage of being familiar with their context. Communities that are too small fall below a critical limit. They have problems in producing their own leaders. This situation is at times aggravated by the culture-related exclusion of uncircumcised men and of women. If this happens there is a shortage of leaders. Women are restricted for cultural and gender-related reasons. Subtle change happens because of support structures like SCCs and the conviction that the needs of the community come first.

The leaders build a kind of task group, working in teams. Teamwork helps to limit power hunger. It helps to overcome anxiety and serves in conflict resolution. It helps to attract

others to ministry. The introduction of leadership teams was supported by the experience of pastoral workers working in teams, by Gospel sharing, the RCIA programme, and the formation material, all of which are based on teamwork.

Catholic identity increases with qualified leaders. The quality of leaders is judged according to their personal character traits, service delivery, respect for customs, and formation.

The motive for leaders to fulfil their task is their concern for their community. It is guided by the sharing of faith. The lack of leaders is a motive for some to take up the task. Personal growth in faith and spirituality, as personal gain, is also a motive. Personal growth contributes to satisfaction. The spirituality of the leaders and the people appears as a spirituality of the presence of God and is clearly a communal one. This spirituality is convinced of the life-giving unity with God. He is the healer and the sole judge, which makes leaders refrain from judging others.

The leaders experience their communities, the priests and also their own families as supportive of their ministry.

3.3 Quality management by selection / election of community leaders

After exploring some general features of leaders we have to ask how these leaders get into their position and what is done to achieve the required qualities beyond the personality level.

3.3.1 Former ways of getting leaders

The group interviews in Bebeza, Lekau and Mkunyazo (Bebeza 1999; Lekau 1999a; Mkunyazo 1999) revealed different ways of access to leadership. One case, already mentioned with regard to female leaders, was based entirely on her own initiative. When Mrs Sobalisa came back home in 1962, she started the Catholic Church and automatically took a leadership position. She had no training, just her prayerbook:

Sobalisa, A: I became a funeral leader in 1962 when I came back, because nobody was here to do that. I was alone and just took the book. I started just on my own with the book (Bebeza 1999).

A variation is the leader who came back from migrant work and offered himself to the priest. Others were asked by the priest, or when working in the cities also for instance by bishop Buthelezi in Vereeniging (in 1986) (Mkunyazo 1999).

Before the time of the Pastoral Plan it was mainly the priests who selected helpers, for instance to conduct funerals in their absence. At that stage the communities were not involved. There were misjudgements, errors in person. "In Dangers Hoek for example. That man didn't like nobody touch anything in there" (Ntaka 1999). The problem mentioned earlier, of leaders who were not accountable to their communities but only to the priest was aggravated by the fact that the priest mostly dealt with one individual person.

Makhobokoana, JM: Then, those people who actually were a bit enlightened were asked to assist the catechist somehow. The priests asked them to assist the catechist in involving in the funeral when the priest is not there (Makhobokoana 1999).

The catechists were also involved in the selection of leaders or assistants. Gqalaqha (1999) remembers that he was approached by the catechist and introduced to the work by him.

These ways of access to leadership show that the initiative came mainly from above, from the hierarchy, or, in one single instance from the initiative of the person concerned. Systematic community involvement was not expected at that time.

One instance was reported in Mkunyazo where one leader was asked in 1987 by the community to take the task as funeral leader. He got no training and did just what he observed. The reason for this kind of community involvement could not be discovered. The impression is that something just had to be done by someone who was respected. The implications for quality can only be hinted at here. Watching his performance in a workshop, it was very poor compared with the expectations of people: he didn't know the liturgy, just said some prayers, while others expressed their desire to recognise certain elements of the liturgy important to them. The discrepancy between performance and expectations does not mean that people were upset about him. The community accepted him. It is an example of a rather uninformed community involvement looking for stopgaps to succeed in doing what was needed. This leader continued his work through the integration strategy: he was not expelled but integrated into a team.

The time of the run up of the Pastoral Plan and the period after its launch shows some change. In an early phase the priests still asked to choose the leaders. But when Maponopono returned home in 1994 his SCC asked him to become a funeral leader in 1995 (Bebeza 1999).

3.3.2 Selection/election by communities

The form of community involvement[178] in leader selection is developing. The Xhosa term *ukukhetha* as used to express this involvement is ambiguous. It means both to select and to elect.[179] The term *ukunyula*, vote, would suggest something like democratic elections.[180]

Initially the procedure suggested was that the community or its committee should select the future leaders. The community acclaimed those who volunteered. Then training, and later the blessing during community week followed (Mpambani, ZP 1998; cf. Lobinger 1991:43). This selection process proved problematic in the rural context with scattered villages. It was supposed to happen about three months before community week. This time was simply too short to provide even roughly the training needed for all the different leadership sections in different villages. Another problem was that training and formation were missed by some who were selected and afterwards blessed. RN Mpambani describes the change of the sequence selection - training - election - blessing:

> Mpambani, RN: We know to do the workshops with the people who don't know yet. Then they go to Father's workshop and then we choose them as leaders and then they will be blessed at community week (Mbovu & Mpambani 1998).

The selection or election is at present done in a various ways. An evaluation by the Pastoral Council in 1997 (Sterkspruit Parish 1997d) shows the different modes of leadership selection/election in various communities. The election takes place either in the SCC, the community, the committee, or in a combination of these ways.

The quick survey showed that five communities claim that the whole community elected their leaders on a Sunday after Mass. Five claim the election happens solely by the SCCs. Two of the responding communities name all three, the SCCs, the committee

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[178] The idea of community involvement in the selection of leaders is nothing new to Africa. Hickey (1980:96) notes: "The 1976 AMECEA Study Conference held in Nairobi applied this principle to the non-ordained ministries as such. One of the conclusions reached by the bishops of Eastern Africa reads as follows: 'Non-ordained ministers should also be earnestly encouraged and fostered in the Christian community. Non-ordained ministers should be chosen by the community in response to local needs, given adequate preparation and appointed by the Church's authority.'"

[179] Lobinger (1980b:17) speaks of selection when dealing with raising an awareness of the communal responsibility and that of selected leaders.

[180] This selection/election process distinguishes the leaders here from the ministers in African Independent Churches. Becken (1972:138) understands the latter rather as charismatic leaders: "From the phenomenological point of view he could be classified as an African Christian prophet, his ministry

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and the community, as involved in the selection. Most of those places where the whole community does the selection are small and have no proper SCCs established. The situation of the bigger ones among them may be even misreported. Those indicating selection by SCCs only may in fact stress their emphasis on the SCC involvement. It was those communities where SCCs are an established feature, working well at the time of the selection.[181]

This procedure was accepted as a fact in the PPC. Nobody questioned the apparent diversity of ways of electing leaders let alone saw it as a threat to the way followed in their own community. There was no longing for uniformity and no pressure to follow one model, but people merely wanted to be at ease with the way of decision making in their particular community. With the emphasis laid on SCC involvement in decision making by the pastoral team, the actual practice reflects the reality that these SCCs are not in place all over or sometimes not functioning the way they are supposed to. Collaboration here takes the form of leaving ways open to find the most fitting way in each place. We have already pointed out the contextualised acceptance of diversity with regard to female funeral leaders. This may be irritating for people used to working with constitutions. The very principle of locality allows one to employ such constitutionally unstructured, multifaceted ways in the local context.

The selection/election by SCCs works where SCCs are in place and operational.[182] SCCs serve mostly as a selection and support system for a pending election in the whole community.[183] Since they are meant to be neighbourhood groups they should offer the ideal basis for emerging leadership.[184] They face, however, the problem of the small size of their actively participating membership. In Barkly East it is mostly women

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based on his personal experience of a divine call." This call can be by dream or by their own experience of healing from sin and disease (:139).

[181] Lobinger (1973b:62) mentions the grounding of leader election in Bethlehem diocese in blocks and the interplay with the priests: "The matona are elected by the block-community and appointed by the priest." The fact that the ways of leader election differ is quite normal. Kerkhofs (1995:143): "The leaders are chosen or replaced by different agreed systems. Terms of office are limited but usually renewable."

[182] Lwaminda (1996:80) mentions the old ideal that SCCs should choose leaders according to the local needs.

[183] Lapointe (1986:188) in his analysis of SCCs speaks rather in an idealistic mode about ministries emerging from them. Concerning the ministry of the word he interestingly refers to the trainer-catechist, who visits the SCC.

[184] Lobinger (1981:8) assumes from observation that SCCs with some 15-25 adults attending may have about 40 active members from a neighbourhood of 150-300 Catholics. A community like Umlamli, claiming nine SCCs and insisting on them when challenged by such figures, would just be expected to produce three. Other communities would not even be expected to produce a single SCC.

(Elia, A 1998a). While in Lady Grey the leaders are an active part of their SCCs, in other places leaders do not attend the SCCs.

Mpambani, ZP: As far as I am concerned, Mike, the SCCs did not start off, you know, very well, as they were perceived. You know, earlier on, with the implementation or the beginning of the Pastoral Plan, the SCCs, we always thought people were in it. And yet they were not quite in. So even the election of leaders, that was not done in the SCCs, it was done in church (Mpambani, ZP 1998).

Though limited in their membership and not well attended by men, SCCs in Barkly East are a kind of support structure for leadership. The notes taken on one SCC meeting indicate how SCC and the whole community work together in selection and election. The concern of the SCC for the quality of these leaders is clearly expressed.

W: How, then, do you get your funeral leaders? Do you elect them here?
One: *Sijonga eqelaneni*, we look for them in the SCC. But then we go to the *ibandla*, the whole community. There we elect the leaders.
W: How is it about the training of these leaders?
One: Oh, we don't want untrained leaders. We want them to do their work properly.
One: We support them that they get some training.
One: For example this year we will take care that they get some training in the planned workshop (SCC Barkly East 1999).

A few weeks later on the way to a remote farm-community I asked Mrs C Maruping about the progress of the SCC in the matter they discussed.

W: How is it going on in the SCC, especially the support for the funeral leaders?
Maruping, C: Oh yes, we support the funeral leaders.
W: How are you doing that?
Maruping, C: We selected now two of us. We encouraged them to become funeral leaders.
W: Who is that going two be?
Maruping, C: It is two of our women. They have to get the training for that task and then they should be funeral leaders. And we back them in that (Maruping 1999).

The SCC progressed in its selection process by getting two women to be trained and taken as funeral leaders. This procedure reflects mainly what is happening in other places with SCC involvement. Their contribution to leadership is selecting people and to present them to the whole community for acceptance. These leaders will serve the whole community and not exclusively their SCC members. A major advantage of the SCCs as place of selection is their familiarity with their members. They know their people and their qualities.

The "task group" of leaders itself is also involved in leadership selection. As members of their communities leaders take responsibility. Some see it as their task to look for new leaders (Gqalaqha 1999). In the case of Lekau it was a leader who approached others to become funeral leaders.

W: How did you get the idea to become a funeral leader?

Lekau, J: I was asked by Hitler[185] to take this role. There were too few to do this task at that time.
Lekau, H: It was the catechist Joseph Timati who asked me here in church.
Mpekoa, A: I was asked by Hitler.
Lekhowa, C: Hitler also asked me here in church to take that role. And then we got the training.
W: Was the community somehow involved in this kind of selection?
Lekau, H: The community agreed to that. We talk in the SCCs about the leaders; we actually look there for candidates.
Mpekoa, A: The leaders come from the SCCs. The SCC says they are right to do the job.
Lekhowa, C: *Sibizwa*, we are called by the SCC (Lekau 1999a).

On a first glance this seems to resemble the system where the catechist looked for assistants. The catechist was a clear exception, instrumental when initiating the leadership work. The difference is that afterwards the initiative comes from within the community by community members and is explicitly community bound. The community at the end gives it consent. It is noteworthy that the leader who takes initiative was himself approached by the catechist. The change of system is accepted.

SCCs, committees and community work together. In cases where the SCCs suggest candidates, the committee normally confirms them and in some cases suggests them to the whole community for election by acclamation. In the community of Umlamli for instance the selection by SCCs ends with the confirmation by the committee that may scrutinise some decisions.[186]

Pitso, TG: Then for ministries, then for leaders election there are different categories of ministries where SCCs should submit names of people who take courses for different kind of ministries. And they give witness that the person is known there by the SCC, he is known by the committee and the priest as well. So it is a kind of a process of leaders election. Which is very democratic from the SCC where you are known. You are nominated for the task and then you accept the task or ministry. So that is how our elections should be. But it is still the old kind of approach, it still creeps in. The way that they do not go according to the process as we may like them to go. But because of other circumstances we fear this man, or we fear this *mama*. Well as far as he is concerned it won't go according to the normal process. We just put him there (Pitso 1999a).

Even this double anchoring of ministry in SCCs and community seems to have some weaknesses. "Fear" at times seems to dictate the admission to ministry.

The approach toward selection is inclusive rather than exclusive. In Umlamli (1998a) the committee discussed at length the situation of one leader who came back from Limeacres where he was communion giver. In his case the committee insisted that he should not automatically be accepted but that he should follow the rule of the place, underlining the principle of locality. Since he had already had a chance to attend

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[185] Hitler is his name, given by the parents to mark the events at the time of his birth.
[186] Ugeux (1988:98-100) sees the committees as means of co-operation and states: "Pas de collaboration sans concertation."

formation to comply with the local rules but attended only partly, the decision was to conditionally admit him but to insist on a better training record the next season.

A way of dealing with problematic leaders is the reduction of their tasks by the committee. Though the SCC claimed that a particular leader was trained and qualified, the committee said this was not true. He was unreliable and scarcely seen in church. Since the SCC had selected him the committee finally agreed but reduced the tasks allocated to him to give him a chance. They also decided to promote greater awareness within the SCCs about electing suitable leaders.

Quite a number of people were selected who did not comply with the requirement of formation or training. The committee disagreed and decided that they should participate properly in training. Their election was postponed to the following year.

The committee as an intermediate structure checks the suggestions of the SCCs and sometimes puts the decision to the community. In case of conflicting convictions the principle of consensus-oriented dialogue applies. It aims at overcoming the dispute over different perceptions. This was emphasised in Voyizana:

> Gqalaqha, MM: Now they are elected by the SCCs. The SCC sees the person, which it can elect. And then we go to the committee. And the committee gives it to the community. And if the community agrees he will be elected. After that we present him to the Father of our place.
> W: Now it may be that the SCC elects a person but the committee and the community doesn't agree.
> Gqalaqha, MM: It will be done, because the committee will bring the reasons. Perhaps it says: this person will not be right for these reasons. And the SCC will say, we want him for this and this reason. With these two reasons of the committee and the SCC we will get clarity and sort it out.
> W: Did you have problems to talk about leaders in Voyizana?
> Gqalaqha, MM: We did not yet have such a problem. But it will be done that the SCC will elect the person by the SCC. The committee is the head of the church community; it looks at all the SCCs. All SCCs come to the committee. This SCC elects a person, however the committee doesn't see him, then they will talk. There will be reasons. The committee will say this person is not eligible for this and this reason. At the end they will agree (Gqalaqha 1999).

The committee dealing with the affairs of the community, if working properly, has a particular competence, which also affects the decision taking at the time of the leadership elections. It also has to monitor the situation of the leaders during their term; it is therefore aware of specific problems. RN Mpambani, the person in the committee responsible for monitoring funerals, reported to the committee of Umlamli (1999b) that at a recent funeral some leaders declined their commitment at short notice. His report triggered off a discussion of possible reasons. One suggested that the new leaders might have been afraid. The suggestion then was to provide further training. The

comprehensive role of the committee includes supervising and searching for ways to improve the ministry within the community.[187] This indicates the taking over of responsibility as committee, and to open channels for exercising accountability. The committee assumes the role of supervisor and forum for analysing and solving leadership-related problems. The priest was at no time expressly asked for advice.

The actual election or acclamation happens in some cases by the community as a whole. That means that the whole community gathered on a Sunday is asked, where necessary, to suggest and then confirm certain people as leaders.

Makhobokoana, JM: The people, the congregation are the people who are supposed to choose their leaders. Not leaders chosen for them! Because if leaders are chosen for them that means that they will reject those leaders. The will reject them. It was a way to keep peace within the congregation. Because if leaders were not chosen by the people they will resist and reject them. Then there won't be any progress within the church. But if the people, they themselves choose the leaders, then they are responsible. They are accountable to the people, to the congregation, because they are being chosen by the people. So they are answerable to the congregation.

W: This accountability or answerability, does it appear in case of re-election or something like that?

Makhobokoana, JM: Well, exactly, Father, if perhaps a person does not perform up to their expectations, then they choose somebody else.

W: And they do that?

Makhobokoana, JM: They do that.

W: They are free enough to say we don't elect you.

Makhobokoana, JM: No, they are free enough. Since there was no progress within this line, then we happened to choose somebody else to assist us to do this job and to see whether there would be any progress.

W: This election happens or happened how?

Makhobokoana, JM: The whole congregation. Then they choose their own leaders. The whole congregation. Not the particular individual sectors. The whole congregation sits in the hall of the church and then they make election by means of hand raising. We announce so and so should be a leader for this. Then they say we second that to do the job.

W: And they are not afraid of people for example, there is an influential person but we don't want this lady or man now to continue, they would say no?

Makhobokoana, JM: They are free, very free. Because it is useless. If a person in the congregation does not perform, as I said, to their expectation, they will elect somebody else. Whom they think that this person will do the job (Makhobokoana 1999).

Without the preparatory, selecting involvement of SCCs, which are not working properly in this community, this way of community-based election of leaders is described as concerned about quality, checking on the performance of leaders, and holding them accountable. It is community related insofar as acceptance of the leaders is concerned and the maintenance of peace.

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[187] To enhance the work of the committee in 1996 the idea of departments was introduced. The priest suggested the idea of having key people in charge of monitoring certain aspects of the community life such as catechism teaching, leadership, funerals, Sunday services and finances to name a few. He invited the committee to think whether they regarded such an idea as helpful. In that case the committee was invited furthermore to define the role of the different departments. The restructuring took quite some time. First the departments were allocated but actually nothing happened with them. One problem may have been the limited availability of the priest at meetings to assist more systematically in introducing the new structure.

An open discussion within the community is seen to have the advantage of attracting some people not yet considered. Volunteers may stand up. This can open a further search to get more than one new leader while the requirement of training is maintained:

> Elia, MP: Sometimes we ask somebody. Some people, when we want to elect the leaders, stand up and say I ask to be a funeral leader. Then we know that there is a volunteer. But we say, no, one or two? We ask others, that the community may elect them. We say, we see a woman, or a man who could do the work. They could know how to do it. We encourage them to go for training (Elia, MP 1998a).

The advantage of this system is the involvement of all. The danger that real opposition or rejection can possibly not be aired was denied. This system leaves still broader space for various ways of assessments, since community leaders can be seen differently by different people.

> Elia, A: I myself see, this person is *oozwi lakhe* (sort of tyrant), this person is lazy, this person does not like to the nice thing done by others. But others like this kind of person. Others say this thing (task, M.W.) is right for him. Others say it is not right. So one group supports, another does not support (Elia, A 1998a).

As noted earlier, not all communities have large numbers of worshippers. With a maximum of 240 churchgoers in few cases and much fewer in others such a procedure is feasible in a context that allows direct communication.

The system of an unmediated community decision shows some weaknesses. There are cases where no proper investigation and discussion takes place about what qualities a possible leader brings along. An informed decision may be hampered in some cases. Some of the candidates may be even overwhelmed and agree without being prepared for the commitment and the skills required. The result is that people complain about the leaders (Elia, A 1998a). During the process the important fact is the community involvement which may even extend to the change of the procedure it is following.

If there is a shortage of leaders, communities resort to non-elected leaders. In the funeral of Thandeka Lahlo, F Dlephu was the main leader of the night vigil within a team; another team of leaders conducted the funeral. As long as he had resided at Maphosileni he was a leader, trained and elected. For a couple of years he was away for migrant work. He is unable to attend training sessions but returns for funerals. The community accepts him for his qualities and deploys him when he is present. There is no outright objection to training or gross negligence but it is a case where an otherwise qualified leader has no access to training. The way forward should be to open different opportunities of ongoing formation.

In other cases the shortage of leaders is dealt with by just taking one unqualified man, but this is counterproductive and detrimental to the image of the community, the dignity of the event, and the basic vision:

Pitso, TG: A problem would be where leaders are not well trained and not confident in their task. It is not a good kind of experience even for the community itself. In Jozanas Hoek the only man we have there cannot do that properly and I think the thing becomes clumsy. That is the problem. If they lead the whole community, in front of others, it looks funny. And also a problem would be where one person is doing it without the team, without others. He loses the meaning that is attached to it. Sometimes this happens, due to circumstances. Someone has to go on anyway. Though it doesn't look ideal. It is not an ideal situation. He becomes a minister of some kind, whereas we emphasise that teamwork, it is a community business. Now but with one man there it becomes more like a Zionist (Pitso 1999a).

3.3.3 Renewing leadership – strategies against exhaustion

Some leaders have a clear vision of lifetime leadership. This can result in tiredness as they get older, and in the loss of motivation while feeling obliged to carry on (Mathis 1999a). The rotation of leaders in their tasks is a system favoured also by Lumko material to renew leadership.[188] Pitso assumes that it is the best model. It helps to get new people in and to avoid linking certain tasks permanently to certain people. A positive side effect is to avoid the feeling of demotion if others come in. It requires a sufficient number of trained people and builds on the assumption that all people are able to commit themselves to various tasks.

Pitso, TG: I think, it depends. It depends on the number of people you have, the number of trained people. You can rotate. It will be the best thing to do. This year I am a funeral leader, the next year I will be a catechism teacher.
W: But realistically: Is every funeral leader a gifted catechism teacher?
Pitso, TG: Ha, if he can lead a congregation nicely in a funeral service, why can't he lead others in the faith? Also the funeral leader is nothing but faith, he is sharing there. So he can be. But if there are enough leaders. Then after a few years one can concentrate on something else. And others come in. Like this thing of Mokhesi now. For a long time they have never known anyone else except Mr Makautse, then Mr Mothabeng and Mr Ndoda. For a long time. So if they know that is the faces they are going to see. There are some other people, women; others have no chance, if a ministry is identified with the same people for a long time. That is another disadvantage. Especially if there are human resources in the place. If there are people who can also be trained for the same thing. Otherwise if things are not done that way, then if they don't rotate, one day, if one was to ask, please let others come in, the feeling of demotion will be there. But if from the onset they know that we have enough people here who may lead funerals here, then others may also come in (Pitso 1998a).

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[188] Lobinger (1980b:23-7) introduces rotation with the question: Should a leader of a Christian community remain in office for ever or should such a responsibility regularly be given to somebody else (:23)? The session continues with inviting a kind of self-examination, asking questions revolving around the basic concern what serves the community best.

For rotation to work well there need to be enough leaders. With several communities already struggling to get the needed leaders a system of rotation is often out of question.

I heard only once from a leader in Bebeza (Maponopono 1993), when she did not appear on the list of all elected leaders at all, that it was because of rotation. Otherwise this principle is mentioned but does not seem to work. Ntaka saw it never working (Ntaka 1999). The quality of some leaders may even present an obstacle to rotation. Their good performance may deter others, fearing that they will never match their quality. "And then perhaps, that also unfortunately encourages, you know, maintaining the same position" (Mpambani, ZP 1998).

The yearly rhythm initially intended for Community Week could have been an incentive to practise rotation. But this rhythm appears not to have been realistic in particular for training reasons. One year appears as too short for a proper initiation. It is difficult, for instance, to learn routine in a single task with low frequency. Mathis sees the collaborative task of the priests as being rather to encourage leaders to share tasks, and to get new leaders, in order to create the readiness to withdraw one day (Mathis 1999a).

3.3.4 Integrating problematic leaders

As we saw with the reflections on leadership qualities, there is an awareness that one never gets them perfect. Weak leaders are elected. People like them for doing something but dislike it when they develop attitudes like dominating (Makututsa 1998). Some tend to select strong personalities without training (Pitso 1998d). Generally communities have not experienced serious problems with their own leaders. Though there are differences in the assessment of leaders by the community, they do not choose by saying, "we do not want this one" (Mangaliso 1998a).

In some instances leaders lapse after their election and installation. If this happens they are not simply left alone, but attempts are made to re-integrate them according to their real abilities. For example, they are given easier tasks, since after all the person in question was supported for various reasons. They were thought to be fit, and they

should be involved instead of just sitting down in the SCC (Mbovu & Mpambani 1998).[189]

The tendency to integrate people can also be seen in the integration of controversial or weaker people. In 1997 an SCC note (Sterkspruit Parish 1997a) on leadership qualities asked whether a person whose defect is known to everybody should be elected. The clear answer for some was "No". In another context a leader who was asked the same question replied: "What should we do if there is nobody else? We have to live with them." Likewise some SCCs gave a qualified reply that such a person might be elected. One did it conditionally in case this person converts and changes his or her attitude. Two SCCs agreed that in order to achieve change and growth such a person may be elected (abuyiswe aboniswe umsebenzi nendlela, he may be integrated, the work and the way demonstrated to him). Another SCC saw a theological and communitarian aspect to qualification of leaders: It saw an opportunity to show mercy, and to maintain peace by avoiding a power struggle and infighting.

Elia, MP: Yes, sometimes we got to a point, which put a problem to us. For instance that a person does not like to co-operate nicely with the leaders. But we say, all right, let us show him and ask him to try to change his situation. We try to look for other qualities. We see for instance one got a problem because somebody is not always 100%. He has many weaknesses (Elia, MP 1998a).

There are problems related to the weaknesses of certain people. The concern for integration and peace comes first in this case too. That includes attempts to correct the deficiencies of the person in a co-operative way. The intention is to win the person over to be on the side of the community. One wants to move beyond the weaknesses of a person and rather discover his or her good qualities.

In a few cases the principle of integration does not work. The most preferred way, if all other measures to get rid of leaders have failed, is to not re-elect them (Elia, MP 1998a). This, however, happens rarely. The evaluation of leadership election is proof of this. I compared the previous list of leaders from 1997 (Sterkspruit Parish 1997e) and the new lists of 1998 (Sterkspruit Parish 1998b) and interviewed some communities about the leaders missing from the new list (Sterkspruit Parish 1998c). Most of them were not re-elected because they either died, got too old or sick, or moved away for migrant labour or schooling. In Lekau one of the 10 cases was revealed as a real problem but was beyond re-election since he left the community and joined another

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[189] Ugeux and Lefebvre (1995:30) realistically observe "It is difficult to avoid all the snags."

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church. In Umlamli 27 of the 39 people who were not re-elected had not attended any formation event for several years. Five had moved away, two resigned, one got too old, one died and two were simply forgotten in the selection and continued in their work. The fact that two leaders were simply assumed to be among the leaders but forgotten indicates that the election/selection is an element but not the ultimate means of accepting leaders. The data for Barkly East confirm the earlier claim that there are no real problems at present. Labour-related reasons apply to five of the eleven leaders not re-elected. Three of them moved away, two found local employment with working hours that do not allow them to take on leadership tasks.

There are cases which are simply too difficult for a community to deal with. In traditional procedures, when the chief is misbehaving, the people just leave him, often causing a split in the community (Mpambani, ZP 1998). It is desirable to avert this danger of a split. Strategies like getting others in and to build teams are preferable (Ntaka 1999). While some communities manage to rid themselves of problematic personalities as ultima ratio, others are too weak or unable to do this. Here collaboration with the priest can help in the concern to maintain the community and to safeguard its dignity. The advantage of involving the priest is that he is a person from outside the community feeling obliged to assist the leaders.

Mpambani, ZP: I have heard in different churches in different places, where some funeral leaders take the advantage of telling it down, you know, over whoever people are there, whether the people or the deceased, who was not a church goer or his family members were not church goers. And then they simply cough out, you know, at the funeral, without that feeling of hurting the other people. Or they also use that platform to say whatever they want. Those are not respected. For example I know one church. The one fellow he is a very staunch Catholic, he knows everything about Catholicism, the old way as well as the new way. He is a teacher. But unfortunately he likes his bottle very much. Now he was a leader in church as well. Even a funeral leader who did funerals. But in participating he unfortunately drank and then he spoiled quite a few things in that. And that is well unfortunate, it is not accepted by the people. But then, now, there is something interesting, then I asked them, what time will you ask him to step down. And they said no, I mean, that is the man who educated us in all these things. Because he was the one who quickly caught them. Then he helped us quite a lot. So it is difficult for us to say to him, step down (Mpambani, ZP 1998).

The respect for a person made it difficult for the community to get rid of the troublesome leader. The neutral priest had to come in to manage the conflict, not expelling him but asking him to step down for the good of the church and the faith. Where there is no easy solution, the lesser hurt may be chosen for the sake of the community.

Problems may be rooted in jealousy or factions within a community. Private feuds and conflicts from outside can also influence community life. They pose a threat as they can lead to people withdrawing from the church or causing fights. The problems may be

aggravated by limited human resources, leading to the community's depending on some rather undesired people:

Pitso, TG: It is not easy. It is not easy. It is not easy. Because our communities are small. And we have few leaders. With those small communities it is not easy. They say there is nobody around. And, there is another form of getting rid of, but they don't have good means of doing it. I have seen some fighting. You see some kind of fighting between certain individuals. Rather say factions. If a certain leader will have his or her own group and another one her own group. Then trying to get rid of one another in that manner. That is what they use, they try to get rid of unwanted leaders. Sometimes the other faction, genuinely it has concerns. Sometimes you find out, there is no genuine thing, just jealousy. That is all (Pitso 1999a).

There are cases with unfortunate constellations, when there are domineering, poorly trained leaders. Simultaneously family matters can be involved as well as for instance difficult characters who are not open for dialogue, or powerful people on whom many depend, for instance for transport. In one such case the solution was to divide the community into sections and to try to refer to the political development and the change it entailed at that time (Morar 1998). However, one such conflict simmered on and there is no real certainty whether it is over. There are matters beyond immediate control, unless one suggests closing down a community, but that can hurt many people.[190]

3.3.5 The priests' involvement in leadership selection

Though the communities select their leaders on their own the priests are involved in the selection process in a variety of ways. This includes the concern for encouraging the community to reflect on the selection/election process. By monitoring the priests detected some flaws in the process of selection. In 1997 a form was introduced that had to be filled in for each selected leader, indicating the leadership tasks, some general leadership qualities, and the consent of the SCC and the committee. Its aim was to improve the selection and election procedure in the communities, especially in the SCCs.

After the selection procedure the priests normally sit down with the local committee and evaluate the completed forms. Weaknesses such as electing untrained people may be discovered. The simple fact that not a single person was selected for a certain task may be evaluated as well as the reason why a well-known leader was not re-elected. It may

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[190] Such drastic step was taken in 1992 in Aliwal North. A conflict there between two choirs led to such a split that the parish of St Francis was closed for some time after all other attempts to solve the conflict had failed (Chronicle of Aliwal Diocese 2000:56).

be that they simply forgot to put the leader on the list. All this may go unnoticed if, as sometimes happens, the election forms are just accepted without further analysis.

Pitso underlines the need to supervise the selection and election process as a priest, indicating his important involvement as animating facilitator. In taking the risk and the pain of a development process where not everything goes as intended, the priest's role is to enhance and support the growing responsibility of communities for their own affairs. This also contributes to the increasing independence of the community from the priests. It goes hand in hand with an increasing awareness of leadership requirements:

> Pitso, TG: And that is why I am not always happy with the way they fill in forms. Because they gave me a lot of mistakes. And I gave them the forms and showed them how to do it. They all say, "Yes Father, we see how it works." And when they fill them in two weeks later they forgot what Father explained. I am not happy with the way they give information. But I am happy that at least they do it in my absence. That shows them that they are responsible. They discuss these people as they elect them. They know why they want that one over there and so on. So I think that is healthier. Because they are their own leaders. And they know each other very well. They know whom they need. These handpicked people I am not really happy with them now. Sometimes I had to handpick people because I know at least who will be quick to understand. But it can't be, I can't say it is the best way (Pitso 1998a).

Though the overall aim is the election of leaders by the communities there are still sporadic cases of the model where the priest resorts to "handpicking". The crucial change lies with the motive given for handpicking. It is no longer the obvious desire to get somebody to do the work. It is rather to have somebody who understands. That means looking for people who understand the whole background of the vision and what is essential to implement it as a leader. The second important change is the reservation: the handpicking system is not seen as the best, but questioned, aiming at what can be achieved in the time available.

The priests collaborate in leadership elections as enabling supervisors for the communities. They do not influence directly, but assist in refining the way of election persistently and by asking questions.

3.3.6 The blessing by the bishop – the vertical dimension

The final agreement to the selection of leaders, their instalment and the conveyance of their authority happens by the blessing through the bishop during Community Week. On this occasion all kinds of leaders are blessed. Though the overall awareness of the people concerning community ministry is already grounded in faith and within the community of faith, this blessing is experienced as empowering with the Spirit (Bebeza 1999). It is a reaffirmation of the source of power: God.

Jeremia: I want to say we are proud about our blessing. Because we know that we get the power of God. The bishop gives the blessing in the name of God. We get the power so that we can do our work. But, we don't want to say, we boast over them because we do that thing, because we are blessed by the bishop. No. That we don't want to do. We are proud, we commit ourselves (Jeremia 1998a).

The group of funeral leaders in Lekau grounds this power of the lowly biblically:

Lekau, H: It is like with the story of David. He was very small and had to face Goliath. He got his strength by the Lord. By the bishop we get that power (Lekau 1999a).

What is notable about the power and the pride is that they are understood as coming from God in order help one to commit oneself. The blessing is not seen as a personal gift, but for service. It authorises (Timati, P 1998) and gives dignity and pride (Jeremia 1998a). It elevates the commitment above a private matter. Those blessed are going to act for the community:
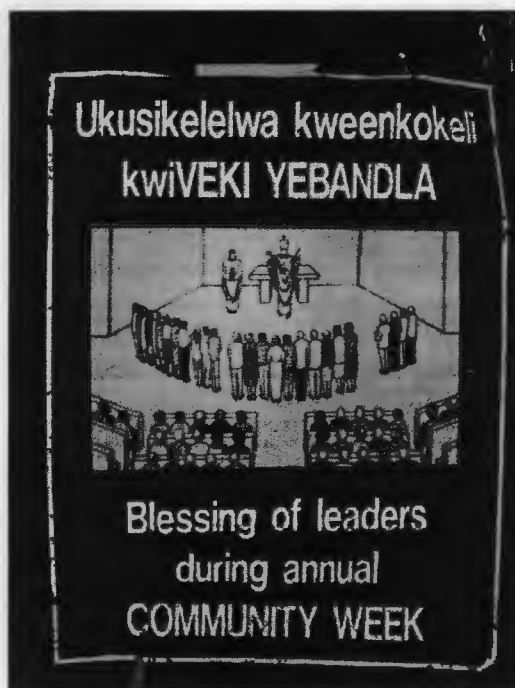
Figure 3.4. Placard inviting for Community Week in Aliwal Diocese

Mangaliso, FT: You don't talk ugly with other people as you talk at your house. When you talk like that you think the church is yours, or your place. You know, you do this thing not for yourself, you do it for the community (Mangaliso 1998a).

The blessing emphasises that what is done by the leaders is not done as a private affair but in conjunction with the bishop, the priests and the community (Mangaliso 1998a). It widens the leadership beyond the confinements of the local community and inserts it visibly into the horizon of the whole church. In the section on formation we will also see that the bishop widens the local scope and serves the unity with the wider church by his involvement there.

The authorisation by the bishop has also an outside effect. Mathis reports about a survey (Mathis 1998) among catechumens:

Mathis, W: Then we asked for instance: Why do you want to join the church? Then there was among the answers: The bishop is visiting our churches, blessing our ministers. We are trained for that. We are called. We are sent. They mentioned that a few times in this evaluation about the motivation for catechumen or for joining the church. That was very interesting. And they brought that on their own. Because, then it was their experience, that they appreciate that very much. And it gives them some pride as well. It's a boost for them to fulfil their services, to be able (Mathis 1999a).

The blessing by the bishop as a way to give authority to those in the immediate leadership of their community also impresses outsiders. It seems to be understood as a reaffirmation that the task they are doing is actually done in the name of God. And this

authorisation is linked with the qualification; they do not just blow out teeth, as others put it. Qualified, the leaders are actually sent.

Mangaliso, FT: Because if he is not blessed, then there is no example, there is no meaning. There is no difference to other people (Mangaliso 1998a).

The blessing implies the initiation into the shared ministry with authority, the opposite of self-imposing people who are just coming in. It is the epitome of all the efforts undertaken before in training and the dedication shown in the acquisition of that knowledge:

Mangaliso, FT: And the bishop, we know he is another leader, who gave himself in the faith and has the hope that Jesus will give him power, and the Holy Spirit will give him power. This person is blessed. We get his authority. It supports. It is not like a person coming in. There is a big difference. When you just come and just talk, there is no meaning of that. But we know that this person must get training, and after the training he also will agree and like this thing. He must work for that. If you like this thing, you must work for it (Mangaliso 1998a).

The dedication and authorisation do not automatically ensure permanent commitment. The blessing is understood as an encouragement for continuous re-dedication of the leaders, dependent on their further consent and commitment. They remain responsible for maintaining their commitment. In that sense it is a renewal for the leaders:

Elia, MP: We take it as chance here. The leaders renew themselves to get the power to carry on with their work. But because there is the training we see the Community Week for me personally as a challenge to do the best of my leadership. As a leader I have to sacrifice many things and to attend to the church's needs (Elia, MP 1998a).

There is no automatic link between the blessing and the performance since there are lapsing leaders. Personal commitment is required (Bebeza 1999). Initially people may have come just to receive a blessing, and may not have taken it seriously at all. For them it was disconnected from the background of formation and selection (Makhobokoana 1999). The impression of Mathis is now that it has an importance related to the task (Mathis 1999a), as the prior statements also suggest.

The blessing directs the focus towards the future. It motivates the leaders to carry on (Timati, P 1998). It contributes to the enhancement of leadership qualities by motivating them to do their best, to accept the sacrifices they make for the church. It encourages frail leaders, and ensures improved performance (Elia, MP 1998a).

3.3.7 Statistical corroboration

The presentation of some statistical data gathered during pastoral work may help to corroborate some of the findings. The proper registration of leaders and their formation

records began in 1993. In 1992, 187 leaders were blessed at Community Week by the bishop (Lobinger s.a.b), 175 in 1993, 346 in 1995, 450 (342 in the old Sterkspruit parish) in 1996, the significant increase due to the merger with Barkly East and Lady Grey. 441 were blessed in 1997 and 333 in 1998.[191]

Among the 333 leaders elected and blessed during Community Week 1998 were 68 funeral leaders. 79 funeral leaders and 17 helpers, a total of 96 were elected in 1997. In 1996 there were 87 funeral leaders; that year the region Barkly East, Lady Grey, Herschel appeared the first time in the statistics. In 1995 in the old Sterkspruit parish area 69 funeral leaders were elected, 49 in 1994, and 25 in 1993. These data show a steady increase from 1993 to 1996. In 1997 it was strongly suggested by the pastoral team to discontinue the practice of electing untrained people as it happened the years before; they should rather be taken as helpers or assistants. As a result in 1998 untrained people were no longer reflected in the elections, the number of elected funeral leaders being reduced to 68. The reasons that led to the increase of the number of leaders were given in some interviews. It is growing awareness of the task, and the example of the role model of active leaders, and the canvassing of leaders in their parishes. The statistical data were also discussed in the communities. Comparing the leadership figures in some cases apparently led to a kind of transitional obsession with growing numbers as expression of a successful community. In the course of this process also some people were selected who proved not fit or convinced of their task. Some were even elected without their knowledge. They lapsed in training as in performance. In this way the statistical data reflect the enthusiasm following a hesitant start, leading to an inflated picture. It was deflated to a stabilised level through the intervention of the pastoral staff and frustrated active leaders. They indicated their displeasure in statements such as: "He never comes." The obsession with high numbers gave way to a rather pastoral concern for having reliable leaders.

The statistics reveal the differences between larger and smaller communities. Umlamli as the largest community also has the largest number of funeral leaders. There are no women among them. The stability in office is strong. Emvakwentaba does not have a single funeral leader. It is a community with only women and one old man who is

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[191] Some statistical inaccuracy is likely. In Lady Grey, for instance, some unlikely changes indicate that the statistical data were not achieved properly. Some places include young or female leaders among the funeral leaders though they are known to be opposed to them. Their role actually is that of an assistant

incapable of taking on that task. Nevertheless, they have rejected female funeral leaders so far.

A total of 147 people were registered as funeral leaders between 1993 and 1999. Of the 68 funeral leaders of 1998, only 8 were newly elected, 8 of them had been elected for the first time the previous year, 1997, 14 in 1996 (tracing back the record for the leaders from Barkly East, Lady Grey and Herschel is not possible). Some of them were also active before 1996. Eight began their ministry in 1995, 13 in 1994, 17 in 1993. Eleven of these 68 leaders had an interruption of one or two years in between and then resumed their task. These interruptions were due to problems within a whole community, to personal quarrels, and to migrant labour. In some cases they may actually have continued their task but were not registered properly. Generally there is quite a high stability among the present leaders. About half of them have been active for more than five years. This does not indicate a deliberate form of rotation.

The steady influx of new funeral leaders is an indication that new leaders are emerging in their communities. Exceptions are places like Mfinci where the same leaders are active over the years. This is a community that has had leadership problems.

The evaluation of the data from 1998 shows that there is a clear accumulation of tasks among the leaders involved in the liturgical sector. 55 of the 68 funeral leaders are also Sunday Service leaders (total: 164). 27 are also Communion givers (total: 49). 22 are simultaneously funeral leaders, Sunday service leaders and Communion givers. With multiple tasks possible, 20 are also SCC leaders (total: 123), 8 are catechism teachers for children (total: 72), 7 are catechumen teachers (RCIA) (total: 49), 5 prepare children for their First Holy Communion (total: 38), and 4 prepare parents for infant baptism (total: 54). The catechetical arena belongs clearly to another kind of people. It is different from liturgical tasks in that it requires a regular weekly commitment.

Four of the 68 funeral leaders are female, three of these being also Sunday service leaders. The realm of women is traditionally in the catechetical area. Though women are already the majority among the Sunday service leaders (101 of a total of 164), the catechism teaching (65:72), the preparation of infant baptism (50:54), RCIA (42:49), preparation for First Holy Communion (33:38) is also clearly their realm. They are also

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who is not expected to appear at the grave whereas they may well conduct the liturgy of the word. This applies to Voyizana, Jozanas Hoek.

active as SCC leaders (103:123). With these figures at hand the conspicuous figure is that of the participation of women in the ministry of funeral leaders with four out of 68. Since they constitute some 2/3 of the Sunday service leaders this under-representation in the area of funerals does not indicate reservations in the whole liturgical area, but in the funeral area as such (cf. Sterkspruit Parish 1998b:10).

Twenty-seven of the 49 Communion givers are also funeral leaders, among them one
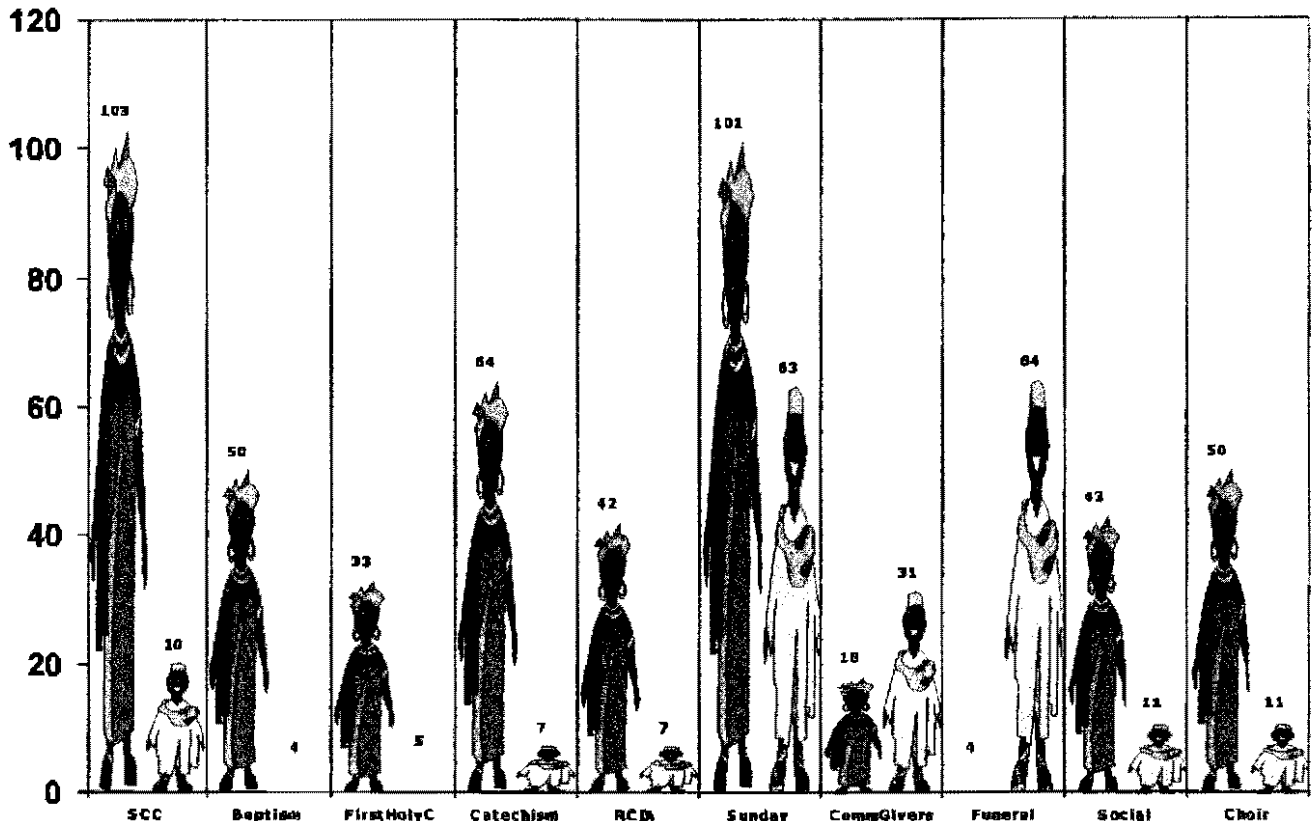
Figure 3.5. Proportion of female to male leaders in Sterkspruit parish after leadership selection 1998. The table reflects the leadership sections of leaders for SCCs, preparation of infant-baptism, preparation for First Holy Communion, catechism teaching, initiation of adults (RCIA), Sunday-services, distribution of communion, funerals, social issues, choirs (cf. Sterkspruit Parish 1998b:10)

woman. This small figure in the area of liturgical activity must be attributed to the fact that Sunday service leaders exist in all communities, but the majority of communities have not yet introduced communion givers for various reasons.

The accumulation of many tasks by one person appears to happen mainly in small communities with limited human resources like Bebeza, Voyizana, Tapoleng and Mokhesi.

Concerning their involvement in the internal community structure of SCCs, 20 funeral leaders were also registered as SCC leaders, 53 stated that they participated in their

SCCs whereas 15 did not. These 15 are found in eight communities. Four of these communities, Jozanas Hoek, Kwa Mei, Rietfontein, and Tyinindini didn't have functioning SCCs at the time of election. Two places seem to be affected in different degrees by the perception that SCCs are a matter for women. For Lekau and Upper Telle the reasons are simply not known. However, the overall picture is that funeral leaders are to differing degrees grounded within their communities by SCCs. To what extent these SCCs are actually operating is not expressed here. There are indications that a number meet sporadically or seasonally.

3.3.8 Analytical summary: Community building through ministry

Leadership concern and community building go hand in hand, they are interrelated. Both influence each other. A community caring for leadership grows as community and becomes aware of itself. Leaders themselves are meant to care for community.

Though leaders were formerly selected by priests or catechists, leadership selection is now community based. It involves, depending on local circumstances, SCCs, committees and the community as a whole. The selection is consent based, a procedure that is possible in small communities, in a consensus-oriented dialogue. It is inclusive rather than exclusive of people.

In times of bereavement, the people expect comfort from the *ibandla*, the community. The community is a comfort. Though community building and leadership are not primarily intended as means of comfort in times of bereavement, when they exist and function well they provide a sound foundation for the comforting ministry. The community in itself represents the response to that need.

One sees a dynamic process of trial and error in the development of community ministry. It follows the pace of experience and adjusts to the context.

Priests and pastoral workers support and help to develop the selection process in the communities, empowering them in this regard. The particular contribution of the bishop is to emphasise the spiritual grounding of the ministry by his solemn blessing. By this he empowers and authorises the leaders. This makes their ministry different from other tasks and supports their commitment and further formation. It puts the ministry into the wider context of the whole church.

The statistical data show a constant growth and a kind of consolidation in general leadership and in funeral leadership. They reveal stability of leaders and the openness to new leaders. The statistics show that the inclusion of women is weak only in the particular ministry of funeral leaders. Men seem to be strong in occasional ministries, whereas women prevail in ministries demanding a frequent, continuous, and regular commitment, such as catechism teaching. The difference indicated here does not mean that men are doing less work. Their dedication can assume very intensive ministry when leading one funeral after another besides leading other liturgies.

3.4 Quality enhancement by formation and training

The selection of leaders shows both the communities' involvement in the search for leaders and their concern about quality. The quality of the leaders depends on the personal character traits of the people, and on formation and training. While the priests have a certain influence in determining these qualities in the selection process it is especially the area of formation and training that they contribute to qualified leadership. If one would ask where the priests were to be found at the funerals, it is precisely the area of formation where they lay the foundations for the leaders' work. This section will explore the formation and training work that contributes to quality delivery by the leaders.

3.4.1 Terminology

The term "training" covers a variety of events, which can be described as skill training and formation.[192] Formation includes theological, cultural, and spiritual deepening. It extends to the message and how to express it by appropriate means in sermons and in rituals. It further extends to leadership qualities and skills in co-operation and conflict solving. Skill training aims at the rather technical ability to perform a task. This means for funeral leaders to be familiar with the procedures, to know what to do when, where, and with whom.

The term used in Xhosa is primarily *ukuqeqesha*, meaning training. It seems most applicable to skill training. Since this term is not sufficient and not attractive, the need

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[192] Lobinger (s.a.a:45) understands "training as the guided development of the charismas given by the Spirit, within the local Church, for its service to the world." He concedes other possible terms such as formation or growth. For its wide acceptance he prefers to use the term training.

arose to look for other, more fitting terms, especially when one is concerned about ongoing formation:

> Pitso, TG: My concern was, that training to some seems to mean that they are ignorant. You are stupid or you are backward or what. So you need to be set alight. So some people don't like to be regarded as ignorant. *Ukuhlaziya ulwazi*, that means you refresh your knowledge. Instead of saying you have to be trained. But of course that is just a way of saying, it is the same thing. But *ukuhlaziya* it is a word that people are familiar with. It lets you know the only thing you need is just to refresh what you already have... That was my suggestion. I was trying to balance these two attitudes together: Why should I be trained. if you are not trained then we try to reactivate your battery, join more energy to you as you already have (Pitso 1999a).

With *ukuhlaziya* a term seems to be found to point beyond mere skill training. It is accomplished by other terms like *ukuzuza ulwazi olunzulu*, to gain deeper knowledge or *ukufunda*, to study. The need to look for appropriate terminology is guided by the concern not to inhibit interest by an unfitting choice of concepts.

3.4.2 The demand for training

> Maponopono, M: I love the training. We renew our knowledge and get strong by that. If there is no training, also the power (*amandla*) goes. It helps in the work.
> Mphaki, J: That supports, it renews and helps in the work. And we were sent to go on.
> Matitilane, G: By training we get power. We renew (*ukuhlaziya*). It is important to us.
> Mphaki, J: The training is like a paraffin lamp. It needs always new oil to give light (Bebeza 1999).

3.4.2.1 Formation becomes a community concern

Statements like these show the development that has taken place when contrasted with that of Lobinger ten years earlier: "All agreed that the leaders must be trained, yet nothing happened" (Lobinger 1999b).[193] This was the situation of training when Lobinger became bishop in Aliwal. When I started my work in 1992 the main expectation people had from the priest besides the Sunday celebration of the Mass was to bring communion to the sick during the week. Training was one minor function among others in the parish calendar. With the introduction of the Pastoral Plan it was the priests and the catechists who stressed the idea of training and formation.

Since then the leaders' conviction, based on the growing experience with training, goes along with the official emphasis on training. RN Mpambani reported about the fear of a new leader, who had to conduct a funeral in Rietfontein for the first time. He was scared by the presence of a multitude of ministers of other denominations. The antidote against

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[193] Mejia (1993:117) counts formation among the pastoral priorities: "The last, but not the least, of the pastoral priorities I want to propose is the formation of lay Christians in order to bestow on them ecclesial ministries and responsibilities according to their capacity."

the fear for Mpambani is not to resort to a priest but training and ongoing formation (Mpambani, RN 1998a).[194] Constant training efforts by the pastoral workers and subsequent reflection and evaluation with the people created an awareness of the value of skill training and formation.[195] There is some difference in attitude between communities. Some skip formation events scheduled for Saturdays for the sake of funerals, others try to accommodate both by postponing the funeral in order to attend the formation (Elia, MP 1998e). The appreciation of formation results in the request for training by the people:

Mathis, W: For me the proof is the fact that they are applying for training. But that depends also on our side that we offer them training and give them a chance so that they can select from these specialised, concentrated trainings. I think they see now what it is all about if they are performing a Eucharistic celebration without any training. That it is a complete mess. They realise that and I tell them every time and say, now you see the difference. You were trained for all kind of things, now you see the difference. And then they realise something about ongoing training (Mathis 1999a).

The development of the awareness of the need of formation went hand in hand with the development of parish structures like the committee and introducing people in charge of certain sectors of pastoral work in 1996. The function of the person in charge of such a sector is just to observe developments in their specific area. Still a process not yet accomplished, nevertheless it becomes more the committee or the leaders demanding training and encouraging others to attend. Formation becomes the concern of the whole community, both in selecting its own leaders and in caring for their formation:

Makhobokoana, JM: You see now with the introduction of the Pastoral Plan it was introduced that the congregation should choose its own leaders. And then if they have chosen those leaders they will send the leaders to the mission to show them how to go about the funerals (Makhobokoana 1999).

The community-based responsibility for formation extends down to the level of SCCs:

"How is it about the training of these leaders?" "Oh, we don't want untrained leaders. We want them to do their work properly." "We support them that they get some training." "For example this year we will take care that they get some training in the planned workshop" (SCC Barkly East 1999).[196]

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[194] Formation and the demand for it by the community make a difference between the AIC ministers and other ministers. "Being a charismatic leader, the healer needs neither a theological nor a medical university training. His ministry is rather orientated towards the types found in the New Testament, where a taxcollector turns into a preacher, and a fisherman into a bishop" (Becken 1972:139). They, however, rooted with their ministry in the Bible, seek guidance by Bible School training (:139).

[195] Kraft (1996) contrasts an education with mere information orientation with its inherent tendency to dispute over the correctness of words and concepts and the real purpose of education "to learn to live, behave, and use knowledge in effective, profitable and (in the case of Christians), Christ-glorifying ways" (:273). With its wide scope and involvement of people we find rather the second type of education here.

[196] Ugeux (1988:61-2) stresses the point that formation matches the real needs of the people: "Encore une fois, il faut parer au plus pressé et veiller à ce que le système fontionne en espérant, par la suite,

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3.4.2.2 Moving towards community ownership of formation

The motives given by the leaders for asking for training and formation range from safeguarding the service supply by increasing the number of leaders to enhancing the quality of the service. In Barkly East (1999c) the announcement of the workshop on funeral vigils stated it was not only about the technical procedures but to go beyond the liturgy outline of *Bongan' iNkosi*. A younger leader expresses the need for training: "We need to be trained. That is number one" (Jeremia 1998a). As reasons she gives a technical familiarity with the procedure. Another one concerns the content, not to make the same mistakes as others in preaching. Yet another concern is ecclesial, not to make a fool of your church. When MP Elia requested a workshop on preaching he mentioned that they had sat down with some leaders and discovered that there was a need to address the topic of preaching. The self-evaluation discovered the need to enhance the attentiveness of the audience by enhancing the skills of the leaders. The concern extended to both content and form of sermons:

Elia, MP: I think there is a need for such a workshop. You see, sometimes it is difficult to find a real topic in the reading. You just don't know how to deal with the given text. There I think we should learn something. And then we should also address the problem of the length of a sermon. How long should it be? Some like to talk very long, half an hour or so and then you see that only a few really listen.
W: Now you say that it is you who says so. Is it only you or did you talk with others about this?
Elia, MP: No, I talked with others. We sat down and talked about this and said we should have a workshop on preaching (Elia, MP 1999e).

Yet we find differing attitudes towards training and formation. The motivation for formation can be based on commitment, and sharing faith and talents. For others it may just be unconvinced compliance with the demands of the priests:

Pitso, TG: That differs from community to community. Some do really come with a positive motivation for training. They want to play their role, to share their faith and their talents in the communities. For others it might just be a chance. This leadership thing concerning training is still confused I think. It is not seen so very clear. Why should I be under formation ... Father wants it. The priest wants it. So we do it. They are not yet convinced of it. That is still a challenge to make them to feel the need themselves to qualify, to clear the motive for participating in trainings (Pitso 1998a).

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adapter ces formations aux attentes réelles des populations." His observation matches the local one. Here not so much the introduction of SCCs, but that of leadership brought the demand for training. It challenges the clergy to respond creatively: "La création des petites communautés chrétiennes a engendré une grande soif de formation parmi les laïcs. Le clergé est appelé à y répondre avec beaucoup de créativité" (:60). They become animators: "Pour les pasteurs qui restructurent leur paroisse en petites communautés chrétiennes, il est évident qu'il faut mettre l'accent sur la formation des animateurs. Or, ils découvrent rapidement – et parfois avec étonnement – la profonde soif de formation qui anime les responsables de communauté" (:60).

3.4.2.3 Motivational influence of pastoral workers

This development is still an ongoing process. The motivational work of the pastoral staff is not yet completed:

> Pitso, TG: Ya, I think a last remark, the main challenge that is facing us is to facilitate the process where people, our communities could long for formation or training themselves. So far in the whole thing that we are doing now, it is us seeing what they need. It is us preparing ourselves for what we want to offer. In other words that means we try to sell our understanding, our goals where we want to take them, where we want them to be. That would be very much more difficult than what we are doing, that they long, that they learn to ask for training. And even when you try to say now, you elect those who were trained... So we still have to go to the motivation level. To motivate them to look forward to training as a need. Of course we did have those few requests that were initiated by some communities. Asking for training. But is not yet the general feeling. They are familiar with the rhythm. But they don't own it yet (Pitso 1999a).

This disparity noted between the communities may be caused by the differing exposure of particular priests to different communities with different levels of development. The aim of owning the training seems partly achieved where demand is growing. As part of the church's life also training thus becomes part of the feeling at home as an indication of an inculturated, not alienated church.

It is a permanent task for the main formators, the priests, to awaken, maintain and further develop the spirit of training. This work is mainly motivational and developmental. In particular the idea of ongoing formation seems to be in need of further reinforcement.

> Pitso, TG: That is our service on our side. The idea of training as a condition I think it still needs to be marketed, so that people see it as their own. For the moment could be they see it from afar. That is what they want. But they have not said that is what I need. It is not yet their own. They don't own this idea yet. Or for instance if you say, some of you want to be blessed. They come for training, which they won't give a damn about it. They don't even like it, they don't enjoy it. But since I want to be blessed on that day as well I just come. So the motive is something else. That happens sometimes. ... That is our own homework as a pastoral team, to sell it so that they own it at least (Pitso 1998a).

The enforcement of training is a last resort. In 1997, after monitoring years of failure in some communities, there was an increasing measure of coercion. Untrained people were not accepted as leaders any more, but given a chance to act as assisting helpers. This exercise of power by the priests was rooted in the concern about the quality maintenance of the shared ministry of faith, itself desired by the communities.

> Pitso, TG: I think the basic threat is, if training is not properly done. People start to get confused with their roles, and with their functions. I think that will give it a bad shape. I mean people, become performers. So if it becomes removed from sharing of faith to something of a limelight issue (Pitso 1998a).

The quality concern is in contrast with the earlier mentioned observation by Jeremia, that in a multidenominational context some may get the impression that becoming a (poorly initiated) member qualifies one at the same time to become a leader:

Pitso, TG: Generally people come, are there for training. Others do even ask for training. Others even ask for particular type of training. There are others of course or a few, who don't see why should I be trained. They claim that those who are being trained, that they are not yet knowledgeable enough as Catholics. So the others claim I am long time Catholic so I don't need any kind of training (Pitso 1999a).

The actual training practice of pastoral workers can have a demotivating effect. With ongoing formation understood as requirement it needs to exceed the mere technical approach by being deepened. It is not sufficient just to repeat the very same thing all the time without variation and with no new material being introduced.

Mpambani, ZP: Well, I mean, you know, if you give them the start, they know already, unless you bring something else to increase sort of their theology and their understanding of catechism. Usually you add something to their faith. If you come with the same thing, be it the last three years, or this it what I have been practising, if you say, lets come and do the same thing, then it gets boring unless you add something more into that (Mpambani, ZP 1998).

Ecumenically the practice of formation is widespread among the main-line churches. The Anglican diocese of Grahamstown in its application for licensing of a lay minister asks two relevant questions:

> Has the candidate undergone adequate training in the area/s of ministry for which the licence is being applied? Is the candidate prepared to continue with ongoing training to equip her/him further for ministry (Diocese of Grahamstown s.a.)?

This, together with the practice of the Methodist Church of having regular training for their leaders, allows the training practice to appear as a normal feature of church life.

3.4.3 Sources of formation

W: Do you still remember how you were prepared for your task?
Matros, DN: I was trained in Colesberg. The training was done by the other leaders and by the priest. We were trained with the Bongani.
Magibili, B: I was trained by the leaders, first with the Xhosa/Sotho book. Then I attended workshops.
Mkala, HB: As I said, I just learned it by observation.
Mangcotywa, MJ: I was trained by Tata Matros. Then the Catechist gave me further training.
Ngangatha, NS: First I was trained by Tata Matros with the Bongani. Then by the Catechist. And I attended workshops here and in Sterkspruit.
W: And after you received the training, how do you see the concern of ongoing formation (ukuhlaziya) for the leaders?
Matros, DN: We know our work. There is no real need. We carry on.
Magibili, B: I see some value in the renewal.
Mkala, HB: It helps to renew your knowledge.
Mangcotywa, MJ: The ongoing formation is important to be able to adapt to the liturgy and new things.
Ngangatha, NS: I don't oppose the ongoing formation (looks at Matros). In the workshops in Sterkspruit I learned some new things with the other leaders there (Mkunyazo 1999).

This group interview reveals the awareness of the funeral leaders about the different kinds of training and the different providers of formation: leaders, catechist, and priest. Other leaders often give the first initiation, with further formation provided by the pastoral workers. There are differing attitudes towards formation. It is the older ones who do not see a real need for further formation. What is appealing about the workshops seems to be the acquisition of skills to adapt to new circumstances and, in the case of workshops for clusters of communities, the exchange among the leaders and learning from each other.

3.4.3.1 Organised formation

The diocesan report on the training situation in the different parishes (Aliwal Diocese 1998a)[197] allowed a rough distinction between theme workshops, skill training, involvement training, and spiritual formation. Theme workshops aim at deeper formation. They are time consuming. They last from a few hours to 1-4 days. They go beyond mere skills. The regional meeting, planned by the senate and conducted by leaders, is one form of theme workshop. Skill training refers to the practice and drill of liturgy and catechesis. Sometimes even the liturgy itself can have the side effect of being skill training when leaders do a kind of on-the-job training of new leaders, introducing them into their role. Involvement training is the less organised form of formation, not actually planned as training but offering an opportunity for learning just by participating in certain events like discussions in the committee, planning, and organising with the priest. Spiritual formation happens in various ways, such as retreats, sessions on spiritual topics like ways of prayer, or Bible studies with spiritual emphasis.

This report on the situation of ongoing formation within the whole diocese of Aliwal discloses the broader context of the experiences in Sterkspruit parish. It helps to locate it on a scale and to avoid becoming idiosyncratic. There are similarities between the parishes situated in the former homeland of Transkei: Teresa and Sterkspruit in the Herschel district, and Tafile (*Umhlanga*) in the area of Lady Frere (*Cacadu*). Common characteristics are the presence of a kind of team of one or more priests and animation

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[197] The situation of formation differs quite a lot. This may be attributed to a true contextualisation by the respective pastoral staff. Lobinger (1973b:48) noted about the situation in Viljoenskroon: "Twenty-five of the 42 lay-ministers ... have been trained for three to four years, others for shorter periods, while a few still remain untrained. Their training consists of a correspondence course tutored by the priest of each parish."

workers. These parishes have the highest number of leaders, because of their membership and their vast geographical extent. Sterkspruit has 23 centres and five farms, Tafile and Teresa have five big and three smaller centres each. Their situation, including the training, differs significantly from that of township parishes. It makes the introduction and maintenance of leadership necessary because the communities are scattered. It poses a specific challenge to the pastoral workers committing themselves to work locally.

Training by involvement is a feature of most parishes. It is the least demanding form of structured preparation. It is noteworthy that the more intensive formation work is done in parishes where there is a team of pastoral workers, priests and animation workers like sisters and catechists. This suggests that working in teams could have an impact on the implementation of formation.

Locally formation was initially done mainly in central workshops in Sterkspruit on weekends. Lack of space, transport expenses, interference by funerals on Saturdays, and the desire to include more people in the training effort led to the increased offer of local workshops in the individual communities or regional workshops in clusters of neighbouring communities.

While the workshops deal mostly with the immediate leadership issues within the parish, the scope of the regional meetings is wider. They provide a special theme. The Regional Meeting (in 1997) in Sterkspruit dealt with Inculturation, based on *The Church in Africa* (CIA). It followed implicitly the advice of that document with regard to inculturation: it must be compatible with the Christian faith and must be done in communion with the whole church (CIA 62). This communion with the whole church finds its expression in these meetings with the bishop, which goes beyond the very local level and opens up the broader horizon, for instance in reference to ecclesial documents.

Skill training happens mostly on demand by communities. In the case of funeral leaders it mainly aims at familiarising them with the liturgy, including that of the unveiling of the tombstone.

A special form of involvement training is provided by leaders in the form of in-service training.[198] This training has an advantage, especially in a township context like in Barkly East where people have various commitments. It does not require extra time besides the event itself.

Elia, MP: No, that means, if they are shy, you say, see, let both of us practice that thing. Like the liturgy of the word.

W: That you do among yourselves?

Elia, MP: It is just myself. I go to Mrs Maruping. Then I say, now let's practice that thing. You see here, Mr Masina, Mr Mangaliso and you. Then Mr Masina reads, then we do this practically. He reads. Then the choir sings at the time of glory. We sing, and then you come in. Do it, read. Then she reads. Then she stands there, practises. Then the altar stands here. How do we do it: we stand like that. Then when she goes there, she will know. She may shiver a little bit, but I must try to do my best. It is only the first Sunday and the second Sunday. On the third Sunday she is willing to do that.

W: So this training helps to overcome fear?

Elia, MP: It's much better. We like to do this. Now, here we have little time. Because after five it is difficult for me to say I can visit Tata Masina to share some things around the leadership. Because maybe I am coming off from work. Then I have to go to another meeting (Elia, MP 1998a).

In some especially critical cases on-the-job training becomes also the task of the pastoral worker or priest. As in the case of Thabakoloi mentioned above two young women were introduced into their task as funeral leaders in direct co-operation. After attending training the previous week and thus gaining a foundation they "practised" the first time at the funeral.

3.4.3.2 Formation by observation – a cultural pattern

Participation in events provides a further source of formation in a kind of informal formation:[199]

Pitso, TG: Our leaders, they don't learn all from what we teach. They also learn from others. And there is a lot of experience that they get from their counterparts from other denominations. So really, the whole environment also offers some kind of training, informal training that they learn from others as well. It is learning by watching, by listening, by seeing what others are doing. So there is a lot of that copying from others that is going on as well (Pitso 1999a).

The influence of other denominations plays a considerable role as part of the informal formation of the leaders. This applies especially to funerals where at the night vigil all sorts of people deliver their style of preaching:

Timati, J: Like before the Pastoral Plan. They were not trained how to preach. They got the preaching from other denominations. They copied there. Because we used to copy when we were together at umlindo. Then they got a chance to copy them. How to preach (Timati, J 1999).

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[198] This method is quite common. Becken (1972:140) describes it with view of apprentices walking with an experienced bishop.

[199] This kind of informal formation is quite normal and a very common way to acquire education. Kraft (1996:274-5) claims that most education happens without books, lectures and examinations. "The basic ingredients are modelling and imitation."

Formation with regard to the liturgy also happens through sermons. It may well be a reflection of an oral culture that good sermons and speeches are not only listened to but also well remembered. I repeatedly heard leaders and people quoting after years from a sermon of Fr Zolile or others. These last two modes of formation, especially, seem to appeal to people coming from an oral culture where everybody is used to learning by observation.

3.4.3.3 Formation by reading

This "oral orientation" goes together with a rather weak use of literature as source of formation.

W: Since you are talking about books: Are you also reading books for formation?
Maponopono, M: We didn't buy any books.
April, A: We got the Catechism, *Uhambo Lwethu Kunye* and the *Bongani*.
Maponopono, M: We don't buy books in the shop. It is the books we get here in church (Bebeza 1999).

Literature is scarcely used as source of formation. Three books play a major role. The book thoroughly utilised is the Bible[200] itself as source of inspiration and guidance. The second one is the prayer book *Bongan' iNkosi* and the third, with some reservations, is *Our Journey Together* in its Sotho or Xhosa version. The catechist remembers well that the Pastoral Plan booklet was used to introduce the vision. Some people keep and use it like the books donated by the bishop at some community weeks.[201] For SCCs the SCC notes provide a used printed guide on particular issues. Occasionally one sees the handouts from workshops in use or the small booklet on preaching, composed during a central workshop by the participants.

Though it is not very common, some leaders read on their own accord. The frequency is rather vague, at home or in the SCC, there using a book instead of doing Gospel sharing. The book A Elia refers to was a gift by the bishop to the leaders:

Elia, A: I read *Uhambo Lwethu Kunye*.
W: And are there other books?
Elia, A: There is this one on leadership, let me look (searches her bag). No, it is not here. It is this book on leadership that I read.
W: Do you do this alone or with others?
Elia, A: Sometimes with the SCC. Otherwise I do it alone at home.
W: How often does this happen, every week, every month or so?
Elia, A: When there is the chance, I do it *(ukuba likhona ithuba)*.
W: And if you do it, why is it important to you?

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[200] The Bible is available in the main vernaculars isiXhosa and Sesotho.
[201] These books deal with aspects of leadership: Lobinger 1994; Lobinger, Miller & Prior 1994.

Elia, A: It renews you, it gives you new joy in your work (Elia, A 1999).

3.4.3.4 Coached distance formation

We already mentioned that some communities resort to leaders who have not attended training because of their profession, though they are interested in formation. Some know that others had learned a lot from attending workshops and try to catch up by reports they get, sharing and co-operating on the educational sector in a kind of "coached distance formation".

Gqalaqha, MM: Father, I have a problem, because I work on weekends. But this thing is supportive. If I can get these books and I study at home, and when I just look at these books, I don't come on. If I come to the workshop I hear those from Hlomendlini say so, and from Umlamli say so, and from Sterkspruit say so, and the Father says so, I have to get that together (ndiyadibanisela), it becomes clear (kutsho kukhanye).

W: How does it help?

Gqalaqha, MM: You see these other things I always read in these books. But the other things become clear when I go to the workshops. This thing must be right when it goes like this. I can study, study and study, but I can't get it how it goes right. But if I go to the workshop I will get to know how it goes.

W: Does it help to meet others there?

Gqalaqha, MM: Very much. For example now, you see here at Voyizana, I left many times. Even when I do not attend the workshops, Mpambani and Mbovu attend the workshop. On Monday I get Mbovu at work, he wrote down all the things done there, I take that book. I write down all the things in my book. We share at work. I get that, though nobody from Voyizana was attending the workshop. We will be left behind if we don't attend the workshops. See this, we never knew this. They discussed about this in Sterkspruit. We help each other like that when we do not attend the workshop. When I attend the church, I communicate it to the people, the procedure from the workshop (Gqalaqha 1999).

The advantage of meeting other leaders and exchanging ideas over mere reading is clearly expressed. Formation in a communal, dialogical way seems to be more effective. The mutual exchange of leaders at formation events is a service to each other. This seems to be pursued even when tapping others who attended workshops in order to catch up.[202]

3.4.4 Formators

The final prayer by Mthwesi at the workshop in Lekau expressed the perception of the roles and the tasks:

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[202] The different sorts of education Kraft (1996:275-7) presents resemble much of the diverse formational influences for the leaders with the exception of formal education like in schools. Nonformal education aims at facilitating change in a semi- or non-directive way as in seminars or workshops. Informal formation happens often in addition to formal and nonformal formation from person to person and by means of informal talking, reading. A fourth way is apprenticeship where teaching is done nonformally and informally. I mention this not for the purpose of indicating a kind of compliance with some educational models (Kraft himself concentrates on the school-system), but to show that there are similar general

Sikubulela ukusithumela umfundisi utyhile iinqondo zethu sikhanyisele emabandleni ethu (We thank you for sending us the priest to open our minds and to enlighten us in our communities).

In a spiritual understanding the priest is sent by God. His task is to animate, to open up minds and to enlighten the leaders in their communities. The task is related to the community of faith. It is a mediating role, enabling the leaders to act competently in the realm of faith. The prayer could just as well have been said about a trainer-catechist.

3.4.4.1 Training by staff

We have already seen that the new pastoral approach requires a transformed and enriched understanding of the priestly ministry and that of the pastoral workers. They are more and more playing the role of formators or animators in all the different kinds of formation and training events.[203] It is a sign of the enhanced co-operation between the community leaders and the pastoral workers that the leaders start to request training on certain subjects. This acknowledges the different contributions the different role players make to their common ministry.

The initial readiness to take the role of a formator differed between younger and older priests. Ntaka used to leave the systematic training to "the younger man":

Ntaka, M: No, I didn't actually, Zolile was doing this. When I was staying with him in Umlamli and I was staying with him here, and in Burgersdorp Martin was doing it.
W: How much were you yourself involved in training?
Ntaka, M: I only examined. I have never started to group up.
W: Were you hesitating to do it?
Ntaka, M: Not that I am not used to do that work. It is just that I had a young man with me to do the work. That's all. You see, on that side I was lucky (Ntaka 1999).

Mpambani recalls that Ntaka left him to do things when he was still a deacon, or to experiment - while he himself did not get involved.

Mpambani, ZP: He said, so I know, you are full of ideas and everything. Since you are fresh from the seminary. Now you can experiment, you know in that parish. But he said, but before experimenting with anything, you know, sit down and say this is what I like to try out and do. And that worked quite well. I know with some things I didn't tell him, they just came into my mind when I was there. Then I sort of tried to implement them. And then they would happen to reach his ears and then he would fraternally correct me (Mpambani, ZP 1998).

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features. Kraft, however, cautions that *"an educational model having validity in one society may not easily be transferred to another"* (:287).
[203] Baumeler (1972:123) understands formation as a crucial question with regard to community ministry. As formators he sees the local mission staff in the first place. He speaks still in the mode of options: Formation should be done.

In the meantime the training task actually requires most of the time of the pastoral team during the week and at weekends. Preparation, implementation and evaluation, particularly, in the pastoral team's meeting consume much time. Teams conduct the central workshops, especially, on weekends whereas a single pastoral worker usually does the local or regional workshops. The preparation of formation workshops takes the form of common preparation, mostly in the pastoral team, in order to prepare the formation as well as possible. The trainer catechist in a kind of differentiated work allocation concentrates mostly on skill-related training, for instance the procedures at funerals. For some special training events and retreats specially qualified people and priests or animators from outside are invited.
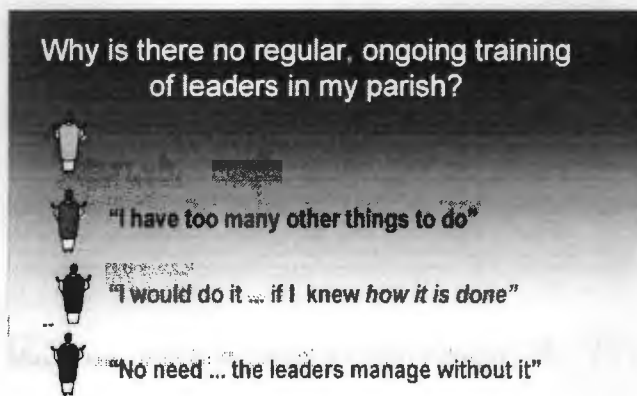
Figure 3.6. Slide from slideshow (Lobinger 1998c: Slide 8)

In a slide show (Lobinger 1998c), presented to the senate meeting on 6.10.1998, the bishop re-affirmed the role of the local priests as that of animators, trainers. This seems to imply that for various reasons there is some reluctance on their side to take up the task of training. The suggested reasons for this are feeling not capable, feeling overloaded with other work, an assumed lack of knowledge of how to do it, and seeing no actual need: The leaders will manage without.

What is not mentioned in this presentation is the fact that there are not enough priests and animators to respond to the training demands of the communities in a satisfactory and qualified manner. Already at this moment the demand exceeds the supply.[204] The often-deplored lack of priests for the Eucharistic celebration has another side to it: the lack of priests in their function as formators or teachers poses a threat to the formation of leaders.

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[204] If a proper service cannot be provided, this could hinder the strategy of getting people to own the training by their own demands.

3.4.4.2 Training by leaders

Collaboration in the shared ministry also extends to the area of formation and training.[205] Some leaders train others in their communities to introduce them and to develop their skills. A Pastoral Planning Meeting (1998) dealt with the fact that in some communities leaders started training new leaders. Some do a kind of in-service training, introducing trainees to the procedures of the liturgy. But it was noted that some provide even deeper training, on sermons for example. The pastoral team identified the need to provide more formation for these trainer-leaders and also to find ways to recognise this activity since up to then only the attendance at training events conducted by the pastoral staff was registered.

W: You told me recently that you are doing training with leaders here on your own. I'd like to know a bit more about this. You said you did it on Fridays.

Mbovu, PM: Yes, we do it always on Fridays. Sometimes there are other things, then we cannot do it. But most of the time we do.

W: And whom are you training then?

Mbovu, PM: That differs. We train *abadlezana*, those preparing the mothers for their children's baptism. We train the Sunday service leaders and the funeral leaders how to conduct the funeral.

W: So it is mostly about the procedures, how to do the liturgy correctly?

Mbovu, PM: Oh no, it is more. We train for example the preaching and about the differences. When they visit for instance the home of a bereaved family, they must know about the different ways of preaching. It is not the same if you come to the home of a lapsed one. And you have to take into account the *ababhujelweyo*, the bereaved. And still it is a different thing in the church.

W: By that you mean the visits at the families and the way you are preaching there?

Mbovu, PM: Yes, that is when we go to visit them. But also in the church service. We talk about the difference for example of *intshayelelo*, the introduction, *ukungqina*, the witnessing, and *ukushumayela*, the preaching. When witnessing we talk about what this text or situation means to me personally. I can only witness about this myself. My experience does not mean that it extends to everybody else. In the introduction you speak more generally about the situation which means all of us. You make people aware of what is coming and what to pay attention to.

W: And this witnessing and introduction you do with a book?

Mbovu, PM: No, we try to do it on our own. We use the *incwadi yentshayelelo*, the introduction book to identify the theme to find out about what in our life the reading is talking about (*ithethe ngobani ebomini bethu*). And with the preaching we try to show them how to work with *isiboniso*, with symbols, or how to use a story. And of course how to choose the right reading for a funeral. And then we try to link our life and the faith. For example concerning healing. At home we go to *ugqirha* or *igqirha* (doctor or traditional healer). Here in church we approach God (*uThixo*). And we ask what the Gospel tells us. For instance this Sunday Gospel with the widow (Lk 18:1-8, M.W.) tells us about a divide and invites us to bring people together.

W: And this does work, this training and that people grasp it?

Mbovu, PM: It takes time. It is easier with the younger people. For the old it takes a lot of time. They often just start preaching when they are supposed to give an introduction. But the younger, they understand it much easier.

W: And where do you get all this from, *intshayelelo, ukungqina* and so?

Mbovu, PM: That is from the workshop in Sterkspruit. Was it not with Fr Zolile? There we got this little booklet. Do you remember? You printed it as the outcome from our workshop. It helps with these things. For example that the *intshayelelo* is leading to the Gospel. This little booklet really helps. And so we go on with the people (Mbovu 1998b).

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[205] Ugeux and Lefebvre (1995:31) observe the emergence of training teams from among the SCCs, while here they emerge from among the leaders.

The training done locally by leaders depends on their personal skill and grasp. As in this case it often goes beyond the merely technical skills. It can include sensitising for the context of the various clients or audiences, matters of method, cultural and theological issues. It draws from workshops attended by the leaders. So these workshops serve not only the formation of immediate end-users but as a source of information for the local formators. They translate the methodology and content used there into their context. The formation material used and produced at such workshops is re-used locally. In this way the training by staff and by leaders is linked. Morar identifies the advantage of this kind of locally adapted training: the trainer-leaders are more easily available as partners in matters of local theology:

> Morar, MK: I think, it will help a lot, I mean, because they would be the ones that have more time with the people to discuss and talk theology and things like that. And I think that needs to be developed more. To make them aware of their role in that (Morar 1998).

Especially in the early phase when everything was new some leaders, trying to instruct others or to convey to their communities what they had learned, met difficulties. Some people were not interested in it (Bebeza 1999). Others were suspicious:

> Mpambani, ZP: It was difficult, you know, for them. People back home were suspicious whether this was really what was taught. You know where they work. Then that would have to be confirmed when we come for Mass on that particular Sunday. We always had to confirm that this is what we taught. When we tried to teach this and carry on so (Mpambani, ZP 1998).

Mpambani's (and Morar's) experiences refer to the early phase of introducing the Pastoral Plan's vision. In contrast to the above-mentioned experiences of leaders they indicate the development that happened over the years with constant training. It is assumed that the increased involvement in formation by the pastoral staff and the attendance of many parishioners contributed to the acceptance of formation done by the leaders themselves. People became familiar with the whole approach. One of its side effects is trust building, besides the efforts to support the trainer-leaders.

The local training by the leaders has a further effect. The training meetings allow for discovering and assessing the skills of people. They provide in this way a basis for recruiting new leaders. Though new leaders are selected in Umlamli by the SCCs, their skills become noticeable in these training events.

> Mbovu, PM: We are training for all the different tasks. Now we are going to select from this group of trainees those who are going to lead the Sunday service, the sermon, the funeral or to go on with *umlindo*. It is easy then for them to come in by following others (Mbovu & Mpambani 1998).

The task of leaders co-operating in formation therefore also includes the assessment of future leaders and their skills.

3.4.4.3 Collaboration inserts formation into the cultural context

The training ministry at times includes broad co-operation on different levels. The collaboration includes the pastoral staff and leaders in running the formation event. It also includes the community and the SCCs in its preparation.

A central workshop for funeral leaders was held in Sterkspruit from 3-5 October 1997. Its preparation began in May 1997 when the priest started planning with three experienced leaders from Umlamli. The point of departure for the preparation was the Lumko training book for funeral leaders.[206] The topics of the book were studied and compared with the experience of the leaders. Locally relevant issues were identified and filtered out. Topics missing in the book were included. In this way new themes were incorporated into the final programme for the workshop. It was an adapting, contextualising approach to provide training material based on the competence of the leaders.

The choice of the topics for this formation event reflected the concern and intent to improve the funeral-ministry. The first topic dealt with the fear of some leaders to act in the presence of the ministers of other denominations. It responded to the anxiety of some leaders and the need of the community for a dignified funeral. In the course of the workshop it was very important that an experienced leader conduct this part. For him it was easy to evaluate the fears of leaders and to address them in a convincing way. A priest in this case could have given a correct talk, but with less convincing power since he is a highly trained professional. He instead took the role of a back-up advisor in case this need arose. In this case collaboration happened in a complementary way.

The second topic dealt with the selection of readings. Though many quotations are given already in *Bongan' iNkosi* the leaders felt that some tend to confine themselves to their favourite reading as they experience it with preachers of other denominations. The aim was to broaden the view and make the leaders aware of the need to choose readings suitable for the particular situation. The need for the leaders to be able to

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[206] Rickert, Moens, Nxala & Lobinger s.a.

prepare for the reading and sermon competently corresponds with the longing of the people for a powerful "word" or message.

Likewise the third topic took up the longing for the word, dealing with the sermon. It was suggested in order to sensitise the participants to different preaching styles and to enhance their preaching skills. The problem was that some leaders tend to deviate from the topic and just talk.

A fourth topic dealt with practical questions: How to bless the grave, how to incense it, where to stand at the grave, and how to pour the soil into the grave in accordance with the local culture. Concerning the different customary procedures the intention here was to reinforce the possibility of different ways of conducting the rite, and variations in different contexts. The phenomenon of accepted diversity was in need of a reflective corroboration. People wanted to discuss the ways of remembering the deceased and the question of the funeral Mass.[207] The last part of the workshop dealt with the selection of songs. This was to make leaders aware of the need for preparation and conscious selection, since the choir often spontaneously does the selection.

The preparation of the workshop itself proved to be formation for the leaders involved. It included ways of evaluation, the study of a list of Bible quotations dealing with funerals and a print out of differing funeral customs in the world of the Old and New Testament. The actual collaboration took the form of collaboratively guiding a formation event with the bulk of the work done by the leaders.

The preparing team decided to involve the communities and the other leaders in the preparation for the workshop via the SCCs. They should prepare the funeral leaders for attending the workshop. To achieve this two SCC notes were designed. One dealt with the topic *The Customs at Funerals* (Sterkspruit Parish 1997b), the other with *The Reasons to Bury with the Church* (Sterkspruit Parish 1997c). Both were provided in Xhosa and Sotho.

The preparatory collaboration with the SCCs was reflected in the responses to certain issues that arose during the workshop. Some of the participants gave very limited

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[207] From this workshop the first time the idea emanated that the Mass with the Catholic community could be celebrated on Fridays before the vigil. In the course of the workshop some strong 'feelings and the dissatisfaction or disappointment were expressed about the idea of having the Mass to remember the deceased on one of the following Sundays if a Mass at the funeral was not possible.

answers whereas others brought a variety of ideas. They were very similar to those found in the SCC notes returned to the pastoral team. This indicates that the preparation happened at different intensity and that not all leaders attended the SCC meetings or that the SCCs did not deal with the topic.

The effect of including local leaders into this workshop was remarkable. The catechist observed various results. It paved the way to overcoming the resistance of a few and it helped to include culture:

Timati, J: To myself it was good. Because that was important. That the other people, who still got arguments about these things, they found that people who were attending the workshop, now they are going on. And their communities they are growing. Because at that time I found M. (a sometimes troublesome leader, M.W.) was present, and he changed. Many *Ntates* did like this. All of them. They said, no, these are some changes. Because they were trained in something which is important. And the training things were also there in *Bongani*. And also they were explained to them.

W: Could you see a difference it made that these leaders were involved? Was there a difference to other workshops?

Timati, J: Yes, something was different. Because that training also included our culture. Because we only trained these people on funerals, not on the *amasiko* (customs). But that one was also including *amasiko* (Timati, J 1999).

Within the process of introducing or rather phasing in the vision of the Pastoral Plan, formation is a way to deal with objections and to open ways for clarifying discourse. By including leaders in planning and conducting it, it was possible to alleviate fears that the new pastoral practice posed a threat to the church. On the contrary, the growth of communities could be seen by the involvement of the leaders. The catechist hints at yet another feature that was first seen when we were exploring the ways of introducing the Pastoral Plan: It seemed important to discover that the new way was not an isolated one but already prepared and reflected in the official prayer book.

When working with expatriate priests, especially, the involvement of the leaders opened a way to deal with culture and inculturation. This is an important difference from the former times when the cultural practices were suppressed though nevertheless followed in secret:

Timati, J: And also for *amasiko*, some people when they are fetching their people at the mortuary, they used to have *ibhekile yotywala* (bucket with beer). That is also good. We can use it.

W: Was this done formerly?

Timati, J: No. The Fathers were against our things. *Ukwele okuqala*, the circumcision of *amakhwenkwe* (male youth) he did not like. And they were against this *utywala*.

W: But did you do it nevertheless?

Timati, J: We did it privately at home. Now we do it also when the leaders or the priest is there. And even those other people, of some denominations, they like it, because now we are open about *amasiko ethu* (our customs). We don't hide *amasiko*. The other denominations they also hide their *amasiko nezithethe* (customs and traditions) (Timati, J 1999).

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Here we notice a crucial development and discover that the leaders play an essential part in the process of inculturation. This development contributes to what I call missionary sincerity or honesty, here with regard to culture. It helps to overcome an institutionalised unconnected double life where customs and matters of faith existed and were kept apart from each other in a kind of cultural apartheid.

3.4.5 Features of workshops

It is common practice to open a formation session, whatever sort of workshop or formation it may be, with a song and a prayer, spontaneously said by one of the participants.

> God of all our time. You are with us day by day. You go with us wherever we go. You are with us here today as you were with us yesterday. Now you are here with in this training. Give us strength that we do your work. Amen (Elia, A in Workshop on Night Vigil in Barkly East 1999).

This prayer re-affirms the spirituality of living in the presence of God. It makes the workshop a spiritual event. God's presence permeates the workshop and is understood as the source of strength to do the impending work. The following observations are mainly based on the regionally or locally-held workshops on funerals of 1999.

3.4.5.1 Participants

The workshops initially aimed mainly at leaders. Nevertheless they address the community as a whole.[208] Instead of having an exclusive training event for some selected people it becomes inclusive. Since 1995 they have been aimed expressly at the inclusion of many community members. All are invited, though only a few will take up a specific task; but all gain knowledge and become more competent in matters of their community. As a side effect this approach to training builds up community with the leaders as agents.

Mathis, W: For me it is very important that there is no training without inviting the whole community. For instance in Upper Telle there were always ten, twenty people who came. All the catechumens came along with the people and the leaders. I think that is the right thing. No training is only for leaders, it's for all. And then the leaders have to relate it to the whole community. The whole community takes part and knows it. And then they can practice it (Mathis 1999a).

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[208] Lobinger (1993:210-1) shows that ministry training is one way to provide adult formation.

The participation in workshops increased over the years. In Barkly East where in 1995/1996 very few people turned up (and those were only leaders), now a number of twenty or more participants is normal.

In many cases women seem to be more comfortable when attending a formation event. The workshop on funerals in 1999 was at all places attended by a majority of women as in Umlamli, Lekau and Mkunyazo or by women exclusively like in Emvakwentaba. In Mkunyazo they displayed a higher reading skill than the men did. They were the ones to go ahead and to request attention in case of distraction. They were the ones who discovered missing parts of the liturgy in the funeral outline and requested they be included. In group work the women took the lead; the men seemed ill at ease with the whole procedure. The elderly men participated far more actively when interacting with each other and with the priest in the plenary modules of the workshop, but not in group work. The men preferred to keep silent in group work or did their part of preparation, of a sermon for instance, alone without consulting with the others. They seemed to prefer a different style. There was a significant age difference between the younger women and the men. This is due to migrant work. Communities with work opportunities can provide better educated and more skilful, younger men, who are used to various methods of communication in formation events. Therefore these observations do not suggest that women are the more capable leaders but that they are capable, that they are available and yet - as in the case of Mkunyazo - that they are nevertheless still restricted from the funeral ministry despite the lack of skilled men.

3.4.5.2 Context and culture

All the workshops on funerals were designed to deal with the problems of the communities concerned. They were contextualised and addressed problems as mentioned before.[209] Also the principle of locality received attention. This was put on the agenda and reflected the problems which arose from the meddling of some leaders from another community in the community of Lady Grey. To the participants it was clear that leaders should emerge from their community and act in it. The co-operative act of the pastoral advisor was just to reinforce that already-existing view which reflects the diocesan regulations. The intention was twofold, to discuss this need of leaders coming from their own community and to apply this principle to other communities as well. The

leaders should refrain from assisting in other communities regularly unless they are asked to do so. In this way the workshop became an instrument of supporting and enforcing policy.

The workshops were a valuable tool in promoting deeper understanding of faith and culture.[209] These workshops were and are an outstanding domain and opportunity for the pastoral team to promote inculturation as urged, for instance, by the African Synod (cf. CIA 59).[211] The deepening is achieved by the choice of method, the choice of the material used, and also by the inclusion of the local culture. This implies, as shown in the collaboration in preparation for a workshop, the value of thorough planning and contextual adaptation of existing formation material. Such a procedure also requires the development and maintenance of skills by the pastoral workers. The process responds to needs felt by the leaders:

> Elia, MP: We would like to learn more about this inculturation, to bring faith and culture together. Since that can not simply mean to do cultural things now in church. The faith must have an influence on the culture. And you cannot do everything in church what is done in culture. But we know too little about all this here in the township. We have no experience. We would like you to bring us together with people from the villages like Umlamli and Lekau to talk with them how they do it. There could be a kind of workshop (Elia, MP 1998c).

In such a process inculturation moves beyond the narrow perception of dancing, music and material used in the liturgy. In these workshops the opportunity is open for tapping the value system or philosophy of the people to achieve a better understanding of both faith and culture. This includes the understanding of the role of Jesus and the ancestors, as we saw in chapter two. In the workshop on funerals, customs of the local cultures and the church community were compared and explored. I see these attempts as a much greater challenge to the church and its practice than the merely exterior things such as using colourful designs in the liturgy. Cultural considerations were included in the workshops on Eucharist offered to assistant ministers of the Eucharist and funeral leaders. The cultural meals in the context of cultures where the common ritual meals play a prominent role provided an excellent point of reference. The

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[209] The formation in these workshops matches the concept of "life experience catechesis" as described by Nadal (1991:107). It is closely related to the concern about inculturation.

[210] Ugeux (1988:61) in his research notes a different experience, that scarcely any use is made of African modes of transmitting knowledge: "Il est rarement fait appel à la conception traditionelle de l'education, aux modes africains de transmission du savoir (mythes, contes, proverbes, légendes, etc.)." It is stunning that a recent publication for training communion givers neglects the aspect of culture (Kramer 1997a; 1997b) – see below.

[211] These efforts towards inculturation translate the call of the IMBISA (1993:38) study document into the area of adult formation: "Emphasis should be given to inculturating catechesis and other forms of proclamation."

workshops offer an opportunity for a cultural encounter where the rules and definitions of expertise become blurred. The theologians as experts in their field co-operate with the cultural experts, the local people.[212] Both increase their knowledge and understanding in the process of developing a local theology. The role of the pastoral worker is that of an inspirer, or animator. He is guiding a process, asking questions, accepting answers, and assists in opening the discussion up for a wider perspective.

The workshops were an opportunity to evaluate and understand the function of the cultural rituals at funerals. They gave a valuable opportunity for the missionary to understand cultural rituals and the importance of the parallel action by the family: The *ukuphuthuma*, the fetching of the deceased, is done to bring him home, *simzise ekhaya*. The slaughtering, *sixhele impahla*, serves the welcome, *siyamkela*, like the beer rite with *umqombothi*, the traditional beer. The consumption of food, *sitya* (we eat), serves unity, *sibe nobunye*. The effect on the family is the gain of life, health, good fortune (*Ngolohlobo sizuza ubomi, impilo, amathamsanqa*). Omission of this would result in *intlupheko* and *ugule*, in misery and that you get sick (Wks-Fnl Lekau 1999). The broad discussion of such a meeting, which involves many voices, reduces the handicap of an expatriate priest, and leads towards the road of a deeper understanding of inculturation. In itself it is an example of culturally-grounded learning in dialogue.

The workshop on funerals in Umlamli also helped people to recognise and accept cultural diversity in customary procedures on a broader scale. When studying selected sections of the Catechism of the Catholic Church[213] in CCC 1687 which shows the European way of commemorating the dead, the participants realised the difference between a culture ruled by the calendar and a culture ruled by experience. Europeans commemorate (if they do) mainly according to set periods of time. African families commemorate when it is time, and this time is determined by deliberations in the family or by certain experiences, especially a dream (*ithongo*). The participants discovered this difference as a natural cultural variety. It was accepted as an interesting facet of church-life without any emotional connotations. They realised they were not obliged to follow literally what was described in the Catechism (Wks-Fnl Umlamli 1999).

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[212] In chapter one I referred to Barnard (1996:182) who maintains that no one possesses absolute cultural competence. The participation of many in workshops that include cultural issues corroborates this by revealing a diversity of customary procedures known and adhered to by individuals. At the same time, by involving many, the participants attribute to a competent, acceptable, and meaningful way of bringing culture and faith together.

[213] The Xhosa draft translation by courtesy of the translation team of Queenstown diocese.

This whole process is far from a primitive working with inflexible, lifeless rules as if every situation were the same. In the workshop similarities and dissimilarities appeared clearly on the newsprint. Leaders became aware that there is no simple levelling but mutual permeation. Inculturation is an attempt to bring the church home, to make people feel at home in their culture and in the church, and to enable the leaders dealing with the people to achieve the same.[214]

This procedure had repercussions on sermons I heard in some services, when people started to draw lines between customs and church procedures. This innovative effect of the workshops is one further reason to invite as many as possible to attend the workshops, not only the leaders. I asked Mbovu whether people would easily draw these lines:

Mbovu, PM: I doubt. No, I don't think so. Those who attended workshops, yes, they will do. But the others, they won't think about this. But you remember when you talked to the youth before the funeral of Qokole. They did it very well (Mbovu 1999c).

Such efforts at inculturation have a self-sustaining effect. We saw that they brought a renewed motive for further formation. In a township situation it was the request to learn more about the culture.

Workshops serve as place for clarification and correction. Even seemingly unimportant matters of practice like the position of the leaders at the graveside are time and again a cause of debate. Some claim they learned about the law of the church demanding it should be at the feet of the deceased (Wks-Fnl Mkunyazo 1999). Here is a place for the pastoral worker to correct a narrow perspective.

3.4.5.3 Methodological aspects

The diverse developments within the diocese were the cause for the release of a syllabus by the bishop (Aliwal Diocese 1999) on training for all community-ministries. It followed the slide show in which the bishop showed that training could be in danger of becoming merely technical. Hence formation with a more theological and spiritual accent should be included. The syllabus for funeral leaders includes knowledge of the liturgy, the regulations of the diocese and the church, decision making for funerals,

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[214] On the issue of inculturation the catechist cautioned at a regional meeting. He warned that the matter is not as easy as it seems and that real inculturation will take time. He mentioned that there were certain customs not easily to be reconciled with faith. And he alluded to a specific problem of the mission work

traditional beliefs and Christian faith on funerals, ways to include many in conducting a funeral and preaching, and how to find the message. The bishop's involvement at this stage shows his responsibility for safeguarding the quality of ministry by the formation of the leaders through the pastoral workers.

Keeping in mind that a good part of formation is actually conducted not by priests but by trainer-leaders, these guidelines need a methodological backup to overcome a merely technical approach. The last item, aiming at the deepening theological understanding within a cultural context, is important. The efforts undertaken so far, such as the study of the CCC were helpful tools to approach a deeper understanding from both sides: faith and culture. They helped to achieve more comprehensive formation on the Catholic understanding of death and hope, more comprehensive for instance than the book at hand, *Our Journey Together*, offers.[215]

Many of the skills used by the leaders in their training efforts are inspired by the procedures of the workshops they attended. This reflects what Pitso mentioned earlier with regard to the formational effect of ecumenical exposure: learning by observation. Therefore the choice of methods in workshops is essential not only for their fruitful outcome but also as an objective of formation, since formation is also formation for further formation, leading to a competent sharing in this sector of pastoral work.

In our situation where there is so little literature available the workshops provide an occasion to introduce pamphlets and some relevant books like the catechism. They are also an occasion for creating some of our own productions with the leaders, such as the booklet on preaching. This makes the leaders co-producers of formation material. For this, of course, one needs the technical equipment like copy-machine and computers, which facilitate the production of the worksheets and enable handouts to be quickly developed in the workshop.

Further methodological aspects may only be hinted at. Morar stressed repeatedly that in the beginning the rooting of formation in the Bible was an important feature. The Bible is the most widely read book of the people. It enjoys high credibility and serves as point of

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with expatriate priests: the priests do not know these customs since brought up in a totally different cultural context and often these particular customs are hidden from them.
[215] The relevant chapter no. 35 (Hirmer 1987:114) deals with the Christian coping with death. Its point of departure is the example of Mary – an example not a single leader referred to neither at funerals nor at meetings.

reference (Morar 1998). This inspires a thoroughly biblically rooted formation design. The method of drawing parallels between existing material and matters of faith leads to new discoveries, for instance when linking cultural perceptions to the appropriate paragraphs of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Group work seems to appeal more to the younger leaders. It is used for instance when the leaders prepare practice sermons (Wks-Fnl Mkunyazo 1999). While it cannot be our task to go deeper into the questions of methodology here, these few aspects highlight the importance of methods used at workshops to enable leaders to continue with formation at their local level.

3.4.5.4 Tackling weaknesses - unobtrusive collaboration

The difficulty some older men have in coping with the liturgy laid down in a ritual book became obvious at the workshop on funerals in Mkunyazo. Their example is not typical for the funeral leaders as such but for the way of dealing with weaknesses. Though these men are practising funeral leaders some of them had real problems in dealing with the book containing the rite. The first problem was technical. They possess different editions of *Bongan' iNkosi* with a slightly different structure for the funeral procedures. This is confusing for some.

The workshop revealed and reaffirmed certain attitudes. The weakness of the men was not exploited in a kind of power game or showing off. When the men gave a demonstration of the burial rite they got stuck at stage three of the liturgy at the grave. This was on spite of their working with the book at a stage of the liturgy that is claimed by many as an exclusively male domain. Women came unobtrusively to their assistance, pointing at the relevant passages in *Bongan' iNkosi*. These community members, who because of their gender are excluded from this part of the liturgy, supported their leaders. No demands were made from this experience, as to let women conduct the whole rite on their own, though there is some longing for it.

3.4.5.5 Enhancing preaching skills

Morar emphasises that right from the beginning the theological leadership offered by the pastoral staff was to develop a new approach to sermons. Instead of repeating the sermons of others one should address hope, life in Christ, and the resurrection. These should be linked with the life and situation of the family (Morar 1998). In this way the training helps the leaders to respond to the needs of the bereaved, to restore hope and faith. This applies to content and form. Morar indicates the problems with the content:

Morar, MK: And also somehow we tried to talk about the whole thing about preaching. Maybe there was some problem with the preaching. Some people used it as an opportunity to denounce other people, and we tried to come away from that (Morar 1998).

The preaching skills extend to the style of preaching, the way of presenting the message. As we saw, some are just loud, at times even insulting (Jeremia 1998a). The questionnaire of Mathis for catechumens showed that people realise there is some difference: Catholic leaders try to refer to the situation, and they do not always repeat the same things (Mathis 1999a).

Training workshops offer the opportunity for enhancing preaching skills by proper contextualisation. They are grounded through the active involvement of the participants in the evaluation of sermons. On the funeral workshop the participants were asked to prepare a mock-sermon. The particular case took into account that AIDS is on the increase: A 25 years old woman was a committed member of the Christian community, a youth leader and a Sunday service leader. After an excellent matric she went to Johannesburg to study law. She came back sick, was admitted in the hospital, and passed away. The people say she died of AIDS.

One preacher chosen in the groups preparing a sermon was secretly asked to preach this sermon in a bad manner. The first reaction in the evaluation was to say, "it was nice", followed by a more differentiated analysis. In Lekau the first part was perceived as nice: When saying we should not be worried (singakhatazeki) the preacher comforted. In the second part he spoke about killing people (ukubulala) and thus made the people feeling upset (Wks-Fnl Lekau 1999). In a similar procedure in Barkly East the preacher supposed to preach normally avoided touching the topic of AIDS at all. The other preacher, supposed to preach in a bad manner, was praised for the good parts, but his swearing was disliked. The evaluation named two main reasons, content and goal related: After all AIDS had different causes, one could not be sure; and then a sermon was for comforting, not for setting up people (Wks-Fnl Barkly East 1999).

As the evaluation progressed it became clearer that leaders prefer to refrain from judging others in funeral sermons where they have to deal with delicate issues. They see the aim of the sermon as being to assist the family of the deceased (Wks-Fnl Lekau 1999). At the Umlamli workshop (Wks-Fnl Umlamli 1999) the same preaching exercise revealed that the reference to difficult problems such as AIDS should not be the main aim of funeral liturgies but should rather be something complementary. At the funeral the immediate focus must be on the bereaved family. Without saying this explicitly, the

preacher must be aware that death has struck this family, has contaminated its life, and therefore peace and unity must become the main themes.

As a community event this part of the workshop makes it obvious that the community as a whole is responsible for the proclamation offered by its leaders. It fosters the awareness of accountability by encouraging evaluation.

3.4.5.6 Supporting the vision of the leadership

The perception that a funeral conducted by a priest himself has more dignity is resilient. The exchange between different communities participating in the workshop was helpful in dealing with this perception. They discovered that not only one community had the problem but all. The reference to the Bible, in particular to the reading of 1Thess 2:19-20. 3:7-9, was an eye opener as we saw in section on the principle of locality.

The reference to the catechism added an astounding discovery. After the participants compiled the list of expectations of the bereaved they now found out that many of the issues they mentioned match the works of mercy in CCC 2447: to admonish, advise, comfort, make happy, pacify, endure weakness with patience, and bury the dead. This compendium of Christian admonitions was reflected in the discussions and on the newsprint. The salient point was the discovery that these ministries dealing with human weakness, ignorance, suffering, failure, and death are not the prerogative of certain people in the first place, but the ministry of all.

In this way workshops become a place to support and reinforce the self-perception of leaders. They offer the opportunity to reflect on leadership as such, and to open up new perspectives. The presence of members from different communities turned out to be a particular asset by opening up a wider variety of experiences.

3.4.5.7 Empowering female funeral leaders

On 23.7.1999 a special workshop was arranged for the new funeral leaders in Barkly East. It aimed at refining the skills needed for leading the night vigil. An important part was the biblical meditation on Mk 16:1-7, the women who went to the grave of Jesus. When asked at the end of the workshop whether the participating women were now ready to conduct the next *umlindo*, they spontaneously said "No", there should be an experienced leader with them. One man added that it would also be difficult for the

family of the bereaved if it was only women doing it. But they felt familiar and competent enough to commence their task.

Then I asked the women about the fear they had talked about months before. It was gone through training (Wks-Night Vigil Barkly East 1999). It was women from Barkly East who, with their experience, stressed time and again that leaders must be trained and educated (*ziqeqeshwe*) (Wks-Fnl Barkly East 1999). Another proof was the training for funeral leaders in Thabakoloi / Emvakwentaba with an impending funeral as the study case.

Workshops can enable and empower women. First of all, workshops increase their self-confidence and acceptance of their role. As community events they may help others to accept women. The workshops are a supportive means of introducing female funeral leaders. The way this develops still depends on the context of the community concerned and its way of dealing with the prevailing reservations. The workshop in Mkunyazo showed an excellent performance by women but still did not lead to their acceptance as actual funeral leaders.

3.4.6 Effects of formation

Generally most of the leaders appreciate the formation events. In some cases the participants even expressed their appreciation financially by taking a collection for the formator(s). This is remarkable, as the church contribution among the poor populace is normally extremely low. The collection is an indication that an important and appreciated service was provided.

3.4.6.1 Developing leadership

The general effect is that people who are undergoing formation are more likely to be able to lead, and to give direction to others:

Pitso, TG: And I think those who I have seen they are able to give directions. They are able to give explanations to others. They lead (Pitso 1999a).

The acceptance of trained female leaders we have seen already. Similarly young men experience acceptance and attribute this not only to working in a team with other experienced people but also to the training and repeated practice. K Sedidi, at that time 22 years old, sees the value of the exercises at Umlamli in the opportunity for practising before funerals:

W: I heard that some people have problems with young people acting as funeral leaders. Did you experience something of that kind?

Sedidi, K: No, I never had problems. Maybe that is because we got training and since we are always together with older leaders.

W: So you think that the training is a help?

Sedidi, K: O yes, the workshops and so on and that we practice in Umlamli, that helps (Sedidi 1999).

The enhancement of quality by training preachers was reflected in the survey done by Mathis (1998). The statements he got about what people appreciated about the Catholic Church said, among other things:

> At Catholic funerals, because the Catholic leaders are trained, the leaders stick to their quotation, while ministers of other churches only are preaching very generally and superficially. They train leaders that they don't abuse other people (*Iqeqesha abashumayeli ukuze banganyelisi abanye abantu*).

These statements reveal not only the longing of the people for quality and their ability to discern. They appreciate the improved quality of the message conveyed and the attitude shown towards the people.

More specific is the evaluation of the workshop on funerals (Sterkspruit Parish 1999a). The participants got an evaluation paper with four questions: What did you gain in the workshop? What did you like? What was difficult? What would you like to continue with? Participants from Barkly East, Lady Grey, Umlamli, Tapoleng, Voyizana, and Hlomendlini responded. The respondents had to answer in their own words. In some cases the answers required a short follow-up interview for clarification. Some papers had identical answers, indicating a kind of teamwork when responding. The replies offer the self-evaluation of the leaders. The answers can be sorted roughly according to faith/knowledge, personal growth, task-identification, co-operation, culture, methodology, community relation, and formation.

The participation in the workshops brought an increase in knowledge (*ulwazi oluphangalaleyo*). This knowledge comes from reflecting on faith with the help of the catechism, biblical deepening, the interpretation of death, and the way to celebrate the funeral.

In the section "How to deal with faithful and lapsed Catholics and how to see the difference" one leader referred to the better understanding gained when dealing with church regulations concerning funerals.

Faith/knowledge: One: Increase of knowledge. A lot of ideas. N Moshasha: Wide knowledge (*ulwazi oluphangalaleyo*). One: Profound knowledge about faith than before. One: Knowledge, nice teaching. One: wide knowledge. A Mohlabanyane: I got many things I didn't know before. PM Mbovu: To bring New Hope about the kingdom to the bereaved. The treasure of the Bible; to study in depth about dying and being bereaved. S Makoa: Deep faith and knowledge; more profound reading of the Bible. MP Elia: Understanding of death. In the follow-up interview he clarifies that he got a clearer understanding of sleeping death (*balala ukufa*). One: Deeper faith; T Moea: Especially to know what the Catechism says about funerals. M Mgidi: Deeper understanding why Eucharist is consumed at this occasion. J Mgidi: That Eucharist is done at the day of the funeral. AM Mohlalefi: Learned things I didn't know before. Working with the Catechism, how it was taught. A Gunundu: To learn about the Catholic procedure. AP Hlanjwa: Word of God and my readings go right into the heart. C Maruping: The Mass and funerals. The discrepancy is felt.

Personal growth: S Makoa: Excitement (*imvuseleleko*). M Motemekoana: *Andiboyiki abantu abaninzi*, overcoming the fear of many people by training. M Yaphi: To know how to accompany those who long for the word. One: I was encouraged to see the interest of leaders in formation.

Task related: PM Mbovu: The way to observe leaders, the way to conduct workshops. Deepening the way of pacifying the bereaved. How to line up the work, *ukucwangcisa*. MM Masina: Peace; to be enabled to do it better than before. In the follow up interview Masina said he learned to help them not only to see the pain. M Yaphi: To be enabled to comfort and to make the bereaved strong. V Elia: Right way to bury. AM Mohlalefi: To know our way of burying which is different from others. P Mosuhli: Knowledge about the Catholic way of funerals. T Moea: Now I can respond to people's questions why we do things the way we do them. AP Hlanjwa: About the funeral procedure. DC Hlazo: To support the bereaved. MM Masina: We were shown how to pacify the bereaved family (*xa ifemeli ithe yahlelwa lilifu elimnyama*; literally: when the family is overshadowed by a dark cloud). M Yaphi: Now I know how to get the readings to help those in grief to find peace and consolation. *Ukuhlaba amadlala*: to mark faults in the sermon.

Co-operation: A Gunundu: Gain knowledge to work together with funeral leaders. One: The way of co-operation in the workshop and that we do the work together. Co-operation of the faithful, the uniting way of working. J Mgidi: The nice co-operation. T Moea: Co-operation, uniting in executing the work of God together as faithful. DC Hlazo: Co-operation.

Culture: AP Hlanjwa: Did not know that God goes together with the ancestors. DC Hlazo: Customs and traditions towards the deceased. A Elia: Teaching included the *amasiko*. MP Elia: Know more about ancestors, customs and the service, to bring customs and faith together (*ukudibanisa amasiko nokholo*). Getting tools. M Motemekoana: Discovery: To get *Bongani* as procedure for Vigil and the prayer therein. Method helped to understand that culture and faith are complementary. M Mgidi: To study that Jesus and the ancestors cross. PM Mbovu: To bring customs, traditions and faith together.

Methodological: One: The working papers and pictures help. MM Masina: Methods are a help. N Moshasha: The whole method and the use of *Bongani*. One: To combine life and faith helped to understand faith more. PM Mbovu: To study step by step. Working with examples. To be able to practice. P Mosuhli: The example of a lady helped to explore to link life and funeral. S Makoa: Old people were not taught this way.

Community: MM Masina: Realising there are many possible leaders. It shows seriousness; it creates satisfaction and encouragement. Asked in the follow up interview he said this was important since it builds up the community (*likhule ibandla*). One: Commitment, the perseverance of participants. PM Mbovu: Interest of men and women. DC Hlazo: How to deal with faithful and lapsed Catholics and how to see the difference.

Self-sustaining formation: MM Masina: For gaining still deeper knowledge. M Yaphi: Refresh the way of preaching with the Bible. C Maruping: Studying still deeper the work. MC Motemekoana: To get strength to face people and wisdom to deal with people. MP Elia: Have interest in matters of the Catholic faith. One: Likes to attend these lessons, wants it on monthly basis. AM Mohlalefi: I am interested to learn more, to get more knowledge. G Mohanua: Training in that knowledge is important. There is much more to know. S Makoa: Opens mind. TM Mahlomaholo: Resembles *imvuselelo*: renewal of faith. A Gunundu: Reminds leaders of need to grow with regard to the funeral service (cf. Sterkspruit Parish 1999a).

Figure 3.7. Gains from formation. Compilation of responses

Besides the excitement (*imvuseleleko*) about the training the workshop contributed to personal growth. Overcoming fear was mentioned repeatedly. Formation was experienced as source of encouragement. It enhanced the skill needed to attend to the bereaved.

Experienced leaders expressed their delight about the capacity of formation to further enhance their performance in proclamation. Thus they indicated the value of on-going formation. In the follow-up interview Masina said he learned to help the bereaved not only to see the pain, which was previously his main point in addressing them. With the exercise of practice-sermons the skill of self-evaluation of sermons was introduced and with it the ability to discover weaknesses in the sermons.

The enhanced competence extends to the specific Catholic ritual and the ability to explain it to others. The study of the ritual helps when instructing others and evaluating their performance.

The way the workshop is conducted also has an impact on the way leaders view co-operation among themselves. This feature of teamwork is interpreted as unifying.

Methodologically the combination of life and faith, of theory and practice is understood as helpful. With the use of *Our Journey Together* the link between life and faith should not be something totally new to the participants, most of whom know the book at least partly. This book for catechumens always starts with a typical life situation and links it with an understanding of faith. The difference in the method of this workshop may have been that the life issues were the actual issues of the participants, while *Our Journey Together* works with something constructed and suggested, a virtual reality. In the workshops the issues were mentioned by the participants and displayed on newsprint, to work with them in a method of a permanent interface. At the same time the results of cultural, biblical considerations and other deliberations remained displayed and connecting lines could be drawn whenever possible.

The whole method was experienced as quite different from the old way of teaching. This indicates the tremendous change that took place methodologically from a kind of educational input-system to one that takes the participants as important and competent contributors to the whole process of formation.

The community-related outcome for the participants was to discover the resources of their community, contrasted with the old practice of having one person conducting the whole procedure.[216] The discovery of the resources extended then to their quality, their

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[216] Here is happening what Osuchukwu (1995:245) rather demands: "... it is pertinent to stress the importance of training leaders to have true community spirit and the ability to build a *umunna* community in the Christian spirit of fellowship. There should be an ongoing formation or training for the leaders."

perseverance and seriousness. From a community where the participation of women is still not seen as needed because there were enough male leaders came the note that both men and women were interested. One leader experienced this with "satisfaction and encouragement". Asked in a follow up interview he said this formation was important since it builds up the community (*likhule ibandla*). Training and formation as integral parts of the leadership work have a community-building effect. When several SCCs (SCCs Umlamli 1999) evaluated the nine years since the launch of the Pastoral Plan, some mentioned the community-building effect of formation: *dithuto ke tsona tse re kopanyang*, the teaching brings us together. With the formation efforts for leaders, including the community, the communitarian aspect of formation becomes clear. The figures of participation in formation corroborate this impression: Far more people attend training than are selected as leaders afterwards.

These experiences lead to a kind of self-sustaining formation. Instead of reaching a point of saturation they brought a renewed motive for further formation. In a township situation it was the request to learn more about the culture. The formation has an effect on the leaders' attitude towards training and formation in general. The feeling is that there is still much more to gain, personally and in view of the people one serves.

The sometimes-mentioned rejection of training seems to depend on the way it is conducted. Repetition of the same thing has no appeal. If training builds on the interest of people and treats those who are going to take responsibility in their community as equals, and as people who have something to contribute, then it opens the mind and raises interest and the demand for further formation. These gains of the leaders were not always in the mind of people, and also probably not in the mind of the priests. Without denouncing what had happened in earlier times, the development shows a clear enrichment of people. The safeguarding of such developments is the interest of the bishop. It is not always met with understanding and may sometimes be suspected as a deprecation of the old times.

"X": Yes, that is what the bishop complained about when I talked this: "Yes, but the quality. We are after the quality." Ya, if you are a man like me, how do we know about the quality, because I am telling you I grew up in what type of a church. Whether there was quality or no quality, but I grew up there. Here, I am sitting here today. So I don't know when you are telling about quality. I don't say things must not be improved. I don't say that at all. But to just clamp down and say, no that thing there, we are going to have this. Somehow you are trying to tell that was rubbish you did there. And which I don't believe it was (Fr "X" in interview 1999).

3.4.6.2 Formation enhances the competence for inculturation

Especially when it comes to culture and faith, the workshops offer an opportunity to reflect on matters that until then were perhaps felt but not expressed. The competence of the people finds channels to express itself. Concerning the workshop on the Eucharist Elia and Mangaliso expressed this:

Mangaliso, FT: With *umthendeleko* (Eucharist), we were not so aware. We believe this, but we could not express it.
Elia, MP: Since the workshop we see this much clearer.
W: What do you think about the people? How do they perceive this?
Elia, MP: They feel this. But it may be difficult for them to express their beliefs (Elia & Mangaliso 1998).

The concern about incorporating inculturation into the workshops is still a novelty for some. That faith, Jesus, and customs, the ancestors are not mutually exclusive entities but deeply linked in their diversity was felt as a liberating disclosure. For some it meant a comprehensive approach that enriches both the understanding of faith and of the customs. MP Elia from Barkly just jotted down: to bring customs and faith together (*ukudibanisa amasiko nokholo*).[217] A follow-up interview revealed the importance of his statement. The attempts towards inculturation expose those involved to the criticism of others, also that of fellow Christians.[218]

Elia, MP: We want to honour our customs and our faith. But we have here other churches that say our traditions are not part of Christianity. So in the workshop we get a vision. But to implement it is difficult. Afterwards it is difficult. These people talk about their perception to us on the street or at the funeral vigils at the time when all are invited to preach. Then they say we deal with demons. For example they don't want the slaughtering saying, we slaughter for demons. But then they too eat at the vigil. Or when we slaughter *impahla* (at the occasion of the unveiling of the tombstone), where also the church is involved.
W: How do you cope with this, do you respond to it?
Elia, MP: We just carry on. We preach the word; we don't reply to that. And there the workshops help. They refresh; they deepen the knowledge and give support (Elia, MP 1999f).

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[217] This concern is nothing entirely new. The heading of chapter 2 of *Our Journey Together* (Hirmer 1987:13) reads: *Discover God's Spirit in your Customs*. Time and again *Our Journey Together* encourages in various chapters the encounter of faith and culture. It appears as if the book has less impact than the formation in workshops though this book is designed as means of communication in a group rather than as means for individual study.
[218] This observation is not unusual. Ugeux and Lefebvre (1995:26) notice: "Funerals are a major activity of the Small Christian Communities, both because of their social importance and because they challenge Christians to take up a position with regard to traditional customs... It is not surprising that on these occasions the members of the Community find themselves in conflict with relatives of the deceased. This is a painful situation, but serves to deepen faith and locate it in the cultural context." Ugeux and Lefebvre seem to have the encounter of agents of faith and agents of culture in mind. The interesting turn here is that the conflict arises between agents of faith concerned with inculturation and agents of faith who dislike the incorporation of cultural patterns though they are originally part of that very culture. The concern about deepening faith and locating it in the cultural context experiences so a new, inner-Christian level.

The inculturation practised at funerals appears as a complementary, parallel one. Problems emerge in this case not from within the church but from within the ecumenical context. Gaining self-confidence through formation and training the leader emerges as advocate of inculturation in the complementary sense. He is grounded in the community of his church in a reflective way. With the deepened understanding gained in the workshops the leaders' attempts in inculturation become clearer and easier to justify. It empowers the agents of inculturation to understand better what they do. It adds to their dignity and elevates them above being mere tools of others. A leader can discover a kind of inconsistency in the attitude of the critics. While they refute the customs but eat the meat, he has an incorporating vision. A reconciled way integrates both customs and faith. It avoids the danger of following disintegrated dual systems.[219]

3.4.6.3 Comprehensive service quality

The ultimate judge of the service rendered by the leaders is the community. An experienced leader links the good and satisfactory performance of a service with formation. It results in the quality of the service, by employing good skills, being knowledgeable about the liturgy and co-operative:

Elia, MP: We as community also need to be trained to lead a funeral in a good manner. If we were not trained the family would like to complain: The funeral is not nice but bad, because these people don't know how to conduct a funeral. They complain and are always dissatisfied.
W: Do they realise a difference between trained and untrained leaders?
Elia, MP: Here in Barkly was a funeral at Maruping's place. I was not here at this funeral. But the people complained and some asked where were you? They say this funeral did not go well. The people who were reading were not reading nicely. They don't like that. They want at least someone who knows to read nicely. They want a person who knows the liturgy of the funeral. It is important to be trained. So that the one who has the role of the third leader really takes this role of number three. And the one who has role two takes it at the right time (Elia, MP 1998a).

It is not only the service quality of the funeral leaders that gains by the training efforts. It is also the service quality of the ministering pastoral staff, the priests. The workshops have a valuable effect of improving collaboration for the pastoral worker. They provide a means of evaluation especially where the pastoral workers, in particular the priest, will normally not be able to watch in practice what is going on. On the other hand this means that pastoral workers who avoid this opportunity deprive themselves of an important tool of their ministry and their competent planning. Avoiding workshops for pastoral workers impedes their contextual competence.

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[219] On dual systems cf. Schreiter 1985:39;145.

The formation events give some insight into the performance and ability of the leaders to collaborate and may indicate what is needed during ongoing formation. They reveal a certain approach to specific issues and indeed form an instrument of dialogue and communication in collaboration with the priest. They are a privileged place of exchange and even planning. As in the case of Hlomendlini (Wks-Fnl Hlomendlini 1999) the workshops give the opportunity to detect and reveal difficulties, in this case the problem of assisting leaders who were drunk; these were borrowed from another community because the community did not have its own leaders.

The workshops also inform the formator. It is a kind of reciprocal formation. Trainer and trainees act as partners. Here is also a chance for the expatriate to have a cultural encounter and indeed to practice justice as far as the cultural expression of faith is concerned. The formation work also empowers the priests by enhancing their contextual competence and their creative power within the diocesan context, exercising their task of caring for unity in diversity.[220] Because of the continuous formation efforts the report to the bishop for Community Week 1999 suggested that the rhythm of blessing of leaders be changed from one to three years. This suggestion was well received and offered to the senate members to consider it, if applicable, in their situations. So the local work contributed to an alteration in diocesan policy.

3.4.7 Statistical corroboration of findings concerning training

The statistical data of Sterkspruit Parish[221] support the preceding findings. They indicate a growing interest in training as far as attendance is concerned. The average leader attended 4.5 training units in 1997, 4.7 in 1998, and 5.71 in 1999.[222]

When registering at training or formation events the leaders alone registered in 1997 1389 times, in 1998 1562 times, and in 1999 1451 times. The increase in 1998 coincides with the decrease in the total number of leaders, which continued through to

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[220] With this we observe what Keteyi (1998:43) desires for the missionaries: "Their role must now become that of companions who are not bringing whatever insights they have but equally willing to learn from the host community. They must allow the local churches to take the initiative in search of new and appropriate ways of being Christian."

[221] The data a based on the parish files (Sterkspruit Parish 1993; 1994; 1995; 1996a; 1997e; 1998b; 1999b) and the bishop's file (Lobinger s.a.b).

[222] Concerning these figures one has to note that they present the minimum. Those who attend formation events may have failed to register. All those people trained by leaders in the villages were not yet registered. Initiatives are under way to incorporate these figures as far as possible in future to get a more accurate picture. The figures reflect only the training provided by the pastoral staff.

1999. Therefore we still see the actual increase in the average training attendance of leaders.

The reduction of the number of leaders - for quality reasons - and of the absolute number of training units gathered by leaders, does not, however, mean a decline in training. The total of participants, leaders and non-leaders increased continuously: 1993: 296,[223] 1996: 860, 1997: 2138, 1998: 2470, 1999: 2762. This corroborates the vibrant and growing interest of people in training, far beyond the confines of leadership. Of the total of 828 attendees in 1999, 333 were leaders, 495 were not leaders. This fact supports the perception that not only the service of the leaders, but also their environment and training, contribute to community building. It brings people together in a steadily increasing measure.

Total of registrations to formation and number of attendees and leaders

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
□ Total of registrations	296	550	600	860	2138	2468	2762
■ Total of attendees	167	145	400	481	743	757	828
▨ Leaders	175	250	346	450	441	333	333
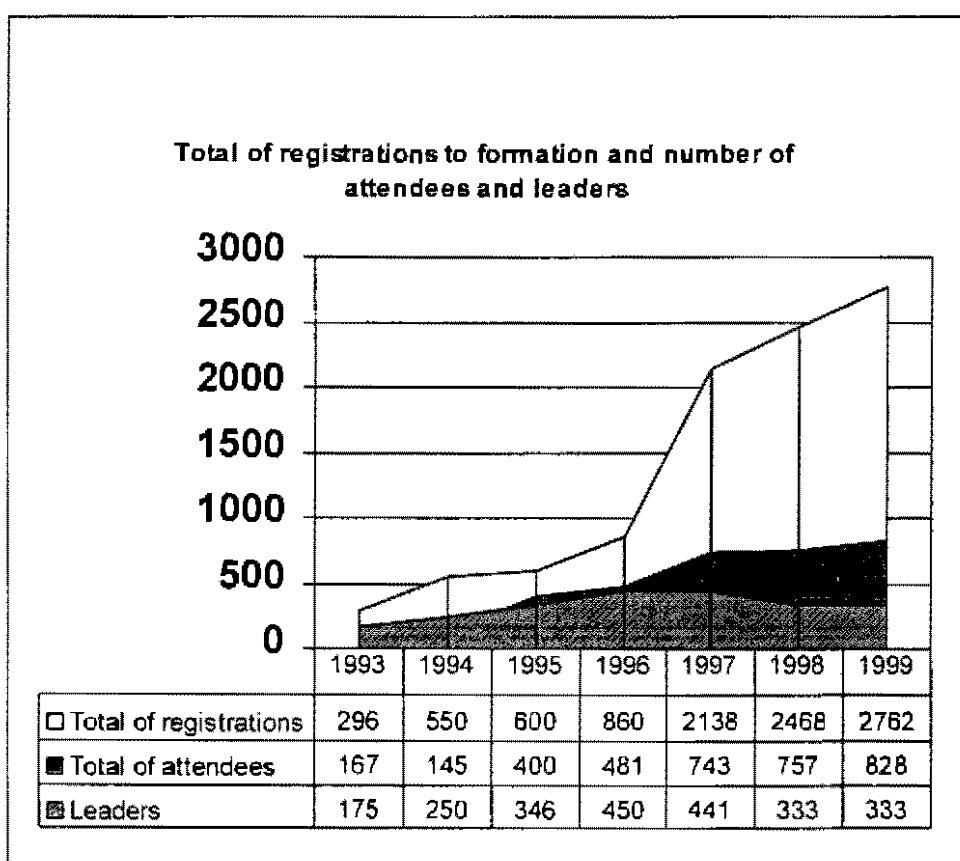
Figure 3.8. Attendance to formation

The steady increase in training attendance is also reflected among the funeral leaders. The average funeral leader attended 2.61 trainings in 1996, 5.54 in 1997, 5.68 in 1998, and 6.41 in 1999. No leadership section remained below an average of

[223] The figures for 1993 reflect only the registration in the training period in the run-up of community week 1993. There was some more training going on, but the figures may not exceed some 500 registrations. Detailed figures for 1994 and 1995 are not available. This is due to computer failure in 1994. Permanent change of pastoral staff in this period may also have affected training/formation as such, and the registration.

5.0.[224]

The figures between 1993 and 1995[225] contain some inaccuracies due to the introduction of an unfamiliar registration process. This may cause the comparatively high number of leaders compared with the total number attending the training. The relatively low figures do not reflect some unregistered training given in an area not related to the immediate pastoral field. In the time of the run-up to the first democratic elections in 1994 much training effort and time was dedicated to voter education. The political situation had an impact on the pastoral work.
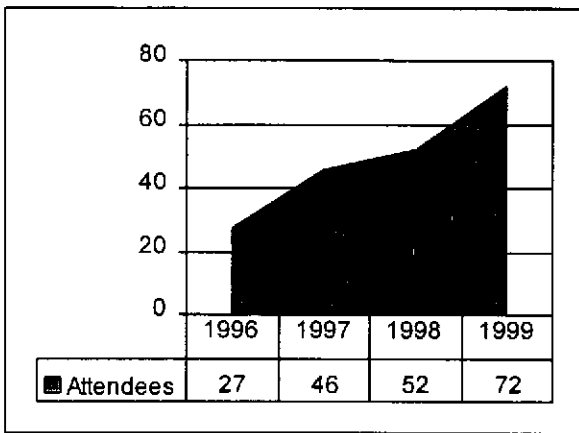
Figure 3.9. Number of attendees to formation in Barkly East

	1996	1997	1998	1999
■ Attendees	27	46	52	72

The year 1996 marks a significant change. This is not only due to the communities of Barkly East, Lady Grey, Thabakoloi, Emvakwentaba and Herschel being joined to the parish. The training record of Barkly East was rather poor in the beginning and then increased steadily.

The data reflect the training by the pastoral staff. They do not reveal that the team of priests has remained unchanged since 1996. In the previous period a constant change of staff did not favour the development of a consistent collaboration in the implementation of the vision of the Pastoral Plan. Moreover, the work was impeded by the poor language skills of most of the priests at that time. This reduced training rather to skill training. Attractive formation events that require higher communication skills like workshops on preaching or inculturation depended on additional, invited staff and the good co-operation with the local catechists.

At the moment it seems that a kind of saturation is reached due to the limits of personnel, though there is more demand for than supply of formators.

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[224] What Ugeux and Lefebvre (1995:23) state with regard of SCCs can here be applied to the development of leadership: "The multiplication of training sessions represents the most important investment since the 1970's."

[225] For 1994 the attendance figure of 550 and the number of leaders as 250 were extrapolated in the chart, as for 1995 the attendance of 600 to 400 attendees in order to allow a continuous trajectory.

3.4.8 Conclusion: Formation advances contextualisation

Training and formation was introduced from above to safeguard service-quality in community ministry. As experience increased it became more community-based, the demand coming more and more from the communities, committees, SCCs, and the leaders. This demand extends to the choice of topics. It is a gradual development towards the training being owned by the communities. Training happens in different ways from skill training to formation in different forms, from workshops to retreats. Outside the organised form of formation people learn by observation. A few make use of literature. Priests act as formators and skill trainers, the trainer catechist rather in the area of skill training. Leaders themselves provide initiating training and in some cases also the more demanding types of formation. The collaboration between leaders and pastoral workers also extends to workshops. The interplay between them contributes to contextualisation and helps to overcome the former estrangement between faith and culture. The perception of experts gradually disappears. It floats with all stakeholders in formation contributing their specific part for enhancing the common mission. The pastoral workers contribute the theological perspective, the local leaders the cultural element. The choice of methods at workshops helps the leaders to continue with training in their communities. The invitation to formation is extended to all community members and enhances quality with an increase in knowledge and further initiation into faith. Moreover, training of leaders becomes a concern of the community and it contributes to their ability to build up and care for their community. The training itself has community-building effects by involving many in matters of common concern.

Training does more than just improve the service. It acts in a self-sustaining way, creating more demand for training. It empowers women and helps everybody to discover human resources within the community. It advances the cultural commitment of leaders.

The statistics show a steady increase up to the present limit. This may indicate a certain saturation effect as well as the lack of human resources, a shortage of pastoral workers to meet the existing demand for training. It also indicates a shortage of priests for formation.

3.5 Conclusion: Structural conditions form a prerequisite for the ministry performed

The structural conditions as explored in this chapter themselves provide an answer to the need for community. Community ministry was introduced from above. Picked up at the basis it became bolstered from below. In a dynamic development it took roots and became community based. This is reflected in various features such as those of leadership selection, the spirituality, and the obvious and natural inclusion of cultural patterns.

The concerns about leadership maintenance and community building go hand in hand. Formation emerged as a crucial area of leadership and community formation, meaning both the education of leaders and of the communities, and building them both up. Formation emerged as one major area of collaboration between priests and leaders. Even in this area a move towards more self-reliance was noticeable. Some leaders tend to provide formation for fellow leaders.

The structural features, with their intrinsic interrelationship with community building, prepare for and support the immediate, practical ministry of funeral leaders that answers the needs of the bereaved, in particular the longing for community. The reality of a community, enhanced by the concern about leadership, serves, supports, and verifies the answers given in pastoral care and proclamation. We shall now have a closer look at this in chapter four.

4   Chapter 4 – Delivery of Ministry

4.1   Quality delivery – the management of the "project funeral"

After the observation of a funeral we focused in the previous chapter on the preconditions of community ministry, the way it was introduced, and the way leaders were selected and trained. These areas appeared to be essential for the immediate collaboration between priests, leaders, and their communities. They already provide crucial processes that lead to the decontamination from death by building up community. This chapter now returns to the leaders' domain. I will use the prism of the grounded theory approach to analyse the preparation for the funerals. This includes the decision making on funerals and the immediate preparation of the funeral service. In the second section I will look at the actual delivery of the service with various ways of proclamation. While the initial observation singled out one particular funeral, the analysis here will be broader when looking at the service delivered to decontaminate from death and serve life. The third section provides both the people's assessment of the ministry rendered by the leaders and an analytical conclusion.

4.1.1 Deciding on funeral procedures

The management of the project of a funeral includes the decisions made about the funeral. The way such decisions are taken has changed over the years. The major changes concerned the involvement of the community and the introduction of diocesan guidelines (Aliwal Diocese 1993a). The present procedure is different from the former decision making by the priest and catechist, sometimes in collaboration with each other:

> Morar, MK: I think in the beginning it was difficult. Because they would come to Sterkspruit and say this person has died. Not saying that they want the priest for the funeral. That was not voiced. But the expectation was that he should come and bury the person. Maybe, you make some suggestions, you know, somebody can do the funeral. Then people would come out and say eventually we want the priest. Later on it started changing. Because then fewer people would come down. And you would just hear that person died and the person was buried. Our role was then just to document that in the register.
>
> W: Who took the decision about the funeral at that time?
>
> Morar, MK: We heard it afterwards, then. I can't remember exactly how they decided.
>
> W: Were there instances of refusal of funerals saying that this was a lapsed one or how you call these people?
>
> Morar, MK: Ya, that was always the problem. It was one of the difficult things for me. Because for me the person was always a human being. And I think what I did was a kind of a compromise. Because the people were buried from their home by their leaders. That, I think, people accepted it. It was at one or two places. It was the family; then there was a leader. Because then it was expected and then it was difficult to refuse that. In one or two instances we gave in and buried the person. And luckily nobody said now we bury the person who should not be buried.
>
> W: And decisions were taken where and by whom? By the funeral leaders, by the committees?

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Morar, MK: I think most of the time I would discuss with Tata Joseph and Tata Phillip, and then we would decide. Then we would let the people know, ok. Of course, if it was a very strong demand that we should come, then we would come. But I know afterwards it became easier. So it meant that the community was deciding to do the funerals themselves and then afterwards we just heard the person died and was buried. I did not ask how did you decide (Morar 1998).

4.1.1.1 Dealing with lapsed Catholics

The critical cases are the decisions on funerals of lapsed Catholics. The subsequent development freed the procedure from possible arbitrary decisions by linking them to the framework of the guidelines and anchoring them in the community. When evaluating of the funeral of T Lahlo, Mbovu pointed at one speaker explaining that he too was a church member. He left the church because his father was not buried the way he expected. At that time the catechist and a leader took the decision on the funeral on their own for unknown reasons (in Wüstenberg 1999a).

The funeral guidelines of Aliwal Diocese (1993a) reflect the need to assist the many communities and their leaders in their decision making on funerals. The guidelines are experienced as help (Mangaliso 1998a). Their main motive is to convey the message that everybody must accept God's friendship personally. It is not the faith of the family that determines the kind of the funeral. The concern is about commitment and perseverance of the individual. A further concern is that about the community. Those participating in the worship and life of the Catholic community know that they will be treated differently from so-called lapsed Catholics.

It is a misunderstanding to interpret the guidelines as preventing the funeral of a lapsed person by the Christian community at all. The criticism of Makhobokoana (1999) for instance, that one cannot deny a funeral and his suggestion to have a more simple celebration for the lapsed, matches exactly what the guidelines suggest. No. 2 of the guidelines, however, indicates clearly that a difference in the proceedings should be made, for instance by not bringing the coffin of lapsed members into the church, if that is the normal procedure for faithful community members. Another way of showing the difference is by abstaining from wearing church garments to indicate that the leaders act now as friends but not as church-leaders. The funeral prayers, however, can be used.

An important concern in the guidelines is to maintain clearly that even though the leaders or a priest may officiate at a funeral, this does not in itself indicate anything about the state of the deceased. This is relevant insofar as other denominations draw the line just here. Some make a distinction by burying the lapsed through leaders "only".

Since working with leaders is the regular procedure, such an impression would be detrimental to both leaders and bereaved, affecting their self-esteem and possibly creating the feeling of being treated unjustly.

4.1.1.2 Sensitive decision making builds community

Decision making is demanding, as it requires sensitivity when applying the guidelines. There are different cases. Though the funeral may be conducted in a simple way, a lapsed Catholic may have family members committed to their church. That may cause some to assume they will get an exception and the full funeral rite for this person. The decision, however, is oriented towards the person, not the family. Those who did not go to church in their life will not be brought there when they are dead. The decision is therefore sometimes a source of dissent. Some claim that because a person was baptised the funeral has to be done in church. People sometimes react in inconsistent ways. Though the people understand the guidelines they do not want them to be applied in their specific case. One response to this predicament says, "we do a funeral of a lapsed at least at home because of baptism" (Mangaliso 1998a).

More sensitive cases occur if a deceased attended church but did not pay his church dues. This causes uneasiness among the leaders. They feel there is a difference between lapsing and not paying. The problem here is that such a person is welcome to the community, and people wish to bring the coffin of such faithful members to the church (Mangaliso 1998a). The uneasiness expressed by Morar is an expression of the values felt by the community-church. Makhobokoana (1999) stresses the point, that the concentration on financial issues can miss the point. He dislikes a financially narrowed view for various reasons: It could contribute to a perception that church dues are a sort of funeral-insurance policy. There may be a personal background that does not allow a schematic application of guidelines without further enquiry. And, again, to be lapsed is more serious than not to pay.

A way of avoiding this problem is simply to motivate people to pay church dues. Experience shows that it is possible to give an incentive to defaulters. Creativity is needed in the way of dealing with such problems. At the same time it is important to

avoid the impression that issues like church dues do not matter (cf. Mangaliso 1998a).[226]

The differentiation made between the funeral service of practising and non-practising members is understood as teaching. If the service were always the same, it would not teach. The inclusion of the community aspect in decision making on the funeral is supposed to prevent from misleading the good members (Mathis 1999a). The crucial criterion is participation in church life. This differentiation is necessary to avoid *ukuxabanisa*, friction in the community. Underlying this is the understanding of the church as community. Conviction is here translated into action. Mbovu states that the funeral service is teaching about the work of the church: to call for *ukuguquka*, repentance (in Wüstenberg 1999b). People compare and notice the differentiations made in funerals. For quite a number the thought about their own funeral comes to mind. They may long for their own funeral to be an attractive one and at the same time they may ask themselves, "What am I doing?" It is a call for self-reflection, self-examination. The leaders are aware that the church is not a funeral society solely in charge of beautifying a rite of transition, but a faith community. They are aware that decisions taken may affect the community and its commitment and therefore also have an impact on the core issue: the decontamination from death.

The concern about the community is applied also in the wider sense in decisions about hospitality towards other denominations. Mbovu, the chairperson of Umlamli committee, reported to the priest about a policeman of Umlamli who was killed in a car accident in Pretoria. He was a Methodist and his family lived next to the Catholic church. They asked for permission to use the church for the funeral ceremonies the following Saturday. The committee met and decided to offer the hall instead of the church.

W: And why don't you want them to use the church?
Mbovu, PM: We were thinking about our own community. We try to follow the guidelines for funerals as we decided upon in the diocese. Maybe the funeral and everything will go well. But afterwards we are afraid we may meet serious problems. People will start to complain that Methodists get into the church whereas lapsed Catholics are refused the use of it for their funerals. We would confuse the community and give reason for fighting (Mbovu 1997).

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[226] This creativity is limited by the life situation of rural people who simply do not have much money to spare They have no jobs but live from subsistence farming in their gardens. The committee in Mfinci (2000) stresses that paying church dues is simply impossible for some of them. The tricky issue is to keep the balance between discouraging those who are able to pay from doing so, and maintaining the main focus with the guidelines on faith-commitment.

He informed the priest since the Methodist minister still wrote a letter requesting the church and stressing the fact that the deceased was a committed member of his own church. The priest left the decision entirely to the committee confident that they would find the right decision. The collaboration between leaders and priest in their concern about unity within the community arises from mutual trust.

4.1.1.3 Community-based decision making

The guidelines provide for both the priest and the parish council to be involved in making decisions on funerals, but local circumstances make this difficult. The contextualisation of the guidelines requires that the local committees have to make decisions on their own and inform the priest later, because time and distance make communication difficult: It is often impossible to pass a message to the priest, let alone to call for a meeting with him. In smaller communities the committee can present its decision to the community for acclamation (Gqalaqha 1999). A single leader never takes the decision. It is in various ways community based.

The ways of communicating death cases have largely improved. The bereaved usually contact the committee of their community via the SCC. This procedure is bolstered by the practice of the priests sending those who still contact them directly back to their community for decision making there. The contextual reason is that the priests in fact cannot know all the individual situations. The community-related reason is the respect for the communities and the intention to avoid conflict that could arise from bypassing the committees.

Mathis, W: When people are running to the mission on their own, they know that we don't accept that. There is no other discussion on funerals but through the committee. And they want to decide on that. And on these places I believe that they don't want to spoil the good ones (Mathis 1999a).

There may be cases of ignorant people who do not know whom to contact in the community. Their ignorance may simply be the result of the fact that the deceased was the only Catholic in the family. Those are more likely to contact just a leader they know, often at short notice. It is the leaders' responsibility, then, to arrange with the committee, at least with some of its members, and to give a full report on the decision taken afterwards (Elia, MP 1998a).

Some SCCs report their death cases in writing to the committee. By coincidence two letters were received by the committee of Umlamli at the same time. The SCC of Lower Voyizana wrote:

Honourable chairperson. We inform you about our member who lost her child, Mrs Z. She says the burial date is still to be set. The name of her child is Lydia. She was baptised and lapsed (*waphehlelelwa waza wahlala phantsi*). We as the SCC ask that you come to bury her. We the SCC of St Michael, the leaders, Mrs Funani (SCC St Michael 1998)

The other SCC of Maphosileni wrote with date 22.9.1998:

Honourable community. It is with sorrow to inform you about the passing away of a church member in the SCC of St Clement. The name of the member is Thandeka Lahlo. She left us on 19.9.1998. She was a child that cared very much when we met as the SCC. She loved to sing and encouraged other children in the singing. She will be buried on 3.10.1998. The secretary, Florence Dlephu (SCC St Clement 1998)

No mention was made about the circumstances of the death as in the case of T Lahlo. She was killed by another youth. Also no mention was made about their financial status concerning church contributions but about the state of their commitment in the church as lapsed or active members respectively. The commitment of the deceased is the major concern. This does not diminish the request for burying Lydia though she was a so-called lapsed member. This is in accordance with the guidelines.

The discussions on funeral procedures in the committee are genuine. Different viewpoints are considered. When participating at one rare occasion in such a committee meeting I got the impression that the prevailing concern was to do justice. The committee (Umlamli 1999a) had to deal with the funeral, the state of the deceased, the date, and the appointment of leaders. Sixteen people were present. The SCC leader reported briefly about the case. She mentioned that the SCC knew the deceased. She put forward the request of the family to bury him on Sunday since a lot of people from Ceres were expected to attend the funeral.

Mdange, EM: That should be fine. But we have to start in the church (with the Sunday service; M.W.).
Giladile, OW: We start first in church and then we bury. But when to start? I suggest at 9am.
Ncindi, E: We must hurry. *Khawulezise*. The sermon should not be too long.
Mweza, VT: The funeral is a ceremony of the home. They may start at home, not waiting for us. Otherwise it will be late. We just do then the church ceremony. If we start at 9am, and they start at 9am, the programme will be finished at 11 so that we continue.
Mbovu, PM: We start here in time. At 10.30 they should be finished with the slaughtering. Then we go on. From 10.30 to 11.30 the programme will be done.
One: When was he baptised?
Ncindi, E (as SCC leader): We didn't get the certificate yet. It was long ago; the certificate is not here. But we have no doubts about that.
One: How was he attending church when he was out in Cape Town?
Youth: When attending school here he was always present. In 1997 he left after Easter.
One: Do you know what happened afterwards?
Youth: Here he was with the choir. What he did over there, that we don't know.

Mbovu, PM: He didn't have a letter of removal. We don't know what he did, whether he was one of those who leave for work and at the same time leave the church.
Mweza, VT: Do we know whether he did not go to church there? Are we not starting to judge him now?
Mdange, EM: We don't judge. But we have to know.
Mbovu, PM: Let's find out till Friday. We know people over there and they are always together. They can tell us (Umlamli 1999a).

Then the committee started to look for the leaders to conduct the funeral, whatever way it would be conducted. First they looked for those to conduct the vigil, *umlindo*. G Ponoane was named and supported by the assembly. J Magalakanqa was suggested. One objected and referred to his poor health. Alternatively F Giladile was suggested and accepted as well as AS Mpambani. Then those for the actual funeral were looked for. Immediately it was said by a lady that he had to preach straight. This found strong support. They appointed PM Mbovu. Then they raised the suggestion to bring in one from the outside, which means from the scattered homesteads surrounding their village. The first suggestion met an objection. He didn't preach well. This was dealt with by pointing out that he didn't have to preach; he would be just with the others. They eventually decided to get someone else from Maphosileni. A community, mostly by its committee, may also call on another community to provide leaders if they have none or none available at the time (Gqalaqha 1999).

The notes from the memory of the procedure of the committee reveal the concern about funerals on Sundays interfering with the Sunday service. It is another example of the concern about the community as a whole and its central celebration. This concern about the community is also shown in the discussion about the letter of removal. It is linked to the concern that justice has to be done to the deceased and his family, without judging. A definite decision is postponed until the facts are clear. There was no undue pressure. Concerning the funeral the committee appoints the leaders and also raises the concern about the quality of the sermon. It integrates leaders; it is even concerned about getting an old one in, who in this case is declined by those who know him, because of his poor health.

The leaders are appointed in teams. The composition of the team does not depend on tribal grounds. In mixed communities it rather reflects the widened understanding of community, which the church creates and represents. The leaders make sure that the prevalent language is respected.

Makhobokoana, JM: It makes no difference. As long as it is a leader, they know that this is a leader. And they are quite happy to see some of the leaders officiating in the funerals of their own congregation. There is no problem at all here. For instance if I use Xhosa, they understand Xhosa,

the people around here. You know in Sotho they are quite conversant with the languages. They have got no problems with the languages. There are no sentiments. Because, in the living situations we are mixed up. The Xhosa, the Sothos, everybody. So there is no sentiments as far as this is concerned (Makhobokoana 1999).

The procedure of decision making is accepted by communities to that extent that in one case a leader just mentioned a pending funeral to the priest without hinting at anything prior to the decision making in the community. Only afterwards they sent a letter to ask the priest for his presence for the Eucharistic celebration (Lekau 1999b).

The decision making by the committee can be bypassed in rare cases because of cultural influences. Someone may be perceived as a headman or elder with an indefinite term of office and accepted as sole contact person. This practice is alive in places where the gender issue still plays a prominent role with an outstanding male person. Cultural perceptions allow even a weak male to be favoured. This system is encouraged by the former pastoral approach, where male catechists did all non-priestly work, where there was an overall patriarchal orientation, and where the priest followed this pattern and only looked for men as assistants (Pitso 1999a).

The principle of locality reappears in the context of decision making. It works rather well when it is integrated into the community. It can lead to complications when locals act independently from their community or for extraneous reasons such as money. In such cases the co-operation with the priest takes the form of correction:

Mathis, W: I think the reliable ones, they are used to decision making. They don't only decide on their own. It's dangerous when for instance SCCs don't work. On the other hand there are people who are very domineering, concerned to get the leaders by support of money. In some cases they are very generous with money, fees for meetings, something like that; they pay food or they buy things for the service of the liturgy. And then it is a tricky thing. In this case something is already going wrong because they are really using the pressure of financial power (Mathis 1999a).

4.1.2 Interplay of family customs and church ritual

When observing the funeral we noticed the parallel and complementary action of the family and the leaders. We will now examine it more closely. The Xhosa word *isiko* (Pl: *amasiko*) means the family-related rituals. In this case "family" refers to the extended family with its clan name, *isiduko*. Family rituals include the relationship with the ancestors. We learned that nobody else but family members acts in this regard.[227]

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[227] The term *izithethe*, which is also used, refers to customary rituals, things done by the community and regarded as important. This may for instance be the custom of climbing certain mountains to pray for rain.

Elia, MP: Let me say at the beginning. It is important for the funeral leaders to respect the customs of the family of the deceased. They have to see that the family members will do their customs (*amasiko*) whatever time. The leaders know how to put the customs in their funeral-programme (Elia, MP 1998a).

Mbovu, PM: There is no collision (*akukabikho ukugilana*). We work together, because we get that when we prepare for the funeral (Mbovu & Mpambani 1998).

The preparation for the funeral is done in agreement with the family. The parallelism between church and culture is accepted, understood and complementary (Mpambani, ZP 1998). It is the two different backgrounds or complementing world views that allow a complementary procedure:[228]

Makhobokoana, JM: No, because this priest is doing the work that he is been appointed by God, to do the job. They are doing it on ethnic basis (Makhobokoana 1999).

The roles are shared with the family. For instance the MC of the programme hands over to the leaders to continue with the church service after the programme of speeches. The leaders hand over to the family at the end, to continue with its work of covering the coffin in the grave with tablets of sandstone or sheets of corrugated iron, filling the grave, throwing in the leaflets with the programme, washing hands, and the common meal. This sharing of complementary tasks is a common procedure (Mkunyazo 1999).

The family practices differ and seem to be contextualised by themselves. That indicates that contextualisation is nothing unusual for the leaders. In the case of T Lahlo she was welcomed outside the house, next to the hearse which brought the coffin home. There the beer was passed on to all present. Mbovu (in Wüstenberg 1999a) assumes that this was done outside since she was killed and died outdoors. All variations, one where her peers formed a guard of honour along the road, are up to the family and their arrangements.

The customs followed[229] aim at bringing home (*ukubuyisa*), and accompanying (*ukumkhapha*) the deceased by beer and by slaughtering. These express mourning (*isisila*) by shearing (*ukucheba*) and by smearing the windows of the hut or house of the deceased (*siyasinda ifestile*). They cleanse from contamination by death (*sihlamba intsila yokufa*) by washing the clothes. Washing oneself (*bangahambi nokufa*: not to go with death) shows the final farewell (*sibonisa ukuncama*). The water, often mixed with

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[228] Luzbetak (1995:264) states as the main difference between religion and world view that religion always deals with the sacred and eternal while world view sometimes does not.
[229] This compilation is based in the workshops on funerals in Barkly East (Wks-Fnl Barkly East 1999) and Umlamli (Wks-Fnl Umlamli 1999)

leaves (*ikhala*) is used to clean from death (*sicoca ukufa*). RN Mpambani (in Wüstenberg 1999a) compares this with the hospital: *njengaseHospital*. Dressing with *ingubo* (men) or *isikhakha* (women), *bayabhinqa* (they gird themselves) shows respect (*ukuhlonipha*). Respect is also shown by keeping silent (*sithi cwaka*). Respect (*imbeko*) is demonstrated by pouring soil (*ukugalela umhlaba*). The dressing assumes an additional meaning. It is done to meet him with ancestors and God (*ukudibana nookhokho noQamatha*), *siyamombathisa* (we dress the deceased), *ukudibana nezinyanya ambethe* (to meet the ancestors dressed). Unity with the deceased is expressed by drinking (*siyasela*) and smoking (*sitshaya*). It is also expressed by cooking *inkobe*, *ukuphekwa inkobe*, and that he is eaten (for) (*uyachilwa*) by us. The customs also express cultural identity: the colouring of the blanket ochre (*sigalela imbola*) is *imveli yamaXhosa* (old practice, custom of the Xhosa).

The cultural demands of a family require some flexibility and prior arrangements with the leaders. This may, for instance, include the custom when a twin has died, of the survivor getting into the grave for a few moments:

Elia, A: If there were twins, our custom (*isiko lesintu*) says, the one who is alive, this takes the place of the deceased. The living will be taken and laid into the coffin for a few minutes. And after that they put the deceased in the coffin. Even when they go to the grave they put the living one into the grave for a few minutes. And then they take him out and put the coffin in the grave. But they don't finish. So those are the customs at that time... We dress him with his cloth. The Xhosa take the red blanket (*ingcawe*). We dress him with the shirt of the living; the dead will be dressed with it. The living takes the shirt of the dead. That is with the twins. He goes with the dress of the living one, the deceased. And the living dresses the shirt of the deceased. These things are done by the family. They do that thing. We as leaders of the church we give them this chance. That they do that thing; they change the cloth and dress. And we get in as the church (Elia, A 1998a).

The leaders adapt to this and provide the necessary space for this procedure within the liturgical programme. They comply with the family decisions out of respect for their values and emotions:

Elia, MP: We know the customs, which we have to include in the funeral service. According to our families. Some like this, some like that. Let's say, sometimes the programme is led by a member of the family, not by the leader. It is important that we pay attention to the family and what they like.
W: Do you talk with the family?
Elia, MP: Yes. If the family wants to lead the programme, it is all right. We as funeral leaders, we lead the liturgy itself. To put the customs in, it is required that we talk, so then, when we conduct the funeral service at our place we must know to adapt to the situation, to be flexible. So if the family says, now we want this and this then we know where to go.
W: Do you discuss with the family or do you try to influence the will or intentions of the family?
Elia, MP: No. We don't change the will of the family. We just leave it as it is. We like to accommodate their feelings and their way of doing things. We say it is right here in this family, it must work by their own way (Elia, MP 1998a).

4.1.3 Changes in practices require a sensitive response

Culture and customs are dynamic entities, affected by continuous changes.[230] The recent development towards the combined funeral and unveiling of the tombstone is only one of them. The dependence on employers who are not ready to release their employees to attend funerals at any time plays a role. The catering for food becomes more demanding and expensive. These developments are met also with mixed feelings:

Mpambani, ZP: Well, if you ask me personally, no. I don't agree with it a bit. It is overdone, far, far, far overdone (Mpambani, ZP 1998).

ZP Mpambani regards the simple presence and sympathy as essential for the funeral. Some simple food may be offered like *inkobe*. Though one could wish that funeral leaders could exercise some influence in this regard they have no competency within the funeral context. It remains a family matter.

Morar (1998) and ZP Mpambani (1998) pointed out the problems arising from new practices coming up. This is with regard to the lavishly offered food and the expensive coffins or caskets. People sometimes feel pressure, especially from urban examples, to spend more on these things. They do not want to look backward. The financial strain can become enormous and often debts are accrued by funerals.

There may be a longing for a turn to more simplicity. In some cases the funeral is combined with the unveiling of the tombstone, a procedure involving masonry work and consuming a lot of time. This procedure is experienced as counterproductive in so far as it causes people to leave the celebration. It adversely affects the longing for community.

Tabane, YT: Do you think one should combine the funeral and the unveiling of the tombstone?
W: Do you see any reasons why people are doing it?
Tabane, YT: I heard that they want to save money.
W: And did you like this now?
Tabane, YT: You don't recognise the funeral any more. Some say our people have a tendency to overdo things. It takes now much too long. Some people even don't come anymore for funerals since it becomes too long. And if you look at funerals in our days, they look like a joyful event. The character of a funeral is spoiled (Tabane 1997).

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[230] Hodgson (1982) researched the continuous change happening to a culture and its readiness to accommodate it. With regard to the above-mentioned Xhosa term *Qamatha* for God Hodgson states that *uThixo* and *uQamatha* are of San and Khoi origin (:62-3). The assimilation of the term Qamatha from the incoming culture changed the perception of the Supreme Being. It was no longer the First Cause or Sky Deity but actively involved in human affairs. It was the result of the Xhosas' movement to Transkei and Ciskei and the coincident "cultural migration" which disturbed the socio-cultural experience and created a need for a new source of power to cope with new situations. The San's emphasis on a Supreme Being above the host of supernatural beings found favour with the Xhosa (:64).

This development is met with mixed feelings. As a family matter it is not open to the immediate influence of the leaders when the lengthy funeral procedures are in progress.

Mpambani, ZP: No, not the funeral leaders. That would be involving themselves in family matters. Those are family matters. No, funeral leaders are simply there to pray and pay their condolences and console the bereaved, not to pose such questions. I mean, such questions can be followed, generally maybe, say, if you want to educate the faithful. Then they can be posed in a parish council meeting. That then would allow the people even to discuss them in the families (Mpambani, ZP 1998).

For Morar (1998) these matters are normally not discussed outside the funeral context. Within this context it is difficult to address them. ZP Mpambani sees the influence that can be exercised rather in a comprehensive kind of ministry that addresses issues like these within other structures, formation events, or committee meetings.[231] It is not a matter for individual leaders. In meetings it will be easier to discuss ideas about how to alter funeral procedures and to escape the tendency to show off. There it happens in an emotionally less charged atmosphere instead of pushing for change at a time when regaining stability is required and any innovation may appear as unwelcome interference. In the progress of funeral procedures the leaders just comply with what the family intends to do on its side. The general concern here is respect for the family. It has to find its peace, in particular by being convinced that it has done everything regarded as necessary:

Pitso, TG: No, I think, one other thing is, the family business is very much respected. So there are also cultural things that are done and where really others don't count. It is more prudent not to hassle around. So they are doing their thing now. They respect the family for that business. To make it sure that it is valid. They don't have to complain afterwards that they have to repeat it or they did it wrongly. It is a family matter. Especially death is really a sacred thing. That needs the attention (Pitso 1998a).

4.1.4 Maintaining mutual respect in the interplay of culture and church rituals

The leaders find themselves sometimes in a situation where time-consuming cultural rituals affect the liturgy and the respect for the church ritual. Delays put the church service under pressure, so much that some demand it to be cut short. This does not so much happen out of disrespect for church rituals but simply because of time running out, with dusk coming. The creativity of the leaders then requires that they encourage changes, which is easier when a Catholic family and not only one Catholic within the

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[231] This happens rarely, however. Issues concerning funerals are highly emotionally charged. Discussions on changes, such as, for instance, the avoidance of funerals on Sundays indicate the high importance attributed to them.

family is involved. Within their own families the leaders act as agents for change in order to guarantee the required respect for church rituals:

Mbovu, PM: The problem is this, the time. When we don't arrive in time, then we have a problem. If they start in time, early, at eight o' clock, they finish early, then the work goes on nicely. But if we start late, then the family changes. It says the church hinders them. The people have to go far (home; M.W.). Then we have a problem. If we start nicely, there is no problem. So, for example, if we start at ten o' clock, at twelve the programme is finished, the service begins, surely at one the service will be over. At two, if we don't go to a distant graveyard, if it is in the home yard, it will be finished. Then all things will be done. All people can go home again. But if we start late, if the programme didn't even begin at twelve, then we have a problem. There will be a feed back. The family stands up and says it is in a hurry. Because it is late. But here it was not the church that was late. No. It is the family who is late in many cases where we go to. For example it will fetch on Saturday morning. Perhaps the deceased died far away. Then they say they will go there to the field where he took the taxi when he left. Then they will fetch him at 7am. Instead of fetching on Friday when he comes from the mortuary before they go to sleep; and in the morning they slaughter only. Now they fetch on Saturday morning. Then they don't go at seven o'clock. They go at eight o' clock. And they won't run. They will go nicely. They go with the mamas, they will take the beer (*utywala*) and everything, and the garments (*impahla*). They go nicely. At nine they will arrive there at the fields. To fetch him. They stay there and take some time, they do their work nicely and talk with their deceased, and they drink and smoke. They stand up and come slowly to rest sometime. Maybe they will arrive here at ten o' clock. Then they start to slaughter. You see, it is ten. At eleven o'clock they finish the slaughtering. Then they start the programme. Or at twelve o'clock they start the programme. At one the programme is finished; they want to go to the graveyard. But the service has not yet begun. The prayers were not yet done. The prayer the church was coming to do was not yet done. There is the problem. But in our families, the Mbovu family, the Mpambani family, the Mdange family, we have got no problem because if our deceased come from far away, we fetch them on Friday. We fetch before we sleep. On Saturday we only slaughter. We don't go to the taxi-stop again. If we don't do that, as early as seven o'clock we go to fetch. At eight we are back home and slaughter. To do the church prayer it must get enough space. It must get sufficient time to work nicely. It must finish nicely. And we finish our customary work nicely. At three o'clock latest we are finished. All the people want to go home. Everything is finished (Mbovu & Mpambani 1998).

The pressure to shorten the liturgy for time reasons is not necessarily connected with rejection of the church rituals. However there are cases where most members of a family belong to no church or to another church where the Catholic liturgy is disliked by some. If the voice of the critics became softened over the years, this is attributed by some to the significantly increased quality of the funeral leaders through formation. Formerly those slightly hostile groups enjoyed the weakness of the Catholic leaders (Mbovu 2000b).

The family can cause some problems and frustration for the leaders. This happens if the family changes arrangements already made at short notice, for example the date for the funeral. This can be aggravated when a family does not care about communicating the changes. Leaders remain committed, exposed to the whims of non-committed family members, due to their respect and accountability towards the deceased as a Catholic. In this faithfulness to the deceased they demonstrate their sense of community.

Elia, MP: We had to change everything with the funeral I told you about. It is now already tomorrow.
W: So you are not going to have it on Sunday?

Elia, MP: No. The family decided to have it now already on Saturday. They said if we would not do it they would ask somebody from any other church to do the funeral. So I have to go for the night vigil today.
W: How did this change happen?
Elia, MP: First they agreed and then they changed.
W: Do you know about the reasons?
Elia, MP: No, I don't know. Those we spoke to first agreed (Elia, MP 1998b).

The probability of such mishaps increases if the majority of the family is non-Catholic or when there is friction or clashes within the family, different groups planning different arrangements for the funeral, even concerning the date.

Ntaka cautions that attempts to mix culture and faith have some problems due to the denominational variety. He warns that the head of a family may belong to another denomination. How can one then try to make the customs Catholic?[232] And to top the ceremony with the Mass in his eyes does not convey a message beyond boredom (Ntaka 1999).

The disrespect of family issues by church leaders can lead to conflict.

Pitso, TG: I think they were just taught that way. I remember Fr "X" once had a problem with Basotho people in Mmusong because he followed the ritual as it is. He wanted to put soil there and they stopped him: Please, you can't do that before us otherwise it is wrong. So please wait that the family does it first (Pitso 1998a).

4.1.5 Collaboration in preparation and execution of the funeral project

When the decision is taken and the leaders are appointed, the leaders have to prepare for the ritual. They generally follow the liturgy outline as provided in the prayer book *Bongani' iNkosi*. This applies to the vigil as well as to the funeral rite.

Some leaders feel some anxiety of acting in public, especially in the presence of ministers of other denominations. This seems to apply in particular to those who are starting their ministry. Their anxiety is reportedly the highest. This was also the case with Mbovu and Mpambani at the inception of their ministry. They overcame it and see a variety of strategies to overcome this fear (Mbovu & Mpambani 1998). The first is to acquaint oneself with the books before coming to the public. The resulting versatility helps to overcome anxiety. Secondly, training helps. The involvement of many leaders

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[232] Tlhagale (2000:2) suggests bringing the blood of the sacrificial animal as symbol of life into the funeral rites, carried out at the home of the deceased. In a parallel, complementary system this seems unnecessary. What the family regards as important, it will do. I was not aware of a desire to christen everything done in the culture. Ntaka's statement even rejects it for denominational reasons.

at the demonstrations of the work helps the individual leader to do things correctly at the funeral. Thirdly it helps if one prepares the sermon in good time. The congregation will notice unpreparedness and the leaders know this. Fourthly the preparation will be better if one prepares in a team. Fifthly the composition of the team helps by assigning weaker leaders to work with stronger ones.

In almost all cases the funeral leaders prepare themselves without the assistance of the priest (Elia, A 1998a). They choose the Bible text, distribute roles (Timati, J 1999) and practise at times (Mbovu & Mpambani 1998). One of the leaders is chosen as the leading leader (Mangaliso 1998a). They discuss the reading and the message. They distribute roles as indicated in the book, taking turns in prayers, sharing the sections of the preface for the liturgy by community leaders, and allocating particular tasks to specific leaders such as preaching the sermon and distributing Holy Communion. Collaboration takes the form of integration. OW Giladile, some 80 years old, is actually a retired funeral leader. However, as long as an old person like him is able to do so he is allocated some easy part like prayers, in order to remain active. Other people taking an active part without being properly trained are future leaders in a kind of in-service training. On rare occasions the leaders meet with the priest. In these cases the preparation takes rather the form of a workshop, intended to improve skills and to introduce new ideas.

The preparation deals with the night vigil and the funeral (Gqalaqha 1999). Normally different teams lead either the night-vigil or the funeral service. In the case of J Mbovu's funeral RN Mpambani was the only one acting on both occasions, joined in the vigil by K Sedidi, a young leader and M Ponoane. For the funeral service Mdange, AS Mpambani, and OW Giladile joined him. The leader who takes the leading role does not necessarily take a prominent item like the sermon. If the priest officiates at the Mass then he is also expected to preach (Elia, MP 1998a). A Elia perceives the power of the priests when she assumes that the priest may overrule the arrangements made by the leaders and the committee (Elia, A 1998a).

Some parts get less attention in the preparation. In the case of T Lahlo only one leader was acting at the welcome rite at home. No other leader but RN Mpambani was around. Here the presence of the leaders is not necessarily expected, though it is welcome. Any leader from any denomination could lead the ritual. But if Catholic leaders were around

it would not be left to others. "We like to stick to our customs" (Mbovu in Wüstenberg 1999a).

The vigil as one core component of the rite is a matter for the deceased's own denomination. To express the identity as Catholics is important (Mpambani, ZP 1998). There are differing perceptions as to whether the vigil or the burial programme is more important. It seems that a majority regard the vigil as more important.[233]

W: Could you still tell me, we had now the Mass and soon they will continue with *umlindo* (vigil) to have the programme then tomorrow. What is most important in the eyes of the people: *Umlindo* or the programme in the morning?
Mpambani, RN: The *umlindo* is much more important.
W: So, why then are you not there now?
Mpambani, RN: Because we have an *umlindo* in our neighbourhood. You remember the Wesleyan church next to our place. There we will have it.
W: So it will be a Methodist *umlindo*. By the way, do you know who is going to lead it?
Mpambani, RN: It is their leaders. But they often call us to co-operate. That creates *ubunye* (unity).
W: So why do you think the *umlindo* is more important than the programme on Saturdays?
Mpambani, RN: It is because there we really comfort each other and for unity (Mpambani, RN 1998b).[234]

RN Mpambani's statement must be understood as referring to the whole burial programme of speeches on Saturday. This can be cut short, not the ritual (Mbovu 2000a; Mpambani, RN 1998b). The important part there is the proclamation. The role of the main leader during the vigil is manifold. He directs (*ukulawula*) the procedure, he has to control it, and to guarantee a dignified conduct for instance by caring for order. This includes interrupting chatting to people. The leader calls the individual preachers forward and concludes the vigil with a prayer. In particular circumstances he allows for some tea, if served and provided for by the family. He can change the reading at midnight, if envisaged (cf. Elia, MP 1998a).

The ritual in *Bongan' iNkosi* is not slavishly followed. There are variations. At the vigil the prayer book suggests that the leaders choose some readings and invite people to preach. The general practice is to choose one or two readings. If there are two the first one will be the basis for preaching before and the other one for preaching after

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[233] See also Presler's (1999) study on the vigils, *pungwe*, among the Shona people in Zimbabwe. He highlights the importance of preaching at vigils (:127-133) and the ecumenical spirit (:124-127). Night vigils are a prominent place for the spiritual encounter in particular with the living dead (:233-238); they are the place to experience and strengthen community (:239-243). Without exploring the issue of vigils deeper already these hints indicate that also they are deeply rooted in culture.
[234] This conversation happened on the way back from the Eucharistic celebration on the eve of the funeral of T Lahlo, before the vigil. RN Mpambani left the place for another vigil, indicating the "funeral stress" caused by the fact that most funerals are held on Saturdays. At the Methodist vigil he would act as agent of unity between the denominations. He would rejoin the funeral celebration of Lahlo the next morning.

midnight. The great variety of prayers offered in *Bongan' iNkosi* for concluding the vigil is scarcely used. The prayers will be done in the funeral procedure with the intercessions, as the leaders in Barkly East pointed out (Wks-Fnl Barkly East 1999).

The vigil can pose a challenge to the leaders ability to adapt. MP Elia (1999b) reported on the problem that fewer and fewer people turned up for the vigil, partly because of burglaries at the homes of known participants, and also to suspected marital infidelity, a tendency also mentioned by others (Pitso 1999b). Elia's suggestion in the committee to skip the vigil was met with opposition since the corpse had to rest at home before the funeral. He drew his suggestion from experience elsewhere, where some spent the night together, while the corpse was brought home only in the morning at about 6am.

Elia, MP: *Umlindo* is important, if we want to lift up *(ukuvuselela)* the living *(abaphilayo)*. But very often we have a problem here in the town with *umlindo*. This problem is with the family, we come to them, and then, when we have the *umlindo* and preach they are not there. There are two or three people.
W: Why are they not there?
Elia, MP: They are working outside, others go for sleep. We preach the whole night. We try encouraging the family. But they are not there. It is not important. It is necessary, when we have *umlindo* that the whole family must be there. They sit there with us. We must know that the sermons of our leaders and all the preachers at the *umlindo* must come to their attention.
W: And on Saturday all are present?
Elia, MP: On Saturday they try.
W: Then those who were not there are present.
Elia, MP: Yes. Especially those who were drinking. They make a problem. Because at *umlindo* they come and drink. When the one is preaching this side they are chatting at the other side. The whole thing disturbs. Here in town we don't like that thing. Many times they make fires with tyres outside. They sing there and say, but now the preachers and the leaders of the liturgy talk and say it is not right that we have two churches. Because of those people who are singing, those who are preaching inside in the house and in the tent can not be heard.
W: Do our leaders play a role in this problem?
Elia, MP: The leaders are inside. They try to get those who are drunk friendly... We here in Fatima we talked about this. Whether we leave *umlindo* altogether or whether we want the *umlindo* to finish at twelve, at midnight.
W: So you talked about this and what did the people say about it?
Elia, MP: The people want the *umlindo* to last till in the morning. When we show them the problems we notice at the *umlindo*, like that the family goes to sleep, others drink, we decided let's finish at twelve. Yes, we can continue till one, two or three till dawn, but at twelve we Catholics say we leave now to sleep. We put it so, that this is not so important that the deceased rests at home. Because, whether he arrives in the evening or in the morning there is no difference. It's only the belief of the people who want the deceased to spend the night at home (Elia, MP 1998a).

Alterations to the procedure are suggested and discussed by the community because of the changing context. This includes alienated family members, crime, and behavioural problems due to addiction. Such incidents are reported from townships, whereas some village communities recently started to complain about burglaries during the vigils. At other places, as a decision by the family and the community, the whole procedure was skipped except a short service on Friday night (cf. Makhobokoana 1999).

The exposure to the context necessitates attempts to deal with it, with some searching for solutions by comparing with other situations. Suggestions made creatively by a particular leader were met with resistance because of the customary procedures, while Makhobokoana reports that such suggestions were carried out. Within the same parish area, depending on the various situations, different procedures are followed, in accepted diversity.

The funeral programmes are similar, with variations like those for T Lahlo (1998), JG Mpambani (1999), M Ntsatha (1998) and P Timati (2000). They indicate the MC as the overall overseer for the programme. Usually after an opening prayer the *umongi* tells the circumstances of death: *Mongi xelela isiswe kutheni ndilele apha* (Mongi, tell the people why I am lying here) was the formulation on the funeral programme of EM Mpharu (1999), the dead addressing the speaker directly. Different speeches (*izithethi*) follow, by representatives of the home (*ikhaya*), the mother's family (*isithethi sakulonina*), the family of the wife (*isithethi sasebukhweni*), the in-laws (*isithethi sabakozi*), the son in-law (*isithethi sabakwenyana*), the relatives (*isithethi sesemanzakeni*), the nephews (*isithethi sabatshana*), where the wife comes from (*isithethi sakwatogu*), the neighbours (*isithethi sabamelwane*), the school in the Lahlo case, the funeral society, her Church, her SCC, the headman. At the end the *inkatha* (wreaths) are read, followed by the obituary. The term *umfundisi* (minister, priest) on the printed programme just indicates that the particular item is over to the church, the leaders or the priest. The main emphasis lies on the speeches of different branches of the amalgamated family gathered at the funeral. The programme allows integrating alterations depending on whether the people concerned turn up.

The collaboration in the whole programme depends largely on the set up of the scene. Mathis (1999b) reported about a funeral in Mkunyazo where he was called upon to celebrate the Mass at the end of the programme. The MC, from another denomination, wanted to cut it out because of time constraints since the programme was started late. Elsewhere time constraints were mentioned. In the case of the funeral of T Lahlo time constraints forced the leaders to shorten the otherwise liked ceremony by omitting the penitential rite, the Kyrie, the glory. They just followed the procedure as outlined in the *Bongan' iNkosi*. They adapted promptly to the situation but nevertheless delivered a sermon of 24 minutes. Within the stronger Catholic community of Umlamli at the funeral of JG Mpambani (Funeral 1999b) the Catholic MC instead cut the speeches short to allow for a dignified Eucharistic celebration.

Concerning an integrated cultural approach much depends on the priest and his openness and even encouragement.

Pitso, TG: No, Michael, I am not able to say something here. I think they just follow what they learned from the Fathers. They learned from their church. They follow the schedule as it is. And at one stage they say now we hand over to the family to do the cultural things. It is a parallel thing. If they say there would be any cultural thing that could be done, the priests have to lead that, to put it into that. Otherwise they follow whatever they learned. A priest who is conscious of inculturation could help them to take up some things from culture and then include that in the ritual. They take it as it is. So on their own, no they are not innovative (Pitso 1999a).

Inculturation depends on the priests. The fact that they allow the parallelism of church and cultural practices shows that they allow expressions of the local culture. It points to the power the priests have: to prevent or to set free. Once set free the creative powers of the leaders, which has been doubted so often, comes into action, as we will still see.

Collaboration happens between the leaders as planned in the preparation. In some places it was reported that ministers of other denominations who were present were invited to take a prayer or say a blessing (Mkunyazo 1999; Bebeza 1999). There is a permanent readiness to accommodate visiting leaders from other communities. They may spontaneously join the Catholic leaders, without official function, saying some prayers perhaps (Funeral 1999b).

The collaboration between leaders and priests at funerals is mainly limited to the Eucharist. There the leaders share the roles with the priest and other community members as far as possible. Variations depend on the size of the community and the availability of funeral leaders as well as on the time. The collaboration with the priest can go so far that he only does those parts where he is essential. At the funeral of N Ncindi (Funeral 1999a) the programme was opened with the Eucharistic celebration in the church. After the Mass the leaders encouraged the priest to unvest and to attend the burial-programme, since they could easily do the rest on their own. These leaders in Umlamli showed a great deal of self-confidence and a well-developed sense of collaboration, far from any form of submissiveness.

To leave as much as possible to the leaders at the funeral is also a policy decision by the priest who could do everything on his own. The purpose is to continually extend the community ministry, to strengthen it, and to create the necessary respect and self-confidence (Mathis 1999a).

Since the priests often arrive at a late stage of the funeral programme, which is common to most denominations, they normally receive a kind of briefing by a leader. The point of

their arrival, as in the case of the funeral of JG Mpambani may necessitate some spontaneous re-arrangement by the leaders. In this case the reading of the obituary, which was about to take place, was postponed in favour of fetching first the coffin from the hut.

4.1.6 Analytic summary: Context-sensitive preparation

The community-centred ministry extends to the decision making on funerals, including the committee, SCCs, leaders, and the community in differing degrees. The decision itself is concerned about the faith community and its maintenance and about doing justice to the deceased. The commonly-written guidelines support decisions that are more informed by the spiritual state of the deceased than by their financial contributions to the church. The decision on the way in which the funeral will be conducted takes into account the intended teaching effect the liturgy has on people. The deployment of leaders is in the hands of the committees.

The preparations are made in co-operation with the family, which is mostly concerned about the cultural rituals. In this area the family determines the details. The different family traditions, influenced by the steadily changing cultural environment, pose a challenge to the flexibility of the leaders. Accommodating the intentions of the family aims at doing justice to the family. It is an expression of respect for the living, for their values and emotions. Thus the ministry of funeral leaders is rendered in a holistic way. Rare conflicts may arise from non-cooperative leaders or family members.

A kind of parallel practice concerns the inclusion of culture. It alternates between faith and family procedures. The multi-denominational background, even within one family, often does not even suggest a merger, assimilation, or replacement of cultural procedures by church rites. The inclusion and use of cultural patterns within the liturgy still depends a great deal on whether it is encouraged by the priest.

Certain funeral procedures and the lack of the required respect for the church rites can cause problems. These issues need to be dealt with outside the immediate funeral. This is not the task of individual leaders but of the families and of the committees. The resistance to demands to cut short the church ritual seems to depend on the strength of the community concerned. When considering a shortening of the rites because of time constraints there is a perception that the burial programme of speeches could be considerably shortened.

The remote and immediate preparation for the funeral by the leaders is a separate activity. It is also a way to overcome anxiety. It concentrates on the already-identified core stages, the vigil, and the funeral service. Teams of leaders prepare these stages. The preparation takes into account the particular circumstances, the context.

4.2 Quality delivery in proclamation

This section focuses on how the leaders respond to the needs of the people, their longing for the word, the prayers, songs, denominational identity and, embracing all, the longing for community. It is the core activity in decontaminating from the power of death.

4.2.1 The word of God in the scripture text

The bereaved are longing for the word (see chapter 2.2.4). It comes in a broad variety. Its importance is reflected in a simple gesture. The leaders, like the priests, tend to show the open book to the congregation after the proclamation while the choir intones a chorus like "The devil has no power", or "The Gospel is beautiful".

The choice of the Bible text, the word, depends on the circumstances either of death or of the life of the deceased (Gqalaqha 1999). The choice is made either by an individual leader or by the team (Mangaliso 1998a). The active, participatory involvement of others beyond the immediate leaders can be expressed by commissioning them with the proclamation of the scripture text (Gqalaqha 1999).

The selection of the scripture text for the funeral rites is often based on the selection of readings in *Bongan' iNkosi* (137-8; 537-8). The workshops show that the average leader does not have a favourite reading that is indiscriminately used on all occasions. On the contrary the active leaders among the participants seemed quite familiar with a broad selection of texts. Though the list of readings provided in *Bongan' iNkosi* quotes only key terms, some leaders knew the content of the text. They instantly gave examples of situations where they would fit. Although they often find it difficult to deal with written texts, this familiarity with scripture references indicates that there is biblical competence beyond literacy problems. The leaders (as many other people) are at home with the Bible. The worn-out books are visible proof of this.[235]

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[235] West (1999:10) counts among the "readers" of the Bible also all those illiterate people, "who listen to, retell and remake the Bible." He regards the translation of the Bible as a metaphor for forms of

The workshop in Lekau (Wks-Fnl Lekau 1999) showed that the only frequently-used reading from the OT was the quotation from Job: 19:23: "I know that my redeemer lives." From the NT frequently used texts are Mt 5:1-12, the beatitudes; Mt 11:25-30: "you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children;" Mt 25:31-36: "Come, you who are blessed by my Father." Lk 7:11-17: "Young man, I say to you, get up!" Lk 23:39-43: "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise." Lk 23, 44-49; 24:2-6: "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." Jn 11:21-45: "Lazarus, come out!" Rom 8:31-39: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" 2 Cor 5:1.6-10: "We have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven." This selection from the prayer book reflects the message of life and ongoing communion.

There are few instances of leaders who prefer their favourite reading, for example from Jn 14, "do not be afraid" or Job 15 (Jeremia 1998a). The practice of sticking to standard readings seems to be diminishing.

The scope of readings is not limited to the suggested selection indicated in the prayer book. Leaders select their own readings, fitting to the context. This ability stems from their general knowledge of the Bible as well as from their actual encounter with the Bible. For the funeral of his father, RN Mpambani suggested taking the Gospel of the previous Sunday talking about the good fruits (Mt 13:3-9). The comparison with the harvest time was the most appealing aspect to him: Now it is harvest time.

Elia, MP: On Wednesday I took my Bible to work. I sat down. I just began paging through the Bible and I came to this book, then I read the first verse, the second verse, then read almost the whole chapter and the second chapter. Then I continued and then I saw from the headings that he almost says we all are nothing, everything is nothing. Then when it comes to wisdom that wisdom is good. But then he said also wisdom can give nothing if used where it is not really accepted. What is like you doing something good for me, and then at the same time I do say, I don't care for whatever you do. Then I said ok, if as there was also some kind of a friction around the family as they were fighting verbally, they were accusing the others of witchcraft and such things. And it doesn't help now to say what what. Let me choose this text. So that those who are against that the death of J. and then accuse the others of doing this and this, then they must know that whatever they say, it is nothing to God. God knows what happened when J. died. And only God can reveal it to us in a special way. They have only to accept what has happened as God's will. God wanted to take J away from this world and God is always taking people when he sees that they are suffering. He calls them to him. So that they can rest (Elia, MP 1998a).

Elia reveals the process of preparation and reflection spent for a contextually fitting reading and sermon. He shows sovereignty in a selection that takes into account the concern for unity and peace in an atmosphere charged with accusations of witchcraft.

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inculturation (cf.:97). This indicates that people start owning the Bible if it is translated into their vernacular.

This peace is concerned with the frictions involved and peace of mind with regard to the deceased, nourished from a perspective of faith.

At times the Bible seems to be used just like a quarry in search for a key or catch phrase, as in the case of the funeral of J Mbovu. The selected text of Mt 23:37-39 in itself does not seem to fit to the occasion at all: Jesus is lamenting over Jerusalem. The sermon delivered, however, made sense out of the empty or full house.

The effect of the reading on the people is not understood as cheap comfort but as a process depending on the individual listener.

Elia, A: We talk about his death. We see the way his death has come. We open the verse that fits to the circumstances of his death, how he died. We select the reading in this way. And, then, when we get that reading we read and comfort the people of the home (*abantu bekhaya*) and tell them, what Jesus shows us by this word; because he died and rose. And all of us will die. We say comfort by the words that Jesus Christ talks. We make them happy (*sibonwabise*) with the word.

W: Are they comforted?

Elia, A: Haa, the bereaved are comforted. But if their hearts are very sad, some cry until the deceased goes to the grave. But others are comforted. They go to the graveyard as comforted people; they don't cry (Elia, A 1998a).

Her statement indicates that there is no automatic and immediate reaction awaited as success of the endeavours of the leaders.

SCCs played an important part in the development of the biblical skills. They are important since the use of the Bible is elevated above a mere individualistic study to a communal, community-based event. This gives them a new competence.

Pitso, TG: Some of them they say, now Father, we are able to stand and proclaim our own faith. And take our own stance. In front of others. Come out and say, now it is our turn to stand up and say here we are and this is what we have. So they are able to offer. Especially through SCCs. They say now the sharing of the Bible has really taught them something. Which they never heard before. The leaders are part and parcel of it. Even especially the funerals as well. That is a very communal occasion. Say if you have leaders who are prepared, who are trained to do well for that, they have the skill to really represent their own faith. And set a point according to their own understanding and belief (Pitso 1999a).

The selection of the reading has an inspiring, empowering effect on the leader. A Elia ascribes this power to the word, whereas others seem to receive it through the preaching technique employed, for instance through the shouting. For her the proclamation leads to a kind of personal witnessing in the sermon:

Elia, A: Let me say, the sermon you hear when you talk about the word, you get the power (*amandla*) to talk. So the other churches they are shouting and make noise, they preach but they shout. It is their way to preach, by which they get the power to preach. Because, I, when I get the reading and I hear that that reading is talking to me and to the others, I say, when I preach, I get power, I explain it to the people. But, when you talk with the word you feel this word is touching your wounds and your problem and your sorrow. You see that this word matches my problem. And my sorrow and so on. Now, I don't know to cry when I preach, I just get the power to speak about the word of God. I

explain what it is talking to me and to you. When you preach you must not say this word is going to someone, pointing at someone. It starts to you who is reading it now (Elia, A 1998a).

The word of the Bible appears as the essential guide for the sermon. It makes the reader and preacher its own tool in the proclamation in the sermon, the *intshumayelo*.

4.2.2 The word of God in the sermon

Comforting means "to create this link with God" (Makhobokoana 1999). The sermon as an event of the word attempts to create this link and to restore faith and hope. The sermon is the place to convey that message.

Mangaliso, FT: *Hayi*, what we preach about, we don't go into depth about the causes of the death. We perhaps try to say that this must not repeat again. The thing we are praying for is running to Jesus. Our hope is Jesus Christ (Mangaliso 1998a).

Typical topics for a sermon are unity with the deceased (*Ubunye bukhona*), reconciliation, leading a good life, and Jesus raising us to new life (Elia MP & Mangaliso 1998). The groups in the workshops in Umlamli and Mkunyazo, following the CCC, elaborated on ways to illuminate the death of Christians in the light of the risen Christ. There is a general Christian message that is common to all denominations (Mpambani, ZP 1998). People should know where they come from and where they go. About this the cultural rituals say nothing (Makhobokoana 1999). This is the unique and distinguishing contribution from the point of view of faith.

On the rare occasions when a priest is present at a funeral his sermon can have a particular aim. Since people learn by example their preaching too falls under the leading and teaching task of the priests:

Mathis, W: That is another reason for me to be there to give them ideas on the message at the funeral. It is really important. It is a commitment for us, a challenge in leading and facing this fact of death and life. We don't know when and how, and in fact it is a proof to show the need of a strong community which is able to deal with such events of death, by accidents or of the youth. And to stress the importance of a strong community which is able to see that, and after that to support one another in solidarity among the people. You have to practise relationships in the community (Mathis 1999a).

The strong emphasis on exemplary preaching and on community building as a preventive response to the needs arising from the confrontation with death shows a comprehensive approach in the shared ministry. It attempts to enhance the communal competence of the leaders. The actual work of comfort begins much earlier, long before death by building its foundations, whereas the acts surrounding the funeral itself just serve to pinpoint the already existing community, thus decontaminating from the threat of death.

Mathis further emphasises the importance the preachers attribute to a focused sermon, which has a message. This focusing, then, becomes even easier for the leaders since they are part of the local set-up and know the context well. The competence of the leaders' preaching comes from their familiarity with the context.

The need to build up the homes [zokha amakhaya ethu, the leaders build up our homes (Wks-Fnl Umlamli 1999)] applies also when addressing the family of a lapsed Catholic. Mbovu (1999b) explained this caring: The Christian leaders have to be sensitive to the situation of the family and to show empathy. They are supposed to differentiate and to understand. In a particular case[236] the leaders had the courage to confront a controversial situation with a word of the gospel and triggered off a lively debate, the pro-vocar of L Boff (1976:15; see chapter 1.3.4). This case contradicts the sometimes-heard impression that they mostly look for easy solutions.

As with the word of the scriptures the immediate effect of the sermon is not to be overestimated. While it may sometimes be frustrating to see how little changes through a sermon, it remains an appeal to the personal life choices of people.

Elia, MP: I usually ask the people before reading: We are going to get our reading from Matthew chapter and verse but I would like you before reading this, to listen, you all listen very carefully to this and then think about it by yourselves. What does this word say to you? Then, I am going to do a little bit of preaching but I would like you to think yourself about the word. What it really says to you, what you should do for your community, what you should do for yourself, like what you should change in your life, what you shouldn't do in your life and so on. First take it to yourself. Not just, I read this word and then preach and then when you go out of that door and then have already forgotten what was taking place here (Elia, MP 1998a).

The important aspect of the leadership style here is to see that the people, the congregation, is taken as a sovereign partner, people whom the preacher leads to reflection, and not people who need indoctrination.

There is some suspicion that the sermons can tend to moralise, talking about the evils people are caught up in, presenting death as kind of punishment, and threatening people (Pitso 1998a). The picture is rather ambiguous. While some do not mention

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[236] As an example Mbovu (1999b) reported the case of a young man who was staying in Johannesburg where he died. Some people complained about the waste of money spent for his transport back home; he should have been buried over there. The leaders, then, preparing for the funeral, chose the story of the woman anointing Jesus' feet with perfume (Lk 7:38), elaborating on the differentiation between waste and expenditure, the latter understood as an expression of the care for the body and the bringing home to the place of the forebears. It was not a full church funeral, since the deceased was lapsed. The preaching was reported as lasting very long, since after the main preacher others joined in a dialogue on the search for the meaning of that gospel. The impression was that the people gained a lot of new insight by this communicative, communion-based preaching.

problematic issues at all, others feel compelled to "talk about the right way" (Bebeza 1999). The moral lead is not necessarily moralising.[237] A frequent phrase says that one expectation of the sermon is to call for repentance (*ukuguquka*) and to point out ways of following Jesus Christ (*ukumlandela uYesu*). For Dlephu this "following" has different dimensions. It applies to the living as well as to the deceased who is about to follow Jesus (in Wüstenberg 1999a).

The duration of sermons differs. Most of those I observed took up to ten minutes, with some exceptions. MP Elia reflected expressively on the length of a sermon. With the intention of moving people that the sermon works in their hearts he regards it as necessary to invite people to listen attentively and to give a short sermon (Elia, MP 1998a).

Comparing the preaching styles, the Catholics are known for "preaching slow". Some suspect that there is a general trend towards "noisy" sermons and that quite a number of leaders are influenced by it. In the observations, however, I found quite different styles. People realise the difference between the styles and express this in their comments and their encouragement for a good preacher, getting the message and affirming it (Pitso 1998a). As Jeremia pointed out, the most important thing for them is the message (Jeremia 1998a). The way of *uMoya* (under the spirit),[238] as seen in the mortuary, is rarely found in the Catholic communities, though preachers love to copy others and though people enjoy the style of controlled hyperventilation, the "noisy way".

We observe rather an accepted and respected homily diversity without the urge to copy. There is an awareness of different identities and personal touches in ministry. This gives space for individual personal development. The quality concern seems to have turned into an identity feature: Quality is what is expected from the leaders.

There are few instances where the impression of abuse of the preaching power occurs. This seems to be due also to the political alignment of leaders. Influential in their local

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[237] Pauw noticed a moralistic trend, also caused by missionaries. "A moralistic trend, placing greater emphasis on adhering to laws and doing works than on grace, is also evident. This might well be related to traditional beliefs that the assistance of the ancestors depends on correct behavior of the living. It has, however, no doubt been fostered by the prohibitions and other rules laid down by missionaries as conditions for admission into a Christian congregation, and by the legalistic system of contributions" (Pauw 1974:432-3). This moralistic trend does not seem to be reflected in the examples given here. The concern seems rather to be a meaningful life in orientation towards faith under the meticulous avoidance of judgement.

community they confuse political and religious tasks. In such instances the priest tries to make them aware of the problems of such a preaching style (Mathis 1999a).

The following subsections do not provide a comprehensive analysis of funeral sermons; that could be done in a separate study. They offer limited samples expressing the personality, the aims, and the spirituality of the leaders concerned. These will always differ in different contexts. What can be seen in this small selection is that the leaders in their diversity try to make sense of their task when contextualising different themes. Common to all is that they develop the themes without consulting the pastoral workers and without reference to homiletic literature. It is their individual witness of faith.

4.2.2.1 Give life a direction

When touching the topic of preaching during the interview, Makhobokoana (1999) gave a general outline of a standard sermon idea based on Rev 4:1:

> After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this."

As with the following examples the reading was chosen by the leader on his own accord. It is not reflected in the list of readings provided in the liturgical books.

Makhobokoana's outline indicates that an experienced leader can easily draw from ideas acquired over a long time. How this is contextualised in the concrete case remains undisclosed here. His example presupposes that the deceased was a believer. It suggests to the audience the presence of God at all times, even before baptism. It recalls the individual's communication with God, which gives orientation in life, including accountability. This gives meaning to life beyond death. Therefore the sermon invites others to join the direction the deceased took. Faith is suggested as answer in an ecumenical openness within the context of a concrete denomination. The leadership rendered here aims at faith in God, communion with him after death, accountability, meaning, and life orientation, in ecumenical tolerance. To add to his former statement the sermon is not only about where we come from and where we go to, but also with whom we go.

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[238] I was told that the qualification of this style as "umoya" does not imply that other sermons are regarded as not under the Spirit.

4.2.2.2 Embrace the culture-embracing faith as source of strength

At the funeral of J Mbovu, Mdange read the Gospel of his choice, Mt 23:37-39:

> "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing. Look, your house is left to you desolate. For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'"

With the concrete case of J Mbovu, Mdange, like Makhobokoana, suggests that life is purposeful because since its inception it has been under the guidance of God. The real cause of sadness is not death but the ignorance of God. By way of contextualisation he refers to the life of the deceased who brought his house to the church. He drew the strength to cope with life from faith by prayer. The blessing faith offers is beyond amenities. The life of the deceased is acknowledged as example of and as source of faith. Mdange uses the Bible rather allegorically. Satan's work is to make the house appear empty, as he pretended that there was nothing like dying when eating from the tree. But there is death. The concern about the house of the deceased led to the choice of the reading to say: In this case the house is not empty. Despite death there is still something, the family, because of faith, dependent on God. With reference to the OT the reality of death is taken seriously, confronted with the power of faith, the faith of the deceased. While death, symbolised by the desolate house, poses a threat to community, faith overcomes this with ongoing community. This perception is understood as exceeding that of the local culture. Faith fulfils what is hidden in culture. Some people may just interpret the presence of a dead person in terms of their culture, attributing their experiences to water nymphs (*oomamlambo*). Faith came to fulfil it and to help us to understand that God is the one who gives life. Different ways of interpreting life are suggested by one's culture and one's faith. Mdange urges to understand life in the culture in the encompassing light of faith. This offer of faith is done in ecumenical openness. The funeral celebration of his Christian community is suggested as a lesson for others. Its purpose is not to attract people with nice funerals. Mdange is aware of this danger. It is the challenge of the whole life that leads to the funeral. Membership in the church is not about positions - the awareness of this danger is expressed - but about spiritual life, prayer to God. It is faith that actually helps, as can be seen with the example of the deceased (cf. Wüstenberg 1998c).

In the evaluation discussion (in Wüstenberg 1999b) Mdange's sermon was characterised by the other leaders as a sermon on perseverance. It responds to the needs of the bereaved: to restore faith, hope, and community. Mdange demonstrates a biblically guided or biblically informed sermon that yields the Christian message of the power of faith in God. He does not deliver a homily in the strict sense of the word, as a sermon on the scripture. He aims at strengthening faith and inviting people into the community of faith. Concerning the deceased he takes his example seriously, without falling into the trap of a eulogy. The faltering faith of a person is mentioned and also his way to recover.

The sermon ended in an abrupt manner: "The sun is setting now." This simply reflects the sudden awareness of the elapsed time at a funeral that started late in a valley with early sunset in winter.

4.2.2.3 Prayer, the transforming power of life in the kingdom

Murdered on 19.9.1998 four days before her 15th birthday, Thandeka Lahlo was buried 3.10.98 at her home in Maphosileni. PM Mbovu chose as scripture text the Lords Prayer according to Matthew and based his sermon on it. Unlike Mdange with his rather allegorical use of one phrase Mbovu follows the text, relating it in a particular way to the context.[239]

> The family of the deceased, the beautiful clan of *amaBhusha*, the head of the church, the priest Fr Michael and all who are nearer to the clan of *amaBhusha* and all the relatives who came from far away.
> When the sun turns to *Masana*, I say, I greet you all in the name of Jesus Christ. Glory to Jesus. I say to you, glory be with you all.
> First of all we want to talk to the clan of *amaBhusha* and the clan of *amaQwathi*; we won't talk about immortal life of Thandeka, but we want to talk about our own immortal life, because all the preaching last night was referred to the youth. So today's preaching must not refer to the youth. They heard the preaching last night.
> My fellow next to me, Mr Mpambani said the preaching must refer to the youth, in order that they know the burning fire, and run away from the burning fire. I and Dlephu said, let us change the direction and show the positive direction.
> First of all, *Zwelakhe*, the family and the community of Maphosileni. I want to tell you a story as an example.
> There was a lady who bought an expensive beautiful necklace. She liked this necklace. When she went for any special occasion she wore it and it attracted everybody in that occasion. In other words, it beautified her. The necklace was broken one day and she was among the crowd. Immediately she went behind the house in an attempt to mend the necklace, but it kept on breaking. She tried hard to mend it but she failed to mend it. She lost hope in the necklace. Now that the necklace had lost its shape, she couldn't wear it

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[239] I present the slightly abridged version of this sermon. This may help the reader to recognise the quality delivered by community leaders. I am aware of the fact and regard it as normal that there are examples that do not reach this standard.

anymore. She decided to leave the occasion but she hesitated and said to herself I won't leave the occasion because of the necklace. She put it in her pocket and joined the crowd again...

Life also breaks without a notice, at any time like this expensive, beautiful necklace. It breaks until you lose hope in life and you don't trust life anymore. Life can break in a short time, so much that you can say there is no God. In the Gospel we have read today. We have selected some words, and these words we hope will combine these two clans, that of the *amaBhusha* and the *amaQwathi* and also the community of Maphosileni. Hoping that when we come back we will notice that these two clans have combined, even the community of Maphosileni. Let us see these as a unity. Let the death of Thandeka unite these clans and the community. Let her death not separate these clans and the community.

Because disunity will prevent these clans and the community from entering the kingdom of God. The kingdom which was asked for by the disciples of Jesus. What we wish for the community of Maphosileni, is peace. The peace of the Lord, and let it be peace inside you, no matter how hurt you are. You have lost your child. Nobody knew that today your child would be lying like this. Only God knows, nobody else, only God. Today we want you to unite and be one family. Even outsiders would learn something new from you, let them learn peace from you.

On the other side we have a vision of Jesus Christ praying; we have the vision of the disciples of Jesus observing Jesus praying. We see also the crowd looking at Jesus praying.

Let us ask ourselves what are we going to say to him about this death as we see Jesus praying. What are we going to ask from him? Do we ask where he was when this death happened? Actually, what are we saying to Jesus about this death?

His disciples saw him moving forward, kneeling down and pray. They also wished to know how to pray. They asked him to teach them how to pray. Why did they not ask him to give them the chance to move around in the streets, or ask the Lord to give them the chance to enjoy themselves and say, Jesus you are wasting our time with this prayer? But why? Why do they want to be taught about prayer? What was the meaning of the prayer? What is a prayer between the disciples and God? Is it a waste of time? Or are they asking for the prayer because they don't have work to do? What is a prayer when we associate it with the death of Thandeka?

God is challenging us about the death of Thandeka. Lord! Teach us how to pray.

The disciples of Jesus saw the power of the prayer when Jesus was praying. They saw the power of the prayer making miracles, making wonders. So Jesus' apostles saw physically his transfiguration on the mountain. We are supposed to change when we pray. A prayer must bring a change.

Some of us are in sodalities. When they pray, do their prayers bring a change? Or do we just pray and recite without a deep meaning of God?

Jesus did not deny his disciples to teach them the prayer.

If we consider the Lords prayer, there are words, which say, "The kingdom of God must come." He speaks about the kingdom of God. When must this kingdom come? At what time would it come? How must this come? When the kingdom of God has come, should we cry? Or are we enjoying ourselves; or is it uniting us?

Give us peace, these are other words which come from the Lords prayer. I hope these two concerned clans will say the kingdom of God must come. This is the oldest prayer. It is not the first time that we hear this prayer today. In different communities and congregations this prayer is prayed.

They all in one word invite the kingdom of God. At what time should this kingdom come? What is our response, if the kingdom of God has come?

The kingdom of God has come suddenly. The kingdom of God has come to the clan of *amaBhusha* and the clan of *amaQwathi*. The kingdom of God has come by the little girl, Thandeka. Please accept it.

One of the teachers said here, if we teachers have made a mistake with these children, please God, forgive us. If, God, it is the parents of the deceased, who have made a mistake, please, God, forgive them. Or if, God, it is the way our youth have chosen and they have decided to behave like this, please God, forgive them.

In this prayer, the same prayer, there are words, which say, forgive us as we forgive others.

When the kingdom has come, at any time, no matter it has come. Please God forgive us as we forgive others.

Mabhusha, believers of Christ, please forgive the *amaQwathi* and you too, the clan of *amaQwathi*, let there be forgiveness between you and the clan of *amaBhusha*.

And you too, the community of Maphosileni, see to it that these two clans forgive each other. Lord teach us to pray.

One of the disciples of Jesus, Judas Iscariot, missed the prayer, no matter how close he was to Jesus, but he missed the kingdom of God. This is why his apostles asked him to teach them how to pray. Because they don't want to miss this kingdom. They are afraid to miss this kingdom...

It is like that, *Zwelakhe*; you have to drive through the mist, no matter what temptations you come across. Don't make a mistake saying that there is no God. No matter there are disappointments, for example the death of Thandeka. But keep your faith; don't be separated from God.

God be with you all.

If it is us God, please forgive us.

If it is this community of Maphosileni, we ask God to forgive them. We want to live in peace here.

One of the speakers said here, we are confused because people here at Maphosileni, they don't get sick. They just die without sickness. We don't nurse them. In that confusion keep on praying and say Jesus teach us how to pray. Once you get yourself, you will pray sincerely. Jesus will help you to solve your problems.

In these words be comfort to the clan of amaBhusha!

In these words be comfort to the clan of amaQwathi!

In these words be comfort to the youth of Maphosileni!

In these words be comfort to the community of Maphosileni!

In these words be comfort to the people who are here!

In these words be comfort to all the believers of Christ

Let God bless you all! Amen (in Wüstenberg 1998b).

In discussing this sermon I want to examine some formal aspects and some ideas concerning the message. The main concern is unity between the clans involved, and within the local community. The background is possible vengeance for the murder of the girl. The sermon responds to the need of re-establishing community and peace. It offers, from the perception of faith, a way to overcome the real threat of contamination with death for the broader community in this particular case.

The kingdom of God is the key offered for reconciliation. If the kingdom arrives, it needs to be welcomed. A challenging conviction is presented: to accept the kingdom's arrival by the girl's death. This is no fatalistic way of coping with death:

Mbovu, PM: Teach us to pray. We pray about the kingdom. What do we then expect? When do we expect it to come? Let it come! *Bufikile*, it has arrived. Don't let us say *masingabhubhi*; let's not die. *Bufikile, apha kwaLahlo*, it has arrived here, at Lahlo's place. Let us agree to that (in Wüstenberg 1999a).

The challenge extends to developing a grounded spirituality with prayer for the kingdom of peace. Prayer based on the example of Christ is presented as an effective and transforming power. It is a source of change. It can become the source of true witnessing for Christ, when people learn prayer-based peace efforts from the bereaved. Thus prayer empowers people to regain a constructive direction in their life.

Mpambani, RN: A sermon helps to lift the Spirit. All know this prayer. The Anglicans, the Zionists, all of them. We want to tell them, it is not only a recitation. Use it. Digest it (in Wüstenberg 1999a).

The outline of a sermon may be overhauled in the process of the funeral rituals. In the beginning of his sermon Mbovu verbalised this: Some advised him to address the youth and to alert them to the burning fire. But that, he felt, was sufficiently done in the vigil. With another leader he decided to change the direction. We find a complementary, shared ministry. It firstly avoids duplications of the same topic in the sermons and secondly adds or widens other speeches with the Christian message.

Among the speeches held at T Lahlo's funeral one speaker narrowed the topic of reconciliation by just emotionally asking pardon from the Lord, thus offering only a receiving, passive reaction. I noticed while recording the video that Mbovu was paging in the Bible and jotting down something on paper during the speeches:

W: Didn't you prepare your sermon?
Mbovu, PM: I did changes to the sermon, when listening to the speeches, *ndahlangahlangisa*. In the process I felt I had to adapt (in Wüstenberg 1999a).

Speeches sometimes help the leaders to adapt their own sermons; they give some contextual inspiration. On the side of the leader this reveals flexibility and ability to make last-minute adjustments. The sermon delivered by Mbovu was interactive, meaning that he, while listening to the speeches, took notes and changed the outline for his sermon.

In this the funeral leaders' ministry has its particular opportunity. They normally experience the whole programme unless they arrive late, while the priests usually arrive around the time Mass is supposed to begin. They do not know about the speeches. When working with new expatriate missionaries this is exacerbated because they are unable to follow what is said in the speeches. Thus their sermon cannot be grounded the way the sermon of a community leader can be when taking into account messages delivered by others. As long as this kind of programme exists and provided the speeches go beyond what some suspect them to be, mere advertising incidents, the funeral leaders have a huge advantage over priests in their shared ministry. In grounding the message of Christ and relating it to the actual, immediate context, they can catch the attention of their audience. The leader, if capable of doing so, can add a new dimension to the unfolding reality in the light of faith. In this particular case it is the appeal to the listeners stop being mere recipients of mercy and become actively involved in the dynamics of reconciliation. The preacher here widened the perspective of the families to include active work for reconciliation: as we forgive. The specific quality of this reconciliation is that it is rooted in the willingness of the victims to

forgive.[240] Secondly, of course, it needs a response from the perpetrator's side as well in order to work:

Mbovu, PM: Teach us to pray: *Usixolele njengokuba nathi sibaxolela abo basonayo thina*, forgive us, as we forgive those who trespassed against us. That is when I mentioned the *amaQwathi*, the family of the boy who killed Thandeka. They were there. And they may be afraid for the death their son caused. And that is why I addressed the *amaBusha*, the family of Thandeka. Maybe they don't want to forgive. *Sixolela thina*, as we forgive. We try to pull the *amaBhusha* to join hands with the *amaQwathi*. The ones ought to come to ask for peace and the others ought to grant it. Eventually you got peace and forgiveness yourself. They should join hands, *dibanisa izandla*. Some like to continue fighting after such a case. They may even say we ought to kill one of them, then we are 50/50 again (in Wüstenberg 1999a).

The undeterred conviction of the presence here of the kingdom of God, which has arrived, can become the source of new life and love.[241]

Technically this sermon made use of the suggestion offered in workshops to insert examples, stories and symbols in a sermon. It reflects the appreciation and use of acquired knowledge. Here it was the symbol of a chain. In this slightly abridged version the symbol of a broken candle and the story about a long journey on a misty road, encouraging perseverance, were omitted.

The evaluation of this sermon showed that it was perceived as well thought through. It reflected on the situation and encouraged people to move ahead. It is a multidimensional event involving many and inserted observed facts.

Mbovu, PM: I chose this sermon because by prayer we get ideas (*amacebo*). By prayer we gain something. And by prayer we can change our situation. That is why I started with the example of the necklace and of the candle. You have a nice necklace. And you are happy with it. And all admire it. And all of a sudden it is lost. Or the candle. It gives you light for hours. And you enjoy it. But if it breaks, the joy is quickly gone. And it will be gone. You must expect this. We get a present. God gives and takes away. *Uvisise*, you have to agree to that. Or when you drive and come into mist. Then you don't see the way. You doubt and you don't want to go on. Perhaps we see a little bit, the white line on the road. And in our life we doubt sometimes. Do we cancel the faith? Do we leave the faith? No, let us carry on. And when the time of death comes, we are very disappointed. But we carry on. Joy comes again (in Wüstenberg 1999a).

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[240] Jesus asks in Lk 23:43: "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." This sentence can be understood in a way that Jesus deferred the question of forgiveness to his Father (cf. Maluleke 2000b:30). This cautions against a rushed notion of cheap and easy forgiveness. On the other hand it could appear as if Jesus expresses the need to involve his "kin" in the process of forgiveness. Without involvement and agreement of all it would remain incomplete, threatened. This required inclusiveness, and indicates the obstacles thorough reconciliation is facing (requiring divine involvement as for instance by such transforming prayer).

[241] Drewermann (1985b:304) deals with the daughter of Jairus. He suggests that for her father all depends on an acceptance of her death that is borne by the trust in the care of God for his daughter. It is ultimately faith in resurrection that enables love and prevents terror.

The word of the sermon based on the scripture is offered as source of comfort. The living Christ is giving direction to living people and so is empowering those possibly captured and paralysed by the thought of death.

4.2.2.4 Dealing with problematic death cases

The leaders are well aware of problematic deaths. In the workshop on funerals in 1999 the quotation of John 10:9-10 was used to identify areas where the thief is coming to steal, slaughter and spoil. They include murder, rape, AIDS, and drunken driving.[242]

Dealing with problem cases can take different forms and is not necessarily expected in the sermon at the funeral itself. The causes of death reflect the life-situation of the people. They call for a reaction and countermeasures. These are beyond the immediate capacity of the local people to deal with as far as general trends in society are concerned. There are, however, ways of keeping people in charge and helping them to cope. The respondents indicated several of them. Prayer, personal counselling, the call for repentance, formation, and asking for peace and reconciliation are among them.[243]

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[242] The responses of the group in Umlamli were representative of others: As criminal causes of death the participants mentioned *ohlatyiweyo* (stabbed), *ogwintiweyo* (assassinated), *xa umntu ethe wahlatywa* (when the person was stabbed), *ukugetyengwa* (killed), *ukubhubha ngenxa yokudlwengulwa* (dying by rape), necklace, *ukubhubha ngokutya ityhefu* (food poisoning). Drug related cases are known: *xa umntu athe wabujiswa ebulawa yintsangu* (when someone is killed by marihuana), *otshatyalaliswe ngenxa yobunxila* (destroyed by drinking), *ukubhubhela kwiShebeens* (died in shebeens), *ukubhubha ngeziyobisi* (die of drugs). Accidents are another form of unnatural death: *ukubhubha ngenxa yemoto ngokuqhuba sisebenzisa utywala okanye iziyobisi* (driving a car under the influence of beer or drugs). There are incurable or terminal diseases: *xa umntu athe wabujiswa ebulawa zizifo ezinganyangekiyo* (when a person dies by incurable diseases), HIV, AIDS, and suicide: *ukuzixhoma* (hang yourself) (Wks-Fnl Umlamli 1999).

[243] *Mna ndicinga ukuba ndikhe ndimhambele umakelwa wam xa ndimbona ekwimeko embi ndithandaze naye ndimcebise xa kuyimfuneko hleze ehle kwesosimo sakhe okanye aguquke ukuba ebengakholwa.* (I think I must go to my receiver when I see him in a bad condition, I pray with him, I advise him if necessary, maybe he will go to his position (come to terms) or repent if he didn't believe). *Ngokubashumayeza iindaba ezilungileyo. Ngokuthandazela. Ngokubaguqula. Ngokubacelela uxolo okanye ukuxolelanisa. Sinqabise izinto ezinobungozi ebantwaneni* (By preaching the good news. By praying for them. By converting them. By forgiveness or reconciliation. We limit the access to dangerous things for the children). *Ukufundisa ngeengozi zeziyobisi. Ukufundisa ngeengozi ezidalwa kukusela utywala kakhulu. Ukufundisa nokucebisa ukuziphatha kakuhle kolutsha ngokuqwalaselisa ukunyuka kwezinga lokubhubha kutsha kunabantu abadala. Ukufundisa ngendlela kaKrestu ukuguqula imeko yokuphatha nokulawula abantu. Ukufundisa indlela yokusombulula iimbambano ngenxa nabo ngoxolo. Ukubona iinkonzo zomnyaka sikhethe iziganeko ezithile. Ukushumayela iindaba ezilungileyo. Ngokucebisa iingozi zobusuku. Ngokwenza iikomiti zokucebisa ngemizekelo emihle. Amabanjwa ahanjelwe: kuthethwe nawo* (To instruct about the dangers of drugs. To instruct about the danger coming from abuse of beer. To instruct and advise the youth to behave well thoroughly by looking deeply at the grown trend for young people to die before the old people. To teach the Christian way to treat and lead people. To teach the way to escape strife. We choose certain demonstration in the Sunday services. To preach the good news. To advise about the dangers of the night. By building a committee to advise on nice examples. To visit the prisoners and speak with them). *Ndingafuna ndakhe ikomiti yokucebisa nokudala uxolo ebantwini* (I want to build a committee to advise and create peace among people). The

The list compiled on newsprint reveals the capacity of the people to contextualise and to respond in a variety of ways to the message of faith. It is not limited to the liturgy but moves far beyond. This limitation indicates that the liturgy is not understood as means of solving the problems of society. That is done in a more comprehensive manner by private encounter, by instruction and communal involvement. This entails the positive admission that competencies overlap and complement each other when specialised advice is asked for.

The approaches to the sermon differ, even within a single community. Mangaliso prefers to touch problematic cases very carefully, not going into depth, perhaps hinting that such a thing should not happen again (Mangaliso 1998a). The locus for solving problems is somewhere else.

Elia, MP: Some say Christians always talk good things about people, the deceased. In our family we are used to talking about the good and the bad sides of people. Others don't like that. But we can't just undo it if one was a wife-beater or was chasing his children. We talk about that at the funeral. We comfort but we go straight forward (Elia, MP 1998c).

This perception of challenging comfort reflects the old dictum of *de mortuis nihil nisi bene*, about the deceased nothing but well. This advice clearly speaks about *bene*, not *bonum*, speaking well, but not necessarily only good things.[244] This may well form part of the due respect for the deceased. As we saw, the murder of T Lahlo was not avoided but formed the foundation of a sermon concerned about future community and life.

Timati, P: Yes. We talk about the circumstances of the death of a person. We talk about these things. We know how the person died. But now, let us try to revitalise each other by peace. The complaints don't give life to a person. We try to rebuke such a thing as murder. Whether it is a young person, or an old person, we try that it may stop. Jesus comes in as our creator. At the funeral. Because we know he came on earth, and he himself was killed, he was buried. Now we say we wait for his spear. For example he says, we will die, and he will take us to heaven. Here Jesus comes in (Timati, P 1998).

The restoration of peace is the ultimate goal, based on Christ, who was killed himself.

Experience shows that it is easier for the leaders to speak of hot issues like AIDS at a vigil with plenty of sermons than at the funeral celebration. Some are cautious even with

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people may convert, Jesus wants the community to effect faith in the people so that they may gain lasting life; we can pray for our people who spoil situations. Let's try to talk with them. Let's try to be reconcilers (*sibe ngabaxolelanisi*). How can I bring the thief back (*ndingalinqanda isela*)? By praying for him, by talking to him about an upbuilding way, by depriving from causes: Dagga, Liquor, dangerous weapons, by upbuilding teaching, by caring (Wks-Fnl Umlamli 1999).
[244] The attitude of the leaders towards problematic people and the general rejection of judging others reminds one of Magesa's statement (1993:79): "An often forgotten fact in pastoral ministry is that the reign of God established by Christ is the dawning of the era *when good things happen to bad people.*"

this limitation for the fear of possible conflicts arising from touching on such issues. The mentioning of problematic circumstances is often allocated rather to the *umongi*, the person who explains the circumstances of the death. But here, too, people saw limitations: *umongi akathethi inyaniso*, the *umongi* does not always speak the truth, or *bafihla inyaniso*, they hide the truth (Wks-Fnl Hlomendlini 1999).

The catechist, observing funerals of other denominations as well, assumes that the ability to tackle hot issues is primarily a personality question. Strong and qualified personalities are more likely to do so. In his opinion it may also depend on training:

Timati, J: Like when I was present at the funeral of the nephew of Phillip in Upper Telle. He was buried by the (Anglican; M.W.) deacon. He did mention it because the killer was a relative. Because I know that man and he was supporting the church. But we had to talk about that because this was not good what he did. Some of them they are strong to stand to the truth. It depends on the individual. Because, maybe those who are trained, because they are not afraid to talk. I remember last Saturday at Mfinci we had to bury the young man. He was killed by a car. That *umshumayeli* (preacher) was from the Wesleyan Church. He mentioned this. He said that we parents, we have to encourage our children to leave this drunkenness. And here he was afraid to see young girls that were drunk in the streets. Now this is part of the parents to talk to their children. That is why I said that some of our leaders they are bold to talk about something that is not right. There are some people who are afraid. They are afraid that maybe those people who, maybe *bazambetha* because *bathetha inyaniso*, they hit him because he speaks the truth. Some maybe, they will hit him, maybe that he thinks that he is better than other people (Timati, J 1999).

The fear of physical violence can in some cases be a reason to refrain from mentioning important issues. Such sermons depend very much on the personality of the preacher, on his or her skills and gifts. This reflects the personality-bound quality of leaders, their charisma, which lies beyond the immediate reach of training or formation.

At times the family determines the scope of a sermon. To speak about AIDS without its consent is regarded as impossible. It is easier to discuss it outside the ceremony. For the sermon in church some see the contemplation of God and his relation to the deceased as the primary aim (Wks-Fnl Mkunyazo 1999). Despite the complexity and difficulties, other leaders feel compelled to mention issues like AIDS. It emerges like a duty and qualifies their leadership task and the drive to combat death. Keeping silent is perceived as a betrayal of their mission:

Gqalaqha, MM: However, I say, as messengers of God, because we are his messengers, the things we show to the people are dangers. We must talk about it to the people, to train the people so that they must know about the danger. We must not be like killers. I am not afraid. But others are (Gqalaqha 1999).

Gqalaqha counts it personal advantage that he works for the hospital. So he is used to the topic, while others are afraid or ignorant. Professional exposure as well as his personal context contributes to his perception of the leadership task. The consent of the

family is also imperative for him. If they do not consent one cannot force the topic. However, leaders can work even on this. One can try to convince the family (Gqalaqha 1999).

The complexity of social issues makes it difficult to address them. It was easier and more obvious to fight Apartheid:

Pitso, TG: No, the struggle was the easiest way of dealing with an issue, the issue to address. But other social issues are not so easy. Social issues are not so easy to grasp. And to see even the root or addressing the root is not easy, really. It is just to confront the bereaved people. Not those issues now (Pitso 1999a).

Issues like violence, killing in shebeens and AIDS would require special knowledge and skills from the leaders. Some may have and use them, but for a number of them it will be impossible to tackle them adequately when even officials are unable to solve them:

Makhobokoana, JM: That is a problem. And it is not facing only the community but the whole country. Because you find that this selling of liquor, it is sold anywhere. Anywhere you find shebeens. So here we used to have two or three cases just around here. But you can't stop that. Because even the government is not doing anything to keep that... It is a very broad problem (Makhobokoana 1999).

In the context of problematic death cases I met the perception of death as a kind of punishment. "Punishment means that nobody is blameless. Instead, God takes one away and so avoids further problems. I see AIDS as a punishment since we Africans tend to go astray in marriage. It is not only a punishment but also to save you" (Leader "X". 1999). As strange as it may sound this interpretation attempts in a friendly way to make sense out of a horrifying experience. It puts the whole event back into the context of God and carries an underlying salvific understanding. Punishment appears rather as the consequence of some wrong actions, when viewed with good intentions and from the angle of faith.

4.2.3 The prayer: Use it, digest it

On the background of the challenging funeral of T Lahlo and the sermon based on the Lord's prayer, RN Mpambani added in the evaluation, that the prayer is not a mere recitation: "Use it. Digest it" (in Wüstenberg 1999a). "The thing we are praying for is running to Jesus. Our hope is Jesus Christ" (Mangaliso 1998a). The prayer is a witness of hope. Elia referred to the prayer practice of the church:

Elia, MP: The other churches always are preaching, are preaching there. No, we have to practice our faith. We have to do it practically, so that the people should say, the Catholics know what they are doing (Elia, MP 1998a).

The prayers respond to the needs of the bereaved (see chapter 2.2.4). Besides the prayers provided in *Bongan' iNkosi* the leaders also say their own prayers. Mangaliso's prayer at the vigil of the unveiling of the tombstone of ML Elia (Wüstenberg 1998a) was also concerned about those who were about to act. It expressed belief in the constant presence of God by the Holy Spirit. He is needed as the source of strength for all present, in particular those who are going to preach. The prayer is a request to make the omnipresence of God an event. At the funeral of T Lahlo RN Mpambani expressed the longing for God's presence and guidance, opening the prayer with the term of belonging: "We are your people, by your love you made us to be here" (Wüstenberg 1998b). The prayer becomes concerned about the bereaved as well as the ministry serving them. What is remarkable is the reason given here for the presence of the leaders: It is the love of God that made them be there. A sort of spiritual network appears, including all involved in the framework of faith. People, leaders, touched by this love convey the love of God to the bereaved.

Among the preformulated prayers the Lords Prayer has a prominent role and is frequently prayed at funerals. As we saw at the observed funeral it was prayed or sung in the mortuary, in the hut, in the Eucharist, in the hut again, at the liturgy and at the graveside. Since the liturgy provides for it only at the graveside (*Bongan' iNkosi*:545) the leaders have their own reasons for inserting it frequently. It is *umthandazo omkhulu*, the big prayer of Christianity, and the prayer that unites us: *usidibanisa sonke*. It is familiar to all denominations and even the children know it (Wüstenberg 1999a). While in the intercessions members of other denominations also join in, the Lord's Prayer as a prayer prayed together is understood as a prayer creating a much wider community. The prayer practice reveals that the leaders are aware of their role. The prayer becomes a source of restored community.

After the first reading in the Eucharistic celebration follows the prayer of the responsorial psalm. At the occasion of the funeral of N Ncindi, an old and prominent member of the community, the leaders prepared the responsorial psalm in an inculturated way. They showed creativity in the area of a recited prayer. The group singing the response and humming during the recitation of the psalm by one of the leaders chose a traditional tune (*ukungqungqa*) to the words: *Ndikhusele Thixo, ndithembela ngawe* (Protect me God, I set my hope in you). The chosen tune and way of dancing are employed when young men return from their initiation school, at another rite of passage. This solemn way of singing a responsorial psalm originated in the preparatory training for the liturgy

for the blessing of the leaders during Community Week 1997 by the animation team. Together with the leaders they underwent a process identifying the appropriate way of singing in a culturally compatible way. The initial idea of choosing a tune used by traditional healers was rejected by the leaders because of the strong connotations in that particular context. Against *ukungqungqa* they had no reservations. The leaders concerned showed in this process consideration and a sense for compatibility of contexts when dealing with matters of culture and faith.

The subsequent further use of this way of singing is an indication for a comprehensive and accountable approach towards inculturation, based on formation, and forming an integrative, not exceptional part of the whole pastoral approach. This way of referring to culture in the rite did not affect the specific customs performed by the family and was therefore not prone to possible clashes. This procedure indicates the conditions of time and people involved in the long-term development of inculturation. It took some time, until at Community Week 1997 this way of singing was actually introduced and again it took two years to integrate it into a local liturgy. The driving force was the permanent encouragement of the pastoral workers trying to adapt what is possible. Their effort eventually set free the creative resources of the leaders.

However, this kind of preparation is not always done. Within the range of funeral liturgies there are more simple procedures, less elaborate liturgies. The state of the deceased within the community influences the way in which the liturgy is prepared. Thus the liturgy also genuinely reflects the reality reflected upon. The procedure does not have the connotation of discrimination. It is accepted without complaints. One should note that this kind of differentiation is not based on social status. The leaders apply just measures accordingly, avoiding choosing, which is often mentioned as a quality requirement for leaders.

On some occasions the creativity of the leaders includes the praise song, or preface. The role of the preface is to mark the concrete event through words of praise. The outline of *Bongan' iNkosi* (:235-5) provides only a rudimentary skeleton for this kind of praise in the ritual of the Sunday service conducted by community leaders. In a special workshop for funeral leaders, the participants were invited to design a song of God's praise for the funeral of people who died of AIDS, for instance, or by accidents at work, for example in the mines. They were inspired by Jesus talking to Peter about what kind of death he would glorify the Lord by (cf. Jn 21:19).

Variations are possible. While some prefer just to complete the three sentences of *Bongan' iNkosi*, directed at the Trinity, others like to follow for instance the structure of the Taizé chant *Bénissez le Seigneur* (Chants de Taizé 1993. No. 26) with the response for the people being *dumisan' iNkosi* (Praise the Lord) in Xhosa or *Rorisang Morena* in Sesotho. For the funeral of JG Mpambani (Funeral 1999b) this praise-song sounded:

Singer / chorus	Translation	Response
Dumisani iNkosi	(Praise the Lord)	*Dumisani iNkosi*
Dumisani iNkosi	(Praise the Lord)	*Dumisani iNkosi*
Dumisani iNkosi	(Praise the Lord)	*Dumisani iNkosi*
Ungumdali wezulu	(You are the creator of heaven)	*Dumisani iNkosi*
Ungumdali womhlaba	(You are the creator of earth)	*Dumisani iNkosi*
Ungumdali welanga	(You are the creator of the sun)	*Dumisani iNkosi*
UnguThixo wethu	(You are our God)	*Dumisani iNkosi*
UnguBawo wethu	(You are our Father)	*Dumisani iNkosi*
Siqubuda kuye	(We worship you)	*Dumisani iNkosi*
Ngamaxesha ovuyo	(By the time of joy)	*Dumisani iNkosi*
Ngamaxesha osizi	(By the time of pain)	*Dumisani iNkosi*
Ngamaxesha okufa	(By the time of death)	*Dumisani iNkosi*
Ngezipho asipha zona	(By the gifts he gives us)	*Dumisani iNkosi*
Ngabazali bethu	(By our parents)	*Dumisani iNkosi*
Masibulel' uThixo	(Let us thank God)	*Dumisani iNkosi*
Ngookhokho bethu	(By our ancestors)	*Dumisani iNkosi*
Ngezinyanya zethu	(By our forebears)	*Dumisani iNkosi*
Ngamasiko nokholo	(By customs and faith)	*Dumisani iNkosi*
Kanako ea tsofalo	(In the time of aging)	*Rorisang Morena*
Kanako ea hokula	(In the time of sickness)	*Rorisang Morena*
Kanako ea lefu	(In the time of death)	*Rorisang Morena*
Lona bahabo mufu	(You bereaved)	*Rorisang Morena*
Lona bale lapa lahae	(You the family of the home)	*Rorisang Morena*
Chaba sa Modimo	(People of God)	*Rorisang Morena*
Kadithapelo	(By prayers)	*Rorisang Morena*
Kalentsoe lemonate	(By the nice words)	*Rorisang Morena*
Kalinyehelo	(By gift)	*Rorisang Morena*

The overall impression of this prayer-praise-song is that it is a communal event, with the exception of its creation. Because of time constraints the leader composed the words in this case on his own.[245] However, by the way it is sung, it becomes a communal event. Firstly it includes all people, who are invited to participate with the response, *Dumisan' iNkosi* or *Rorisang Morena*. Secondly the three-line verses are shared among the

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leaders and others who are invited to sing them. Thirdly the song respects the different language groups by alternating Xhosa and Sotho verses, knowing that the deceased himself was a Xhosa while many of the participants, neighbours and friends would be Sotho.

With its call to praise the Lord the text itself has a strong communal character. Addressing first the Lord, it expresses the communion with him as the creator, as God our Father. Furthermore it depicts God in the praise as the essential link between all aspects of life. This holistic praise happens in all situations of life: joy, sadness, and death alike. For all gifts received and for the parents – in this case the deceased was the head of the family – thanks and praise are rendered to God. God as the actual link is praised for the ancestors, *ookhokho* and *izinyanya* and what keeps people together: customs and faith. The communal trajectory spans thus from the ancestors to arrive at those present: the bereaved, the family, and the people of God. In this way the prayer expresses an inclusive understanding of customs and faith. It expresses the appreciation of inculturation the leaders are involved in.

A huge scene is set with its link to God. It comes back alluding to the immediate context by praising the prayers (of comfort at this occasion), the words (the word of God, longed for) and the gift (bread and wine, the nourishment for the soul in the meal of unity and hope). The words referred to include the sermon, as the evaluation clarified (Mbovu 1999a).

Emanating from community, making it the subject, and actually enacting it, this praise song is a unique expression of shared leadership. In its creativity it enacts important issues longed for in the time of bereavement: community, word, prayer, song. It shows independence in expression, done on the leaders' own initiative after being instructed in formation events. It is to a certain extent contextualised since it speaks to the situation of a deceased father of the family. It is a song of faith, taking God as the essential link of all. He is the reason for the death-defying prevailing praise.

One could argue that this is a singular event, particular to that community of Umlamli. It seems to me rather to be part of an exemplary work. The intention is to give by this very

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[245] It is an indication of the leaders' preoccupation with matters of faith and their responsibilities for their community that this creative work was done on a business trip (Mbovu 1999a). Others reported that they got some of their best ideas about sermons during their working time.

work an incentive to other communities whose leaders and members are present at such occasions. The cultural background of this kind of strategy is the hope that the common pattern of learning by observation (as described earlier) and innovation will also be used in this case. People love to introduce things they experienced and liked elsewhere. Experience shows in the meantime that these praise songs are adapted in various ways. Where the skill of rhyming is lacking, as in the case of Mfinci, the adaptation happened by changing the tune while adopting the wording of others.

The praise song shows that the pastoral workers are concerned to promote collaborative leadership by enabling leaders to meet the actual needs. On the side of the leaders it demonstrates the actual implementation. It also proves that these leaders are not simply technical executors of pre-formulated agendas but are creative. This creativity incorporates and expresses the cultural or rather spiritual basis of the community concern. It combines traditional understanding and faith. The leaders show that they are capable of carrying out the task given to them.

While all these prayers are in the hands of the leaders, the intercessions are part of the communal prayer-event where the leaders invite many to participate with personal prayers for the deceased and the bereaved. In some cases the leaders prepare a short outline with key areas for the intercessions and distribute certain topics among the participants to avoid duplications, thus providing guidance. Such an outline can be short like the one used at the funeral of JG Mpambani (Funeral 1999b):

Indlela entle eya kwizulu likaBawo wethu (For a nice way to the heaven of our Father)
Ukomelela nethemba kwinkosikazi kamfi (For strength and hope of the wife of the deceased)
Ubunye nokholo olunzulu kusapho lukamfi (For unity and deep faith of the family of the deceased)
Isidima nomfanekiso wakhe kumaGcina onke (His dignity and example for the whole clan of amaGcina)
Intsikelelo kumhlangano nebandla (Blessing to the sodality and the community)

The first prayers followed this outline; afterwards others continued with their particular, spontaneous intercessions.

Another way to integrate the community as a whole is by inviting them to pray together certain prayers from the prayer book. This is done in particular in preparation for receiving the communion if the priest is absent as we saw at the funeral of J Mbovu.

4.2.4 The songs – cultivate the exploitation of the paradox

With the exception of such praise songs the leaders are scarcely involved in the area of singing. The choir mostly chooses the songs. It chooses the songs that are loved and fit the situation (Wüstenberg 1999b). The songs are taken from the Xhosa prayer book *Bongan' iNkosi*, from the Sotho hymn book *Lifela Tsa Bakriste* (1995), or from other sources. The choirs also make use of a huge number of *choruses*. This term relates to Gospel verses and other Bible quotations, sung by many different denominations.

The leaders occasionally influence the selection of songs if the deceased liked a particular song. For instance in the case of J Mbovu it was the song of Mary, whose example he loved. In the case of JG Mpambani it was the song of the Sacred Heart, since he was member of that sodality. In the latter case the leader intoned it when they left the hut with the coffin.

W: Do you as leaders start songs at funerals?
Elia, MP: No, that is done by the choir.
W: And when you prepare for the funeral, do you choose songs?
Elia, MP: No, the choir does this. Maybe that we suggest a certain song for a special part. But otherwise it is done by the choir. Normally we put in a joyful song. Because *sifuna ukumnikela indlela entle*, we want to prepare him a nice way. Since we believe that we accompany him to his rest and there may be some tribulations on that way (Elia, MP 1999a).

The songs are done *ukuphakamisa iintliziyo*, to elevate the hearts (Wks-Fnl Lekau 1999). *Sikhuthaze, sithande*, we encourage and we love (Wks-Fnl Lady Grey 1999) with singing. *Ngokucula sithoba umoya wethu sonwabise*, by singing we bend our spirit in awe and are happy (Wks-Fnl Lekau 1999).[246] Singing the song at a rite of passage is understood as accompanying the deceased actively, cheering him or her up.

Choruses revolve around the power of the gospel. In their repetitiveness they bear traces of trance. After the proclamation of the Gospel at the Funeral of T Lahlo the choir started singing: *Limnand' iVangeli*, the gospel is nice. Other choruses read: *Hayi, hayi, hayi, hayi asimbonanga, akakho ofana naye* (No, no, no, we haven't seen one, there is no one who is like him) alluding to the uniqueness of Jesus. The chorus referring to Psalm 22, *Eloi, Eloi, lama sabakatani, Thixo wam, Thixo wam, undishiya ngani na?* (My God, my God, why have you forsaken me) expresses in one of its tunes the whole ambiguity of this psalm by reciting the first verse of felt abandonment. The rather joyful

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[246] Keteyi (1998:28) mentions that music as a cultural phenomenon has been very effective in the power of bonding people together for instance at funerals.

tune takes up the hopeful end of that psalm, full of trust in God. *Akanamandla, akanamandla, akanamandla uSathana* (Satan has no power), was sung after the Gospel at J Mbovu's funeral, in a coincidental manner alluding to one aspect of the subsequent sermon by Mdange. The complementary and supportive role of the singing for the proclamation appears as rather coincidental and could be exploited in a more comprehensive way in prior arrangements.

With the ability to express the paradox of the coincidence of sorrow and joy, of abandonment and trust by text and tune, the role of the songs, especially in the emotionally ambivalent situation of a funeral, can not be underestimated. While not themselves deeply involved in this part of ministry the leaders collaborate with the choirs. The choice of choruses by the choirs seems to be both spontaneous and based on experience. In general it fits with the situation. It could be another area of research to explore the proclaiming role of the choir and ways to enhance it in collaboration with the funeral leaders.

4.2.5 The use of symbols – local re-interpretation

Uzukwu indicates that the use of symbols may be borrowed cross-culturally but warns that they should not be imposed:

> though we recognize that Africans may borrow gestural patterns of the West without doing harm to their fundamental vision of humans in the universe ... we insist that to *impose* a gesture in order to realize a uniform practice of Christianity is harmful (Uzukwu 1997:14-5).

In the funeral observation we noticed a parallel employment of cultural symbolism and church symbols. We will see that in the concrete context the meaning of the church symbols is expanded by the way the leaders make use of them. This creativity is an indication that the symbols are not imposed by freely used. The richness of interpretation reflects partly what Uzukwu (1997:15) expresses when he indicates that the same expression of body language (in our context one has to say the same symbol) may represent very different, even conflicting meanings in different cultures. Onaiyekan (1997:357) hints in his reflections on Christology that the exposure to different Christian traditions makes it easier for Catholics to interpret African rituals and symbolic cult objects.

In our context we observe an enrichment, a broadening of meaning by the local interpretation. By the use of incense *sigxotha imimoya emibi*, we drive evil spirits away

(Wks-Fnl Umlamli 1999). The grave is blessed so that the deceased may rest in love and peace: *singcwalisa ingcwaba alele noxolo nothando* (Wks-Fnl Lekau 1999). *Sivula indlela yakhe* (Wks-Fnl Lady Grey 1999), we open his way. *Sicela uThixo umphefumlo wakhe anyuke njengaso* (we ask God that his soul may rise like the incense) (Wks-Fnl Barkly East 1999).[247] At the evaluation of the funeral of T Lahlo, Mbovu explained the use of incense as *ukugonya iintsholongwane zobubi*, like a vaccination against the germs of evil (Wüstenberg 1999a). They used the traditional claypot, *ingqayi*, for the incense.

The leaders like to provide incense for the intercessions and invite those who raised a petition to come forward to pour some grains of incense in a traditional clay pot, *ingqayi*, filled with glowing *amalongwe*, cow-dung as fuel. The rising smoke and smell indicate the ascending prayers. Through this symbolic action the participants open the way of the deceased. At the same time they become verbally and physically active. After the at times paralysing experience of death they regain control and activity – in the encounter with God.

The way the leaders apply incense depends on their own preference. In the case of the Ncindi funeral (Funeral 1999a) the leaders incensed the coffin thoroughly before leaving the church. Incensing the grave the leader climbed into it: *to prepare the new home*, as he explained afterwards. There is space for a kind of dramatising creativity. The Order of Christian Funerals (NCCB 1990:934) regards incense merely as sign of honour for the body of the deceased and as a sign for the prayers rising to the throne of God.

By the use of Holy Water, *sicoca*, we cleanse (Wks-Fnl Umlamli 1999), it is used *ukusikelela umfi nengcwaba* (to bless the deceased and the grave) (Wks-Fnl Lekau 1999).[248] *Sivula indlela yakhe* (we open his way) (Wks-Fnl Lady Grey 1999). It is noteworthy in this context of water that the Xhosa word for rain, *imvula*, meaning the

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[247] The use of incense became a distinctive sign for Christian identity. Fragomeni (1990:595) states: "The earliest instance of a Christian use of incense is in the funeral procession of St Peter of Alexandria in 311. The use of incense at funeral processions portrayed the difference between the Christian and the pagan attitude to death. The pagan attitude understood death as practically an end, without future prospects. The Christian attitude was one of hope in a world where death had lost its sting. Christian funeral processions, therefore, copied triumphal processions in which incense has an important part." The new rubrics refrain from attributing meaning to its use. Fragomeni expects that its interpretation will change. "In future developments, other cultural considerations will influence the frequency and the manner of the use of incense" (:596).

[248] An interesting account of the use of Holy Water and its meaning can be found in Nxumalo (1979:34-36).

opener, has a semantic affinity with opening the grave. The meaning of rain is to open the soil before ploughing.[249]

Mpambani, RN: Yes. We work with Holy Water. If we baptise a person into faith we take Holy Water. Today he passed away. He is in his grave and we sprinkle his grave with Holy Water and say: Go well in your grave.

Mbovu, PM: I think that Holy Water has meaning in the grave. We don't say it is just water. It is Holy Water. When we sprinkle this grave with this water we clean this grave. May it be washed. May it be cleansed. Everything bad inside may be destroyed by the Holy Water. So that the body rests in peace. For example, there is the story I heard about a *Bawo*[250] in the village. He was not going to church. He said, when we chatted, then the leaders of the Catholics, when they bury, they sprinkle there in the grave the water of the church. You can sleep there at night in the grave. You are afraid of nothing. It is the same as if you sleep at your home. There is nothing to intimidate you. There is nothing; maybe it is wonderful. You will see it. It is like you sleep at home. Then they sprinkle that Holy Water. In these graves. So, I learned that there is an effect of this Holy Water. You are assured by the sprinkling the graves (Mbovu & Mpambani 1998).

This simple rite of sprinkling the grave with Holy Water by the leaders assumes the quality of anticipatory comfort. It is the assurance that one can feel at home and gain peace. This assurance not only affects the deceased, but the mourner's own future. This reflective moment deserves consideration. The leader in this talk with a lapsed member gains a deeper understanding of the things he does when conducting the liturgy. The expressing of peace by using water gathers more momentum:

Mbovu, PM: We say, they must rest in peace. Also Pilate washed his hands. He said, I don't see guilt, may he rest in peace (*makalale ngoxolo*). You may take him by yourself, but I don't see the guilt. I wash my hands. That is why you see at the end of the funeral that we wash the hands. It means, we say, we don't see his guilt, he must rest in peace. That is why the Xhosa lay the stone, or some pour soil, we say, rest in peace. That stone you put there shows peace. It is a greeting, it gives dignity: rest in peace. All of them.

Mpambani, RN: Father Michael, we work with you here. When you die, all the people will say we want to greet Father Michael. There, where he died. Maybe you will die in Aliwal North. Some will not be there. They want to put the stone: rest in peace (Mbovu & Mpambani 1998).

The washing of the hands, which actually is a cultural procedure after the funeral, is respected by and required of all. The use of this water is re-interpreted by the leaders from the viewpoint of faith and assumes new meaning. The point of reference is Pilate. The meaning that is traditionally attributed to this gesture changes. It is no longer understood as the washing of personal guilt or as the proof of innocence by the washing person. It becomes a symbol of accompanying the deceased, based on the words of Pilate: I don't see guilt. The washing becomes a symbol of peace with the deceased, which refrains from judging. He must rest in peace. This also expresses dignity. In terms of the cultural encounter this reinterpretation does not change a custom nor does it

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[249] The Order of Christian Funerals (NCCB 1990:934) sees the Holy Water as reminder of baptism. In the case of funerals it may also indicate the farewell. In the local context we see a plethora of new meanings emerging in the dialogue between culture and faith.

interfere with the family. It transforms the symbol semantically. It makes it part of the proclamation of peace and responds to the need for peace (cf. chapter 2.2.4).

The pouring of soil and the laying down of a stone on the grave by those who couldn't attend the funeral is also interpreted in the same context, as expressing peace and dignity (Mbovu & Mpambani 1998).

The use of the sign of the cross, *ukuphawula ngophawo lokholo*, is understood to sign with the sign of faith (Wks-Fnl Umlamli 1999).

These three symbols, incense, water, and cross are used to express the same: *ukusikelela ikhaya lakhe lokugqibela*, to bless his final home (Wks-Fnl Umlamli 1999). In particular the use of incense and water offer a comprehensive expression of decontamination and maintenance of communion in active care for the deceased. The omission of their use will be noticed. Dissatisfied people will complain if the water is not used and if one does not wash one's hands after the funeral. This would violate the customs concerned with community. The leaders demonstrate a creative way of dealing with symbols and reinterpreting them. This reinterpretation also affects cultural rituals. They appear as part of a local theology.[251]

4.2.6 The Eucharist – epitome of expressing communion

With the celebration of the Eucharist we reach the climax of restoring community, peace, and joy. It is mostly requested for the faithful deceased, in some cases also by the faithful relatives of a lapsed person who has died (Mangaliso 1998b). The leaders are responsive to the needs of the people when they request the presence of a priest. At some places funeral leaders are also communion givers or assisted by them. They distribute communion if the priest is not available.[252] In quite a number of places this is not possible because of the absence of extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist and the lack of tabernacles in some churches. In these cases the leaders are not able to provide

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[250] *Bawo*, Father, is a way of respectfully addressing or referring to a man.
[251] Pauw (1974:432) mentions the adaptation of certain rituals. He assumes their use, however, is superficial. The local responses seem to contest this view: "For many people Roman Catholic rites of blessing and sprinkling have taken the place of indigenous rituals to safeguard homes, stock pens, fields, and food at feasts against witchcraft and sorcery, or to terminate conditions of impurity. Blessed medallions could easily be substituted for Bantu amulets. This kind of adaptation has, however, been superficial and, except in the case of the Roman Catholic Church, uncommon" (:432).
[252] Bishop Bucher (2000) told me about Bethlehem Diocese, that they have communion givers. But they do not distribute communion at funerals.

this part of the ritual though it is taken for granted by the teaching in the CCC. It suggests that the Eucharist is celebrated at funerals. The church law assumes (cf. Canons1176-1185 CIC) the same.

The Eucharist is liked on Saturdays or, increasingly, as a result of the reflections in the workshops, on Fridays before the vigil. These alternatives are welcome to some (Jeremia 1998a). Others have some reservations against the Friday celebration since it can collide with cultural rituals (Makhobokoana 1999). The observed repetition of the distribution of communion on a Saturday, after the Mass had already been celebrated on Friday may indicate some still unreconciled procedure in an important area:

W: Now, please tell me, why did you distribute the Eucharist again where you had the Eucharist on Friday evening?
Mbovu, PM: On Friday the people from the far places were not there. They might complain. To avoid this we distributed the communion again. They may ask us why did you celebrate the Eucharist on Friday and not on Saturday. We were not there. So we want to let them participate in the communion (in Wüstenberg 1999b).

The Eucharist is normally distributed to Catholics. In some cases members of other denominations, then mostly Anglicans may come forward. They are not refused to receive. In some places the leaders first explain who is allowed to receive. In doing this they comply with what was later laid down in the Directory on Ecumenism for Southern Africa (SACBC 1999a:20 [6.3.6]). By their compliance the leaders show ecumenical concern in respect of the Eucharist. Moreover, they are aware that some ministers of the Anglican or Methodist Church might complain if members of their congregations could receive with the Catholics, while being barred in their own churches for certain reasons (Wks-Fnl Umlamli 1999).

4.2.7 Analytical conclusion: A contextualised proclamation of faith

The concrete performance of the ministry includes the proclamation of faith, in sermon, prayers, songs, rituals, and the Eucharist. The funeral leaders show a versatile approach to the scripture. The text should fit to the context. Leaders have different styles of approaching and reading the Bible. The biblical competence of the leaders was much enhanced by the SCCs, indicating the existence of a complementary network that supports ministry. The word affects the leaders themselves, it empowers the empowerer.

The sermons differ in style and duration depending on the individual leader. They cover a wide range of topics including unity, reconciliation, advice, and new life in Christ. With

faith the sermons articulate a unique dimension, distinguishing clearly church and cultural rituals. They can be informed by and interact with the sermons of the vigil and the speeches during the funeral programme. With leaders present at the programme these give an opportunity for a kind of dialogical contextualisation. The tackling of problem cases depends on the skill and personality of the preacher. The consent of the family for addressing problem cases is essential.

The complementary contribution of other structures like workshops and specialists in addressing problems is acknowledged. The importance of the sermon and the expectations it gives rise to are therefore not exaggerated. The message creates a link to God, which can have a decisive impact on people if they allow its influence. The concrete content of this message differs according the circumstances. It can include "the right way", faith as source of strength, or the power of prayer as source of reconciliation.

The prayers for the deceased and bereaved are both preformulated and spontaneous. As a church-related matter they offer space for creative activity for contextualised and culturally-informed praise. They do not conflict with the cultural family rituals. The skill for a contextualised style of prayer was developed in a long process, coached by the pastoral team. It led to independent activity. In preparation and performance the prayer becomes a communal, community-building event.

Songs as the domain of the choir play an important part. Leaders may contribute to the selection of songs by taking into account the context of the deceased. The inherent power of the singing is a long way from being fully exploited.

Symbolic rites like the use of incense and holy water are re-interpreted by culturally-based perceptions and their meaning is thereby enriched. The use of ritual symbols responds to the needs of a rite of passage and reflects transition and the entry into a new state. The symbols reflect and reinforce the message given in word, sermon, and songs. They become a place for proclaiming for instance the message of finding a home and joy. They demonstrate in a visible and tangible way the decontamination of death.

The celebration of the Eucharist fits well into a rite of passage. It is tragic that the core of Catholic liturgy, the Eucharist, is only accessible in a fragmented form, if available at all. In an area where most other denominations have lost this treasure, this sad fact is

even more tragic. It must appear contradictory to provide good leaders while they are not equipped with the tools they need to provide a full Catholic rite, whenever required, as a comprehensive answer the needs of the faithful members. One can reasonably ask about the theological stringency of this restriction. This deprives people of the most powerful tool they could have in a liturgically oriented church at the crucial time of bereavement to come to terms, *ukuncama*, and to live on in new life and hope in togetherness.

While otherwise observing a complementary ministry, it remains incomplete here. Teaching, conviction, and offered practice diverge. The ministry fails to provide for the needs of the people. That appropriate provisions are not made adds to the distress of the distraught. Many of their needs can not be met through that sacred meal: finding community, listening to the word, being appeased, finding peace, experiencing the presence of the Lord, who has deep importance for their life. Even when distributing the consecrated species from the tabernacle the real symbol of the drinking of the blood of Christ cannot be offered.

This casts some doubts on the important formation efforts. We saw already that workshops and formation have a liberating effect. People who unconsciously believed things, are enabled to talk about them, as in the case of the Eucharist and its interpretation. One can question the legitimacy of such comprehensive formation events if at the end their promises and insights are knowingly not fulfilled.

A further challenge is, while still reserving the Eucharist to one's own denomination, to look for culturally informed, accepted, and respected ways of hospitality. This could redeem loyal, but nevertheless ambiguous feelings about a restricted Eucharist. It is a discrepancy to have an all-inclusive cultural meal with a limited world view and an exclusive communion with an all-inclusive world view. In the case of the participation of other denominations at special occasions the local culture could provide the idea of temporary membership. This idea was not explored in workshops since it would raise an empty promise with its inherent appeal when confronted with the present regulations. In chapter five we will come back to this.

4.3 Not only "God spoke about good fruits" – the dawn of new missionaries

This section concludes the discussion of the ministry of the funeral leaders in two ways. It presents the assessment of the ministry by its recipients and it offers an analytical conclusion.

4.3.1 The people's conclusion: A ministry that composes life

The initial praise song let God speak about good fruits. Likewise the people are generally satisfied with the way funerals are conducted by their leaders.

W: "And how do you see their work?"
One: "We like their work."
One: "They work nicely" (SCC Barkly East 1999).

The expectations placed on the funeral leaders seem to be met. For the biggest discrepancy -- that with regard to the Eucharist -- they are not held accountable. Instead they bring some relief when extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist offer at least the Body of Christ from the tabernacle where applicable. The church regulations, the Catholic ways, are accepted as they are. It is not the leaders but the absence of the priests that causes people *bayaxhaphe amagwebu*, to have foam at their mouth.

MP Elia (2000a) confirms that people have no complaints. They are satisfied with the ministry of the funeral leaders, except with those who have problems with reading. People do not like if a leader stumbles and stutters when reading. Similarly Mbovu (2000c) says, that people are happy, but some tend to be selective. They want a particular set of leaders, since they do not like those who are less capable of reading and easily confused about the procedure.

In the course of this analysis we have already seen that people are satisfied, content with a ministry that is also supervised, and accountable to them. Serious complaints were aired in cases where these features did not work because they had to get leaders from other communities, or due to interferences from outside. The liturgy conducted by the leaders is loved. It brings peace. The service of the word is common with other denominations. But the liturgy of the Eucharist is experienced as more (Elia, MP 2000a). Rather than abolishing it there is growing demand: Upper Telle, Tapoleng

request training for it because it is the Catholic way. The liturgy has a teaching effect,[253] if things are done well by the leaders for the people in pain, especially if it is done in a honoured, dignified, and suitable way that answers the pains and cries of the people (Mbovu & Mpambani 1998).

The contamination with death by loneliness is surely overcome when people experience the event with many participants. After the vigil for T Lahlo her brother said that it was nice, a real comfort. And her father added with the expression of joy: it was packed (*ncwele*). An old lady commented: It was nice, it was full in the tent and in the house. This refers only to the physical restoration of community. That already comforts, *kuyathuthuzela*. Mangaliso (1998a) experiences a kind of feedback by the people. They speak highly (*bencoma*) of funerals, saying it was done well. In one workshop, when dealing with the hope of people (1Thess 2:19-20; 3:7-9) one lady exclaimed: "They are here in Fatima (name of the church, M.W.). In Barkly. Those who helped me, who supported me when I was bereaved, they were my hope" (Wks-Fnl Barkly East 1999).

The liturgy helps the bereaved to pick up life again by drawing a line. A crucial effect of the liturgy is to part from the deceased in the sense of a rite of passage. *Simnika imbeko yokugqibela*, we give him the last respect (Mbovu & Mpambani 1998). People part from the deceased on that day, culturally by slaughtering, faith-wise with the liturgy. It is, however, embedded in a long process of parting. Other events, like the unveiling of the tombstone follow after years.

The positive experience raises the concern about each mourner's own funeral. This can have a very positive effect. If someone experiences the funeral as meaningful way of overcoming mourning and anxiety, as a way of decontamination of death, they may also think about their own death and burial, and the way it should be celebrated. The properly-conducted funerals achieve this kind of anticipatory comfort. They help one to cope with one's own confrontation with death: "This nice thing will also be done with me" (Timati, P 1998).

Indirectly others indicate the usefulness of the ministry rendered. There is the mutual influence of speeches. As a sermon can be influenced by the speeches in the

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[253] Van der Ven (1996:182) concludes from his research in the Netherlands: "The most important items involved in liturgy are celebration of the Eucharist, funerals... From this table it appears that liturgy is the greatest source of religious experience, and that the unanimity about this is also the greatest."

programme. One also sees that speakers take up the topic of the sermon, if it was delivered at the beginning of the funeral programme, thus deepening certain aspects of the message (Funeral 1999a). People vary this when they refer in their intercessions to central ideas from the sermon.

Other denominations indicate the value of the Catholic funeral ministry. An important result of the work with leaders is the overcoming of estrangement from their own liturgy. Mangaliso quotes the joy of other denominations when they praise the ministry of the Catholic leaders. This praise is due to the change observed over time. With funerals formerly celebrated mainly by expatriate priests, it was mostly the Catholic community which could follow his speech since they were used to their foreign accent and content, whereas the other participants would not understand and often get bored (Mangaliso 1998a).

Respect for the leaders is a result of the funerals they conduct and also a way of supporting them in their task, *sizikuthaza ngentlonipho* (Wks-Fni Hlomendlini 1999). People love the leaders for their work, which in turn boosts the motivation of the leaders (Mangaliso 1998a).

Some people respond to the ministry with the longing for belonging. Though their aim is not proselytising people, funerals can attract people to join the church. Though these are exceptional cases, they contribute in a particular way to community building.

Elia, MP: You know, we had a funeral. She was a lapsed one. They came to me on a Friday and asked to bury her the very Saturday. I tried to meet the committee to talk about this. But I couldn't get hold of them. So I went to visit its members to talk it through. We decided that I should go. So I designed a programme for the vigil and for Saturday. I did the whole thing but without church garments. After the funeral, then, one came and said she wanted to become a Catholic. And then still four others came.
W: Why did they come?
Elia, MP: They said they were somehow touched by the funeral.
W: Have they been members of another church?
Elia, MP: No, they didn't belong to any other church (Elia, MP 1998d).

Besides being touched by the liturgy, a lengthy procedure like the vigil also gives space for inspired talks among the people. This is an opportunity also for the leaders to give testimony about their own faith in direct communication. One night vigil in 1995 in Maphosileni brought a number of men to the decision to join the RCIA course in preparation for baptism.

Pitso mentions the major shift taking place in the mission area. It is not the priests who attract people to the church and instruct them. It is the people themselves, in particular the leaders who become prime missionaries:

> Pitso, TG: We are never out. Me and yourself do not go out and look for people who want to join the Catholics. We just see our leaders saying: Father here is so and so, who wants to join the church. They are crucial. Because they are implementing the faith. They are important anyway. And, yes, even we have some leaders who also prepare the catechumens. They pass on the faith to the new ones. They do well (Pitso 1999a).[254]

The people's perception refers to a ministry grown over some ten years. It emerged in a long process with remarkable delays locally. Introduced from "above" it became grounded and substantially accountable to the communities. Through selection, formation, and decision making the leaders are integrated in their communities. Their ministry, rendered independently, is special in the context of funerals as it expressively serves the message of Christ in various ways. Chapter five will take a theological look at their ministry.

4.3.2 Conclusion: A culturally contextualised ministry

The outstanding feature of the ministry of the funeral leaders is their contribution to community building, their spiritual grounding, the cultural insertion of their ministry, their competence, and their contribution towards justice. The underlying precondition of this ministry is collaboration with the pastoral workers, in particular the priests.

The longing for justice was the point of departure for the whole venture of introducing community ministry. Facing the extreme proportional under-representation of Africans in the leadership structure of the church one must admit that the situation still prevails if one looks at the ordained ministry only. With 333 leaders compared to three expatriate priests, however, the local representation is recognisable and can be seen as an expression of justice.[255] Justice is done insofar as the leaders are respected in their field of commitment by dependent independence. Justice includes the empowerment to play

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[254] There is, however, also reason for caution as Pitso (1999a) points out. As much as funerals in fact can attract to the church as a haven of peace, mercy, and deep joy, the attractiveness for some may just be rather superficial as to get a decent funeral. Pitso warns that some people may join the church or sodalities just for this reason. They subsequently tend to lapse from attending and paying church dues. Without a clear preparation in RCIA this can affect the vision of the community church negatively. Even SCCs may experience a similar threat. If regarded as a criterion for active church membership they can fall victim to a practice of being joined by those who feel that their time has come, thus suffocating them in sclerotic ossification, and stripping them from attractiveness to younger people.

[255] With the experience at hand it appears as true what Hastings (1967:234-5) noted, that one does not have to fear about schisms due to many pastors. Rather their lack may lead to this.

one's role. It emerges that the area of justice is much wider than the narrow scope of proportional representation in ministry. Beyond that it reaches out to true cultural representation mediated and facilitated by the ministry. The ministry of community leaders contributes further by doing justice to the bereaved through informed decision making, doing justice to the gifts of people who take up the ministry, and to the communities as such, as the leaders become accountable to them. The communities develop as the subject of selection.

The competence of the leaders includes their social, cultural, personal, ecclesial, faith, biblical, and proclamatory competence. Their social competence results from their acceptance by selection through the community, and by their direct and indirect contribution towards building up the community. The personal competence rests to a great extent on personal character traits. Deficiencies can be compensated for by the system of inclusion. Their competence is enhanced by formation. Their cultural competence is the result of their insertion into their own culture, and the encounter with different cultures locally. The faith competence is difficult to measure but is expressed by the spiritual conviction of living in the merciful presence of and communion with God. The biblical competence is rooted in the general familiarity with the Bible. It is enhanced by SCCs. Their proclamatory competence has the advantage of being directly inserted into the context. It is enhanced by formation. In a reciprocal relationship the competence is promoted by formation as the formation is enhanced by their experience. The competence of funeral leaders in particular is increased by their involvement in community building. They show competence in terms of liturgy and cultural adaptations. They are competent in terms of their selection and acceptance by the community.

The community ministry of the funeral leaders facilitates integration into the cultural context. The respect for cultural values is a desired trait in leaders. The family rituals receive due respect and recognition through an integrated, complementary procedure. Culture informs the structure of ministry and its performance. The inculturated performance affects the style of sermons, language, and prayers. The inculturated structure affects the ways of selection, decision making, and dealing with controversial leaders by inclusion. In these areas the reference to culture proves helpful, an acceptance-supporting tool. The still widespread non-admission of women is mostly culturally motivated, probably supported by the traditional male-only leadership of the Catholic Church. Cultural perceptions at some places also limit the access to ministry to culturally-initiated men. The above-mentioned principle that "community comes first"

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eventually implies that culture serves community. Changes in order to maintain community would not come as a surprise in a changing culture.[256] Change seems to come as development rather than as overthrowing the old order. The same seems to apply to the culturally-informed understanding of and longing for the Eucharist. With regard to funerals it is shaped by the perception of hospitality, cultural procedures in a rite of passage, ancestors, and the all-embracing community with them as expressed in common meals and drinking. At present one can not hear an explicit call for new forms of ministry that are compatible with these culturally-informed spiritual needs and take them into account in a satisfactory manner.

Formation is a prominent way of moving towards inculturation. A dialogical structure contributes to its cultural fit. Culturally grounded, it helps to bring home faith. In a multicultural setting this happens with the tolerance of an accepted diversity. Learning by observation can be methodologically used to facilitate formation efforts.

The spirituality of the leaders is informed and supported by the culturally-rooted concept of community. As Christian spirituality it includes community with God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit in the deep conviction of their actual presence. This community concern permeates all aspects of ministry. It allows for a culturally informed approach towards death, even in extreme cases, borne by the overriding principle of ongoing communion. This informs prayer, preaching, and the handling of funerals. It leaves space for merciful decisions and allows refraining from judgement, based on the longing for restoring community wherever necessary by establishing peace through reconciliation. This spirituality informs the longing for the Eucharist as a comprehensive expression of and means to establish the community of people with one another and with God, including the deceased.

With its cultural grounding and its spirituality the ministry of the funeral leaders contributes to community building. Community was the prominent desire of those looking for the service of funeral leaders. The process of their selection strengthens the self-awareness of communities and attributes importance to SCCs where they are in

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[256] The road towards change seems to be long in certain places. A male member of the committee in Mfinci (2000) rejected with high emotions any thought about women in the liturgy still in October 2000. He pointed at the neighbouring parish. Communities like that with female leaders he perceived as weak. Apart from his personal interest indicated by the emotions, this is still a – negative – proof of the community serving aspect of ministry. With his perception silently contested by the attending women the personal commitment towards the community concern is probably not entirely genuine.

place. The formation of leaders is a concern of the communities and brings them together, enhancing their knowledge. The way of decision making on funerals takes into account the concern about the quality of community and its cohesion. The same applies to the sermons. The accepted diversity allows different styles of sermons, performance, admission of women, and advances contextual community building. Teamwork enhances the community spirit and the readiness to get involved in ministry. In some cases the well-performed ministry by good leaders has attracted new members to the church. The ministry of well-educated leaders increased the respect of other denominations for the Catholic community and its own self-respect.

The relationship to the hierarchical structure of Catholic ministry can be described as dependent independence in an accepted variety of forms of a complementary ministry. When one leader once said: "Now we are the same" (Mbovu 1998d) he expressed exactly this: In the same ministry of Christ we are co-operating with different competencies. He did not intend to abolish the role of the old hierarchical structured ministries but to hint at a new fundamental equality in different, complementary roles.
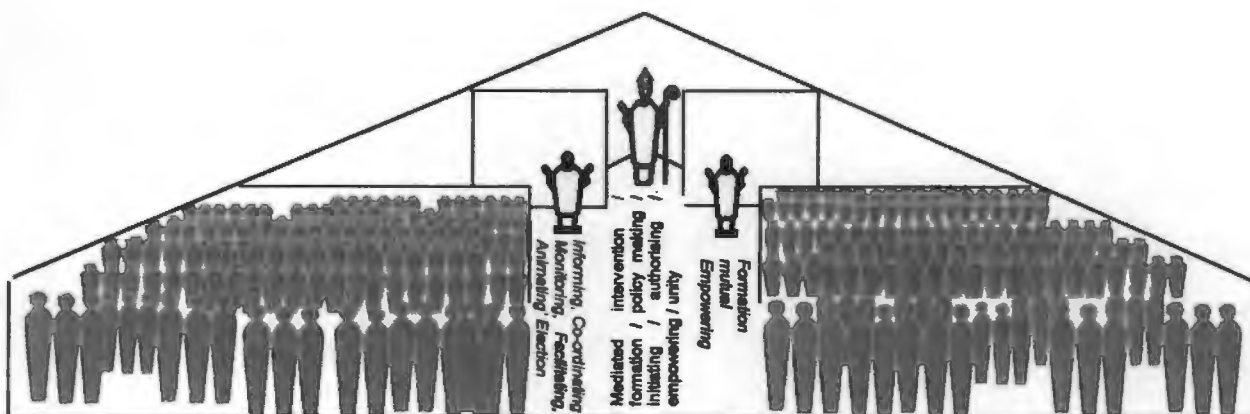
Figure 4.1. A flat hierarchy. In the foreground are the leaders, with priests and bishop coming to the fore only at special occasions

The ministry of the funeral leaders is not a one-way form of service-delivery to certain clients. In a reciprocal way it also serves by enhancing the supportive ministry of the priests in interdependence, as for instance with regard to their cultural competence. This relationship can be described as flat hierarchy.[257] Flat does here not refer to the levels of hierarchy involved but their relationship in the performance of ministry. What is normally seen and observed is the ministry of leaders, whereas priests (or pastoral workers) and the bishop remain in the background but play an indispensable role for the

maintenance of the ministry, serving its service, and unity. Therefore the term flat hierarchy does not deny hierarchy as such. It refers to the mutual relationship and mutual appreciation. It expresses a close togetherness instead of a remote top-down structure. Where the priests come to the fore in the concrete case of funerals is in the area that is not entrusted to community leaders, where dependence prevails, the celebration of the Eucharist.

The analysis showed the complex picture of the ministry of funeral leaders. This graph
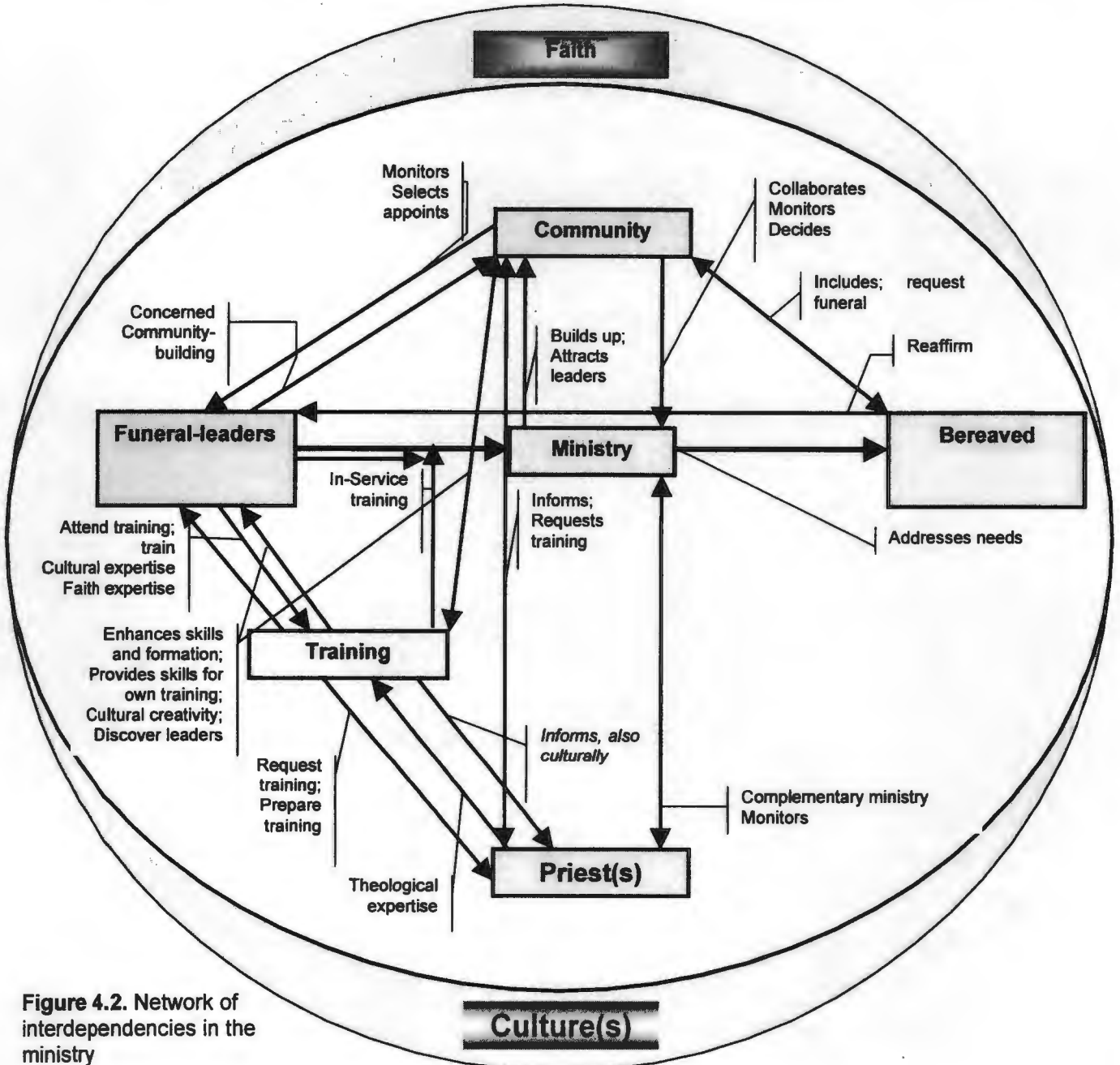
Figure 4.2. Network of interdependencies in the ministry

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257 Kanungo and Mendonça (1994:279) discern flat and tall structures according to the number of levels in the hierarchy. I take a different view by looking at the relationship between these levels.

depicts some of the complex interdependencies that play a role in the concrete ministry of funeral leaders. The whole web of activities takes place against the background of faith and culture(s) as indicated by the circle. What seems to distinguish culture from faith is the fact that faith is an all-encompassing reality while the cultures, though providing a holistic world view, differ because of the different customs and different nations and clans involved. The area of observation (chapter two) was the rendered ministry. The graph depicts some of the often reciprocal processes, the various role-players, and the influence they have on each other. It shows the dependence of the leaders on the mostly hidden role played by the priests, and the involvement of many in training. It shows the dependent independence of the leaders in delivering their ministry and in formation as well as the community-bound ministry they render. It also reflects the mostly rather distant rapport of the priest with the bereaved, indicating the prominent role of the funeral leaders.

5 Chapter 5 – Theological Reflection

The analysis of chapters two to four shows the "life" we now have to reflect upon theologically. Since this is a complex topic I will concentrate on a few crucial aspects. The cultural insertion makes it possible to begin the theological reflection with a piece of local theology, the *isibongo*. The theological reflection that follows will use the structure of the pastoral theology outlined in chapter one. The three dimensions of life, interpretation, and celebration will be employed for both: to reflect on the service rendered by the funeral leaders and to reflect on the ministry of funeral leaders as such.

In chapter one I pointed out ways of linking up sociological or anthropological findings with theology. According to Kehl (1976:59-65) the sociological results must be comprehended. Their reception must be justified, that is that they must be important and bear on the whole. And it must be an ecclesial reception. With Wijsen (1993:19) the experience will be interpreted in the light of faith-tradition and the faith-tradition will be reinterpreted in the light of the observed situation; the local theology encounters Christian tradition and the Christian tradition encounters local theology (Schreiter 1985: 95-104). Van der Ven (1996:104) sees the sociological (or anthropological) aspects as religious signs, understood according to a code (:107).

There are many possible criteria for a theological judgement. Bate (1998:168-9) suggests, for instance, the scriptures, gospel and faith values, interpreted scripture, tradition, and the teaching of the church. His own criterion was the way the church sees itself as One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic. One could also look at the phenomenon from the point of view of its representation of the kingdom of God, or from the service side as martyria, koinonia, diakonia, and kerygma. Azevedo (1987:213), in his analysis of Basic Ecclesial Communities in Brazil, aligned himself with the five models of the church as presented by Dulles: the church as institution, communion, herald, sacrament, and servant.

Following an inductive strategy, I focus the theological judgement using concepts that appeared in the research and that will act as codes (cf. chapter 1.4.4). Concerning the service of the funeral leaders it is the concept of decontamination of death by proclamation. Concerning their ministry as such it is the concern about community and justice. The fundamental theology as presented in chapter one will serve as contributing branch from the systematic theology. Some aspects of church history, the Bible, local

theology, and leadership reflections from management, culture, and church, together with church documents and reflection on these will contribute to the theological orientation.

Uzukwu (1996:124), like the *imbongi*, speaks of the Holy Spirit as the driving force. The theological reflection on the phenomenon of the ministry of funeral leaders in this chapter takes his concern into account:

> The incarnational tension within the church implies that the church as an institution cannot ignore the structures of the society in which she is living. However, the fundamental issue for the renewal of the church is whether the Spirit of God is allowed full initiative in the assembly of Christians.

In an inductive approach, therefore, the theological reflection will start from the phenomenon and then proceed by relating it to other areas of reflection. A theologically emic section will precede an etic section, the former interpreting from within the context and the latter taking the wider theological community into account. This means listening to what the Spirit says through the communities, and then relating it to what the Spirit has said to others. Thus the concrete experience of the communities meets faith-tradition and the faith-tradition meets the experience, contributing to new faith-tradition.

5.1 "Big Things" Bowing: Initiation by a local theological treatise

The *isibongo* is not an academic theological reflection. It reflects and highlights theologically important concepts. The transcription does not capture the acclamations by the people and their gestures. It also does not allow us to see the body language of the *imbongi*, to hear his voice and the changing tones, and to see his dress. In wearing traditional gear and using the traditional form of praise while expressing church-related matters the encounter of culture and faith is demonstrated. It is not unusual to employ the style of *isibongo* for various occasions and themes as the compilation of Mtuze and Kaschula (1993) shows.[258]

Holy Spirit! Holy Spirit!	*Moya oyingcwele, Moya oyingcwele!*
Bow, all, before the Big Things As if you were bleeding!	*Thobani nonke zinto ezinkhulu* *Xa ngathi niyophisa!*

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[258] Their compilation contains *izibongo* (Pl.) covering a wide range of areas from Ntsikana's praise of God *UloThixo omkhulu* (:19), of the chief of the amaHlubi (:24-5), of death (:56-9), of a religious minister (:114-6), of the trade union COSATU (:140-2), and of the inauguration of the first democratically-elected president, NR Mandela on 10.5.1994 (:143-4). In 1996 the national soccer team Bafana-Bafana was encouraged by an *isibongo* at the African Cup of Nations tournament held in South Africa (and won).

Bow to show your respect!	*Thobani ukubonisa intlonipho!*
All of you bow	*Thobani nina nonke*
To show your respect!	*Ukubonisa intlonipho yenu!*
All things are done,	*Zonke izinto zenziwe,*
All things are completed!	*Zonke izinto zigqityiwe!*
Prayers are done,	*Imithandazo yenziwe,*
Prayers are completed!	*Imithandazo iphethiwe!*
Come down, Holy Spirit, come down!	*Yihla, Moya oyingcwele, yihla!*
Come down, Holy Spirit, come down!	*Yihla, Moya oyingcwele, yihla!*
Come down Holy Spirit over the leaders!	*Yihla Moya oyingcwele phezu kweenkokheli!*
I have heard God speaking from the heaven.	*Ndivile uThixo ethetha esezulwini.*
He was speaking about the leaders.	*Ethetha ngeenkokheli.*
Go you Big Things!	*Hambani, zinto ezinkhulu!*
Go to your communities and lead them!	*Hambani niye emabandleni enu niwakhokele!*
You are all armed by the blessings!	*Nixhotyisiwe ngeentsikelelo!*
You are immunised by prayer!	*Nigonyiwe ngomthandazo!*
Go, you are all sent!	*Hambani, nonke niyathunywa!*
Come down, Holy Spirit, come down!	*Yihla, Moya oyingcwele, yihla!*
Come down, Holy Spirit, come down!	*Yihla, Moya oyingcwele, yihla!*
Go, because you have got the weapons!	*Hambani, ngokuba ninezixhobo!*
Go and lead your communities!	*Hambani, niye nikhokele amabandla enu!*
But don't confuse them!	*Ningawalahlekisi!*
Go, because you are all beloved and elected!	*Hambani ngokuba nithandiwe nakhethwa!*
Go, you are trusted!	*Hambani ngokuba nithenjiwe!*
Come down, Holy Spirit, come down!	*Yihla, Moya oyingcwele, yihla!*
Come down, Holy Spirit, come down!	*Yihla, Moya oyingcwele, yihla!*
I heard God speaking from heaven.	*Ndivile uThixo ethetha ezulwini.*
He spoke about good fruits.	*Ethetha ngeziqhamo ezihle.*
Even in your communities God is looking for fruits!	*Nasemabandleni uThixo ujonga iziqhamo!*
You are all given good luck!	*Nifumene amathamsanqa!*
I heard Jesus speaking with the angels about	*Ndivile uYesu ethetha neengelosi*
collaboration.	*ngentsebensiswano.*
And even you, go!	*Nani hambani nenze njalo!*
You must do it in your communities!	*Yenzani njalo emabandleni enu!*
You must not be the foremen,	*Ningabi ngabaphathi,*
But you must take part!	*Koko nithathe inxaxheba!*
You are all trained.	*Nonke niqeqeshiwe.*
And you became well trained.	*Naqeqesheka kakuhle.*
Go and do your work.	*Hambani niye ukwenza umsebenzi wenu.*
The Big Things bowed,	*Izinto ezinkhulu zithobile,*
As well as I became frightened.	*Nam ndiziva ndisoyika.*
Yes, they bowed,	*Ewe, zithobile.*
Because they help each other.	*Kuba ziyancedisana.*
They help each other,	*Omnye uncedisa omnye,*
And lift up all heavy jobs!	*Ukuphakamisa umthwalo onzima.*
Sing you, Sotho girls!	*Vumani, ziintombi zabeSotho!*
Because the imbongi is going to the end!	*Kuba imbongi iyagqibezela.*
The Basotho girls start singing:	
This is the day which was made by the Lord,	*Kelena letsatsi le entsweng ke Modimo,*
Let us be glad and rejoice!	*Ha re ithabeleng renyakalleng kalona.*
I heard Jesus speaking with the angels in heaven.	*Ndivile uYesu ethetha neengelosi ezulwini.*
Don't do things by your own, you Big Things!	*Ningenzi izinto ngokwenu, zinto ezinkhulu.*

Your priests are there.	*Bakhona abaPriste benu.*
Go and ask for advice!	*Hambani nicele icebo!*
Our bishop is here.	*Ukhona uBishophu wethu.*
Ask him for help!	*Nicele uncedo!*
The sisters are there.	*Bakhona ooSister.*
Also they are there to give you advice!	*Nabo bakho ukunicebisa!*
Now, ululate!	*Niyiyizele!*

The ladies start ululating.

I can't hear you well.	*Andiniva kakuhle.*
Your bishop is here.	*Ukhona uBishophu wenu.*
Ask for advice.	*Nicele ingcebiso.*
Your priests are here.	*Bakhona abaPriste benu.*
Ask for advice.	*Nicele ingcebiso.*
Invite the sisters and tell them	*Nimeme ooSister nibaxelele*
That you ask for their collaboration.	*Nicela intsebenziswano yabo.*

This African poem of the *imbongi* at the occasion of the blessing of the leaders gives us a piece of local theology.[259] It suggests an understanding of the ministry as service. The "Big Things" were bowing. This allows others to proceed with the bowing: all are bowing before them in respect. The praise song refers to them by the praise-name "Big Things", *izinto ezinkhulu*. Semantically this term is used to address the chief (*inkosi*), the king (*ukumkani*), the headman (*isibonda*), as well as priests (*abafundisi*), as the *imbongi* explained. All of them are usually persons of respect, authority, power, influence, and sovereignty[260]. The leaders deserve that one bows before them in respect, because they themselves are bowing by doing difficult things in mutual support and collaboration among each other and with other stakeholders. What the *imbongi* praises and encourages at the same time is the servant ministry that appealed to the people locally on the placard for
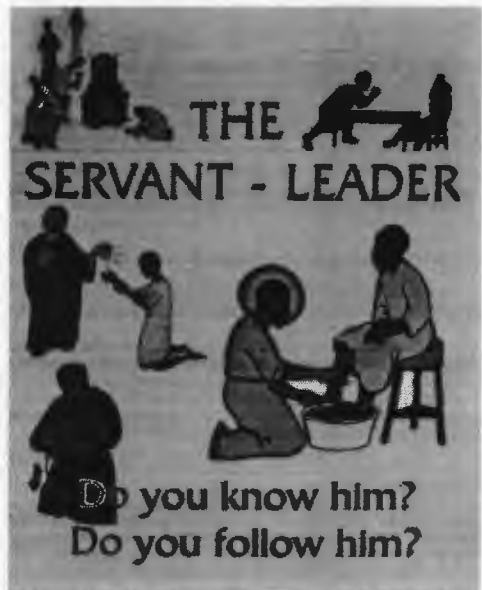
Figure 5.1. Placard of the SACBC for the year of Jesus Christ (1997) in preparation for the year 2000 jubilee

the "Year of Jesus Christ" (1997) in preparation for the jubilee year 2000. The placard

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[259] This praise song is borne by the insertion into the church, the Good News of the charge God takes about his people, and the culture. Thus it matches the criteria Schreiter identified for the making of a local theology: "It takes the interaction of all three of these roots – gospel, church, culture – with all they entail about identity and change, to have the makings of local theology" (Schreiter 1985:21). Further it represents the thought that it is rather gifted individuals or small groups doing local theology on behalf of their communities and accepted (or not) by them (cf. Schreiter 1985:17). Lombard (1999:168) shows with a Zulu *isibongo* that traditional poetry and Christianity "*are both remarkably protean in their potential for creative interaction*".

[260] The term "Big Things" has a flavour that is similar to that of "VIPs" or of "movers and shakers" in English.

contrasts domineering, exploiting, inaccessible, greedy, and humiliating forms of leadership with the servant-ministry of Christ. The questions posed on the placard: Do you know him? Do you follow him? here evoke a peculiar response.

With the leaders as first recipients of the praise the audience plays an active part in the praise. In its own way it represents the dialogical structure embedded in the community. The audience supports and acknowledges the praise by ululating, both spontaneously and when invited to do so. It would be an exaggeration to interpret the joyful exclamations and gestures as approval with a deep reflection on the essence of leadership. The context of the celebration of the blessing of leaders allows one, however, see the participation of the people as an expression of their consent within the framework of a celebration. The short timeframe and speed of the praise-event do not allow for reflective assertion. Experience and expectation regarding leadership meet in joy and direct the view into the future. The kind of leadership Christ presents was experienced in the past and is expected in the future.

As a local reflection the *isibongo* summarises the reality analysed so far. Referring to all sections of leadership, including that of the funeral leaders, it expresses the experience of ministry rendered by leaders to their communities. It reflects the selection and support by the communities, the spiritual support by prayers, the blessing in particular by the bishop, the formation, the deployment in teams as service for the communities, and the succeeding in the task by bringing fruits.

Equipped by the strength of prayer, blessing, and the formation as "weapons"[261] the task of the leaders is to lead the communities from which they originate. In a kind of interdependence their emergence is based on love, selection, and trust by their communities while the leaders' task, as kind of response, is leading without confusing, in genuine leadership. It is a community-based and a community-serving ministry. This happens in the kind of servant ministry serving in both dimensions: serving their communities and each other as leaders in co-operation.

The whole picture of the *isibongo* keeps the suspense between fulfilment and future task. The good fruits of this kind of ministry are already visible and yet remain a future task in the balance of the already and the not yet.

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[261] *Izixhobo* means literally "tools". The imbongi intended the meaning of "weapons", *izixhobo zokulwa.*

The ministry is indiscriminately qualified in the *isibongo* as leading the communities. It is powerful since it has the potential of causing confusion. It is a task that requires strength, since it demands hard work. As a praise not aiming at a complete and comprehensive depiction of collaborative ministry the *isibongo* clearly outlines the main task of the pastoral staff with regard to leadership: they have an indispensable assisting, advisory, and supervisory role besides that of authorising and blessing. A picture of one ministry in collaborating complementary tasks of the bishop, priests, and animation team sisters emerges.

The praise of the ministry begins with the invocation of the Holy Spirit, clearly indicating the new context into which the traditional form of praise song is introduced. Already present, the invocation asks the Spirit to come down, for further presence. The Holy Spirit is the background of the whole scene, as indicated in the chorus "Come down, Holy Spirit, Come down!" It is the pneumatological dimension of the ministry that allows bowing down in respect before the leaders. This happens against the background of the immediate preparation of the leaders in training and in the celebration of their blessing, as well as by the prayers.[262]

With the Holy Spirit as the binding element, the *isibongo* in a deliberately chosen trinitarian structure refers twice to both God (the Father) and to Jesus. The *imbongi* becomes their mouthpiece: He hears them speaking in a kind of eavesdropping and conveys their conversation, which becomes the strengthening message for the praise-receiving leaders and community. Their uniting communication includes, through the *imbongi*, all others and reassures the spirituality of the presence. Both are speaking about the leaders, indicating their concern about their ministry, their productivity or quality delivery for the communities in collaboration. These concerns are marked as the genuine concerns of God about leadership in the church. This elevates the ministry above a mere community concern. While God (Father) is speaking in a more general form about leaders and concerned about the good fruits, Jesus - himself the role model of servant-leadership - is concerned with collaboration among the leaders and with the pastoral workers. The underlying vision, implied rather than articulated, of the Pastoral

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[262] *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (EN 75) emphasises that evangelisation is only possible with the Holy Spirit who is the soul of the church. *Redemptoris Missio* dedicates a whole chapter (III) to the Holy Spirit and takes up the formulation by EN (75) about the Holy Spirit as principal agent of mission (RM 30). *Evangelii Nuntiandi* refers to Vatican II's decree *Ad Gentes* (AG 4).

Plan of a *Community Serving Humanity* resounds here. It is also built up by leadership structures and resembles God as community.

As the *imbongi* later pointed out to me, God himself is interested in the leadership and its good fruits. With the Holy Spirit as the background it is God's ministry at work for the communities. He himself is community and is acting in community. As the *imbongi* explained, he is of the conviction that God (the Father) and Jesus himself are in a collaborative mode as for instance by talking. Their communication does not remain unheard. It happens with the angels. Being in communion and collaboration explains God's interest in the collaboration of the leaders among themselves and with the pastoral workers, priests, animation-team sisters, and the bishop.

The praise of the leaders appears as purpose of the *isibongo*. It is based on their deeds, their preparation in various ways and their situation of being sent to their communities. It reaffirms and encourages them for the task ahead in a kind of performative speech. The praise reinforces the spiritual background of the sending and invites all to collaborate in the diverse ministry of Christ. It is a prophetic voice if prophecy is not about passive predicting but the active participation in creating and influencing the future.

The *isibongo* is based on concrete experience with leadership. In an inductive way it is a theological view of reality and opens the way for further inductive theological reflection. In a similar way the theological reflection will follow an inductive path and then include reflections from the wider theological community. Listening to the people takes another hue: theology listens to the people at the grass roots and deploys itself in a mediating mode in order to promote understanding.

5.2 Funeral leaders' action: Service delivery

Chapters two and four, in addition to analysing the activities of the funeral leaders, set out the dimension of "life" in the model of pastoral theology. Confident with the situation of the deceased and the bereaved, and culturally initiated, the leaders deliver their service on their own accord. The service was qualified as decontamination from death that affects every aspect of life. This service is the material that now needs to be interpreted or reflected upon theologically. The reflection will concentrate on areas that emerged as essential. This includes the proclamation of faith in word and deed as well as in its celebrating aspect and the culturally rooted respect for ancestral aspect.

5.2.1 Theological discussion of the delivery of ministry by funeral leaders

The leaders originate from their communities and show concern about upbuilding them. This applies to their taking decisions on the funeral as to their proclamation. The concern for the community is also a response to the need that corresponds with the feeling of abandonment. It is a decontamination of death, restoring life:

> For many Africans, to live fully is to live a life free from suffering, disgrace and harm. It means living this life is peace, love, justice, joy and cheerfulness (Magoti 1991:179).

In a situation where life is exposed to various forms of contamination with death the leaders contribute to its decontamination. They operate in the intention of Christ who was to bring life to its fullness (Jn 10:10), making his followers servants of joy (2 Cor 1:24), and offering a ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor 5:18).

The leaders interpret life competently by faith, inserted into the immediate context. The principle of locality attributes to their competence. They dialogue with the context and limit themselves avoiding tendencies of omnipotence or omniscience by acknowledging in problem cases the roles of other stakeholders and structures.

5.2.1.1 Decontamination by the Word rendered by local leaders

The analysis showed the different ways in which the leaders address the longing for the word by the bereaved and the community. The word is delivered by a contextualised choice of Bible-readings, by sermons, which take the context and circumstances into account, and by prayers. The redeemed intention is decontamination of death by restoring life, faith, and hope and giving direction and orientation. In all this the leaders serve what Van der Ven (1996) calls the general function of the church: religious communication. The word itself contains what the communication is about, creating unity.

5.2.1.2 Decontamination by actualising the word of God in the scripture

A major concern is the sometimes rather uncritical usage of the term "Word of God". I want to avoid a fundamentalist understanding, which takes uncritically and thus dangerously everything as a literal word of God, uttered in times and contexts of the past and preserved in the printed form, handed down to us in diverse languages. When the Bible is abused for the speaker's own political agenda, for oppressive purposes, or

exploitation, linking it to the notion of word of God even becomes blasphemous. The Gospel itself teaches that the written word of the scripture can actually turn into the word of Satan as a source of temptation (cf. Mt 4:1-11). It is the permanent task of all Christian people to make the Bible what it is intended to be: the word of God addressing contemporaries. This usage builds up: *liyakhuthaza ilizwi leBhayibhile*, the word of the Bible encourages (Wks-Fnl Lekau 1999).[263] At first glance one could think that a sermon like Mdange's quotes out of context. Misconstruing the gospel he misses its original point. For him, however, the word of the empty home became the point of departure for the event of the word of God in his context.[264] In my own interpretation scripture became for him what real life was for Jesus, the point of departure for the proclamation of the kingdom.[265]

Oduyoye (1995:173; footnote 3) locates a tendency towards a literal reading of the Bible:

> In Africa generally, the historical-critical method of biblical scholarship has remained within the universities. Biblical models of human relationships, which fit well with the African traditional world-view, have been accepted as unchanging norms for all times and all peoples. It is not surprising, then, that anything other than a literal reading of the Bible is unacceptable.

The short analysis of the sermons showed various ways of access to the scripture without even intending to exhaust this area. The closeness to the Bible and the trust put in its message in a certain context became evident. The local ways of dealing with the Bible seem to go beyond a mere literal reading. The variety of methods of interpretation

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[263] This experience and intention mirrors on the local level the liberating strand of black theology as presented by Ukpong (1999:321-2). The intention to read the Bible as the word of God matches with the second strand. The uncritical use of the Bible can make it a tool of oppression.

[264] Noteworthy in this context is the hesitation of Maluleke (2000a:94-5) towards an "African Biblical Scholarship" if it is understood it terms similar to western-type training. He emphasises that Africans have appropriated the Bible "in package" with other things such as stories, preaching, and rituals probably due to their orality. He then (:98) refers to Mosala who suggests widening the concept of text with the historical text of the lives of the people. He pinpoints the fact that textual accuracy and the "contents" of the Bible are not primary to many Black African Christians. One important reason for misquoting and disregarding the contents is the oral knowledge of the Bible, acquired during socialisation in the churches. Martey (in Maluleke 2000a:99) confirms the local use of the Bible being the diving board to jump into theology. Okure (2000:196-7) reaffirms the simple fact that also for the scripture itself life came before its literary account. Nissen (2000:179) mentions the two points in the process of interpretation, the biblical text and the community of faith, which are in a mutually creative tension. He, then (:182), points at an important shift in hermeneutics. Previously occupied with questions as how a text passes on information it now focuses on the transformative role of a text. This appears as the actual focus in the local use of scripture.

[265] West (1993:13) assures with the focus on the oppressed and poor: "The Bible itself shows that God speaks specifically to specific people in specific life situations." To arrive there he elaborates on three modes of reading the Bible critically (:23-43; cf. West 1995:131-173).

does not deny the rights of the historical-critical method, which, however, plays no role among the funeral leaders. Their approach is manifold and rich in variation in a complementary way, including literal reading, metaphorical, inspired reading (Mdange) to local exegesis (Mbovu). This is not unusual.[266] Ruiz (1995:78) points this out for the document of the Pontifical Biblical Commission, *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* (Houlden 1995). This document acknowledges that the interpretation of a text is always dependent on the mindset and concerns of its readers:

> No scientific method for the study of the Bible is fully adequate to comprehend the biblical texts in all their riches (Houlden 1995:19).

It acknowledges certain methods of literary analysis, comprising rhetorical analysis (:20-2), narrative analysis (:22-4), and semiotic analysis (:24-7). In our context the exposition of the narrative analysis may contribute to our understanding of the local approach of the funeral leaders. The narrative analysis discerns the *real reader*, who reads the text at a given point in time, and the *implied reader*, which the text presupposed and in fact creates. The implied reader is

> the one who is capable of performing the mental and affective operations necessary for entering into the narrative world of the text and responding to it in the way envisaged by the real author through the instrumentality of the implied author (Houlden 1995:23).[267]

The narrative analysis insists that the text functions as a mirror and exercises an influence upon the reader's perceptions (cf. Houlden 1995:23).

The practice of the leaders reflects the fourth section of the document, *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*. That fourth section confirms the adequacy of their approach. It deals with the actualisation and inculturation and the use of the Bible.[268] The living tradition of the community of faith is understood as a stimulant for

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[266] Ukpong (1999:313-4) observes, of the African scholarly use of the Bible, "the concern to create an encounter between the biblical text and the African context. This involves a variety of ways that link the biblical text to the African context such that the main focus of interpretation is on the communities that receive the text, rather than on those that produced it or on the text itself, as is the case with the western methods."

[267] The *real author* composed the story; the *implied author* is the image of the author, which the text progressively creates in the course of reading (cf. Houlden 1995:22-3).

[268] The recent phase of biblical studies in Africa (cf. Ukpong 1999:324-6) has two orientations. One of them recognises ordinary African readers as important partners in academic Bible reading. This matches mutatis mutandis with the partnership between leaders and priest, which enhances the contextual competence of the priests. The second orientation makes the African context the subject of interpretation. "The basic hermeneutic theory at work is that the *meaning of a text is a function of the interaction between the text in its context and the reader in his/her context*" (Ukpong 1999:326). Maluleke (2000a:92)

the task of actualisation (Houlden 1995:83).[269] The Bible itself gives proof of actualisation when early texts were re-read in the light of new circumstances and applied to the contemporary situation of the people of God (:82):[270]

> New local churches have to make every effort to convert this foreign form of biblical inculturation into another form more closely corresponding to the culture of their own land (in Ruiz 1995:79).

With regard to the basic Christian communities the document states:

> There is reason to rejoice in seeing the Bible in the hands of people of lowly condition and of the poor; they can bring to its interpretation and to its actualization a light more penetrating, from the spiritual and existential point of view, than that which comes from a learning that relies on its resources alone (cf. Matt. 11.25) (in Ruiz 1995:79).

The unique authority of the poor can bring in new interpretations hidden from the learned. West (2000a:165) concludes, "For those who work in contexts where readings of the Bible matter, whom one chooses to read with makes a difference that matters."[271] As Ruiz puts it, the Commission acknowledges the epistemological privilege of the poor and marginalised and "subverts the hermeneutical hegemony of First World academic elites" (:79). It is an acknowledged competence that appears.[272] The sermon of Mbovu on the Lord's Prayer as a powerful text with performative intention bears witness to this.[273]

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speaks about the Bible as "conversation partner". Maluleke (2000b:30) refers to Mugambi who assumes that the concepts of inculturation and liberation have expired. He develops a new paradigm of the agency of Africans (2000b:32). In my study it appears that by the agency of Africans (as incomplete as it still is) inculturation or contextualisation actually assumes a new quality, which cannot be achieved without them.

[269] Maluleke (2000a:102-5) highlights some biblical hermeneutics of African theology.

[270] See also Okure's (2000:198) remarks on the different groups of people involved in the Bible: the persons in the stories, the immediate audience, and the readers throughout history. The question arising is as to how the contemporary life experiences can be a hermeneutical key for interpreting the Bible.

[271] West (2000a:166-172) elaborates on the relationship between the biblical scholar or theologian and the Christian reader. With his example of the strategies of oppressed he actually shows the extraordinary of the "ordinary" people. This extraordinary allows maintaining dignity and is hidden to the oppressors. West (1995:209) outlines the mutual dependence of "ordinary" and "trained" readers.

[272] "From this it should be obvious that local theologies (performance texts) cannot simply be derived from received formulas or from previous performance texts. ... Access to competence (Christian faith) is not reserved to theologians or older churches. Astonishing and well-formed performance texts can come out of the youngest churches, just as young children can speak well-formed sentences never spoken before" (Schreiter 1985:116).

[273] The few examples of sermons given in the context of this study allow considering the reservations of Maluleke (2000a:94). While West (2000a) speaks about ordinary people and knows about the reservations of Maluleke (West 2000b:59), "ordinaried" people emerge as culturally informed, competent, and informing partners in the process of proclaiming faith. As a personal note I may add that I would never have been able to deliver a sermon the way as Mbovu did.

The crucial point here is with regard to the poor. When initially referring to the "option for the poor" or the "option with the poor", it is now the "option of the poor" that appears. The church and its central document, the Scripture, becomes the option of the poor, represented in their leaders, to address their life and to transform it. It becomes a clear option from within the context of the poor. Though introduced by outsiders it is the contextual competence of the insiders to apply the message of the Gospel from within. From this point of view the work with community leaders, such as funeral leaders, assumes considerable missiological importance with regard to the proclamation of faith. The leaders become agents in the incarnation of the Gospel in their specific African context.

Hirmer (s.a.:9) states in his reflection on Gospel Sharing that in the "first hand encounter" with Christ, even though a text could be wrongly understood in the exegetical sense, it may be right in the context of the whole Bible with its basic message. The variety of approaches towards Bible interpretation mentioned above allows one to underline the basic principle "that Jesus is accepted in the text" (Hirmer s.a.:9), and, I want to add, that he is also accepted in the con-text. Moreover the community-based approach to the Bible, in SCCs as in the actual preparation for proclamation, provides a correctional means to the other members or leaders.[274] The suggestion of Hirmer, that difficult questions could be put to an expert later, is actually part of my general experience. The demand of the leaders for training to "get the message" is a proof for this and cautions against an over-anxious scepticism about the use of the Bible.[275]

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[274] West (1995: 83-102) sees the commitment to the community closely linked to accountability and solidarity. He (1993:14) states, with a view to reading the Bible in community: "We have to honestly believe that we can learn from the readings of ordinary people. So for us reading the Bible with ordinary readers requires something of a conversion experience; we need to be converted to a sense of community consciousness." West (1993:15) cautions against uncritically romanticising the contributions of ordinary readers. He sees the importance of trained readers in a group. Decock (1999:47) states that a Catholic ethos as background of the reading of the Bible in a community helps to avoid the pitfalls of fundamentalism. The few examples in this study showed different ways of dealing with the scripture. Some at least indicate that one finds "trained readers" (albeit not in the academic meaning) also among the "ordinary readers".

[275] Decock (1999:48) stresses the point that ordinary people "have to be enabled to benefit from the results of sound scholarship..." Prior (1999:31) sees the interpretation of the Bible as community activity to which all, including exegetes, contribute. He mentions Mester's example of providing simply written exegetical books.' In this regard the local field is wide open and in need for further development. Prior (1999:32) indicates that respective SCC notes, published by the Lumko Institute, are not sufficient to balance the Gospel sharing methods.

As the Bible corroborated the process of the introduction of leaders, their closeness to the scriptures through Gospel sharing points to a community-based approach to the Bible. Parra (1996:967) notes a theological basis-production in the bosom of the community. The scriptures mediate the communal reflection on the reality in the light of their faith in Christ. Generally, the proclamation by leaders must be understood within the whole life of the community, which includes the exposure to many leaders. Mbiti (1994:33) stresses the benefits of oral communication and dialogue as opposed to the one-way monologue of Western practice. The treatment of the Bible is communal. In this there is some affinity between the Bible and the African culture: in their mutual concern with community (Mbiti 1994:35). In African culture community includes both the vertical dimension (the departed, living, and the still to be born) and the horizontal, including kinship and neighbourliness:

> The Bible is read and interpreted under the umbrella of this community orientation, and biblical teachings are considered in the light of the pervasive awareness of community (Mbiti 1994:36).

Kalilombe looks at the access of non-literate people to the Bible.[276] The people must handle the Bible themselves if it is to have a liberating effect, "otherwise it remains a merely intellectual activity indulged in by comfortable academics" (Kalilombe 1991:398). In our context the question of its interpretation becomes relevant. With regard to the step of interpretation, for applying the Bible to their lives as believers, Kalilombe identifies several ways to appropriate and interpret inputs. One of them is the repetition in ones own words (:407). He points at the community-based interpretation when stating:

> The value of retelling is enhanced when several people *exchange and discuss* what they have retained singly (Kalilombe 1991:407).

Mutual challenges and criticism become possible when enriched by the points others have to bring in.[277] Mbovu (1999b) reported on a preaching event (chapter 4.2.2) where several people joined the preaching.

All this does not devalue the more academic approach but rather puts it into context: the academic approach enters an exchange with the popular approach, especially with

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[276] See also West's contribution in chapter 4.2.1.

[277] A further way is drama, re-enacting the text. Also prayer is a way of interpreting and applying God's word. Finally he mentions testimony, when people share their experience of Gods activity in their lives (Kalilombe 1991:408).

agents living in both realms, like the priests. A very important field for trained theologians emerges. If the objective is to interpret life with the help of the Bible, their task is to assist as a corrective against a too simplistic approach to the Bible (cf. Ruiz 1995:82) and to provide what is requested: to help people to find the message in an appropriate, contextually-grounded manner.[278] In this process the service ministry of the leaders contributes to the conversion of the ministry of priests into a service ministry of its own kind. With the ministry of leaders and their involvement in the interpretation of scripture as matters of fact they are requested and needed to evaluate and enhance the quality of sermons.

This may also touch the concern of Snyman (1999:147-154) about the possibility of a message-distorting, decontextualised reading of a biblical text by readers rooted in the local culture.[279] This may carry dreadful consequences if simplistic equations are drawn from the biblical role players to those of the present day. Such unethical abuse of scripture was not observed here. Also, academically-trained readers may find themselves in danger of distorting and abusing a text. In these cases the discussion within their academic community provides the arena for contradicting and correcting them. In the local context this seems to happen within the community itself when it is looking for good preachers. The predominantly used pattern of the spirituality of the presence and of mercy, and the refraining from judgement does not mean connivance at the misdeeds of the deceased. The strong tendency towards mercy does not replace the Lord's judgement, but expresses an unwavering hope for mercy. It seems to be a spiritual habit not unfitting with the literary example of the "doomsday" preaching Jonah (3:4) and the contrast of more than Jonah (cf. Mt 12:41; Lk 11:32). It remains an open hope that the verbal attachment to mercy translates into transforming daily life and the witness, martyria, there. The treatment of cases is an indication of this.

5.2.1.3 Decontamination by the word of God in proclamation: death without sting

In the proclamation by sermon and prayer God is speaking in a human voice. With the church's most important function being communication (Van der Ven 1996) the leaders serve in the area of self-communication of God. In their words he bestows his Spirit which is life. He gives his presence. The sermon, inspired by the words of the Scripture,

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[278] West (2000b:63-71) elaborates on the contribution a critical reading of the Gospel can make.
[279] In a process where the reader creates and discovers meaning Nissen (2000:183) sees a danger when contemporary issues are superimposed on the scripture. This leads to disregard for the biblical text.

becomes the word of God, not as a historical entity but as event: In its proclamation the word achieves what it says, God is speaking in human voice (cf. Is 55:11).

> "He who listens to you listens to me; he who rejects you rejects me; but he who rejects me rejects him who sent me." The seventy-two returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name." He replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven." At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure" (Lk 10:16-21).

From the fundamental theological premisses it can be assured that this word is infallibly true as long as it is the self-communication of God. This applies to all proclamation and underlines the fundamental equality in the proclamation by priests and leaders alike. It is about unity (cf. Jn 17:11;21;22), acceptance in the kingdom of God, and its fruits and conditions like forgiveness (Mt 6:12). A difference may exist on a secondary level in the area of quotable material and a wider theological horizon, but not in the immediate self-communication of God. The sermon as service to God's word of self-communication is indeed an intimate expression of the fundamental equality in ministry before all differentiation and specification. The fundamental theology employed suggests that the difference between the common proclamation of every Christian and that of the ministry exists by the latter expressing that faith comes to the community as a whole also from hearing the message (cf. Knauer 1991:297-305; cf. chapter 1.3.3). This difference is not given here since both the leaders and the priests address the community as a whole in their sermons. Differences may extend to the quality and way of articulation, which differ among leaders and priests alike. The service of the priests is essentially, and not only because it is demanded by the people, to enhance the way of proclamation by opening access to the secondary level and maintaining that the service ministry is to the service of God and the dignity of his word.

The fundamental equality in the unsurpassable self-communication of God's love finds its biblical reflection in a text not meant to inspire the wage negotiations of trade unions but the awareness of the essence of faith. In Mt 20:1-16 all receive the same wage, one denarius, irrespective of their contribution and ability. Everybody receives the same in terms of faith: without reservation the unqualified love of God. This is communicated in the proclamation. The fundamental theological thoughts reflected this simple and far-

reaching fact of faith. It underlines the power and authority of all involved in the actual proclamation of faith, which happens *eMoyeni*, in the Spirit.

Nürnberger (1998:496) reports on a rather limited alternative, which may turn out to be none. He asks whether the word of God reaches people through the institutionalised care of the tradition or through direct charismatic contact. The point is that no charismatic line emerges without tradition and that tradition becomes ossified without charismatic element. To me there seems to be no real alternative. The word of God is the self-communication of the Spirit, a charismatic event. The tradition in its origin is part of it as a real charismatic event. In the same way new charismatic events will become part of the tradition. Tradition that fails to communicate its essence, the self-communication of God, does not hand over, does not trade anything and is worthless. Its main lesson is the need to be contextualised. The word of God is the event of its essence or it is not the word of God. The same then applies to the Bible. If the words quoted or used do not confer the self-communication of God, they are not God's word. While they are intending to confer it and actually proclaim unity with God as source of life and hope, the leaders actually join a tradition of restoring life and offering it in its fullness (Jn 10:10).

Okure (1997) emphasises the continuous speaking of God. He spoke to the ancestors through the prophets, then through Christ, and he continues to speak. "This means that God is always present in his word" (:245). In this word he communicates the divine self to people. It is a source of life (:246-7). Okure points at the importance the life-giving bread assumes in the Eucharist. The source of life gives his flesh and blood as food and drink to the believers through the transforming power of the word of the Eucharist (:257).

In the *isibongo* we encountered a prophetic voice concerning leadership. Whitehead & Whitehead (1991) point at the link between prophetic activity, the present life situation, and the opening up of a new future. The funeral leaders share in the prophetic activity when they speak, in a contextualised way, to the present in the light of the word of God in order to open up life in the future. For Whitehead and Whitehead (1991:142) the prophetic voice is not a gift to see into the future but to see clearly what is happening at

present.[280] It helps people to see God's future and the impact it can have on the present life (:142). Since new things always commence with a farewell, the prophetic leader needs to teach the way to say good bye (:145). "Prophets help a community to grieve by bringing private pain to public expression" (:146). This grieving is the beginning of healing (:147).

These considerations help us to understand the service of the funeral leaders in its prophetic dimension. By allowing one to let go (ukuncama) they help to open up a new future by contributing to a healing process with their grounding in faith. It is not only their sermons but also their prayers that put this healing message into words.

Wallace (1990:978) outlined that the US bishops' Committee on Priestly Life and Ministry suggested an understanding of the homily as providing a scriptural interpretation of life. He sees this kind of preaching in line with what was just called prophecy: the charism of bringing the gospel into immediate contact with the life of the community. This implies that it is not only those in orders who see how the scripture speaks to the life of a particular community.

Preaching is described by several Greek terms: kerussein, to herald, to proclaim, evangelizesthai, to announce the gospel, and martyrein, to witness (Hilkert 1990:791).[281] The leaders' sermons reflect all this. They proclaim the Good News of the presence of God and his love, and relate to their own witness and the witness of the deceased. In this way they are involved in kerygma and martyria by their proclamation. The leaders are competent for their task by their spirituality, community support, insertion into the context, and ongoing formation. Wallace (1990:976) states with Schillebeeckx that competence for preaching lies in the praxis of Jesus embodied in the life of the preacher.[282] The competent preacher is concerned with human situations. He

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[280] Whitehead and Whitehead (1991) state that for fear of uncontrolled prophets the prophetic authority became part of the bishops' office. This helped to prevent its abuse, but did nothing to contribute to its growth (:141).

[281] With Evangelii Nuntiandi (EN 42) preaching is firstly the verbal proclamation of a message, but can take other forms too. For Wallace a homily is supposed to give a scriptural interpretation of life (1990:978). A sermon can touch on any topic. In this sense the leaders actually preach, deliver sermons, and also homilies, depending on their scope. Some prefer to relate to their preaching as witnessing in order to indicate the difference to a "trained reader" (the term of West). Since also this term has its limitations and since the scope of the sermons seems to exceed witnessing in the sense of sharing personal faith experience, in this thesis I prefer to use the general term of "preaching", which includes all these forms.

[282] This includes the creative treatment of the scripture as we noticed in the sermon of Mdange as long as the basic message of faith is conveyed. Lombard (1999:183) in his analysis of the Zulu-praise song noted the creative change of meaning too when the symbol of the star of Bethlehem was used to refer to Christ

is one who can set in motion the processes of admiration, joy, and liberation as Jesus did.[283]

A concern of some may be that community-ministers are preaching at all. The known reservations are usually limited to the eucharistic celebration, where we saw no problem at all since the priest is expected to preach and does it despite the fact that the more contextually competent people are the funeral leaders. As we noticed in the analysis the accent of the priests in the sermon seems to shift easily to matters of their competence, providing in-service formation.

Wallace points out the decision to reserve the liturgical homily to the ordained (Wallace 1990:977-8),[284] in line with can 767 CIC, with the liturgists' argument that who presides also preaches.[285] A major concern should be who can preach best at an occasion. Wallace locates the emphasis in the perception of the sermon as a teaching event, reserved for those in teaching positions: bishops, priests, and teachers. The guidelines themselves also point in another direction: that the laity can preach in light of the deepened knowledge of scripture and theology, which many lay people possess.

From a missiological point of view the insight that the spirituality that contributes to the competence of the leaders is a spirituality shared with the people deserves attention. This distinguishes the community leaders from expatriate missionary personnel. What emerged as a culturally inserted spirituality of the presence finds its expression in the proclamation by preaching as in the prayers. The prayers are another way of verbally sharing faith. The prayers created by the leaders in particular are both an expression of

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himself. The praise "illustrates tension between the original source and its adaptation in the genre of praising" (:183). The same applies to the preaching.

[283] The US bishops' guidelines on lay preaching safeguard the quality of the sermon by requiring persons of good standing, living good Christian lives. They have to be active members of the church, familiar with the needs of their community, faithful to the leadership and teaching of the magisterium. They should have, besides suitable communication skills, solid grounding in scripture, theology, tradition, and liturgy (Wallace 1990:976-7). An important notion is the recognition that people may have the gift of preaching on a differing scale on the continuum, continuing, frequent, or at specific occasions. This allows a broader access to discover those whom the Spirit has elected to speak (:976). A further notion roots the preacher in the community: the competence is complemented by the welcome of the preacher by the community (:977).

[284] Wallace (1990:975-8) outlines the change in the perception of preaching depending on the change in the theological perception. While the council of Trent anathematised those assuming that all Christians have the power of the ministry of the word, the shift in the perception of the church from a hierarchical institution to the pilgrim people of God allowed understanding baptism as the basis for preaching. All are called to the priestly, prophetic, and kingly Christ. Subsequently Canon 759 CIC provides that lay people can be called to co-operate with the bishop and presbyters in their ministry of the word (:975).

[285] Hilkert (1990:797) notes that in the course of the development, the theology of the ordained ministry is redescribed in terms of the primary pastoral responsibility for the proclamation of the word.

this spirituality and a proof of its effect, the restoration of faith and hope, the decontamination of death. This effect can be heard in spontaneous intercessions of people referring often to the proclamation in the sermon. While they accept the present reality the prayers look well beyond it: "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" (1 Cor 15:55). With their proclamatory dimension as public prayers the prayers themselves become word of God, a powerful source for restoring life. God himself, through the prayers of the leaders, offers a means of establishing community with him and among each other. The prayer is meant to make an impact on the future: "take it, digest it." It allows one to live with the ambiguity of the brutal facts of life and their spiritual incorporation. It is an expression of the redemption of the African trait of mourning coinciding with joy by the "new faith" that still goes deeper. It allows one not only to quote but to live, corroborated by the witness of the contextually inserted leaders, what Paul expresses: "We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body" (2 Cor 4:8-10).

A particular way to express faith in this ambiguity is the prayer set to music, the singing. We saw that the leaders are not deeply involved in this field of proclamation. It nevertheless deserves mention here to stress its importance and its potential for developing the future shape of leadership exercised in collaboration with others, in this case the choir. The ambiguity, first experienced in the composed understanding of death in cultural terms, is also reflected in some choruses, and the praise songs created by the leaders. It is the ambiguity of life, living in the presence of God as source of life while exposed to death.

While the normal term *iculo* (song) was introduced to indicate a church or school song without body movement (cf. Dargie 1997), with their choruses the people repossess a cultural way of expression.

> Music, song and dance are certainly essential for an African identity (Castle 1990:188).

According to Hiebert (1985:32-3) music, dance, and drama express the affective dimension of culture. The affective dimension comprises meaning, attitudes, tastes, likes, and dislikes. It plays a role in how one expresses love, hate, and sorrow. Castle (1990:190) names some of the effects of songs. They lead the way in rectifying

unsatisfactory conditions and crystallising new demands; they allow people to re-live psychological tensions and correct erring members of society; they express the community's contradictions and ambivalences in a way that propositional theology is unable to do; they express what people do believe as opposed to what they should believe.

> Though we cannot at present quantitatively evaluate the effect of a hymn on a person, one can assume that each time the hymn is repeated, the meaning is reinforced in the consciousness (Castle 1990:189-190).[286]

He assumes that music is most probably more effective in creating an emotional response than the words (Castle 1990:191).

Castle (1993:24) directs the attention to another, missionary feature. The songs stand for a willingness of a community to listen (even to things it does not like). He understands hymns as theological, social, and cultural statements (:103). Though some assume that people are rather attracted by the tune he points at research indicating the inter-relatedness of music and language.

With its ambiguity music can assume theological characteristics. The singing of Psalm 22 mentioned earlier does not necessarily (and unconsciously) remain within the parameters of the single verse. This psalm of the dying Christ (Mt 27:46; Mk 15:34) moves from desperation towards hope and faith, so expressing the paradox in one instance. While only repeatedly singing the first verse "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Ps 22:1) the attached – joyful – tune expresses hope. Magoti (1991:184) maintains that death expresses the meaningless breaking off of life and at the same time it shows itself as the attainment of a mature existence. He sees this paradox expressed at funerals in distinct acts attributed either to joy, as with dance, music, or eating, or to sadness, as with crying and wailing. While he does not mention singing it is just this part of music that is able to express the paradox in one and the same act. There is no word for paradox in Xhosa.[287] It may well be that this concept is

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[286] The same would apply to sermons: It is difficult to evaluate their real impact. Though it is impressive, the effect of the sermon of Mbovu in preventing acts of revenge, for instance, is not easily determined. The lack of such acts can well be attributed to other reasons.

[287] Paradox seems not to be a Xhosa concept. The Dictionary (Fischer et al. 1985) gives only a description: *intetho ethetha ngokungathi into ichasene nengqondo kanti iyinene.*

absorbed by a holistic world view integrating diverse phenomena.[288] This, then, can well be reflected in songs simultaneously expressing and admitting both.

Songs have a theological potential that can question old religious perceptions. The joyful dimension given by a tune to a sombre quotation could also hint at a new perception of God. Waliggo (1998:175), in his reflections on suffering, refers to this Psalm. Prayed by Jesus, it converts the old perception of the rejected as sinners into the rejected as God-fearing people.

5.2.1.4 Decontamination by respecting cultural procedures and ancestors

The Gospel of John (19:40) indicates that the burial of Jesus was in accordance with Jewish customs. Though this notion appears rather marginal at first, the adherence to customary procedures assumes theological importance particularly when dealing with a missionary interest. We saw the co-operation and sharing of the leaders with the cultural family rituals in ministering the need of unification with the ancestors. They co-operate with the family, and endorse with their presence as leaders the procedures expressing and enacting the unity with the ancestors.

While this practice is locally not perceived as colliding with faith-values there is some strongly-felt opposition to the inclusion of ancestors. Reynolds (2000) expresses a perception that ancestors assume the role of gods (*Badimo*) and need to be appeased. Not as intermediaries but as gods they rule people by fear. African religion and Christianity were not compatible and attempts to reconcile them would end up in syncretism. Their inclusion in Catholicism was unacceptable in terms of Christ's salvation.

Such a position is not uncontested. Nyamiti (1984:15-6) stresses that, despite all differences between the cultures of African people, there are some common beliefs among Africans. Concerning the ancestors he identifies the natural relationship between the ancestors and their earthly relatives and the supernatural status acquired by death. Its attainment requires a good life. While he calls them role models, the local context does not know this trait. Onaiyekan, however, cautions against generalisation in this

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[288] McKay (1991:48), on the other hand, identifies a contradictory and paradox response to death in the theology of Western culture.

regard when pointing at different ethnic groups attributing more importance to the ancestors or to divinities and spirits (Onaiyekan 1997:357).

For Kabasélé one becomes an ancestor because one complied somehow with the will of God in society by promoting harmony and community of people. Personally they are important only since life comes from them (cf. Kabasélé 1989b:151). Not everybody becomes an ancestor. One must have led a life of virtue (Kabasélé 1989a:75). The term ancestor may, nevertheless, be extended to others who did not qualify totally according to these criteria (:76). Ugeux observes the importance of the relationship to the ancestors for the society.[289] This extends also to the individual.[290]

Rücker (1985:146-147) cautions against an assumption, such as that of Reynolds, that ancestors are the gods of Africans. Ngada (1993:17) states that Africans do not replace the belief in ancestor spirits by a belief in the Holy Spirit. Both are distinct realities. Therefore the so-called "veneration" also differs. Concerning the ancestors it is a family matter not to be equated with Christian veneration even of saints. Ela (1987:34) rejects the idea of linking ancestor veneration and religion. He refers to Sanon, pointing out that there is actually no veneration or prayer to the ancestors. Ancestors do not replace God. They fulfil a role as mediators, which is played by the heads of the families (Ela 1987:37). Cult in the context of ancestors does not mean what Christians may include under this expression. It is not cult for the dead but expression of cohabitation with the dead and enacting of the relationship. It is not a religious act but a symbolic one (Ela 1987:33). The ancestors remain below God. Christ however is one with God. Ancestors were never made goddesses by the Bantu and it was never their aim to unite with God (Kabasélé 1989b:151).

Community is the main mediator for the initiation of the individual into life. Outside the community the whole existence of a human being would be deprived of its meaning. The ancestors are prime mediators as those who know the sources of life already and they know us (Kabasélé 1989a:83). Ela (1987:30) emphasises that the essential acts

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[289] "Bref, on constante une interaction entre la crise de la relation avec les ancêtres et la déstabilisation des sociétés traditionelles négro-africaines" (Ugeux 1988:130).

[290] Krog reports a short dialogue after a chief's testimony at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission: "'Why do you start your testimony with your lineage?' I ask him afterwards. 'Their names organize the flow of time,' the interpreter explains to me. 'Their names give my story a shadow. Their names put what has happened to me in perspective. Their names say I am a chief with many colours. Their names say we have the ability to endure the past ... and the present'" (Krog 1998:137).

concerning ancestors serve the strengthening of communion links that bridge the gap between death and life.

Ela (1987:44-5) hints at LG 16, that those who have not yet received the Gospel are oriented towards it in different ways, as does the 4th Eucharistic prayer. It refers to those who searched for God with sincere hearts, those whose faith nobody knows but God. The creed professes that Jesus descended into the underworld. A church that maintains the memory of Abel and the sacrifices of Abraham and Melchizedek cannot exclude the ancestors from the commemoration.[291] To live in an African way the mystery of unity in Christ who unites the visible and invisible means including the living relationship with ancestors as one dimension of the encompassing faith.

The biological and spiritual aspects of life are tightly interwoven for Bantu people. Whoever promotes peace, joy, and love is a source of life. Jesus' emphasis on love coincides with the Bantu appreciation of ancestors. He is the bread of life. He nourishes the life of the faithful (Kabasélé 1989a:78).

Food and drink for the ancestors are an expression of respect and of the bond with the ancestors within a cultural context in which communication with the invisible is one aspect of the all-encompassing reality (Ela 1987:33). Ancestors are living for Bantu. A European perception is different. The European ancestor is a memory; the Bantu ancestor is a presence (Kabasélé 1989a:79). The relationship with the ancestors affects and fosters relationships among the living as well (cf. Ela 1987:31).

> The mediation of Christ is universal and ultimate... The mediation of the
> ancestors is limited to their descendants and does not achieve the plenitude
> of the kingdom of God. Its efficacy is not comprehensible except within the
> grace of Christ, who reveals the infinite love of God. Before the revelation of
> Christ, our ancestors were a sign of the nearness of God, of the love of God.
> They remained so after the revelation, even if a more astonishing sign has
> been given in the incarnation of God himself (Lumbala 1998:47).

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[291] Occasionally for instance at Easter and around the time of All Saints a number of communities celebrate the commemoration of the dead, the ancestors, and the saints. This commemoration is accompanied by the libation of local beer. The funeral leaders bring this beer forward. The voices of the representatives of the families or clans pouring beer on behalf of their ancestors reveal the emotional touch of the ceremony and the felt unity. Before the preparation of the gifts of bread and wine the priest pours some wine to recall that Jesus descended to the dead to redeem also those who were not able to get to know him. So other ceremonies and the talks about their feasibility and preparation contribute to a rather comprehensive practice.

The principle involved here is that Christ did not come to supplant all the other signs of God's love. His coming confirmed these signs and sealed them. He accomplishes them (:47).

The importance of respect for the ancestors and also the ancestors-to-be becomes clear if one accepts Dwane's (1982:21) proposition that the ancestors are mediators in contact with God whom people hesitate to approach directly out of awe. This kind of mediating attitude is opposed to the Western approach of "me and my God"; it has a communitarian trait. For Dwane the Western concept of direct access to God appears to Non-Westerners as a dangerous obsession with the self.

Hellinger,[292] who worked for some time in KwaZulu/Natal, developed a system of systemic psychotherapy. Part of it is the essential need to acknowledge the right place of everybody, dead or alive, in a family system, with detrimental consequences if it is neglected.[293] The older take precedence over the younger (cf. Weber 1993:147). It is therapeutically necessary to express the required respect (which does not mean to acknowledge all the deeds) (cf.:294). Hellinger speaks about the clan or family conscience. It is unconscious and represents especially those who were excluded from the soul and consciousness for whatever reason. It integrates people inescapably into the common destiny of the family (Weber 1993:150). This European approach (the extent of the African influence on it is not known to me) underlines the importance the expression of respect has in maintaining or healing and restoring community-borne life.

The ministry of the funeral leaders appears in the light of this discussion as integrative, holistic, comprehensive, and honest. It allows the integration of cultural family patterns so that people find inner peace and healing in a troubled time of bereavement. They help to overcome the formerly-practised estrangement encouraged by the first missionaries. The cultural rituals concerned here are not in contradiction to faith. The sharing of the complementary ministry of comfort and establishing community appears as meaningful and theologically indispensable. Spiritually it reflects the holistic world view and avoids the individualistic patterns of Western perception. It helps to avoid from the start the lack of respect for family systems that in turn leads to a need for healing. What in a Western view has to be rediscovered is present in the local context,

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[292] Weber (1993) recorded much of Hellinger's work, which is not put down systematically in writing.
[293] Similarly Hammond-Tooke (1989:65) states that the failure to pay respect to seniors "is a heinous offence which can bring down full ancestral wrath about one's head."

maintaining the well being of people. The idea of ancestors doing harm can be understood as a self-inflicted harm by not respecting their own lifeline within a world view based on continuing community. Both here and elsewhere analysis has shown that there is no confusion of saints, ancestors, and God.

The fact that two gospels contain the genealogy of Jesus (Mt 1:1-17; Lk 3:23-38) indicates the need of taking personal roots as something important.[294] Theologically formed with arithmetic symbolism in the grouping of the ancestors, some of them alluding to scandals, even criminal and other rather irregular incidents these gospels invite one to see the theological quality of ancestors in one's own history of salvation. God's greatness comes to the fore when contrasted with the uncensored history of ancestors, who were role models neither in the Gospel nor in the African context. The fact that their existence is no longer hidden when a Christian rite is conducted helps people to pay respect to them. In this regard the leaders with their extended presence at funerals fulfil an important task for an integrated and healing relationship in communion. As all the persons listed in Jesus' line were important to bring him about, so were all the ancestors for the respective believers, who often could or did not share their faith. The initially quoted criticism appears rather doubtful and would deserve its own analysis. Its perception rather obscures the all-encompassing unity, including the living and the living dead, as part of the Christian proclamation.

The Christian contribution in this particular regard, however, lies not in "baptising" everything and thus intruding into family matters. The family part is not taken over by church rites. The parallel practice of church and cultural rituals seems to have well-supported reasons. The denominational diversity and membership in different churches discourages thoughts of involving church leaders in such cultural rituals as slaughtering and incorporating them within church structures. It is rather the prerogative and specific contribution of the funeral leaders to signify and witness the presence of the church and the all-embracing faith that unites the families and clans. They can afford to be present at various stages of the funeral procedure. The direct involvement in the family meal concerning its own unity is not of concern for the church as such and cannot meaningfully be since it is not part of the particular family system and its own practices. The church's own ritual meal, the Eucharist, should rather be promoted.

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[294] On the genealogy with the gospel of Matthew see Buttrick et. al. (1951:251) and on Luke Buttrick et. al. (1952:80-3).

5.2.2 Celebration

The model of pastoral theology employed assumes a reciprocal effect of the three dimensions on each other. It can only be inferred from the reaction of people and their further request for the ministry of the leaders that their action in taking life into account and interpreting it by faith has some impact on life itself. The interpretive dimension is part of the celebration led by the funeral leaders, though it also happens outside the funeral. The third dimension of celebration is represented in the liturgy, the ritual performed by the leaders.

The participation of the leaders in the rite of passage reinforces the values of faith. Their rituals, prayers, readings, and sermons serve its proclamation. They create new trust, and re-establish community. They do it in a holistic way by accepting and accommodating the customary rituals. While most of the funeral-procedures are ecumenically inclusive with members of other denominations actively taking part in certain areas, the denominational identity is preserved at the core stages with the Catholic liturgy and with the celebration of the Eucharist. This celebration combines many aspects as we saw. It provides a way of comprehensively celebrating communication that far exceeds the expressiveness of other ritual actions. It provides space for interpretation by proclamation and by the use of cultural patterns. It, however, faces some opposition and the fact of exclusiveness.

The Eucharist is the only area where the presence of the priest is required in the performing of the funeral ministry. It is the only area where the concrete needs of the people are not met by the ministry that is offered and cannot be met completely by the funeral leaders, with the exception of the distribution of already consecrated species from the tabernacle by communion givers. This clear discrepancy calls for some theological attention with regard to the understanding of the Eucharist and of the ministry.

5.2.2.1 Decontamination by the Eucharist: an essential ministry

The Mass, the memorial of Christ's death and resurrection, is the principal celebration of the Christian funeral (NCCB 1990:925).

When reflecting on the celebrating part of the ministry of funeral leaders the frequent non-celebration of the Eucharist deserves special attention.[295] The above statement not only contradicts the observed practice, it expresses the meaningfulness of this celebration in the context of a burial. This is borne out by the expressed desire of the people for the Eucharist, though there is so little provision for ensuring that it is celebrated. The problem is that such a grounded pastoral approach, though promised, is not possible. The most comprehensive and effective form of celebration is often prevented from happening.

In the awareness of the people the Eucharistic pattern covers all dimensions of the model of pastoral theology. They reflect on their shared life: we did it together. It recalls the community of faith lived together. This shared life is interpreted in the light of faith, informed by the biblical message in order to achieve peace, reconciliation, and to encourage community. The actual celebration restores community among the living, with the dead, and with God. It influences the future perspective of the participants who are facing their own death and the way in which the community of faith will probably handle it. Even in this way this celebration restores faith and hope. It helps to decontaminate stained hope with regard to the bereaved peoples' own death and opens the way for participation in eternal life. In conjunction with the concern about life it is worthwhile to recall what Jesus did: he celebrated his Last Supper. People will give different reasons for it. One is to open the opportunity to partake in the meal the (future) deceased used to participate in. Thus the bereaved participate in his faith. In this remembering testimony of their contemporary witness, their faith can be strengthened in advance of their own death. Life is regained in the Eucharist. It builds the community and it is a proof of both their own life and survival as long as one assumes that the deceased eats with the living. Eating is proof of life. The risen Christ eats (Lk 24:43; cf. Mk 5:43 with the daughter of Jairus). Hence the eating community becomes an eschatological sign of the concrete survival of the bereaved, contaminated and now decontaminated from death.

The Eucharistic celebration as such is not the main focus of this study. It becomes relevant in its relation to the ministry offered by the church to meet the needs of the faithful bereaved. It appears that the assumed flaw, observed at the beginning of this

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[295] The following reflections will focus on the issue of the Eucharist only in connection with funerals and as far as they seem necessary for the understanding of the ministry under research. They do not intend to

analysis, really exists. Loyalty to Christ is at stake; he provided a celebration that answers the needs in question. When introducing the extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist or communion-givers in 1993/4 the bishop supported the efforts of the pastoral team by countering initial reservations of some parishioners. He hinted at the long practice of the church, and more important, that one has to take the spiritual hunger of the people into consideration: "Christ wants to give us spiritual food, could we deny it?" (Lobinger s.a.b).

This flaw has several facets: The most pressing one is the inconsistency between teaching and practice. The practice of not offering the Eucharist because of the assumed lack of priests[296] or its incomplete and contested offer in the form of distributing the already consecrated species does not match the teaching as offered in the statement above, or in the Catechism of the Catholic Church.[297] It also does not match the locally-provided formation with the people, the communities, and their leaders. Triggered off by the concern about the Eucharistic practice, this teaching takes into account the local context and root-metaphors regarding ritual meals. It initiates people deeper into faith, raises expectations, and leaves an inconsistency in terms of a culturally-informed spirituality. It brings a harsh awakening when the expectations, hopes, and promises raised find no proper response in the practice. What Shorter (1985:133) called infidelity and what appeared in the analysis as the opposite to missionary sincerity or honesty is a threat to the credibility of the proclamation, operating with promises that are not kept. It is an ethical question whether formation that includes features of the local culture can be pursued if a corresponding practice is not offered.

This even creates a discrepancy or inconsistency within the wider efforts of inculturation. When there is a clear intention to contextualise or inculturate faith it is

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present a full picture of the theology on the Eucharist. Here is ample field for further studies.
[296] One can question the assumption of a lack of priests and a lack of vocations under the condition that the offered conditions of admission to priesthood exclude many of those who feel to have a call but being unable to respond to it in the required way. The lack of priests may well be assumed as self-inflicted.
[297] The argumentative figure of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF 2000:26; no. 17) to deny the proper term church to some churches is nothing new. It links it to the existence of a valid episcopate and the preservation of the genuine and integral substance of the Eucharistic mystery. Without embarking on a discussion of these conditions a serious question arises in our context. How can one assume the preservation of the substance of the Eucharist if no sufficient provision is made to provide its celebration at occasions where it is promised and expected such as Sunday services and funerals? It appears that a rather intellectual, theological preservation is envisaged instead of Jesus' actual invitation or request, "do this in remembrance of me" (Lk 22:19). This obvious discrepancy between

essential that this should not be a kind of petty inculturation that is concerned with nothing more than garments and drums, as important as also these details may be. If culture starts to permeate ministry and teaching this must have a bearing on the whole practice of the church. If it does not, one should honestly abandon culturally-based approaches in teaching and admit failure, the temporary or permanent inability to live up to them. To get the contrast clear: the alternative would be to continue providing learning material, inspired by a Euro-American background of people with access to running water, exposed to individualism, and with scarcely an idea about cultural meals (which is not their fault) to people struggling with daily life who practise a culture deeply shaped by the values of community, expressed also in their meals.

If justice was really an intention behind the introduction of community ministry, inspired by statistics of personnel, it is still exposed to threats. With people easily ready to accept culturally perceptive ministers from other nations, the concern about justice extends clearly to the area of culture (Mangaliso 1998a). Injustice seems to be done to leaders who cannot fully celebrate what is expected. This injustice extends to the contention of the admissibility of the distribution of already-consecrated species, rejected for instance with the suspicion of a mere intention to show off. This fear is at least not backed by the local experience. Moreover, the meaningful participation in the chalice remains impossible. Injustice is done to the people with a culturally-informed understanding if raised expectations are not met. People experience it when taught in a contextualised way without serious impact on the practice. Injustice is done to the proclamation of faith, which remains deliberately incomplete. It happens to the ritual not fully exhausting its power, paralysed facing the expectations of people. It is done to pastoral staff trying to implement their crucial animating and facilitating teaching task. In the attempt to promote a culturally informed and theologically sound local theology they must question this approach if it is not backed by serious endeavours at least to solve the discrepancy of expectancy and non-fulfilment.

The exclusion of non-Catholics from communion is painful to the leaders, though made easier for church members by their internalisation of the church rules. While the cultural meals are inclusive the Eucharistic invitation is explicitly or implicitly only to members of the Catholic denomination. Some people of other denominations may attend. With the

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self-perception and the related question of denominational identity, teaching, and practice deserves some ethical and theological reflection.

background of a cultural family-meal that invites all and with the experience that the church unites the different nations and cultures the felt inconsistency here is the exclusiveness in the central ritual.[298] The leaders are aware of the pain inflicted on those willing to attend and knowing they will not really be welcome. The "Big Things" bow (their self co-determined by the cultural traits) when they accept the given regulation of their church and feel the limitation of their service. From their side comes no immediate and clear demand to change things, though there is openness to change. Here it seems rather to be the vested interest of theology to further the cause and to promote it by mutual reflection in their own realm, and with inclusion of local theologians. With the latter the caution of honesty applies again: not to raise expectations without willingness to respond to them.

On the basis of the cultural practice of regarding all participants in a family celebration as members of that family and expressing that verbally by addressing all participants by the family name, one could ask further whether this pattern (cf. chapter 2.2.5.5) could inspire considerations on Eucharistic hospitality. The celebrating host-church could extend a kind of temporary membership to participating members of other churches and allow them to receive the sacrament. As in the local customs these would accept, tolerate, and appreciate what is done in the one denominational family, and return to their own afterwards, the attitude of respect prevailing. If clarified and verbalised such practice could become a source of tolerance and mutual understanding. It could witness the power of Christ to unite his people in an encompassing community. Thus the Eucharist would become a genuine missionary tool, enacting and making real what it proclaims. It would resemble and ritually enact the meals Jesus was talking about, inviting all from the street-corners and hedges (cf. Mt 22:1-14; Lk 14:15-24). If one takes this further, it could become a true African contribution towards the ongoing discussion on the Eucharist.[299]

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[298] Healey and Sybertz (1996:267-8) state under the heading "Inculturation of the Eucharist in Africa": "Ideally the Eucharist is an inclusive banquet."

[299] Vatican II in its decree on ecumenism *Unitatis Redintegratio* (UR 8) felt the discrepancy when suggesting that common worship should not be regarded as means to restore unity among Christians, though grace to be obtained sometimes commends it. UR 9 strongly recommends study on this issue in fidelity to the truth and a spirit of good will. Both criteria could well be inspired by this cultural trait of temporary membership. Within the framework of this study I can only hint at this. It deserves more attention indeed in the context of studies on the Eucharist. The foremost issue remains however the provision of the Eucharist as such to the members of the Catholic Church.

5.2.2.2 Contributing aspects from research on the Eucharist

Kyeyune (1992:51) underlines the proclamatory and evangelising character of the liturgy. He says that it becomes

> the matrix and venue for self-evangelization and evangelization of the entire new People of God. For self-evangelization is like the celebrations of African life events. It is therefore essentially an on-going integrating, deifying and humanising formation for individuals and for the community.

Davies and Drury (1997:184) note that sometimes the Eucharist is referred to as rite of passage. In this context they prefer rather to call it *liminoid* instead of *liminal* since it does not conduct a person from one social status to another:

> What it can do is take people out of their normal everyday and hierarchical form of life and place them for a moment within a context of shared equality together and with God (Davies 1994a:46).

Davies (1994b:46) refers to Turner who described liminoid events in modern society as normally lying outside central political and economic processes as moments when a sense of community is experienced. It is rather a rite that changes the mood and quality of relationships. Davies prefers to speak of the Eucharist as a rite of intensification, when basic beliefs and sentiments are focused upon and experienced anew (:47).

The workshops on the Eucharist referred especially to the gospel of John. In John 6 the multiplication of loaves and fishes and the walking on the sea preceding the Eucharistic part portray Jesus as the new Moses, leading his people to the final Passover (cf. Moloney 1995:67). With this allusion to Moses using "his" blood at the doors of the Israelites in Egypt, the understanding of the presence of Jesus in "his flesh and blood" is not at all strange for people who use the meat of the ancestors (*inyama yezinyanya*). Eating and drinking are not to acquire a particular quantity of sacred nourishment but of union with the person (cf. Moloney 1995:71). The gain of receiving the Eucharist, mentioned in the Gospel, is appealing in the context of the funeral: who eats my flesh and drinks my blood, has eternal life (Jn 6:54). This becomes particularly tantalising with the idea of the deceased being around while the participants eat his Last Supper in proxy. The gain extends to all participants, the living and the living-dead. Thus the meal becomes a union in faith. The community shares in the faith of the deceased, which it shared with him life. This faith, threatened by death, survives, resurrects in this way, overcoming this contamination with death.

Bujo (1990:82-4) emphasises the aspect of life, a concept he sees as essential for the elaboration of an African theology. He who believes in Christ cannot die. If Christ is the giver of life, then he is the bread of life and survival. Thus the Eucharist becomes not only the present Christ as object of contemplation, but essentially nourishment and vivification. It is about gaining life in full and reinforced vitality.

The approach towards the Eucharist taken by linking up with the local culture is essential and indispensable. It takes into account the act of meaning. Moloney (1995:224) referring to Lonergan points out the two traditional adversaries in Eucharistic theology, Thomists and Scotists, the latter operating on an empirical notion of objectivity, where "intelligible reality is confused with the kind of reality reached by reason" (Moloney 1995:224). According to Lonergan the real should be rather defined by an act of meaning:

> The real is that which is reached by the intellect's completion of the process
> of understanding and judging... Such an approach rests on a firm conviction,
> that the intellect, not sensation, is the faculty of the real, and the validated
> judgement is the index of reality (Moloney 1995:224).

Moloney calls this position critical realism, in contrast to the former, which he characterises as naïve realism. This concept of the real taking into account the - contextually inserted - perception of faithful people, if accepted, has to bear on the dealings with the reality. This includes the pastoral approach and ministerial allocation of powers.

A critical realism as favoured here also supports the perception of the real presence as expressed by the local people and corroborated by them. The crucial question for Moloney is to determine what one understands as "real" and what one understands as "presence" (Moloney 1996/7:19). Roughly outlined, the real can be understood as the content of a true affirmation or as the term of sense perception (:18). Concerning the question of presence, the question is whether presence is the presupposition of action or its consequence, with naïve realists tending to the former assumption (:20). The critical realist will find the latter position in the Aristotelian principle, *actio est in passo*, action exists in the recipient. "Action is the presence of the agent in the recipient" (:20).

The consequence of this position is that presence must be grounded on action (:21).[300]

The acceptance of a perception by critical realism allows for a culturally inserted broad approach avoiding a mono-explanatory approach. Moloney points at the different perspectives John and Paul have on the Eucharist. John rather emphasises what it is in the vertical perspective with the focus on the individual participant, whereas Paul emphasises what it symbolises, the ecclesial body, with no contradiction between the views; both are necessary for an integrated, complementary view (Moloney 1995:73).

The understanding of the Eucharist also affects the perception of the ministry involved. Whitehead and Whitehead (1991:134-7) note a shift that took place in the middle ages. The focus shifted from breaking the bread to the consecration. The priests' announcement, this is my body, became the holiest part of the celebration. This transformed the role of the liturgical leader as well. In the last half century the focus has shifted to the community's sharing of this blessed bread and wine. The leader presides instead of providing the celebration. As a presider, a term that stems from Justin Martyr, "a leader orchestrates the celebration to which many members contribute" (:136-7).

In a missiological perspective the demand of local people and the reasons given for this demand form part of the cultural grounding of the Eucharist in the particular context; here the context of the funeral. In this way inculturation integrates the world view and influences theology from within; it informs, transforms, and develops it.

> Among many peoples and cultures evangelized from Europe, it is time to recognize the matrix of their own culture in the telling of the Christ story, the celebration of rites, the use of symbols, and the composition of prayers. Though there has been some adaptation, as with the rite approved for Zaire, the stage of creativity where the culture is truly matrix has scarcely begun (Power 1995: 339).

Power (1995) uses the phrase "multicultural orthodoxy". It appears when relating the cultural ways of understanding, here of a meal, and the church tradition in teaching on the Eucharist, which in itself is always influenced by the local culture and philosophical

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[300] Scheffczyk (1998:138) emphasises the need to broaden the narrowed view of the presence of Christ in the species of bread and wine towards various kinds of presence, which exist side by side (Christ's principal real presence, memorial real presence, substantial somatic presence). The article of Scheffczyk revolves around a presentation of the traditional teaching on the Eucharist. Within the framework of a Dictionary of Mission some thoughts on cultural encounter with the Eucharist and the mutual enrichment and development of main-line theology and local theologies could be appreciated in further editions.

background[301]. It is here a Xhosa and Sotho context getting into contact with church teaching and starting the integrating process of transformation:

> While the tradition shows what were the universal factors in eucharistic practice and belief, it also makes it clear that there is no rigid uniformity to the sacramental imagery and to the metaphors of redemption that have been employed (Power 1995:299).

Okoye (1992:275) looks for the appropriate root metaphor for the Eucharist in African culture. There could be various ones, dependent on the particular culture. He refers to his experience in Eastern and Southern Africa and suggests "assembly" as root metaphor (:277). In the given context "community" appears as the root metaphor with all the additional hues it assumes such as dignity, peace, reconciliation, and faithfulness to common practice.

Moloney (1995:237-256) reflects on the fruits of the Eucharist. Firstly he thinks about the fruits people give, namely the glory to God, and propitiation, not meaning placating an angry God but honouring God by repentance and deeper appropriation of forgiveness (:240). These are present in the intentions of the people.

Among the fruits people receive he firstly puts community (:241) as expression of the kingdom as the goal of Christianity. And this has a clear eschatological character:

> Our Lord came back to his disciples in order to gather his community together again, and this he did most notably by eating and drinking and praying with them at a common table... Eucharist and community go together, just as liturgy and life are inseparable... Community without Eucharist deprived the community of one of its most far-reaching sources of power (Moloney 1995:242).

As remedy for our sins Pius X emphasised that the Eucharist was not a reward for virtue but a remedy for our human frailty (Moloney 1995:246). The further fruit is the banquet, the feast of the blessed in the kingdom (Moloney 1995:249). It is heaven on earth: who eats his flesh has eternal life. The Eucharist is locally understood as a privileged way to express the togetherness of death and life, separation and ongoing communion. It is a powerful tool of proclamation that allows joy in sorrow and laughter with tears.

The paradox points at the eschatological perspective of the Eucharist that is perceived by the people as we saw (in chapter 2.2.5.4). Davies (1993:95) underlines four aspects.

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[301] Moloney (1996/7) shows this in particular with the contrasting positions of Scotists and Thomists.

a: the Eucharist as memorial of Christ himself and greater things to come; b: the claim of the promise by the church when calling *maranatha*; c: the promise of forgiveness of sins and eternal life to the penitent; d: the Eucharist projects Christ's final advent into the present.

When theology designates the Eucharist as the sacrament of the church, its celebration has also to do with the church's identity, that is made public, perceivable to others. "It refers to the ways in which, through eucharistic rite and devotion, communities develop a sense of inner coherence and of public identity" (Power 1995:296). We observed this also among the local Christians.

Chibuko (1997:46) identifies an urgent need for a new theology of the Eucharist, which is "other-centred", while the former, "my soul centred" spirituality was very limited in scope. For Traets (1987:152-3) Paul stressed the Eucharist as source of unity for a Christian community especially targeting the Corinthian community, having some discord. He does this with a covenant theology, connected with the rite of the cup. And he develops a theology of the body of Christ. Kabasele Lumbala (1998:49-50) explains the integrative aspect of the Eucharist among Bantu people, his concern being the invocation of the ancestors. The phrase "be with us" assumes specific meaning in languages that have no verb to express "to have" or "to possess". "Be with us" does not mean stay next to each other but expresses community and solidarity within a civilisation that is fundamentally relational. With respect to the Eucharist, this means that there is a movement towards communion "in the project of life inaugurated by Christ and transmitted through the Eucharist" (:49-50). Meyer (1989:45-7) stresses the point that a meal, even without a preceding sacrifice, is a deeply religious form of communication. Food and drink are the gift; eating and drinking represent their acceptance. While sharing the gifts the participants communicate with each other and with the origin of life, God. From him all gifts originate, they are filled with the power of his life. In the sacrificial meal the exchange happens, which is the meaning of the sacrifice.

Klauck (1988) makes an important contribution from an exegetical point of view regarding the community celebrating the Eucharist. "Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord" (1 Cor 11:29). He senses in this verse a veiled reference to the community as Christ's body. The chapter deals within the Corinthian context with

those who failed to recognize how community in the Lord's supper must be demonstrated. "The community of faith must prove itself in the visible community of Christians in a given place" (Klauck 1988:21). Paul in 1 Cor 11 interprets the community of the Lord's supper as the principle of unity (:20).

The ambiguity in the assessment of the practice of distributing consecrated hosts to an assembled community outside the Mass has already been mentioned. The general discussion on this issue revolves around the distribution of communion during a celebration of the Word if a priest is not available. The problem seen by some is the dissociation of Eucharistic action and communion.[302] Meaning attributed to the Eucharist, and identity seem to be at the core in the controversy. Of course here we are not discussing the Sunday service but the celebration of the Eucharist at a funeral, which is promised as means and rite of farewell. The critical question of some concerning the dissociation of eucharistic action and communion seems for me to be superseded by the even greater problem of dissociation of communion and community and dissociation of proclamation of faith and its related promises, and their redemption. The theological reflections on Eucharist and community or eschatology as presented above are a spiritual reality for the local people. The discrepancy between the theological reflection on different levels and the actual practice creates the problem of proclamatory honesty or sincerity.

The receiving of communion, however, is the acknowledged essential part, as real symbol of the unity longed for. This is unity with the church, with God, and with the deceased:

> Similarly the principal sacramental representation of Christ's paschal mystery is located in the communion action, not in the prayer of blessing, nor on any repetition of Christ's own words. Of course it cannot be *this* type of ritual eating and drinking without the proclamatory word and the memorial blessing, but the symbolism at the center of the entire action is the communion gift and its reception (Power 1995: 293).

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[302] Provencher (1997:126) quotes the contrary statements of bishops. Coffy maintains that the Sunday finds its full meaning in the Eucharist and that the Eucharist finds its full meaning on Sundays. Weakland maintains that Sunday services without a priest weaken Catholic tradition and identity. Provencher himself sees the right of the faithful for the Eucharist when obliged to attend Sunday Mass.

The people were instructed in their faith and seemingly accepted it. To complain about the acceptance[303] and the hitherto related requests seems to become a pastoral absurdity.

The theological concern that the Eucharist is the expression of unity but cannot be a means of it (Bucher 2000; cf. UR 8), is not so much of a discussion topic locally, though it is indeed relevant. It is a legitimate emphasis within the framework of a certain understanding of unity. The local thinking, with the idea of temporary membership within a clan provides, as far as I see, a model to accommodate the other view provided by Vatican II: The Eucharist is source and summit of Christian life (LG 11). The considerations about the expression of unity take a further turn with regard to those present at the celebration, who are not belonging to our own denomination. Hospitality is recognised as a cultural feature in the local context. Magesa (1991:25) points to hospitality when sacraments are meant to dispose people to build up the body of Christ. This hospitality includes three central aspects of the African appreciation of the meaning of the sacraments: making people welcome, integrating or forming community, and contributing to the life of community. These elements have a transformative power.

The Directory on Ecumenism for Southern Africa (SACBC 1999a) alludes to Vatican II stating:

> (a) The sacraments and most especially the Eucharist are signs as well as sources of unity and therefore are properly open as a matter of course only to those who are in full communion with each other; (b) baptism creates a bond between all baptised which seeks its full expression in eucharistic communion (SACBC 1999a:19 [6.3.1]).

This implies that the normal case is abstinence from shared sacraments. Prominent circumstances justifying sharing sacraments are danger of death and other pressing needs (SACBC 1999a:20 [6.3.3]). It can be argued that such a need arises in the case of funerals for people wanting to express their faith and looking for decontamination of death. It is doubtful whether the danger of death as depicted in the Directory on Ecumenism includes what was earlier described as contamination by death with all its threats. This point would deserve more attention. It would not only take into account the physical death, but the spiritual as well. The guidelines provide for a grave and pressing

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[303] One priest told me that the people only demanded the Eucharist because they were taught that way. It remains a surprising phenomenon that people belittle or downplay the success of their own teaching while continuing not to live up to the meaningful promises made in this teaching.

need that can arise when attending an Eucharistic celebration for a special feast or event (SACBC 1999a:22 [6.5.3]).[304] This can, with all the importance attributed to them, well include the rites of the funeral.

Klinghardt's (1996) investigation in private meals as community meals (1996:30) in the context of the early church may help to further understand the missionary relevance of the Eucharist, allay some fears, and encourage theological reflection on the possibility of a "temporary membership" or hospitality. Funeral societies were taking care for funerals of their members.[305] These associations had an important impact on the development of the Christian communities. Common to all the societies was the common meal (1996:40). Klinghardt points out that the participants in philosophers' symposiums were very homogeneous. Uninvited guests appear and threaten the intended homogeneity. Invited guests brought these by secondary invitation (1996:84-7). He assumes that before baptism became the criterion for admission to the Christian meal, the meal of the community itself must have been an important factor in the early mission due to the phenomenon of secondary invitations (1996:90). The threat to homogeneity by secondary invitations is not only a phenomenon of private meals. It affects the missionary common meals of the early Christians (1996:91).

Jesus' communion with sinners and tax collectors made his meals different from those of the Pharisees, for example (Klinghardt 1996:157). The meal with its sympotic community conformed very much with the expectations of justice, equality, and friendship. The meal is a concrete utopia for community; its idealisation helps as basis for models of society (1996:163). The wish for peace symbolises itself in the idea of a joyful community at meal (1996:169).

Some points making an impact on the context of this study emerge. The general social practice of meals influenced the developing practice of the church. Likewise reflection on cultural meals can influence the church's practice as it develops. Members introduced people by secondary invitations into their community. Many non-members

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[304] The condition remains the compliance with diocesan norms and adherence to the criteria given in [6.3.6]: the persons seeking sharing must do it on their own initiative; must be unable to receive from a minister of their own church; must manifest Catholic faith in the sacrament; must have proper disposition for fruitful reception (SACBC 1999a:20). Insofar the practice complies very well: distinctions are seen between the denominations and their Eucharistic practice. Those feeling uneasy with rejecting people must know that it is the initiative of the recipient that counts most.

are present at funerals. The meals can take a missionary expression with the community at the centre. This community includes the real presence of Jesus, the ancestors, and the deceased. In the local context the "teaching" effect of the Eucharistic celebration was emphasised. All this invites and urges to consider ways of making the Eucharistic celebration possible and to extend the Eucharistic hospitality. One can understand this as a missionary task in an important area: the funerals.

5.2.2.3 Contributions to the discussion of ordaining community leaders

It remains a matter of concern that the Eucharist cannot be celebrated because of a lack of ordained ministers. One therefore needs to look at ways of overcoming this specific deficiency in the ministry of community leaders. Considering the ordination of local leaders and the failure to do anything about it have been around for a long time. Schillebeeckx (1981:59) stated that those leading the community are the ones to celebrate the Eucharist with it. For Rahner (1980:143), who did not know about community leaders, it remains mere theoretical thought to claim that the functions of a pastoral assistant must not be confused with those of the priests if they are the actual leaders. If one accepts the axiom that the appropriate rite should transfer a permanent and important task then the pastoral assistants should receive the authorisation fitting to their task. If he is the leader of a community, he should be ordained priest (1980:145).

Hastings (1973a:24) draws the attention to the fact of the reversal of situations. In medieval Europe there were priests who had no university education. They celebrated the Mass, but this rural ministry did not preach. In rural Africa the catechist preaches but does not celebrate the Mass. In the earlier time the preaching was considered too difficult, but not the celebration of the Mass. Hastings regards neither situation as ideal.

With more development we now have leaders who find themselves in a similar situation, which is not ideal. Hastings (1973c:176) assumed at the time he wrote that the appearance of ministry would vary in different contexts. For him structuring the ministry according to the situation is a must. He suggested at that time that some of the catechists be ordained after further training (1973c:177). He sees a profusion of lay ministries co-operating (1973c:183). Hastings (1973b:117) notes that only some of the

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[305] On the perceived similarity of the early Christians to the funeral societies see also Wilken (1984:31-47): To the casual observer the Christian community appeared remarkably similar to an association, religious or burial society (:44).

ministries in the church need the commissioning or ordination. As early as 1970 Hastings said

> a structural revolution in the whole pattern of the African Church is required not merely because the present pattern of ministry is simply not viable, but because the whole mission of the Church in the non-western world calls for it (Hastings 1970:172).[306]

Lobinger (1971:345-6) called early for a team ministry of local presbyters. In a plea for the ordination of proven Christians he (Lobinger 1975) states that the incarnation process of the Gospel is expressed by resorting to local people. Ordination gives scope to charisms; it is an acknowledgement that all ministries come from Christ.

Ela's vision of the church matches Paul VI's admonition to make the Eucharist the centre of church life: He suggests rebuilding the church by SCCs and then gradually allowing them to celebrate the Eucharist, presided over by one of the members (in Baur 1994:321-2). Community-oriented priests are needed with a necessary diversification of priestly types: Priests must come nearer to the natural communities in which the faithful live (Konde Ntedika in Baur 1994:321).

Thinking in terms of SCC leaders Kanyandago (1993:153-161) sees that the leaders who promote unity in the community would preside over the sacrament of unity, the Eucharist. The reason for a lack of a sufficient number of priests he locates with Ela in a ministerial model that is not able to respond to the needs of the communities. There is a need to review the ministerial model in the light of the vital needs of African communities. One way forward would be an ordination that would not raise someone to the priesthood as understood up to now, but to the service of the community and Eucharist. For the formation of such ministers Kanyandago sees no need for new structures. Existing lay leaders could be used. Ela proposes to commission others to celebrate the Eucharist.[307]

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[306] Why Hastings (1973c:177) does not assume that every little village would have its own priest, but one next to a cluster of villages with a Eucharist once a month is not clear to me. The ideal would be to enable the regular celebration on Sundays, and in our case at funerals.

[307] "Müßten wir ... nicht auch die Frage der Gemeindeleitung in Verbindung mit dem sakramentalen Dienst und ganz besonders der Eucharistiefeier neu überdenken? Die Frage, die man ernst nehmen muß, ist folgende: Würde es in der Übergangssituation, in der sich die afrikanischen Kirchen befinden, dem Glauben der Kirche widersprechen, wenn ein Gemeindeleiter, der einen vom Bischof anerkannten Dienst übernimmt - einen Dienst, der keineswegs dem geweihten Amt vorbehalten ist -, ermächtigt würde, je nach den Umständen Eucharistie zu feiern?" (Ela 1987: 76).

Kirchberger (1998:298) sees two theories about the future legitimisation of ministry. One sees the authority to preside over the Eucharist and to administer absolution as given by the ordination; all other duties are regarded as lay ministries. The other position maintains the ordination as conferment of authority for the ministry of leadership in the name of Christ, culminating in the celebration of the Eucharist. This would apply to leaders of the communities. They as de facto leaders should receive the necessary authority and spiritual help by ordination. As ministers they would co-operate with highly trained priests. Kirchberger sees the restructuring of ministries in the young churches as an important factor in making the churches at home in their own culture. Such action would comply with the desire of local people to feel at home (cf. chapter 3.2.10) on the ministerial level.

5.2.3 Conclusion: a culturally grounded proclamation of faith

In the light of the theological reflection the funeral leaders provide a competent proclamation of faith. It is based on a culturally informed interpretation of scripture. This form of interpretation is theoretically backed by theological reflection. The leaders contribute to the decontamination from death by communicating the word of God in their sermons. As the self-communication of God's love the sermons are the event of the word of God and bring about community with him. Moreover, the longing of the bereaved for community is not only satisfied by the offer of the community within the church. It finds a peculiar response by the important and theologically unproblematic inclusion of the respect for the ancestors into the flow of the whole ritual of the rite of passage.

The celebration of the Eucharist appears in the light of the local theology and of the wider theological tradition as the epitome of proclamation in the paradoxical situation of bereavement. It provides the ritual culmination of restoring life in community embracing all strata, the faith community, the families, and God as the source of life. It in itself resembles the stages of a rite of passage. Its reservation to the traditionally-known type of priesthood raises serious questions with regard to the sincerity of proclamation and to the offer of an intrinsically incomplete ministry. The reflections on ordaining community leaders show a way out of the dilemma. The local experience allows widening the scope of available people as envisaged by Hastings. The inclusion of community leaders in the ministry of presiding over the Eucharist would promote the concerns about community

and inculturation while the current practice violates its own concern about inculturation and neglects an understanding won under the viewpoint of critical realism.[308]

5.3 Decontamination by an incorporating ministry

While employing the model in pastoral theology in the previous section on the service rendered by the funeral leaders, I will apply it now to their community ministry as such. The dimension of life in this case is their ministry, which will be interpreted in the light of faith. This interpretation and its celebration will bear on the future, as does their concrete ministry: the con-vocar, pro-vocar, and e-vocar of Boff.

What was observed and analysed in chapters two to four is a culturally-initiated, economically viable, and ecumenically friendly kind of ministry, performed by leaders accountable to their communities in order to restore life by holistically building community among the members, with each other, and with God.

Deriving from their communities, contributing to their upbuilding, and aiming at community, the leadership is community based. The leaders "are God's elect through the vote or the acclamation of the people" (Uzukwu 1996:137). The community is built on collegiality through the collaborative participation of its members (:137). All this happens in collaboration with the priests and bishop by their unmistakable, specific contributions.

5.3.1 Emic discussion of the community ministry by funeral leaders

Azevedo in his study on Basic Christian Communities stated:

> Ecclesial communion today does not so much call for the transmission of set ideas and models from one Church to another. Instead it calls for the perception and comparative analysis of the concrete factors in different

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[308] The main printed sources for adults for an understanding of the Eucharist are the RCIA book *Our Journey Together* (Hirmer 1987), the training booklet *Training Assistant Ministers of the Eucharist* (Lobinger 1976), the book on *Building Small Christian Communities* (Lobinger 1981), and *Ministers of the Eucharist* by Kramer (1997a;1997b). It is surprising that this recent publication from Africa avoids reference to culture and cultural procedures altogether. No open module of reflection within a multi-cultural context in South Africa is provided. More reference to culture is found in the new book for the preparation for receiving the first Holy Communion (SACBC 1999b). Published exclusively in local languages it does, however, not address the adult leaders. It is also surprising that in *Our Journey Together* the cultural point of reference to the Eucharist becomes the scarce slaughtering of a wedding beast. "In many African cultures it is the blood of a beast which seals the new unity between bride and bridegroom" (Hirmer 1987:132). According to the trainer catechist J Timati this is locally only done by the Basotho. The much more common ancestral commemoration meals, where there is spirit (the required cry of the beast), blood, flesh, and presence, is not referred to.

situations that explain the configuration of a specific local Church (Azevedo 1987:105).

Different models of leadership throughout Africa reflect this. The main emphasis in the diocese of Kaya in Burkina Faso, for instance, lies on self-reliant catechists trained over a full-time period of four years in their church functions as well as in income-generating trade (Wüstenberg 1995b:44). They are deployed as single people, as "representatives of the priest" (Guirma 1995) to a certain village community, as bishop Guirma put it. Their involvement results in what Mathieu called passivity of communities.[309]

Some labelled them the pillars (cf. Bühlmann 1976:265) or corner stone (Hastings 1967:222) of the mission. The perception of the catechist as the representative (cf. Bühlmann 1976:265)[310] or substitute (Hastings 1967:222; cf. AG 16) for the priest in the village is not a single instance. Lobinger, however, concluded his thesis with the point that catechists were to be regarded as a temporary means when working in rural parishes (Lobinger 1973a:103). The church in Kinshasa chose another approach involving lay-people. In 1975 Cardinal Malula introduced as their form of lay ministries the Bakambi[311] (singular: Mokambi) (cf. Hickey 1980:72-74; Bertsch 1990:120; Santedi Kinkupu 1997).

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[309] Mathieu (1995) reported that in his parish of Tema-Bokin in Burkina Faso 22 of 33 Communautès Chretienne de Base (CCBs) have a catechist. Experience shows that those communities without a catechist are livelier. Note that the CCBs differ significantly from the SCCs in South Africa (cf. Wüstenberg 1995a).

[310] "In the past, the catechist was the last link in the chain within the monarchical system of the missions: one bishop – one missionary – one catechist, and then below that the more or less passive congregation. He was paid by his leader, was accountable to him alone, and was his one and only representative at the outposts" (Bühlmann 1976:265). On catechists see also the articles in Shorter & Kataza 1972; Hickey 1980:40-49.

[311] The bishop commissions a single Mokambi with the administration of a parish and the organisation of the pastoral care for a certain term and with far reaching responsibilities. The bishop appoints a co-responsible priest who does not reside in the parish. The priest is accountable to the bishop for the priestly service; the Mokambi is accountable for his share in the pastoral service. A Mokambi receives a three years long theological and pastoral education at a particular institute. He must be married and have a profession as source of income. He is encouraged to keep at least two afternoons free from parochial duties (cf. Bertsch 1990:134-135). This time limit requires the involvement of other ministries to cater for various needs of the parish (cf. Hickey 1980:73). It encourages parishioners to a more active participation in church life (Bertsch 1990:77). This model depends on the presence of a number of priests with special tasks who cannot take full responsibility for parish work but may assist with a limited contribution to this service of the Bakambi (Bertsch 1990:76). Thus the work with Bakambi seems rather limited to well developed urban areas with a number of priests available to provide the specific priestly ministry while working mainly in categorial pastoral areas.

5.3.1.1 Ministry serving community

Reflections on the church as community often focus or emerge from consideration of Small Christian Communities (e.g. Lwaminda 1996) or Base Communities (Azevedo 1987). Here a local church appears with some SCCs, built up as communion of faith by laying a strong emphasis on local community ministry in a variety of ways. This happens in an indispensable interplay with the priests and the bishop. I recall only their crucial involvement in introducing, maintaining, and affirming the ministry, and in preserving unity. Their ministry appears as a prerequisite for that of the leaders and hence for their contribution in building up the church. While the Pastoral Plan (no. 13) simply states that ministries create a spirit of community their contribution assumes a clearer profile. Community ministry responds to both the vision of Vatican II and the Pastoral Plan of the church as community resembling God's Trinitarian unity. The particular ministry of funeral leaders responds to specific needs by restoring community of the people with each other and with God. The deployment of community ministry appears to be a genuine way of building the church.

The funeral leaders and other leaders emerge from their faith communities. The process of selection/election already affects the community. It brings the community together in various forms and strengthens its members in their concern about their own affairs. The reflection on the qualities required in leaders promotes a progressing, maturing self-understanding as a Christian community. Self-reliance and independence of the community are promoted.

The way a vocation, the call to ministry, is experienced deserves special attention. Some felt touched by the biblical message about the need for leaders, others by the example of the role model displayed by leaders. The leaders themselves care for their communities by looking for new leaders, and by attracting some through their example. It is, even in combination with these, the needs of the community and the call by the community, which often qualifies the vocation. It is in most cases not a personal vision

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Bakambi differ insofar from the leaders in our context here as they are commissioned according to Canon 517,2 CIC, installed to manage the parish. Bishop Tshibangu Tshishiku pointed out that the introduction of the Bakambi well before the promulgation of the new Canon law in 1983 was based on theological grounds and an intuition that it did not contravene the regulations of the church. It anticipated what was later reflected in the law: "Fondé sur les bases théologiques, et avec l'intuition qu'il ne devait pas être opposé aux dispositions juridiques et sacramentelles de l'Eglise, le ministère non ordonnés des *BAKAMBI* fut instauré bien années avant la promulgation du code canonique de 1983" (Tshibangu Tshishiku 1997:22).

or urge. Subject of the vocation is the community, subsisting at times in SCCs and represented by its committee. In the case of those called by example it is again a working team, or particular leaders working in a team, that influences community members, rather than a single person. It is usually the community of those who received the spirit and who live in his presence, not the individuals, who call. From this point of view the vocation of the leaders is a community-related spiritual event with the controls at hand for the community. With regard to vocation, the ministry of the leaders differs from that of the priests. Though the priests too grow up in a community, they are normally not selected and sent by it.

The concern about the needs of the community emerged in one case as the motive to open the ministry of funeral leaders to women and so to perform a major shift in contravention of culturally determined perceptions. Community thus became the determinant for adaptation and cultural change.

The deployment of the leaders in teams builds up community and community spirit among the leaders themselves. It allows the inclusion of personalities with a tendency towards domineering. When there is conflict the principle of locality itself suggests the tendency to integration instead of separation and possible escalation, which could cause frictions in the community. Here the community ministry differs from that of pastoral workers like priests. Priests can be transferred to other places and differ in their accountability. Leaders are accountable to their communities in the first place.

The concern for quality urges the community and the leaders to care for formation. This care for the leaders affects the community in various ways. It brings wider sections of the community together when attending formation events. It enhances the formation of wider parts of the community in matters of faith. It promotes a culturally-informed and therefore rather accessible and acceptable understanding of faith. It accommodates the cultural needs of the community. In this way leadership formation becomes a prominent place for the development of a local theology. The work with a selected target-group includes further community members and its results influence the whole community. The advantage of the specific formation and training as opposed to general approaches to adult formation is the motivation deriving from immediate and comprehensible needs. A community ministry oriented training makes it easier to entertain thoughts on the Eucharist and aspects of death than a seminar held just to cover this topic. Task-based

formation is target oriented and contextualised to the concrete needs of the community and its leaders.

The leadership-related formation work contributes to the building of trust. In a mutual exercise leaders inform pastoral workers and enhance their contextual competency while pastoral workers do likewise with their theologically-trained competency. Such a process creates a trust that distinguishes the deployment of community ministry from a mere emergency and stopgap measure. With a basic understanding of faith as trust this allows one to interpret the exercised community ministry as a witness of practised faith and the community as faith-community in practice.

The decision making on funerals takes into account the needs of the community itself. It aims at maintaining the community and motivating people to active participation. The community-based ministry is rather able to take individual circumstances into account, including the concern of integrating them into the community. Even where conflicts arise over decisions or problematic leaders, these can be turned to build the community. They help to clarify, deepen, and apply the basic vision.

Similarly, the proclamation offered by the leaders keeps in mind the church as sign and instrument for communion with God and of unity among mankind (cf. LG 1). The spiritual self-understanding is to reassure the persisting community with God and the active participation in the community of his kingdom. The message preached usually goes far beyond simple moralising though it can be moralising too. It often revolves around community with God and community with the church in faith and hope. The community becomes the offered answer to the need for it. The kerygmatic intention is the proclamation of God present among his people. In their concern for oneness the leaders serve unity within the congregation. The ministry of unity extends to the administering of the Eucharist as a response to the needs of the bereaved. The sense of the church as community and the community with God as the essential cornerstones of faith proves the competence in faith and as faith community. The *sensus fidelium* can be sensed among the people and their leaders. They are faithful to the faith handed over to them and in its adaptation to their situation.

The self-image of the leaders sees them as depending on God and his presence, the presence of the Spirit. Their team effort is understood as work empowered by God for the people. As witnesses of faith they are instrumental in responding to the longing for

the Spirit by their ministry. They are hope (cf. 1 Thess 2:19) by reassuring and representing the spirituality of the presence.

Serving the proclamation of faith in various ways, the leaders reflect and enact the apostolic faith handed down to them. They contribute to and ascertain its catholicity when involved in incarnating the apostolic and universal faith into their own ever new contexts. They prove and proclaim that the message of Christ has a crucial bearing and importance in their particular context with its particular cultural grammar. This way they contribute in their specific way to the catholic variety within the church-community as a whole. The leaders' advantage is to be at home in both the cultural and faith grammar.

This kind of ministry is in many ways incorporated into the wider church. This becomes clear in the collaboration with the pastoral workers, in particular the priests. The collaboration in the ministry seems to be essential for its functioning. It affects the functioning of the ministry by its introduction, admission, and maintenance through the pastoral workers. It is essential in its formation efforts to maintain quality. It includes the bishop as representative of the diocese. Most of his visits are linked to matters of leadership, thus assuming a crucial role in leading the local church by supporting and authorising its leadership. He symbolises in particular the faith aspect of the ministry that it is a gift of God, entrusted by him. This implies a shift in the professional profile. In former times visits of the bishop were mainly linked to the confirmation of people not yet meant to take responsibility in their communities. A role change is required and this happens to the bishop when he embarks on building a church led at the grass-roots level by a service ministry carried out by local leaders. The priests themselves become rather animators. The community ministry requires them to take up the main role Jesus fulfilled when teaching people and supervising the disciples he sent out. The ministry and the encounter with the leaders enhance the skills of the pastoral workers, expatriate and local priests as well. All of them, even if part of the local culture, are in permanent need of adaptation to a continually changing context. With this the community ministry challenges and enhances the community building efforts of the pastoral staff with its primary target group, the leaders. In a dialectical relationship the ordained and the community ministry assume a power to build up the church as community which they would not have without one another. Their relationship is a creative one.

The funeral leaders appear as collaborators in their own right when acting independently from other pastoral workers. Unlike other African models they are neither

representatives of nor substitutes for the priest. The mode of their election and accountability makes them representatives of their church within their communities, collaborating with and dependent on the priests. As pillars or cornerstones in the church they do not appear as paid catechists but are trained, voluntary parishioners. They are not commissioned with the administration of a parish like the Bakambi. Like any development, which precedes legal reflection as we saw in the case of the Bakambi, future law development may legally secure the position of community leaders.

The community church with qualified and respected leaders has a good standing among the denominations. Their qualification contributes to the appreciation of their own community by other denominations and therefore to pride (not vanity) and self-esteem as a community formerly known for its utter dependence on pastoral staff in proclamation and ministry. The own identity as a faith community among faith communities is more enhanced than threatened by the work of community ministry.

The leaders express an understanding of service ministry. Their integration into their communities, their approach to common decision making, their ministry, and their
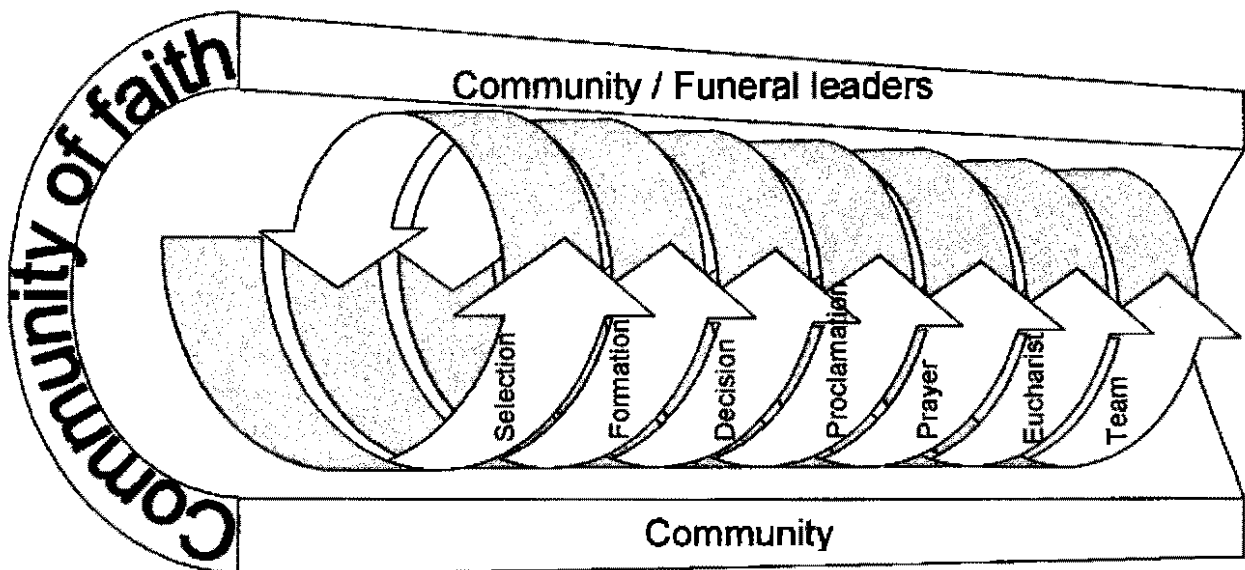
Figure 5.2. Community promoting spiral driven by the internal dynamics between leaders and their community

respect for the culture are in service of the community. For all that they invest in some cases a considerable amount of time without expecting remuneration. Economically they provide a locally adapted and affordable form of ministry.

Community ministry enhances the community. The Pastoral Plan (no. 6) points out that the love and oneness of the community resemble the community of God and make the

communities a sign and instrument for unity in the whole human race. In a mutual process community promotes leadership and leadership in turn promotes community.

From the point of view of fundamental theology the fact that the leaders act for the community puts them on the side of the official ministry. The special ministry, or in other words, the ministerial priesthood as opposed to the priesthood of all faithful, serves the faith of the community (cf. chapter 1.3.3). This service to the faith of the community happens, as we now see, in a very complex and comprehensive way. It is not limited to the actual proclamation in sermons and the rituals but goes way beyond by including issues such as selection and formation of other leaders.

The one inconsistency reappears here: since the leaders are not ordained they cannot act for the community by presiding over and so providing the Eucharist. The church that needs and promotes them does not allow them to carry out their ministry in the comprehensive way needed by the community for building up community. This threatens the catholicity of the community. It does not allow full integration into the local context using the culture text of the meals in the actual practice. In terms of denominational identity an essential part of Roman Catholic identity can not be practised. This calls for urgent attention.

5.3.1.2 Ministry serving justice

Besides community building, the longing for justice by increasing the number of local leaders was one motive for introducing community ministry. "The Lord loves righteousness and justice" (Ps 33:5). It may be an experience of the abundant love of God that the concern for justice, triggered off by statistical inequality, developed a much broader scope.[312] The ministry of community leaders revealed a quite comprehensive picture of justice. Justice affects the community leaders. Unlike former helpers who were chosen by the priests, the new leaders are backed by their communities and

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[312] Holland and Henriot (1983:30) state that social analysis within a pastoral cycle aims at action on behalf of justice. In the theological realm with the reflection on practice triggered off by previous reflection we receive here a piece of practical theology guided by the concern of justice. Van der Ven (1996:ix-xi) names as object of practical theology the self-development of the church. "The praxis of the church can be described as the practice in which a transformatory orientation is active" (:xi). Change in this process brings the church closer to its goals. The Greek word κρίσις used in the NT for justice assumes a multitude of meanings. It includes God's righteous judgement, judgement, right in the sense of justice, and righteousness (cf. Bauer et al. 1979 on the respective key-words). It can take the hue of punishment like ἐκδίκησις, another word translated by justice. In our context particularly the connotations of righteousness as good and having a just cause are unfolded, enriched by the local experience.

accountable to them. They are able to experience equality instead of subordination in ministry. Justice is done by enabling them to develop and employ skills, the charisms given to the individuals.

Justice happens to the communities as such. Leaders who were formerly accountable to the priest are now accountable to them. They are enabled to select the leaders according to their needs. They gradually become more independent from outside sources, financially and in terms of personnel, at least for immediate ministry. The ministry remains dependent in the crucial sectors of formation, selection, and commissioning. The awareness of the communities' responsibility for themselves grows. The leadership contributes, as we saw above, to the implementation of the theological vision of a "community-church". This includes decision making and proclamation as well as the tender beginning of policy making with regard to the acceptance of women as funeral leaders. The concern for the community is more important than cultural constraints. A statement like "the needs of the community come first" can also indicate that the basic cultural concept of community is applied for the church. This indicates the value attributed to the church community. The fact that the concern about community is maintained by many instead of just being imposed from above makes the basic vision owned by the people. The church becomes their own.

Justice happens in the whole process also to the priests, the pastoral workers. A much closer process of initiation into the context happens in their intensive exposure to the predominant task as teachers, formators, or facilitators. Their competence is enhanced by the competence of the leaders and their communities.

Justice happens to the bereaved and the dead as well. The bereaved experience contextualised, informed, and normally transparent decision making. Especially when they are members of different denominations they experience respect for their customs, which are not interfered with by a particular church. The dead are respected by being accompanied fully.

The people experience justice by having their culture respected and not denigrated by the church. By having local leaders rather than expatriate ones, their language is treated with more respect.

One problematic area is that of the acceptance of women as funeral leaders. Traditionally not wanted, it is the overruling community-concern, this time for the

community of faith, that allows gradual change. The local experiences give no indication of a revolutionary process governed by the idea of entitlement of individuals or pressure groups for a certain task. Though not articulated it is a matter of injustice to still exclude women from the funeral-ministry.[313] To include them as matter of justice for the women is one issue. Developing their skills and charisms and making them available for the service of the community is another. This cannot be a men's affair only. It is the entitlement of the community as a whole that requires change, inspired by faith and expecting women willing to offer their service.

The community ministry of funeral leaders contributes to the implementation of justice. What we saw so far looks like the happy fulfilment of the promise "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled" (Mt 5:6). However, further steps for the self-development of the church lie ahead as the still existing inconsistencies suggest. They are an expression of inadequacy or injustice prevailing and are of ethical concern.

Theologically it appears questionable to deploy leaders who function well in all areas but one, the celebration of the Eucharist. Though the present practice is loyally accepted and implemented by the leaders, it seems unfair to expose leaders to the permanent failure regarding the wish of the people to receive the Eucharist. It appears to be counterproductive and creates the need for occasional justification. This deficient practice contradicts the formation efforts including a culturally informed understanding of the Eucharist. The locally increasing demand for the Eucharist is probably also influenced by the intensive formation. This formation must in the long run appear as an empty shell if it is not implemented in practice.

Some forms of injustice that appear in connection with the inappropriate implementation of community ministry can be more easily addressed. There is some injustice in the occasional interference from the outside by priests or leaders from other communities. These violate the principles of locality and accountability to the community. It also appears to be unjust to lead groups which are too small to see themselves as a community. They are unable to fulfil the requirements of a community. Injustice happens if such a group has to make use of leaders that are not accountable to it. Injustice

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[313] If men who seem in a number of regards weaker in performance are in need for a sanctuary this question has to be addressed. They should, however, receive their proper respect by other means than by the exclusion of women from a particular ministry.

happens to the vision of leadership when people prefer to call in priests rather than be served by unaccountable leaders.

5.3.2 Etic discussion on the community ministry

After interpreting the community ministry of funeral leaders in a local theological framework, understanding them under the local code, the etic discussion will widen the spectrum by looking at the faith tradition. It provides criteria to locate the phenomenon of the community ministry of funeral leaders theologically.

I will refer to the theological tradition that reflects on the *sensus fidelium*. It allows us to understand the genuine contribution of the leaders to apostolicity, catholicity, and unity. In referring to church history I intend to show that the local development can be understood as a contribution to the tradition of continuous development of ministerial structures. By looking particularly at the history of the African church we can discover the contribution that community ministry makes to overcoming the shortcomings of the past. A contextualised ministry is part of the ongoing making of tradition. The Bible seems to have been the main source of credibility and point of reference when introducing the new forms of ministry. Therefore it seems appropriate to relate them to the local biblical source, the Xhosa Bible, and the way in which it suggests and reflects the variety in the ministry of Christ. The reference to South African formation material and its underlying theology will help to put the local phenomenon into relation to its own broader context. I will refer to leadership trends in the secular realm, which include a culturally-informed perspective, and to trends within the church. This resumes an old tradition. The church always drew from its context in order to develop an accepted leadership structure. The context now includes leadership patterns of various cultures and of the established church itself. Thus such considerations form part of theology. They can help us to recognise the local development as contextually fitting and acceptable. Further reflections on cultural issues will help us to understand that a leadership form that is rooted in its cultural context is a contribution to inculturation in a structural perspective. Moreover it will help us to discover that the ministry of the funeral leaders is itself part of their eschatological proclamation. By consulting church-based documents, regulations, and reflections the local leadership will appear as part of a diverse development ruled by needs and differing trends. This will show that it is both in line with the major theological direction within the whole church and a possible stimulant for the development and enhancement of the theology and the related regulations.

5.3.2.1 *Sensus fidelium* implies catholicity in local variations

The statement "listen to the people" of one leader revealed the secret of his collaboration with the people. The methodological approach of this study resembles this principle, taking the reality given in observations and interviews as point of departure for the theological reflection. The theological concept that seems to support this procedure is that of the *sensus fidelium*, the sense of faith of the faithful. Instead of starting with the given literature on ministry as main source this approach trusts in what every bishop prayerfully promises and expects for those receiving the sacrament of confirmation:

> Send your Holy Spirit upon them to be their helper and guide. Give them the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of right judgement and courage, the spirit of knowledge and reverence. Fill them with the spirit of wonder and awe in your presence (NCCB 1990:163).

This petition implies the conviction that it can be fulfilled in a meaningful way. It encourages one to trust the faithful as a source of faith and theological reflection, in our case those who are going to proclaim the message of life in its fullness in the encounter with death. It should have become clear in the analysis so far that the power of faith and the Spirit are at work in the funeral leaders. The theological reflection now envisaged serves to corroborate this impression.

Vatican II, in its text of LG 12, caused a major shift in the perception of the *sensus fidei*, whereby the magisterium retains a guiding function. Sartori (1981:56) mentions that at the synod of bishops of 1980, dealing with the family, one bishop related the see-judge-act method to the *sensus fidelium*, a suggestion met by others with suspicion. The actions at grass roots level do not always immediately appear as actions of the Spirit.

Sartori (1981:57) points at two sets of criteria to discern the *sensus fidelium*. They relate to fidelity to the divine and to fidelity to the human. Faith is the radical primum in the church to which all are bound. Equipped with the Spirit and its gifts all are rendered capable of teaching others. The gifts of the Spirit are not limited to the abstract formulation of doctrine but are also present in the concrete history and dynamism of the development of the seed of the word.

The criteria of what is truly human include the principle that communication comes before communion. Only free people can reach real consensus:

> The *active reaction of believers (whether in consensus or dissent) can in fact be described as a true locus theologicus*, in which it is possible to read the

force of the transmitted Word, to grasp its original resonances and ever new implications (Sartori 1981:58).

This includes the acceptance of moments of conflict. Conflict is often needed to achieve quality and to examine thoroughly. One has to expect a dialectic interplay between minorities and majorities, where the truth lies beyond the victories and defeats. Antitheses become authentic complements when placed within a whole, identifying the problems and admitting sincere discussion (Sartori 1981:58).

This allows the use of various forms of expressing the same faith rooted in the Spirit as transformed antitheses. The concern is quality in ministry. This seems better achieved with the present form than with previous forms. Bishop Onaiyekan makes it clear:

It is my belief that the African theologian must count among his primary tasks the effort to listen to, and speak on behalf of our people as they express their life in Christ in the daily circumstances of their lives (Onaiyekan 1997:358).

Scheffczyk (1988:182) points at ways of viewing diversity and at the same time considering the sense of faith in the community. The unifying factor of the plurifomity seems to be its common origin and its common final goal, unity. He seems rather cautious towards the *sensus fidelium*, the sense of faith of the people of God when he assumes it could be used against dogma. He therefore demands acceptance by the whole church as inerrant expression of faith (:183). In the concrete observation of funerals dogmatic questions were never at stake, neither in the proclamation nor in the ministry of the community leaders. On the contrary, the trinitarian dogma of redemption and all other dogmas are maintained by both.

Tillard (1990) emphasises with reference to LG 8 that within the church communion, which includes the hierarchy, the mission and charism of the bishops are part of a communion of missions and charisms given to all. They do not exist in parallelism but in communion with all and at their service. The *sensus fidelium* must not be confused with *consensus fidelium*, the latter being the fruit of the presence of the *sensus fidei* in every baptised person. What protects it from dogmatism is its embeddedness in the wider context of the ecclesial communion and its relatedness to an authentic evangelical life. In its relatedness to the community and as gift to the single person it is actually the antenna for concrete action, for instance for contextualisation:

The *sensus fidelium* intuits what is fitting, even demanded. It discerns what fidelity to the revelation (which through the Spirit is its foundation) calls for, in

such and such a situation or in the face of such and such a profound or irreversible evolution of the human condition (Tillard 1990:249).

The tension lies between the ecclesial poles of *semper ipsa* and *nunquam eadem*, always herself and never the same. The *sensus fidelium* tends to verify the latter, the magisterium the former, maintaining the memory of the church. The *sensus fidelium* and the ministry of memory are in communion. Tillard extends his reflections explicitly towards the issue of contextualisation and inculturation.[314] He widens the former statement to *et amplius ubique ipsa, nullo loco eadem*, also everywhere herself, but nowhere exactly the same. This is expressed in the dialectical, creative relationship that we observed between office holders and community leaders:

> It is crucial to understand how apostolicity, unity and catholicity are together interwoven in such a way that one of these essential features of the church cannot exist without the others (Tillard 1990:255).[315]

The church is apostolic[316] since everything she has comes from the apostolic times. The church is catholic, since over the centuries and at different places she embodies the apostolic tradition while taking new forms according to the variety of cultures. This local church unites with the apostolic community and all local churches in the Eucharist.

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[314] Taking as point of departure Newman's reflections on the *sensus fidelium* also Crowley (1992) addresses the question of inculturation in a hermeneutic universe. Alluding to Gadamer's principle of 'fusion of horizons' he states: "What is involved here is an interpretation of past meanings within a current historically-conditioned consciousness... In this fusion of horizons the subject's current horizon of understanding becomes broadened. The horizon of the tradition, in turn, becomes more sharply focused within the consciousness of the subject, in this case, within the faith consciousness of the local church" (:169). Crowley assumes that the church was ready to dogmatise when the horizon of a particular faith consciousness was ready to meet the horizon of faith tradition itself (:170). The magisterium "never has obviated the a priori role of the *sensus fidelium* which has resulted from living the faith in particular historical circumstances" (:170).

[315] Sanneh (1989) describes a similar process: Christianity from its inception translated itself out of Aramaic and Hebrew. In doing so it exerted a dual force: it relativised its Judaic roots thereby promoting significant aspects of these roots, and it destigmatised gentile culture as a normal extension of the life of the church. The action of destigmatising complemented the one of relativising (:1).

[316] Apostolicity is an inclusive term. Küng states that the whole church is in succession of the apostles. It succeeds the apostles in faithfulness. That constitutes its authority and power. This implies that there is not only a historical succession but also an internal appropriate consistency (Küng 1967a:419-425; 1967b:146-147; cf. Küng 1994:112). Schillebeeckx speaks about the apostolicity of the Gospel of the community (1981:59; cf. Boff 1980:74-75). This apostolicity is a historical dimension of the church, which is always to be realised (Küng 1967b:150). Boff (1980:75) sees apostolicity foremost with the community of faith. The original sense of apostolicity means to be sent as a group, the community of the twelve, and the first ecclesia around Jesus. The whole apostolic community was bearer of power. Christian Basis Communities resort to this original meaning of apostolicity. The community as a whole is a bearer of the orthodox teaching. Therefore the apostolic succession is not limited to the hierarchical function. Schillebeeckx (1981:65-6) states that apostolicity means the awareness of the community that the work of Jesus continues with steadfast importance of the NT as source of inspiration. Martyria, liturgia, and diaconia are apostolic marks of the community. This is open for new forms of ministry. For Van der Ven (1996:314-5) apostolicity means for the church of today to relate best to the context as the first church did, confirming the perception of apostolicity as brought by Tillard in connection with *sensus fidei*.

Nullo loco eadem expresses what Shorter (1994) calls a culturally polycentric church. "There are many obvious ways in which local churches can develop their own spontaneous expressions of faith, worship, ministry and Christian life independently of centralised authority, especially at the grass roots" (:117). A culturally polycentric church has a message for the evangeliser and the evangelised (:118). "It is a Church that accepts a plurality of understandings, applications and expressions of Catholic teaching that are consistent with the meaning of its historic faith-statements" (:119).

The reference to the *sensus fidelium* allows admitting the people and here in particular the leaders as crucial informants of the magisterium. Bate's (1998:168-9) suggestion of checking theologically by referring to the terms of holiness, apostolicity, catholicity, and unity is attractive when considering the local leaders. They are apostolically based in the tradition. The apostolicity of faith is upheld for instance in their co-operation. They are in a very catholic way the local agents of faith expressing and promoting it in a contextual manner. They are concerned about unity, as expressed in the Eucharist and in their whole way of decision making. A community based and community concerned ministry contributes to oneness. Moreover, a ministry executed in the culturally corroborated awareness of the presence of God, being in service of him, contributes to the spiritual aspect of holiness. All these aspects together contribute to the incarnation of faith into the local context. The leaders provide with their *sensus fidelium* crucial insights for the magisterium without which the mission could be rendered senseless. Their ministry and the reflection on it offer a contribution to a communication that is the basis of communion locally, as we saw, and in the worldwide church by faithfully maintaining catholic identity in the *nunquam eadem*.

5.3.2.2 Church history in general: Ministry takes different shapes

While the analysed reality of leadership is part of the church's history, the focus of this study is not on the history of ministry. Some aspects of church history, however, including that of ministry, help us to understand the importance of local development in the wider context of the church's experiences and its tradition in its attempts to translate the apostolicity into contextualised catholicity. I will highlight only few points, drawing in particular from the studies of Osborne (1993) who looks at ministry in general, and Baur (1994) who focuses on the church in Africa.

Hastings (1973b:118) states that a sociological comparison of ministry in different centuries at different places would reveal enormous variation. He stresses that not all

variations were desirable since some weakened effective ministry. The development of ministries appears as contextual, as based on contemporary leadership styles. The socio-political society of the Graeco-Roman world with its orders began influencing the church in the third century. The inculturation of Christianity into the Western society led to assimilation to the leadership style of the secular order with many characteristics of feudalism (Kerkhofs 1995:143). The ministry always developed into a specific shape within a particular context. Exposed to the problems of the time the ministry should help the church to cope with them (Neuner 1995:122). Consequently priestly ministry also changes with changing situations, even today when new policies such as SCCs are introduced, as Hearne (1982:222) pointed out.

As the ordering of the church structure began, those in orders were described by the term *kleros*, those outside the ecclesiastical orders were called *laikoi*. Ordo became the hermeneutical key to introducing and understanding these terms. Neither the New Testament nor the apostolic fathers use the term "order" to describe Christian ministry. Both sources speak about ministry and leadership only (Osborne 1993:27).

Theological reflection on ministry has continually extended, using these new terms and their reality as material. They were borrowed from secular life and were then developed theologically. From its inception the Jesus community had a ministry of service-leadership. Names for it developed only gradually and differed from place to place. The Christian Communities of the first century had different structures. They developed according to the situation of the specific time, location, and the requirements of the mission (cf. Bertsch 1990:144, Schillebeeckx 1970:189; Dulles 1974:152).[317] This implies an accepted coexistence of a variety of leadership models within the one church.

Schillebeeckx contributes further concepts. These offices permeated each other and were primarily community-oriented. Referring to the letter of Clement to the Corinthians Schillebeeckx states that presbyters practising justice exercised good leadership and an episcopal function. Insofar as they lived their faith they also had a diaconal function (Schillebeeckx 1985:151). Schillebeeckx (1981:57-8) points out that in the whole New Testament ministry or office did not develop around liturgy or the Eucharist but around the apostolic up-building of the community by proclamation, instruction, and leadership.

Office-holders were animators, inspirers, and evangelical figures of identification for the community.[318]

With regard to the development of a ritual ordination, one may regret the side effect of reducing the involvement of the whole people of God in ministry. This does not question the existence of an *ordinatio* or *cheirothesia*, the lying on of hands, a rite of installation. The ministers of the Christian community were public office holders of their church so that

> some perceptible and ritualized installation process has its rightful place. Such a ritualization is both the public acknowledgement of such ministerial leadership and the celebration by the community that God has given such a grace to a particular community (Osborne 1993:30).

The problem of concern which can arise with the ritual of ordination is when it is seen as a conferment of sacred power based on a conferment of an ontological repositioning (Osborne 1993:30). The New Testament when referring to discipleship neither addressed a leadership in-group nor a cadre of vowed religious:

> The picture of discipleship which these New Testament authors present is meant for all followers of Jesus (Osborne 1993:48).

Since it seems impossible to talk in New Testament terms about ordained or non-ordained people it is equally difficult to embark on a search for women being ordained in New Testament times. That is simply so because there were no instances of ordination at all (cf. Osborne 1993:31). In the New Testament times the role of women in society was culturally not uniform. It was also contextual:

> Athens, Sparta, Corinth, Macedonia, Asia Minor, Egypt and Rome each had differing ways in which women engaged or did not engage in the academic, political, cultural and religious aspects of everyday life. There was also the Jewish milieu of Jesus' time and its openness and non-openness to women's roles (Osborne 1993:110).

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[317] The Synod on Africa (CIA 62) similarly emphasises for the present time that the scope of inculturation also includes the church's structures.

[318] Not a pluriformity of church structures developed from the variety of ministries but a decline: "The reduction of church life during the second and third centuries – necessary perhaps at that time of expansion – prepared for the unfortunate separation of the Christian community into a large, passive laity directed in word and sacrament by a very small separate group, who alone were publicly constituted in full-time service, i.e., ordained" (O'Meara in Osborne 1993:28).

Generally speaking women and men were placed in parallel situations, especially in the Gospels of Luke and John. Restrictions found as with Paul and Timothy may rather be the result of some local issues.[319]

Osborne shows that access to formation has an important influence on the participation in leadership.[320] It was not only the lack of adequate access to formation that influenced the position of the laity negatively and for a protracted time (cf. Ritter 1990:379). Also spirituality, or better the lack of it, has enormous influence. The deprivation of a developed spirituality coincided with this impoverished education:

> By and large, however, western church leadership, whether monastic or episcopal, did not provide the ordinary lay Christian with very many facets of spirituality (Osborne 1993:326).

After a history of permanent change the church arrived at a new stage with its considerations based on the theology of Vatican II.

> The documents of Vatican II center the entire mission and ministry of the church itself and of each and every specific mission and ministry in the church (bishop, priest, lay minister, etc.) in the mission and ministry of Jesus... Jesus, in his humanness, is the primordial basis or sacrament for all Christian ministry and mission (Osborne 1993:31-2).

The ministry coming from Jesus is not clerical; otherwise lay people could not participate in the three offices or munera of prophet, priest, and king (cf. CL 29). Nor is it lay only since then the question would arise where the mission and ministry of the clerics come from (cf. Osborne 1993:34).

When Clement used for the first time the differentiation between clergy and laity this did not mean a status but a difference in functions (cf. Schillebeeckx 1981:113). The

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[319] Osborne (1993:111-2) attributes the reduction of the roles of women in the following period to various reasons such as celibacy gaining some prominence, gnostic positions, and the views of the Montanist movement which took a strong stand on the position of women in leadership. In this whole process the principle of discipleship lost against that of leadership, especially that claiming apostolic succession.

[320] Summarising the development in the first millennium from the perspective of formation and education Osborne (1993:325-326) states: "In the west, but not in the east, the formation of vernacular languages without an educational base, and the retention of Latin as the educational language, further deprived the ordinary Christian of literacy. An uneducated group of people becomes a powerless group, while an educated group of people becomes a powerful group. Instances of such situations go far beyond western Europe in the early middle ages. A 'pedagogy of the oppressed' has a validity at almost every stage of human history... This issue of illiteracy can not be taken lightly, for once lay men and women began to be educated, as we shall see in the high middle ages and in the reformation period, a revolt by lay people began to take place, and it was a revolt that had its own educated lay leaders. The fact that education appears as a major reason for the repositioning of the lay person in the church at a later date indicates

theological point of departure of Vatican II rests on the base of christology (cf. Osborne 1993:527). The occurrence of some ambiguity in the texts of Vatican II can be attributed to the fact that the council actually did not present a basic outline of christology. Based on christology its topic was ecclesiology; and even in its ecclesiology one can identify two different trends (Hirmer 1973:127). Vatican II attempted to harmonise two different theologies of the ministry: the old Catholic tradition which introduces the ordination to argue for the hierarchical priesthood and the christology of the reformation which roots the participation of all Christians in the three munera of Christ in baptism (cf. Eicher 1980:41.46). This leaves us with a compromise: what is excluded (omitted) by a hierarchical theory will be included by the three munera theory (:46). The council itself thus gives witness to the concurrent existence of different trends. That implies that one can read the texts of Vatican II from different points of view, polyvalent (Osborne 1993:529), depending on one's own christology.

Synthetic conclusion: It is not the intention of this brief reflection on the history in ministry to reconstruct an ancient type of leadership. The discovery of key concepts can help to understand the local development with community leaders as a quite normal feature within the church as a whole. It becomes clear that this kind of leadership based on baptism and confirmation is well in line with the contextuality of leadership styles of history. Contextuality implies the coexistence of different models of leadership. The same ministry of Christ is exercised in different roles. These roles change with changing situations. Locally the assumption of roles by women depends primarily on contextual conditions. Enhanced formation (the reference is mainly to general formation) plays a role in the involvement of laity, as appropriate means of spirituality do likewise. Locally we discovered this as major concern of all stakeholders. With Vatican II and its different theologies, concurrent different trends can be read not as incompatible, but rather as complementary. This perception allows one to understand the local development as a normal procedure, which aims at enhancing evangelisation. Its contribution to building up community is one criterion from history to assess ministry. The dialectical interplay between priests and in this case especially the funeral leaders seemed to be concerned and deeply contributing to exactly this.

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that the lack of education was actually one of the major reasons why at an earlier date the ordinary lay Christian was not only repositioned but depositioned."

5.3.2.3 Church history in Africa: A cry for a locally grounded ministry

In his study on the history of the church in Africa, Baur (1994:27-30) sees indications that Christianity in the beginning was at home in the lower classes of society. Educated leadership in the church was rare even around 250 AD, when Cyprian as a neophyte, a newly baptised, was elected to the metropolitan see of Carthage. The alienation of the poor, simple minded Christian from the well educated, Latin speaking upper-class leadership contributed to the Donatist schism (311-411). When Carthage fell to the Arabs in 697 the whole Latin upper class fled to Europe, leaving behind some 30 out of more than 300 bishops. Baur attributes the decline of the church in Northern Africa, contrasted to the survival in Egypt, firstly to its failure to evangelise the Berbers. The church's focus was mainly on Rome instead of the Sahara. Secondly the church failed to indigenise. The failure to use the local language shows this. Neither scripture passages nor prayers written in the local languages have been found. Thirdly the loss of leadership may have been the decisive factor: with the bishops most of the priests and monks, members of the upper class, left the country. The priests already living a refined life around their bishops in the urban centres simply left the flock in the countryside alone.[321]

Also the lineamenta for the synod on Africa (Lineamenta 1991) explore reasons for the decline and disappearance of the church in North Africa. They are attributed to *remote causes*, namely the appearance of Donatism, reducing the church's strength by splits. Then there was the failure to translate the Bible and liturgy into Berber and Phoenician languages and to make use of the native culture to create a North African national church "which would have survived the domination of Islam" (Lineamenta 1991:6). Here North Africa differed from Egypt and Ethiopia, were faith was expressed in Coptic and Ethiopian languages. *Immediate causes* were the Arab Muslim invasion, during which many Christians fled, and the subsequent pressure to convert to Islam.

Uzukwu (1996) points out the strong stance within the early African church on unity in diversity. He refers to Cyprian for whom *concordia*, the moral communion, was imperative for the manifestation of the one church. Though views of bishops could differ significantly and even in a contradictory manner in important questions, there was no break in communion (:55).

The negative experiences with Congo underline the need to indigenise the pastoral staff, to care for formation, and to be aware of material corruption (by trading interests) and the independence of local priests from the traditional church-finance-system. For the 16th and 17th century Baur notes that through the failure to train a local clergy the missionary work could not survive the missionaries themselves (Baur 1994:59-67).

A theological problem arose with the cultural ignorance of the missionaries. Preoccupied with the Augustinian perception of history as fight between the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Satan they consequently fought everything pagan in a culture not known to them (cf. Baur 1994:66). Baur mentions as grave shortcomings for the epoch from 1500 to 1800 that the missionaries tried to implant the faith in the form, which they knew and lived, by assimilation rather than by adaptation. Christianity was not integrated into African life and culture.

The failure to aim at building up the church was also detrimental. The emphasis was on soul saving, not on church building. So no church organisation was built up with indigenous people, though attempts were made to train African priests, and many catechists were appointed. The individualistic approach was opposed to the communal concept of religion among the African peoples. The functions of African rites in bringing forth and protecting life remained hidden from the missionaries (Baur 1994:94-95).

The lack of contextually suitable role models distorted ministry. The training of indigenous clergy started as early as 1447. In the 1500s seminaries were founded in Cape Verde, São Tomé, and Luanda. The African priests became victims of the surroundings in which they were educated, with priests as role models who were the dregs in Portugal, looking for privileges. The number of African priests was at all times insufficient and their training usually inadequate. However, there was always a good number of catechists, the torchbearers of faith (Baur 1994:97-99).

Important shifts took place at a later stage of mission. Women were an important factor in revitalising the mission efforts. One factor changed dramatically in what Baur (1994:103) calls the third encounter of Africa with Gospel from 1792 with the momentum on the side of the Protestant churches: Their pastors brought their wives with them who

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[321] In Egypt other factors played a role in the decline of the church like the Islamic policy of slight discrimination and imposing taxes on Christians (Baur 1994:26).

shared their domestic skills with their African sisters (Baur 1994:107). The Catholic missionaries sought the co-operation of sisters' congregations.

In a more recent development the need for a more intensive training of the laity was felt everywhere but not always implemented (Baur 1994:320). In Kinshasa SCC leaders were trained by the especially erected *Institute Supérieur des Sciences Réligieuses* in weekly evening courses over three years with an output of some 300 well-trained lay people per year. The same Institute provided specialised courses over three years for new ecclesial ministries, among them the Bakambi (Baur 1994:320). In South Africa the Lumko Institute concentrated on the implementation of Vatican II regarding the role of the laity, their co-responsibility and activity (Baur 1994:405).

The precondition of progress within the church is trust. Baur sees clericalism as the root of mistrust that paralyses the Body of Christ: Rome mistrusts the African bishops, the bishops mistrust the priests, and the priests mistrust the lay-people whenever a new initiative is started (Baur 1994:370).

On the background of mistakes and subsequent failure in history one must consider the question whether history could repeat itself (cf. Lineamenta 1991:10). This is not about a threat but about a strategy to avoid a repetition of failure:

> The history of the extinction of the Ancient Churches in North Africa and the disappearance of the Churches founded in sub-Saharan Africa in the 15th and 16th centuries, must be seriously considered at this time when the Church in Africa is reflecting upon Her "Evangelizing Mission towards the Year 2000" (Lineamenta:10).

Synthetic conclusion: The brief look at selected aspects of the church in Africa allows us to locate the local history of leadership of the church being researched here. With locally rooted, resident, and economically independent leaders a big step towards grounding the church is being taken. They are leaders taken from the people. They are not easily tempted to abandon them. Their formation is shared with the people, uplifting all. Their focus is local in loyal connection with the wider church. This localisation includes the culture and makes people feel at home. No longing for status or the striving for its maintenance distorts the ministry. The critical issue remains the fact that (some of) these leaders are not ordained. This leaves one area regarded as crucial not covered whilst addressing all others. However, the work with leadership initiated a healing process for the church itself. The problem of cultural ignorance is tackled by

initiating the ordained priests and pastoral workers, who are willing to undergo this process.

With the vision of the Pastoral Plan in Southern Africa and the leaders as task group the shift from individualistic soul saving to church building became obvious in many ways. It matches the communal perception of African religious thought or philosophy. This process affects even the structural form of church work linking the co-operation of the different forms of ministry. The Community Weeks and formation events serve as examples.

For future planning role models will be important. With the lack of proper role models, the reality for the communities is that their leaders are the prime role models for ministry, rather than the priests who are often not available, and sometimes expatriates. The leaders are the contextually fitting role models for ministry within the church while the priests in the flat hierarchy appear in this context as the prime formators.

A vital responsibility emerges for the priests (and the other pastoral workers). Their involvement and motivation is crucial. Materially, formation-wise, and interest wise alienated ministers contribute to an alienated church in history and locally. A church led by alienated ministers becomes dysfunctional both in vision and in meeting the needs of the community. The new emphasis on formation for lay-people can be seen as a real breakthrough in history. Its implementation differs. While Baur mentions, for instance, the formation taking place at an institute in Kinshasa, the path chosen in the local context of this study is different. Here formation takes place at the very grass roots level. While an institute-based approach requires special formators and provides formation remote from the parishes, the local approach necessitates a role change for pastoral workers in order to become the facilitators and formators in their parishes. Their formation efforts are aimed at all parishioners and avoid the possibility of a new caste developing. Though the pace may be slower the emphasis on ongoing – lifelong – formation means the outcome may not be much lower than that of a three-year full-time course. This approach also takes into account the many sources of formation. The inclusion of the community is a crucial difference.

While the overall experience with local leadership shows the strong involvement of women, their partial (but diminishing) exclusion from the role of funeral leaders may one day be seen as a loss. If they are included in future this will be a vitalising factor in

church life, as the vitalisation of the church in mission history was attributed to their contribution.

5.3.2.4 The Xhosa Bible: One ministry in differentiation

Leaders are an expression of what Prior (1997:38-41) calls the church of disciples. This church strives to meet the needs of the people. The differentiated leadership in our context is designed to meet these needs. The remark of one leader: "Now we are the same" (Mbovu 1998d), meaning leaders and priests, reflects the dialectic of "being themselves and never the same" in still another way. Appreciating the different roles he expressed the same foundation of ministry.

The ordinary leader will encounter a wealth of different meanings of leadership if he or she opens the main written source of his faith, the Bible. The new translation of the Xhosa Bible delivers a kind of interpretation of scripture in its choice of vocabulary. It indicates the ambiguity of the term leader.[322] Unlike the older Xhosa translation this term is indiscriminately used for all sorts of leaders, good and bad ones, elders, bishops, political and religious leaders, and others. The differentiation comes with the concrete task and context. Though one might deplore the terminological impoverishment by reducing the wealth of biblical terminology to one general term, *inkokheli*, this fact may emphasise that there is one ministry before all further differentiation. Moreover it shows the different hues in any kind of leadership.

Focussing on the New Testament only,[323] the gospel warns about the leaders, who are blind (Mt 15:14; 23:16; ὁδηγός, leader, guide). The term teacher is replaced by *inkokheli* when Jesus warns not to allow being called a leader, since there is only one (Mt 23:16; καθηγητής, teacher). Visiting a Pharisee leader (Lk 14:1; ἄρχων, ruler, authorities, officials) Jesus uses the opportunity for formation, thus transforming a meal into a teaching session.

In the Gospel of John the term leader applies to the leaders of the present constituency. Some of them express doubts about the new teaching (Jn 2:18; οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, the Jews), others like Nicodemus are partners in conversation (Jn 3). In their own search for

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[322] For the biblical research the Logos Library System 2.c by Logos Research Systems http://www.logos.com was used with The Greek New Testament 1983, IBhayibhile 1996, and The New International Version 1984.

orientation the people are expecting advisory leadership from their authorities when they ask themselves whether the leaders (Jn 7:26; ἄρχων) had agreed whether Jesus was the Christ. Some leaders are plotting against Jesus (Jn 11:53; ἐκείνης referring to the chief priests and Pharisees of verse 47) whilst others (Jn 12:42; ἄρχων) believe in him – while in fear of their colleagues. Among the leadership there may be intimidation and obstruction.

Ignorance is the excuse Peter sees for the acts of the leaders when addressing the people of Israel in Solomon's Colonnade (Acts 3:17: ἄρχων; cf. 13:27). Without praising ignorance he indicates that even in poor leadership God remains powerful and achieves his aims. In the Temple court Peter refers to Jesus as leader (Acts 5:31) (ἀρχηγός, leader, ruler, prince) exalted to the right hand so that he might give repentance and forgiveness of sins. Paul in Galatians 2:2.6 (τοῖς δοκοῦσιν, τῶν δοκούντων) then uses *iinkokheli* to refer to the Christian leaders in Jerusalem. Their task also is to assess the genuineness of the work of the apostle among the gentiles. Collaboration here indicates approval and sharing tasks for different target groups of ministry.

The term *inkokheli* is also used for the overseers, a term traditionally connected to the ministry of the bishops (1 Ti 3:1.2; ἐπισκοπή, office of a bishop; ἐπίσκοπος, overseer), and in Titus 1:7 (ἐπίσκοπος), providing the lists of leadership qualities for bishops.

Hebrews 13:17 invites people to obey the leaders (ἡγουμένοις) and to submit to their authority. Leadership requires some respect from the people. It requires acknowledgement of its effectiveness.

Quotation	Xhosa (1996)	Xhosa (1975)	English	Greek
Mt 15:14	*linkokheli*	Abakhokeli	Guide	ὁδηγός
Mt 23:10	*linkokheli*	Abakhokeli	Teacher	καθηγηταί
Mt 23:16	*linkokheli*	Abakhokeli	Guide	καθηγητής
Lk 14:1	*Owayeyinkokheli*	Abaphathi	Prominent Pharisee	ἄρχων
Lk 19:47	*linkokheli zabantu*	Abaziintloko zabantu	Leaders among the people	οἱ πρῶτοι τοῦ λαοῦ
Jn 2:18	*linkokheli zamaJuda*	AmaYuda	Jews	οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι
Jn 3:1	*Inkokheli yamaJuda*	Umntu wakubaFarisi	Man of the Pharisees	ἄνθρωπος ἐκ τῶν Φαρισαίων
Jn 7:26	*linkokheli*	Abaphathi	Authorities	ἄρχων
Jn 11:53	*linkokheli zamaJuda*	Bona, re to ababingeleli nabaFarisi	They (re to chief priests and Pharisees)	ἐκείνης re to οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ οἱ Φαρισαῖοι
Jn 12:42	*linkokheli zamaJuda*	AbaFarisi	Leaders	ἄρχων

[323] The Logos Research System counts for the search term *nkokhel* 163 hits in the OT and 26 hits in the NT.

Acts 3:17	Iinkokheli zenu	Abaphathi	Your leaders	ἄρχοντες ὑμῶν
Acts 4:5	Iinkokheli zamaJuda	Abaphathi	Rulers	ἄρχοντας
Acts 5:31	Inkokheli (re to Jesus)	Umthetheli	Prince	ἀρχηγός
Acts 13:20	Iinkokheli	Abagwebi	Judges	κριτάς
Acts 13:27	Iinkokheli zabantu baseJerusalem	Abaphathi	Rulers	ἄρχοντες
Acts 14:5	Iinkokheli	Abaphathi	Leaders	ἄρχουσιν
Acts 24:5	Inkokheli	Umkhokeli	Ringleader	πρωτοστάτην
Gal 2:2	Iinkokheli	Abadumileyo	Leaders	τοῖς δοκοῦσιν
Gal 2:6	Iinkokheli	Abadumele	Those who seemed to be important	τῶν δοκούντων
1 Ti 3:1	Inkokheli	Ubuveleli	Overseer	ἐπισκοπή
1 Ti 3:2	Inkokheli	Umveleli	Overseer	ἐπίσκοπος
Titus 1:7	Inkokheli	Umveleli	Overseer	ἐπίσκοπος
Heb 2:10	Ubunkokheli (re to leadership)			
Heb 13:7	Iinkokheli zamandulo	Abakhokeli	Leaders	ἡγουμένων
Heb 13:17	Iinkokheli	Abakhokeli	Leaders	ἡγουμένοις
Heb 13:24	Iinkokheli zenu	Abakhokeli	Leaders	ἡγουμένους

Figure 5.3. Occurrences of *inkokheli* in the new Xhosa-NT and parallels in other Bible versions[324]

The term *inkokheli* is used for all sorts of leaders even beyond the confines of the people of Israel and the early church. It refers among others to "bishops" and to Jesus as well. Various ways of entering and carrying out the ministry exist. The OT especially indicates that it is meant to be exercised for the people. This indicates what is common in all the various forms. Conflicts in leadership, its abuse, are not unexpected. They require appropriate action. Leadership is designed for collaboration. This includes even the assessment of the prime conveyor of faith, the apostle. At the same time Paul also contributes the idea of collaboration and broader co-ordination in addressing new cultures (Gal 2). Peter keeps the conviction that even in weak leadership God remains powerful. The lists of leadership qualities in 1 Tim and Titus resemble the lists compiled by the communities. With their demands the New Testament's lists also admit implicitly that not all leaders lived up to all the expectations. Thus the locally accessible picture of leadership in the Bible reflects the complex reality and corroborates its legitimacy as apostolic, leading to the catholic adaptation in the given context.

5.3.2.5 Theological aspects of Southern African formation material

Formation emerged as important for leadership. It is theologically relevant. For the priests or pastoral workers formation means becoming more like Christ, teaching and reflecting with his disciples and sending them. They contribute from their own broad

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[324] *The New International Version* 1984. *The Greek New Testament* 1983. *Izibhalo Ezingcwele. IzezeTestamente Endala nezeTestamente Entsha* 1975. *IBhayibhile. Inguqulelo Entsha Egqityezelwe Ngowe* 1996.

formation, their access to formation material, "their going to school" (RN Mpambani in Wüstenberg 1999a). Formation qualifies the community not only as a sociological entity, but also as a community of faith. It belongs to the second dimension in the model of pastoral theology. Formation is reflecting on the work done and to be done in the first dimension. Biblically it reflects Jesus' meeting with the disciples and the report given by them (cf. Lk 10:17). It helps to focus on the theologically-inspired vision of ministry.

The Lumko materials of the series *Training for Community Ministries* express this vision. They, and the courses offered by the Lumko Institute, are a response of the wider church in providing the perspective required to maintain the underlying vision. They can also serve as a theological mirror for the ministry in practice.

A brief look at some major features will show the theological direction offered in these materials, and their impact on the local practice. *The Christian Community and its Leaders* (Lobinger & Prior 1995) was designed to raise awareness in the communities about the way of relating to their leaders. The special feature of this book is that it provides its reflections in the form of liturgies for the main assembly of the congregation on Sundays. Thus it aims at active community involvement in formation and grounds leadership into its place. It deals with the qualities of leaders and the responsibility of the community for the right choice of leaders (:10-17). It explores different ways of installing leaders (:26-34). It maintains that the installing of leaders must not lead to parish passivity (:34-39). It explores the value of teamwork (:40-46), and of some leaders stepping back in order to get new leaders in (:47-55). It discourages looking for honours and distinctions (:56-62), and invites the parishioners to co-operate with their leaders (:63-69). Theme nine encourages the faithful to accept the different gifts and to avoid jealousy (:70-77). The last chapter deals with fatigue and crisis in a community and the responsibility of all for its revitalisation (:78-85).

Developing Shared Ministry (Prior & Lobinger 1983) emphasises in its awareness programmes the basics of ministry in the call each Christian received, the gifts of the Spirit, calling and sending, and the local vision of the church.

Spiritual Formation for Community Leaders (Lobinger 1980a) shows that spirituality is not an optional extra for ministry but an essential part. The book aims at enhancing the spiritual formation and human relations of leaders. It includes such things as personal faith, being witness of Christ (chapter 1), the relationship to God (chapter 2). It discusses conflict and how to deal with suffering as a leader (chapter 3). The

relationship of leaders towards the community is reflected (chapters 4 and 5). The integrity of leaders is discussed (chapters 6, 7, and 8). The co-operation in a team with differing people is dealt with under human relations (chapters 14, 16).

Towards Non-dominating Leadership (Lobinger: s.a.a) presents a thorough outline of the aims and methods of the Lumko series. Its point of departure is the vision of a community-oriented ministry in a community-church (:5-20). It outlines the main principles of training (:21-46), the methods of training (:47-72), and the introduction of pastoral workers to training methods (:73-86). Part five presents a community oriented suggestion to ordain emergent[325] leaders (:87-105).

Of particular interest here when looking at the collaboration in ministry, are the reasons Lobinger (s.a.a: 19-20) gives for training.[326] It enables people to use the gifts of the Spirit. It helps these gifts to grow. It gives all members a chance. Training many people makes the church a sign of equality. It liberates people, enhances creativity, and is part of evangelisation and of the process of transformation. It liberates the existing leaders and puts the focus on the local parish.

The formation material offers a theology aimed at human growth, faith development, and community building.[327] This includes both the intellectual and spiritual sphere as well as the required skills. The ministry of the funeral leaders, as shown in the analysis, gives a vibrant proof of the viability and implementation of the theology offered in the available materials. The fact that not all the available material is actually used in the parishes and yet the practice of the parishes still corresponds to the suggested theology shows a profound conformity with the basic vision of a *Community Serving Humanity*. The graph below shows some of the areas envisaged by the training material and its underlying theology, and the corresponding actual local practice. This practice does not slavishly implement all suggestions of the material provided but implements it, inspired by the material, in a contextualised way.

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[325] Emergent leader refers to what we call local leader, a person emerging from a particular community and remaining in it (cf. Lobinger s.a.a:22).
[326] The term training here refers to many activities. It is understood "as the guided development of the charismas given by the Spirit, within the Local Church, for its service to the world" (Lobinger s.a.a:45).
[327] Nadal (1991:117) sees catechesis (and formation) as means to build community "by bringing people together and helping them to relate as members of the body of Christ."

The methodology of the formation approach takes the vision into account. It does not create the required personal qualities of leaders (as the people expect them). Blunt and Jones (1992:85) state:

> No one would argue that theories of leadership can be taught in the classroom, but knowledge of theories does not enhance the ability to lead.

However, formation brings about many of these intended effects. This indicates that formation is more than acquisition of knowledge; it transforms people and communities. A formation approach that recognises the participants as gifted, adult people is supportive and theologically relevant. In itself formation becomes an expression of respect, acknowledging the expertise of all. It is an approach very different from pedagogy, which literally is the instruction of children. As adult formation it takes the people as partners.

The formational style agrees with styles employed outside the ecclesial area like the Mananga style, which is also based on cultural patterns.[328] The creative inclusion of leaders as learners and teachers contributed towards a teaching and learning style that, in a special way, again reflects cultural patterns, this time the communitarian way of

Figure 5.4. Theologically relevant concepts emerging from training material and the corresponding local experience

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[328] Blunt and Jones (1992:317-8) report on the culture-related Mananga training style from Swaziland. The emphasis is on learners as individuals and mature adults: a learner-centred educational approach. The emphasis lies on learning outcomes rather than teaching intentions. Learning happens from fellow participants and experience.

participating in the formation process as partners with different qualifications. The methods employed respect the human as the basic point of departure of theology. In this way they already serve humanity. As we saw, all turn into learners and teachers in this process, leaders and pastoral workers alike. It resembles Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed.[329] The formation itself becomes a witness that all are gifted with the Spirit. All take part in the teaching ministry of Christ on differing levels.

5.3.2.6 Secular leadership: A roster for orientation from economy and culture

As the early church borrowed structures of leadership that already existed, adopted them, and made them the basis of theological reflection, a look at contemporary forms of leadership may also help to comprehend and reflect upon the ministry of the leaders.[330] This can also provide insight about the extent to which the leadership is not only contextualised into the local culture but in the common concern of communicating cultures about leadership. The synthetic conclusion will link up these following sections with the local leadership phenomenon. I refer to contributions made by Carlsson (1998), Blunt and Jones (1992), Ndongko (1999), Kanungo and Mendonça (1994;1996) and, concerning collaborative ministry in the church Cooper (1993), Sofield and Juliano (1987), Whitehead and Whitehead (1991) and, linking both realms, Sofield and Kuhn (1995).

The reflections of Kanungo and Mendonça appeal for various reasons. By coincidence African students at the Missionary Institute in London introduced me to their writings. They are open to a one-world perspective and take cultural differences in a networking economic realm into account. Kanungo and Mendonça's (1996) reflections on leadership are oriented towards professional leadership in organisations.[331]

Kanungo and Mendonça make a distinction between management and leadership. They point out that much research is based on supervision or managership, whose aim is the maintenance of the status quo. A core element of leadership is to bring about effective

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[329] Freire (1972:66): "Authentic education is not carried on by A for B or by A about B, but rather by A with B."

[330] As Avolio (1995:20) states for the economic realm: "Transforming the cultures of organisations to accept the new levels of diversity and to align them will represent one of the most significant challenges for transformational leadership in South Africa."

[331] Kanungo and Mendonça (1996:11-2) point at some limitations concerning the research on the leadership phenomenon: "At the conceptual level, there is the difficulty of developing integrative and reasonably comprehensive frameworks to understand the leadership phenomenon. At the empirical level,

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improvements, changes, and transformations (1996:21). As crucial feature of the community leaders in this regard appears their comprehensive contribution to contextualisation and inculturation:

> The leaders are expected to provide direction, exercise control, and generally execute such functions that are necessary to achieve the organizations' objectives (Kanungo & Mendonça 1996:2).

Leadership as group phenomenon exists in relation to the group. It needs to be accepted by the group (1996:14-5). The leadership phenomenon consists of the leaders, the followers, and their context (1996:15). Among the contingencies of leadership-effectiveness the involvement of followers in decision making is crucial (1996:18-20). The analysis showed the interplay between leaders, communities, and context. This indicates that the emerging type of leadership is in line with contemporary developments in the secular realm.

Kanungo & Mendonça (1996:53-6) discern two influence processes available to leaders, the transactional and the transformational influence process. The transactional influence process employs the use of rewards and sanctions.[332] This process can lead to an inefficient deployment of the organisation's resources, because leaders who follow this process are more likely to focus on the status quo. It may further lead the followers to assume that the end justifies the means.

In the transformational influence process,[333] the leader aims at a change in the followers' attitudes and values to achieve the goal of the organisation (1996:56-7). The basic dynamics (1996:57-8) that seem to operate in this process are (a) the internalisation of the leaders' vision by the followers, and (b) the enhancement of the followers self-efficacy beliefs. The empowerment strategies seem to play an important part in the transformational influence process. The idealised vision in particular influences the leaders' identification and commitment and the exertion of efforts to realise the vision effectively. "Such a self-transformation that the leaders undergo then

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the ambiguity of research findings has led some even to question the usefulness of research endeavours in the leadership area."

[332] Kanungo and Mendonça (1996:53) explain that the psychological mechanisms and dynamics of the transactional influence process can be explained in terms of the theoretical perspectives derived from the leader's bases of social power (French & Raven), the nature of social exchange (Blau; Hollander), and the motivational dynamics (Evans; House; Luthans & Kreitner).

[333] Kanungo & Mendonça (1996:57) draw from the social psychological theories of influence processes (notably French & Raven; Kelman), the influence tactics (McClelland), and of empowerment (Conger & Kanungo; Thomas & Velthouse).

becomes the model that inspires the followers to undergo a similar inner transformation"(1996:58).

Both influence processes were identified. The transactional process appeared as counter productive to the vision of building community. Most of the action can be attributed to a transformational influence process. The holistic approach includes the followers in both the performed ministry and in its maintenance in various ways. These are roots of the empowering influence. This includes the contribution to spiritual renewal that is expected from and offered by the leaders.

The self-transformation of the leaders has a spiritual element (Kanungo & Mendonça 1996:58-9). The aim is the gradual self-transformation toward finer and subtler qualities and refined aspects of power in the quest for self-realisation. This characterises the inner psychological world views of charismatic leaders. Their readiness for self-transformation inspires others to do the same. Kanungo and Mendonça reflect on pertinent aspects of spirituality concerning leadership:

> At a cognitive level, spiritual experience represents a realization that, at the core of human existence, there is a set of cardinal virtues and capital vices and that the goal of human life is to live these values and overcome the vices (Kanungo & Mendonça 1996:88-9).

The beatitudes, for instance, express a detachment from the mundane world as transitory, which results in an emotional detachment. At the same time the individual develops a bonding with the spiritual reality, which has permanence, is unchanging, and endures (1996:95). The leader views this as source of inner strength (1996:96). The experience of being empowered by a leader who is strong and virtuous is a spiritual experience. It implicitly includes some abstinence from dependence.

Principles of ethical power play a role in order to arrive there. Kanungo and Mendonça (1996:98-101) name purpose, pride, patience, persistence, and perspective. Purpose refers to the overall vision, pride to self-esteem. Pride does not mean vanity. Obstacles in the environment and reluctance of the followers illustrate the need for patience. Serenity is the result of faith in the vision. Persistence means that difficulties are not allowed to weaken the resolution towards the vision. Perspective is the art of seeing what is really important in a given situation. The habit of reflection is essential for acquiring perspective. While all these characteristics appeared in the analysis I want to highlight only two. In the process of decision making the leaders generally proved

persistence paired with perspective, the clear perception of the concrete circumstances. Both are borne by their commitment towards the vision.

In an earlier work, *Fundamentals of Organizational Behavior*, Kanungo and Mendonça (1994) reflect particularly on the motivational aspects for leadership. They underline in particular the importance that the funeral leaders themselves attribute to team work. A special motivational force is the work in work groups (Kanungo & Mendonça 1994:180-4). Their characteristics are lifespan, accountability, and degree of autonomy. "In 'high-involvement' organizations, work groups may constitute 'self-regulating' or 'autonomous' work teams" (1994:181).[334] They differ from other groups in the degree of freedom and autonomy they enjoy. These groups are effective if these criteria are fulfilled: Task relevant effort by members; task relevant knowledge; expertise and skills of members; task appropriate performance strategies. The performance strategies include planning (setting objectives), organising (setting up structure), directing, and controlling (motivating, feed back). All these criteria from secular leadership appeared in the analysis of the ministry of funeral leaders. This again indicates that their development is in line with contemporary forms of leadership. This applies also to the area of conflict resolution.

Kanungo and Mendonça (1994:245-251) deal with conflict management by consensus. This does not mean unanimous acceptance or giving up of views or perceptions. Consensus requires attention to two questions: Will the acceptance compromise a basic value or belief and will the execution pose unbearable hardships? Other ways to deal with conflict are avoidance, defusion, engaging power, negotiations, and integration. Among these alternatives the leaders' emphasis lies with consensus and integration. They reflect cultural patterns. This trait is another crucial concern also for secular leadership.

Leadership is also a part of what we call the concern about inculturation or contextualisation:

> The fact that organizational forms reflect cultural differences highlights the significance of the issue of cultural fit when managerial practices or technology developed in one sociocultural context is transplanted "as is" in

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[334] According to Avolio (1995:19) a team's wellbeing takes precedence over that of any individual. "Consistent with Afro-centric philosophy and the concept of ubuntu, transformational leaders develop creative co-operation, open communication, teamwork and reciprocal moral obligations" (:19).

organizations which operated in a completely different cultural orientation (Kanungo & Mendonça 1994:293).

In collectivist societies loyalty to the group is valued above individual achievement (1994:294-5). Culture affects the modes of decision making, whether it happens individually or consensual (1994:299). A lack of agreement between societal environment and organisational practice can happen if management practices developed in one country are transferred into another one, which has a significantly different cultural orientation (1994:300-2).

Here the new leadership style in the church has important implications. As we saw it enhances the competence of the - expatriate - pastoral workers in terms of culture. Kanungo and Mendonça (1994:304-5) stress that managers must recognise and articulate the underlying values to their management style. They must learn as much as possible about the values and management practices of their partners.

The organisational structure can have effects on motivation. Kanungo and Mendonça point at four contrasting pairs of characteristics. Between their extremes several intermediate degrees exist. In a specialised organisation the job design is specialised into simple jobs with repetitive movements. A generalised job design allows variety in skills, task significance, autonomy, and feedback as much as possible (1994:278-9).

An organisation with a tall structure has many hierarchical levels. The span of control is narrow. A flat structure has fewer hierarchical levels caused by a wider span of control. "A flat structure would provide employees more opportunity for enriched work and, to that extent have a positive impact on work behaviour" (1994:279). A tall structure limits the autonomy of the employees.[335]

Independence and interdependence of work units differ on the degree of specialisation. Specialised organisation creates more dependence. Without specialisation units can operate independently. The impact on motivation depends here on preferences and abilities of the employee (1994:279).

Whether an organisation is tight or loose depends on the degree of formalisation. If policies, procedures, and rules are spelled out in detail one has a tight structure. If they allow the employee discretion and expertise, it is loose. Loose organisation will appeal

to people who appreciate autonomy and who are competent. Communication in such a system takes more the form of consultation. People not seeking autonomy or discretion will prefer a tight structure (1994:279-80).

The analysed ministry shows mostly the characteristics of a generalised "job-design" and of a flat hierarchy that favours autonomy. The autonomy of the leaders is supported by their ability to share and take over various roles. It may sound like a surprise for those who tend to perceive the church as a strict hierarchical organisation: With competent and autonomous leaders we find characteristics of a loose organisation.

Kanungo and Mendonça (1994:281) finally point at the underlying perception of people as decisive for the policy employed. They trace three major groups, the traditional model,[336] beginning with Taylor, the human relations model[337] with Mayo, and the human resources model with Maslow and McGregor. These models somehow reflect the development that has taken place in the church. The traditional model with few helpers in the beginning was characterised by the "Yes-Father" spirit (cf. chapter 3.1.4). It develops gradually into a collaborative leadership style where the leaders are understood as partners in ministry and where they are accountable to their communities.

This new style reflects much the human resources model. It has three basic assumptions. Work gives the workers an opportunity to achieve own goals by contributing to the achievement of the organisation's goals. Then, growth in the job is important. Thirdly workers seek and can handle challenge, autonomy, and

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[335] Kanungo and Mendonça count 17 levels of management with Ford, and five with the Catholic Church (1994:279).

[336] The traditional model assumes roughly that workers are uncooperative and only few can handle autonomy and responsibility. This leads to a job division into thinkers and those who carry out simple tasks. Decision making is autocratic, the communication pattern top-down. The degree of hierarchical control is high. The reward system is based on monetary rewards in the "carrot and stick" approach. The manager is controlling and monitoring (Kanungo & Mendonça 1994:282-3).

[337] The human relations model, based on the traditional model, works with two assumptions. Humans long to belong and to be recognised; the fulfilment of these desires is above monetary award. The job design is similar to the traditional model, but organised in groups not for efficiency but to respond to the longing for belonging. Decision making is still autocratic, but managers will listen to their subordinates before announcing their decisions, though the decisions may already be made. The listening is a reaction to the longing for recognition. Communication remains top-down, with the listening for the motives mentioned. Controls are like in the traditional model but communicated and explained. In this paternalistic approach communication is the sugar to get the medicine down. The reward system differs. The assumption is that employee satisfaction comes before performance. Hence the system knows unconditional rewards. The manager's role, providing praise, recognition, is to give the employees the feeling to be important. The social relationships that flow from his actions are rather superficial (Kanungo & Mendonça 1994:284-5).

responsibility. The rigid distinction between thinking and doing is therefore virtually eliminated. The workers "field of activity is the one in which he has the most expertise, - operational planning, performance, and control" (1994:286). Work teams are responsible not only for their immediate task, but also for their maintenance, quality control, selection, and training of team members. Decision making is consultative and participatory with the genuine desire to tap the expertise of the workers. The managerial role is to give autonomy and self-control, remaining ultimately responsible for the organisation's objectives (1994:286-8).

In order to help others deciding what model to follow Kanungo and Mendonça (1994:288) suggest choosing that which most accurately describes the real world. To establish this they ask which model the most effective and successful managers use, with effectiveness relating to the achieved performance and success in terms of their own promotion within the organisation. Their data suggest that the focus on the human resource kind of management is critical for being a successful manager and leader.

These data invite us to understand the ministry of the funeral leaders in the light of both the analysis and the reflections on secular leadership as a successful model of ministry. To a considerable degree it reflects the intentions of the human resources model which retains an important and indispensable role for the managers as the collaborative ministry does for the pastoral workers. With the admission of autonomous performance and decision making this local reflection of the human resources model satisfies those involved, the leaders as well as the receivers of their ministry.

5.3.2.7 Contextualised leadership approaches – ubuntu

Kanungo and Mendonça's approach calls for contextual considerations to be taken into account. African and South African reflections try to introduce African patterns into leadership structures:

> The manager manages very much according to the "rules of the game" that
> exist in his particular environment (Carlsson 1998:17).

The analysis showed that the community ministry of the funeral leaders is in many ways deeply anchored in the local culture. It's overall success and attractiveness seem to have another root here. The following considerations indicate both, how near this ministry is to African patterns and that it avoids their assumed traps. Carlsson, in his reflections on management in Africa, confirms that the contextualisation of management

practices is conducive to the successful functioning of an organisation (Carlsson 1998:21). The organisation theories may provide some helpful clue for understanding the particular focus in this study. They have in common:

> that the organization is integrated with its environment and dependent on it for its functioning (Carlsson 1998:22).

In his criticism of inculturation in the church Makang actually targets a rather superficial approach towards including local culture into church life, in which the culture remains at the margins:

> Another example of culturalism[338] and its mystifying character is the movement of *inculturation*... Thus the inculturation of faith in African reality which is favored by Church hierarchy is one that limits itself to African music, dances, rituals and symbols in Church liturgy, but is not allowed to go deeper and to question Roman Catholic dogmas, the authoritarianism of Church leadership, Church ministry, and priesthood ... (Makang 1997:331).

This lamentation about a limited understanding of inculturation is not only in contrast to the local practice we have analysed here but also to the wide approach suggested by Keteyi (1998:36-42). He sees a holistic encounter of culture and faith in the long process of evangelisation. This process needs vigilance and patience. This matches the concern of Ndongko about an overall approach, informed in many ways by African concepts familiar to the people. A leader

> should use culturally sensitive techniques to motivate the members of his organization (Ndongko 1999:115).

The manager of an African organisation should be result and people oriented (Ndongko 1999:117). This trait we discovered for instance in the areas of formation, decision making, the overall concern about community, and of the performance of the ritual.

Ndongko (1999:116) also reflects upon some of the negative effects of cultural influence. Among them are the myth of the chief, deference (to the point of abdication), the role of age and seniority, belief in magic, and continuation of the village notion of community consensus for everything. Blunt and Jones (1992:71) state about the business sector that the prevailing management styles are authoritarian, personalised, politicised, and not conducive for management development and the emergence of new

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[338] Makang describes as "culturalism" the reduction of African traditions to culture, whereby culture is synonymous with folklore (Makang 1997:330).

leadership. The general tone of management in Africa is often authoritarian,[339] inflexible, and insensitive with some causes lying in the colonial past (:81).[340] Values from traditional Africa that are important for leadership are communalism and democracy for Hearne (1982:229). Negative aspects are totalitarian power and monarchical, absolute rule. Hearne alludes to the history and the easy acceptance of the trappings of Imperial Rome and feudal Europe. Ndongko attributes the authoritarian style, with similar sources of reference as Blunt and Jones, not only to colonialism, but also to African tradition where children are born into an authoritarian environment with the expectation of obedience (Ndongko 1999:111). Oduyoye underlines the supporting role of Christianity for the patriarchal order:

> African men, at home with androcentrism and the patriarchal order of the biblical cultures, have felt their views confirmed by Christianity (Oduyoye 1995:183).

However, others contrast this observation:

> Lastly, it might be argued that the traditional Catholic structure is more African, because it is based on a pyramidal authority and that in turn would be nearer to the authority idea inherent in the African chieftainship. An African Catholic bishop, P. Sarpong, of Accra, qualified as anthropologist to comment on this argument, replies: "The African is not used to dictatorship.... In fact, so alien is autocratic rule to some African societies that, as some of us know so well, they are acephalous having no rulers properly so called. In some societies, authority may be collectively possessed" (Lobinger 1973b:75).

Though we found a few instances of a sort of patriarchal orientation in leadership style, the general direction in the local practice tends towards dialogical and consensus driven decision making. If Christianity supported the former style, then we discover here a re-orientation that allows people to employ the locally preferred style.

Wiredu (1997:303-4) develops a multifaceted view of the concept of consensus that contradicts the idea of oppressive dictatorship. In interpersonal relations among adults consensus was taken as axiomatic basis of joint action. This does not mean that it was

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[339] The acceptance of the authority of varying teams and role players is nothing unusual. Kuckertz (1990) in his study on the Mpondo in Caguba near to Port St Johns indicates the different meaning authority can assume: "Which is no longer the authority belonging solely to a particular role, but the authority of the 'leader' or 'spokesman' who knows how to organize support for a course of action and to whom authority is granted within the group which is taking action" (1990:67).

[340] Kalilombe also noted that the original form of African leadership was distorted by colonial powers who distorted it when utilising it for their ends (Kalilombe 2000). The same traditional leadership structures

always attained, conflicts were frequent. He rather sees consensus as a system of reconciliation in which "the bones of contention" (:304) experience the reappraisal of their significance:

> It suffices that all parties are able to feel that adequate account has been taken of their points of view... Consensus does not entail total agreement (Wiredu 1997:304).

Consensus presupposes prior positions of diversity. Dialogue functions to smooth edges and to produce compromises agreeable to all or at least not obnoxious to any. It can lead to agreed actions without necessarily entailing agreed notions:

> The problem then is how a group without unanimity may settle on one option rather than the other without alienating anyone (Wiredu 1997:304).

It can only be done by the suspension of disbelief in the prevailing option by the minority (1997:304). Prinsloo (1998:49) has some doubts about consensus as part of *ubuntu*. It seems to be easy as long as the differences are marginal rather than fundamental. The perception of the best interest of all is a matter in which people normally differ.

For Mbigi (1997) the hallmark of African traditional governance is that of collective stewardship, freedom of expression, grass-roots participation, consultation, discussion, and consensus aimed at accommodating minority needs and views (1997:22). In this system chiefs ruled traditionally through consensus and consultation with a council of advisors in collective leadership and accountability (1997:27). "If the chief could not convince the council of elders, he could only go against their advice through broader consensus and legitimacy by taking the issue for consensus to the people through a village assembly" (1997:27).[341]

"For a chief to be fair, he must be a patient listener. And listening takes plenty of time" (Uzukwu 1996:128). This notion concerning time is important. It sets one of the conditions under which the system works and which are worth employing to achieve real progress in difficult negotiations, though it may stretch the patience of Westerners involved. "Many missionaries and colonial officials ... found it difficult to appreciate the

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distorting colonial influence found mention by Hinfelaar (1994:11): centralised chieftainship and colonial administration was imposed from the 15th century onwards.

[341] Soga (s.a.:32) notes that the Xhosa chief was in no sense an autocrat. For the Basotho Lapointe states: "The chief must consult his subjects for any major decision and generally accept the consensus which is established at such occasions" (Lapointe 1986:30). A similar pattern applies to the Zulu: the

kind of free speech practised in Africa, which allows the creative Word to generate humane living in the community" (Uzukwu 1996:128). Uzukwu therefore speaks also about the "liberation of the Word" (:129).

The use of the leaders in teams seems to support the dialogical style and the search for consensus; it avoids the connotation of chieftainship.[342] This includes the prominent virtue of listening. The sometimes time-consuming processes serve the maintenance of community. This includes the strategy that deals with problematic leaders. The local patterns prefer their inclusion instead of removal.[343] The guiding principle also in such cases is about maintaining community by avoiding possible splits through breakaway groups or emigration.

The African style of leadership is related to the concept of *ubuntu*. Tutu finds that *ubuntu* is

> difficult to translate, but essentially meaning that a person only becomes a person through other people (in Burger 1996: Preface).

Prinsloo (1998:41) outlines that *ubuntu* is an African way of life and world view.[344] It takes man as a social being with communitarian morality and rationality (:43).[345] Mnyandu (1997:81-2) identifies the following attributes for a person linked to *ubuntu*. The person is "caring, humble, thoughtful, considerate, understanding, wise, godly, generous, hospitable, mature, virtuous and blessed" (:80). The context of *ubuntu* is community, without which nobody could survive.

With regard to leadership and management Prinsloo states:

Nkosi has to consult his council. Failing to heed the advice of his councillors the *Nkosi* was to suffer the consequences of his actions alone (cf. Manus 1993:115).

[342] Also this is one of the diverse African traits. Inspired by *ubuntu* Mbigi strongly suggests in the industrial area the introduction of work teams (1997:118), much in charge of their own affairs (1997:124).

[343] A ruler is normally respected. If he does not render his service, he is removed from office, or killed (Uzukwu 1996:18). Most African societies had established procedures for the removal of a ruler from office (Ayittey 1991:135-7). Ayittey gives the example of the Xhosa chief Ngqika from the 1800s, as described by a missionary. The chief had counsellors to inform him about the sentiments of his people. The captains admonished him with great freedom and fidelity if he abused his authority to a degree that the displeasure of the people could be shown. This happened when he treated the admonition with contempt. The reaction is not by insurrection but most effectually by emigration.

[344] For Kraft (1995:20-1) world view represents the time and space framework, reasons behind things, options for interpreting, and a framework for evaluating life. World view involves priorities and concepts where loyalties are placed. World views change, mostly slowly. Differences in world view create difficulties in communication. "In cross-cultural work there is often a tendency to view behavior without understanding the worldview that is related to human needs behind the action" (:22).

> *Ubuntu* style management involves a departure from hierarchically structured management relations, as well as the introduction of a cooperative and supportive form of management in which the collective solidarity of the various groups employed is respected and enhanced (Prinsloo 1998:43-4).

Important for our context is the assumption that a culturally guided transformation of leadership is possible in the business world, when linked with requirements deriving from the entrepreneurial culture. Prinsloo (1998:44) sees it not solely as a matter of tradition but as something that should be combined with training and development, linked to tradition. It is also the conviction of Mbigi (1997:39) that differently inspired systems are compatible. Collaboration between "white business" and *ubuntu*-inspired business is feasible. Mbigi and Westbrook (1998:26) assume that "genius organisations" can be competitive and co-operative while following the concept of *ubuntu*, putting people's care at their centres, while giving priority to attractiveness and co-operativeness over competitiveness.

This is no problem insofar as the vocabulary of *ubuntu* is not unfamiliar to western thought. Mbigi (1997) understands *ubuntu* as a unique African concept that nevertheless is implicitly expressed elsewhere in the world (1997:2). It is a kind of all-encompassing philosophy of life. It contains the concepts of hospitality, trust, and dignity (:5-6).

With these contributions we can talk about an *ubuntu*-borne leadership structure in the local church. The important part here is the conviction that a contextualised form of leadership does not contradict other forms of contextualised leadership in other parts of the world within the same organisation. On the contrary, such practice seems to enhance performance and acceptance. Both the entrepreneurial and the local experience with the leaders seem to support this assumption. In the local case the increased attractiveness enhanced even the "competitiveness", the acceptance within the ecumenical community of denominations. Since secular leadership styles informed ecclesial leadership styles since the beginning this notion could encourage the search for fitting leadership structures in the worldwide church. The contribution of the local case is then not so much to provide a role model as such but to show the method or the path to achieve this by contextualisation that is concerned about the positive values of

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[345] There are many attempts to translate *ubuntu* into the business world and that of administration. Clapper (1996:27) cautions that *ubuntu* has been romanticised to the point of becoming meaningless, used in an exclusivist manner so that people from outside the African world view meet it with scepticism.

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the context. Such method that allows diversity serves both unity and the local implementation of the general function of the church: religious communication.

5.3.2.8 Learning from secular leadership as pastoral concern

Kanungo and Mendonça's as well as the following reflections prove Mbigi's assumption that the *ubuntu*-inspired leadership style is in fact very close to general trends. Sofield and Kuhn (1995) form a link between leadership/management research and church as they investigated what they call wisdom people: Christian people exercising their ministry in the secular world (1995:82). Their purpose is to learn from their kind of leadership (1995:25). The key concepts that emerge are listening, vision, collaboration, role change to facilitating in the community, response to needs, and the qualities of leaders.

As basis of effective ministry also they establish the ability to listen, which includes listening to the needs of people. As leadership points into the future it needs a vision that "is shared, clear, realistic, and dynamic" (1995:56). It includes transformation. Leaders put a challenge to those they lead, themselves informed by the gospel values (1995:45-68).

The ministry is done collaboratively. In the world of business the role of the leader changes from that of the expert to the facilitator. This coincides with growing responsibility for all involved. "Effective collaborative leaders focus on the development of team and community" (1995:97). The community is experienced as source of inspiration for its leaders. Opportunities for mutual dialogue and shared decision making must be developed (1995:94-103).

The ministry is a response to needs, having its greatest impact if responding after careful listening to what people really yearn for. The strongest needs Sofield and Kuhn identified in parishes were that for community as response to the feeling of loneliness[346] and the desire to be fed by the word of God (1995:121-4).

The introspective aspects of leadership, the qualities of leaders, have momentum since leaders influence others by their own being. Among them Sofield and Kuhn state that

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[346] This is a result of an assessment of needs conducted by Sofield and Kuhn with eighteen parishes in Ireland.

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effective leaders are joyful, hope-filled people, conveying the peace and excitement that flows from their experience of God's love (1995:196).

5.3.2.9 Collaborative ministry translated into church context

Considerations on collaborative ministry from elsewhere generally corroborate the local practice. They indicate that the local development is in touch with the concern about effective ministry within the wider church. This includes for instance the awareness of the actually available human resources, their legitimacy and acceptance, the need for formation, the concern about spirituality and vision, the constructive resolution of conflicts, the community based form of leadership, and the concerns about community, accountability, and dialogue.

Cooper (1993:1; 6-7) understands collaborative ministry in the church theologically as a response to the call in baptism and confirmation to recognise the charisms in all people. It is rooted in the understanding of the church as communion. He (1993:28-46) sees the spiritual foundation of collaborative ministries in the dignity of every person. Whitehead and Whitehead (1991:3-8) identify the movement towards collaboration as a transformation from a parenting, hierarchical church to a mature church shaped by partnership. This partnership, both in the gospel and in contemporary life, is qualified as an experience of shared power, which rejects the domination of each other.

The perspective of collaborative ministry changes the perception of resources. Facing the scarcity of priests and experiencing the number of gifted adults ready to minister to the needs of the church Whitehead and Whitehead (1991:15) ask themselves whether one dwells in scarcity or abundance. Community-based leader selection helps to change a view narrowed down in history.

Whitehead and Whitehead (1991:63-4) indicate different ways for leaders to gain legitimacy. Though legitimacy is conferred when proper procedures are followed most pastors realise that to carry responsibilities in the community they need the active support of the community. "An organization can appoint the people in charge, but organizations cannot create leaders. Practically, leadership depends on the consent of the group" (:64). Besides the institutional basis of legitimacy, its theological justification (:66-8), the personal qualities of the leader and the competence of the leader are important sources of legitimacy (:75). Religious authenticity is required from leaders, not only orthodoxy (1991:80-3). It is given when the person is seen as personally genuine,

has a leadership style that is non-defensive, and is willing to exercise religious leadership. "Finally, authentic religious leaders stand with us when life's absurdity – the death of a child ... tests the resilience of our faith. In these dark moments, they offer us not easy answers but their companionship in courage" (:83).

Formation and training are stressed as sources of communion and collaboration in a team (Cooper 1993:16-9). It is a communal event with all actively involved and contributing.

Sofield and Juliano (1987:58-70) stress the importance of spirituality and vision. Both can be in conflict with each other. A spirituality as provided for former generations of ministers may not meet the needs of people involved in a collaborative lifestyle. Hence in a holistic approach the spirituality too has to be contextualised. Compassionate action is suggested as an appropriate measure of spirituality, since Jesus was the example of compassion. For Cooper (1993:70-1) a common vision is needed as integrative moment for collaboration. This vision, in a mission statement, reflects the context. For Sofield and Juliano (1987:73-5) the implementation of collaborative ministry needs a vision in whose formulation the people are involved.

In case of unavoidable conflicts conflict management is often more realistic than conflict resolution (Sofield & Juliano 1987:103-5). A conflict that is dealt with leads to group cohesion. For Whitehead and Whitehead (1991:87-97) inevitable conflicts can be an opportunity to readjust the common vision. They reveal the values of a group often more than mission statements. They show what is important enough to fight about (:180-1).

For Whitehead and Whitehead (1991:103-5) leadership is servant leadership. Since the word servant implies servitude and slavery and powerlessness, whereas leaders need to be powerful, they prefer the biblical word of stewardship. "Their task is to foster the network of effective relationships through which members care for one another and pursue shared goals" (:104). With this co-ordinating power leadership is a group process rather than an individual possession.

For Whitehead and Whitehead (1991:105-8) effective leaders are building community. They reinforce the conviction that people need each other and show the benefits of belonging. Accountability is mutual; it affects both leaders and community. Both are

accountable for the score. Whitehead and Whitehead (1991:27) link power and accountability. If power becomes a possession then authority escapes accountability.[347]

Whitehead and Whitehead (1991:116-125) discern various forms of power. As a religious leader in power one is actually acting on "we" power. Ministers draw their power from God and the people they serve.

Structures of dialogue require processes to expand dialogue, to extend decision making, and to enlarge mutual accountability (Whitehead & Whitehead 1991:174-203). Dialogue includes obedience. It is about belonging and integrating and means literally listening. This applies also to church leaders: obeying by listening to their people. The listening attitude of leaders allows one to adjust to the aspirations of people without compromising basic values. In a church with structures of partnership all obey the gospel in mutual accountability. Leadership is the responsibility of all and the charge of some. Charging them one also pledges support to them. Obedience then means openness to their influence, not submission.

Leadership in itself is proclamation of faith (Whitehead & Whitehead 1991:130-4). Leaders, like all people of God, are symbols of God's healing presence. Their task is to serve the presence of God, not to provide it. They represent the faith and remind people of the enduring presence of the Lord. As a mediator the leader is not only a representative of God or of the institutional church, they also represent the faith of the community. This is reflected in the discovery of local people that the leaders are a source of their hope.

5.3.2.10   Inculturation of leadership and eschatology

We saw in almost every respect that aspects of local culture played a role in the leadership issue: in the practice and understanding of leadership, decision making,

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[347] Cochrane and others suggest a comprehensive, community related understanding of accountability: "We would argue for an understanding of layers of accountability. Yes, a pastor is ultimately accountable to God for her or his ministry. But the understanding of God's will must of necessity be contextual, that is, determined in relation to the situation in which ministry is to be exercised. It must also be communal, determined in relation to and in consultation with the community of the faithful at that place. Finally, it must be ecclesial, reflecting an accountability to denominational and ecumenical understandings of what it means to be the church in context" (Cochrane et al. 1991:51). Ugeux adds with his view on SCCs: "La création des petites communautés chrétiennes n'inaugure donc pas automatiquement un novel exercise de la responsibilité dans l'Église. C'est la façon d'appliquer les principes de coresponsabilité et subsidiarité qui est déterminante" (1988:184).

ways of formation, of theologising, of spirituality, of preaching, and of admitting cultural procedures. The encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* states:

> The process of the Church's insertion into peoples' culture is a lengthy one. It is not a matter of purely external adaptation, for inculturation 'means the intimate transformation of authentic cultural values through their integration into Christianity and the insertion of Christianity in the various human cultures.' The process is so a profound and all-embracing one, which involves the Christian message and also the Church's reflection and practice (RM 52).

There are many ways to define culture, for example as an historical development or as a psychological, evolutionary development. For missiology Luzbetak (1995:74) suggests using a multiple or composite model of culture, which views culture primarily as a society's blueprint for succeeding in life, its plan for coping with the various demands of life. Models that look at culture as a system of communication may be used as complementary submodels, adding detail and providing correction and balance. Luzbetak (1995:75) views culture as

> *a dynamic system of socially acquired and socially shared ideas according to which an interacting group of human beings is to adapt itself to its physical, social, and ideational environment.*[348]

In the funeral ritual we observed a parallel practice of cultural procedures and church ritual. This could be understood as a kind of dual system.[349] It appears in the given context that the duality observed is not the expression of a dual system in the strict sense. When sharing the various tasks the leaders act within distinct but complementary systems, not in overlapping systems addressing in their respective ways the same needs.[350] The cultural ritual followed by the family and the ritual of the church have distinct, different functions. The family celebration cannot meet the needs covered by the church ritual, and the church ritual cannot accommodate the needs of the family.[351]

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[348] Banawiratma and Müller (1995:133) see two basic functions of every culture: to interpret life and to attribute meaning (hermeneutic function) and to give purpose or direction (ethic function).

[349] Schreiter (1985) attributes the development of dual systems to taking a rigid line towards syncretism. In dual systems a people follows the religious practices of two distinct systems; they can operate side by side. "Sometimes one system is followed more faithfully than the other (as in Africa, where people will follow the Christian system, but retain elements of a traditional system)..." (Schreiter 1985:145).

[350] For Schreiter (1985:155) one reason for dual systems is that the invading sign system and the local sign system deal with different things.

[351] Schreiter (1985:158) cautions that a conversion process is very slow. What appears as dual system may actually be stages of the conversion process. Whether this could be applied to the local practice

The Church in Africa (CIA) mentions in no. 62 that inculturation within the church happens amid the constant evolution of cultures.[352] It includes the whole of church life, theology, liturgy, and structures.[353] Luzbetak (1995:72) sees as the direct objective of inculturation the integration of culture with Christ and his basic message.[354] The community leaders play a crucial role at this interface of culture and faith. They are able to respond competently to traditions, arising needs, trends, and changes.

This local fine-tuning by the leaders in various contexts may even be better characterised by the concept of contextualisation.[355] It takes seriously the idea that local cultures actually contain the germ of Jesus' message. With the presence of God beginning with creation, Christ is not introduced as a total stranger. He is somebody already present in the non-Christian heart (Luzbetak 1995:73).[356] This view is shared by GS 22 and prepared by John 1:3: "Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made."

> Christ is incarnated once again, not, however, as a Jew two thousand years ago, or as a Westerner of the twentieth century, but as someone born here

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remains questionable, since it is dealing with family matters. Those of course are also open to change and development.

[352] It is imperative to note that cultures are under constant development. This helps to avoid the temptations, Droogers (1977) still counted in the 70s: generalisation of the many cultures of Africa (:445-7), the fallacy of reconstruction of culture as it existed in the past (:447-8), idealisation of African culture (:448-50), artificial Africanisation as opposed to local approaches (:450-2).

[353] Shorter (1988) clarifies the terminology used: enculturation relates to the insertion of a person into its own culture. Acculturation means the encounter between two cultures, which may be the main cause of cultural change. Cultural domination refers to one culture dominating another one, an unwelcome transference of foreign cultural traits. Inculturation's shortest definition is the "ongoing dialogue between faith and culture or cultures" (:11). Interculturation expresses the reciprocal character of mission. Luzbetak (1995:64-6) notes that enculturation is important for the intrasocietal living. It may become dysfunctional at the intersocietal level when it turns into ethnocentrism. Ethnocentrism is the tendency to regard the ways of one's own society as *the* normal, right and proper, and certainly the best way of thinking, feeling, speaking, and doing things. It may vary in intensity: from minor excesses to xenophobia. It can play a role with regard to local leadership. "Ethnocentrism regards local leadership and self-determination as premature... One of the reasons for the shortage of clergy in Latin America and the Spanish-speaking communities in the United States is the conviction of the people themselves, engendered over the centuries, that the padre had to come from the 'outside,' from the '*superior*' outside" (:66). In this context the local longing for priests at funerals seems to be an expression rather of honour instead of felt inferiority. Whether the still prevailing lack of local priests is influenced also by such ethnocentrism, could be investigated in further studies.

[354] Schreiter (1989) gives a thorough account of the development of the pertinent issues concerning inculturation.

[355] According to Cole (1984:3) the term contextualisation was created in the early 70s within the WCC Theological Education Fund. He does not see a distinction between it and indigenisation. Schreiter (1989:747) notes that many authors use the terms inculturation and contextualisation interchangeably. Contextualisation has the advantage of emphasising the importance of the context. Luzbetak (1995:69) states that contextualisation is also known as inculturation and incarnation.

[356] Schreiter (1985:29) identifies a christological basis for the great respect for culture. It is the belief that the living Christ is active in bringing the kingdom before the arrival of missionaries.

and now for the first time: the Gospel is not so much *transplanted* as it is *sown* for faith to rise out of the native soil (Luzbetak 1995:74).

Bate (1994:93-117) gives a comprehensive overview of inculturation pointing out the gospel, faith, the people, and the church as subjects of the inculturation process. The last has a particular bearing on our considerations. The community concerned lives in both the church and the culture. "The recognition of the life and practice of the community of faith and the affirmation of this as Christian life and practice is essential to the process of inculturation understood in this way" (Bate 1994:99). The main agents in a contextual model are the Holy Spirit and the local people of God (Luzbetak 1995:70).[357]

Redemptoris Missio, like other documents, acknowledges that "Within the church, there are various types of services, functions, ministries and ways of promoting Christian life" (RM 72). It formulates two principles for inculturation: compatibility with the Gospel and communion with the universal church (RM 54).

For locally initiated ministries it is much easier to promote the profound movement of inculturation. As we saw with regard to the ancestors there may be some doubt cast on the efforts towards inculturation. Bediako (1992:235) senses the Euro-centric source for a certain kind of perception of African culture:

> Missionaries, on the whole, saw in Africans and the African environment what they expected to find. In other words, what was observed in Africa was understood and interpreted, not in terms of Africa, but in terms of Europe, that is, of the European value-setting for the faith.

In his argument with Allier, Bediako (1992:236) notes that Allier, uncritically, seeks to show that conversion to Christianity for "uncivilised" people amounts to the development and acquisition of the mental processes of "civilised" people, their logic, reason, morality, and version of individuality.[358]

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[357] Mejia (1993:107) feels a particular danger: "The real danger is, however, that the process of inculturation becomes just a *clerical responsibility* in which the clergy takes over the charge of inculturating the Gospel Message for African people excluding the people themselves." Luzbetak (1995:68) calls contextualisation the right of a local community. "We understand contextualisation as the various processes by which a local church integrates the Gospel message (the "text") with its local culture (the "context"). The text and context must be blended into that one, God-intended reality called "Christian-living" (:69).

[358] Shorter (1988:17-23) elaborates on a classicist view of culture which saw only one culture, and the modern view of cultural diversity in communion.

Thus, whilst Allier rightly emphasises the revolutionary character of the Christian Gospel among non-Western peoples, he nontheless exemplifies the failure to conceive that Christianity among Africans or other non-Europeans could be different from the European manifestations of the faith, and that there could be other criteria than those provided by European civilisation to measure the attainments of the emergent Christianity (Bediako 1992:236).

This allows one to acknowledge the "otherness" of emerging leadership structures and practices. The "thick description" (Geertz 1975:6) shows the community ministry as a contextual response to contextual needs. As such it necessarily differs from approaches elsewhere. Kalilombe (1977:178) points out that the intention to localise the church is not a venture of vanity, but of intrinsic importance for the mission of the church. This means becoming the sacrament of salvation, an effective sign. This localisation only becomes genuine if the local people carry it out. This includes local possibilities, needs, and problems. Decision making, policy making, accountability for it, and setting the pace: all of this belongs to the concept of localisation. If it is in the hands of people from outside, then there is no genuine localisation.[359]

Nkurunzinza (1985) saw the liturgy as the privileged arena for inculturation. The main reason he gives that it is the sacred action surpassing others (:211). I maintain, with Kalilombe, that there are other crucial areas with regard to inculturation. In particular the realm of leadership is essential. It determines considerably the way the liturgy is celebrated. This depends on the cultural competence and the formation of those acting in the liturgy. Such mature leadership appears as both part and condition for contextualisation or inculturation.

Kalilombe (1977:180) quotes the 1973 AMECEA plenary, which identified as one crucial sign of localisation local leadership in the church, and the church's finding its own resources for its life and mission. True localisation therefore can be located by the triad of self-ministering, self-propagating, and self-supporting (Kalilombe 1977:195).

All attempts to inculturate faith do not just mean putting a Christian cloak over all cultural appearances in order to preserve them. Culture is developing continuously. In this process it is communicating with various influences. One of them can be the Gospel and its values, liberating and redeeming culture.

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[359] Localisation is not a matter of superficial changes regarding vestments, music, instruments, and artefacts. Kalilombe (1977:179) even asks whether such approaches actually reflect the feelings, needs, and desires of the people affected.

> Because culture is created by man, and because man is sinful, what he creates, however beautiful, however great, however highly cultivated it might be, it nevertheless bears the imprint of human sinfulness... Culture does not cleanse itself of its own impurities... Culture has its demons, which only the Gospel is equipped to exorcise and disarm (Mbiti 1977:37).

This statement indicates the essential role the message of the gospel can play for the culture. In our context we did not encounter serious problems concerning leadership, though the literature hinted at some undesirable traits of culture in this regard. The leaders are aware that there is no simple equation between faith and culture. A problem that remains in our area is that of the fully integrated involvement of women in the respective ministry with its cultural and ecclesial roots. Mbiti (1977:38) identified as future tasks also the question of the relationship between culture and leadership in the light of the Gospel, including such issues as the hierarchy and the role and dignity of women.[360]

Mbiti (1977:39) observes an area of supplementary need: he claims that culture has no eschatology. It is concerned with the past and the present. It promises no goal in time and history:

> Culture knows how to bury the dead, but it does not know what to do with the soul of man in the final analysis because it has no resurrection, so to speak. Culture has limitations beyond which it cannot take mankind (Mbiti 1977:39).[361]

The funeral leaders play a twofold role with regard to eschatology. In their proclamation they point to the death-overcoming power of life in God. On the background of the

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[360] *The Church in Africa* (CIA 63) underlines the concept of the "Church as God's family" as guiding idea for the evangelisation in Africa. This image appeals since it emphasises for instance care for others, solidarity, acceptance, and trust. CIA assumes the need to develop this concept further. After pondering on the excellence of this model, Msafiri (1998:306-311) continues pointing at its weaknesses (:311-6). Among them he counts ecumenical concerns, the problem of referring to the family while facing the growing number of "single parent families", the negative consequences of the traditional African patrilineal and matrilineal systems, and the gender issue. Healey and Sybertz (1996:145-9) mention the danger of understanding the hierarchy as parents and the laity as children and add: "Up until now there has been very little real sense of the church as family" (:149). It appears as if the family model is in need of an overhaul. Already the biblical reserve towards an uncritical reading of families helps to caution (cf. Mt 12:46-50; Mk 3:31-35; Lk 8:19-21). In the local context the smallest, family-like units within the church, the SCCs are not operating in the expected way. Patriarchal tendencies don't recommend emphasising this model either. There is an extremly high number of single parents at the occasion of the baptism of their children. The biblical restraint points at a new sort of family. The issue of community leadership could contribute to the development of the "Church as God's family" model. It could contribute by reducing the indicated weaknesses: "Ecclesial structures that embody the church as the family of God call for the expansion of ministries to everyone" (Healey & Sybertz 1996:148).
[361] Moila (1989:140-1) points out with regard to the ancestors that a person never dies. Death is separation, not annihilation. Therefore the dead, in a traditionally informed spirituality of the presence, play a role in the future life.

longing for ongoing community the leadership itself with its community building traits becomes part of the realisation of the eschatological expectation in the form of an "already", still characterised by the suspense of the "not yet". For Kehl (1986:224-230) the historical form of the kingdom of God appears in the form of community. Because the Spirit descends on all, the community sees the dawn of the last days, and feels entitled to understand itself as the eschatological community with the promises of the kingdom of God. This reflects the impressions gained by the local communities when relating the hope envisaged in 1 Thess 2:19-20; 3:7-9 to the concrete situation. The leaders are leading the eschatological vision. Kehl emphasises this active participation of the people of God in building up the communicative unity of the real symbols of the kingdom of God (:226). Christian hope is directed in its historical dimension towards this communion. It is the function of the church to be the sacramental form of the universal unity (:227).

The eschatological dimension of leadership brings us back to the option with the poor. It is they who put people into the presence of the Lord (cf. Suess 2000:1). If mission means to bring people into the presence of the Lord, the poor are the best missionaries. In their cultural otherness they still enact the future vision of eschatology: in the rituals remembering the past, rejoicing the present, and anticipating utopia. Thus they show the "already" and "not yet" of Christian eschatology, which defeats all attempts to move it into an unapproachable distant realm (cf. Suess 2000:1).

With the cultural background of meals representing community and transformed by the Christian message into an eschatological sign that anticipates the future of the participants, the incompleteness of the ministry offered and rendered appears again. Since the Eucharist anticipates the universal communion at the table of the Lord, it in itself is the most intense form of historical representation of the kingdom of God. Without it the eschatology of the presence is deprived of one of its vital forms of expression.[362] The intention to inculturate ministry in a context that demands eschatological signs is seriously obstructed.

These contextual considerations offer a contribution to the wider church. The local church transcends its local nature. Inculturation affects the wider church.

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[362] Kehl (1986:228-9) highlights three basic attitudes to implement this Eucharistic meaning: to implement appropriate structures of ministry, trustworthy solidarity with the hopes of the poor, and active openness for ecumenical unity in reconciled diversity.

The local church is, therefore, something more than local, and *the ultimate purpose of inculturation is not only the benefit to be derived by the local church qua local but the enrichment of the whole Body of Christ* (Luzbetak 1995:72).

Banawiratma and Müller (1995:143) see the tension between universality and particularity. Jesus, with his universal meaning, was part of one particular culture. The tension in the process of inculturation can be resolved by intercultural communication, where the involved cultures give witness and listen to witness.

5.3.2.11 Synthetic conclusion: Community ministry offers a holistic fit

With these various contributions we see the locally practised ministry in the wider context of contemporary thought on leadership and culture. With the differences between concepts of commercial leadership and church-leadership it is conspicuous how this selected presentation indicates basic general traits of leadership such as listening, authenticity, cultural insertion, vision, and dialogue. Just as the early church adapted to existing structures of leadership, we note that in our days something similar is happening in the realm of managerial leadership and in the church. The reference to African leadership style does not suggest dictators who actually distorted the original version of chieftainship. We rather see an African leadership, "which is the polar opposite of autocratic or despotic rulership" (Uzukwu 1996:130). It appears that in fact the undistorted African style of leadership has anticipated what is only now being introduced in community-related features in management and church practice. The *ubuntu*-informed leadership style is widely compatible with the community-related management strategies. Drawing a conclusion, some aspects of the local ministry of the funeral leaders will now still be put into a closer relation to the features that emerged in the reflection on leadership and management styles.

5.3.2.11.1 Serving the vision of community

A common trait in the literature I quoted is the importance of a vision. The leaders serve the vision of their organisation, here the *Community Serving Humanity*. Conflicts that occur in decision making, for instance, over funerals, serve the maintenance and clarification of the vision. The traditional model of consensus seeking helps the reappraisal and integration of different views. Though in most parishes there is no mission-statement that translates the vision into the context, the basic vision is clear and permeates the actions of the leaders. It corresponds with the main concerns we

saw expressed for instance during selection, and in decisions on funerals. These were concerns about community. With an inclusive practice conflicts are managed rather than solved.

The leadership is oriented towards the people and the common goal. It is result-oriented, and addresses the needs of the people. Kuhn and Sofield identified as basic needs the need for community, the need to overcome loneliness, and the longing for the word of God; these coincide with the needs expressed in the context of bereavement.

The leaders are quite naturally in a permanent interplay with the community on different levels. Leaders depend on the acceptance or consent by their communities, as expressed in the selection process, even integrating controversial people by consent. Their legitimacy is based in the community.

The style of the analysed leadership maintains the shared vision, while all are responsible for it. It is a servant or stewardship style of ministry that has community building, the shared goals, and the relationships at heart. Its power is community related and comes from both the people and from God, as A Elia demonstrated in the reflections on preaching. Empowerment happens through participative practice by community and team involvement, a participation that exceeds mere delegation. It is reflected in the dependent independence. The power to succeed ultimately depends on the ability to listen. Obedience is a mutual requirement, community related and community building. Thus consultation is a permanent feature, including consultation with the community and the committee as well as with the pastoral workers. It is also an obvious characteristic of the cultural practice of consultation. It shows that the leaders normally do not act as autocrats. In case of conflict the normal way is to integrate others by "admonishing". With regard to listening one must imagine in a missionary situation the involvement of some missionaries, deployed and yet deplored by people for their "gibberish" (Mangaliso 1999b) due to missing language-skills, including the cultural semantics and grammar (terms used by Luzbetak 1995:77). The local leaders bring along the required language skills as a precondition for listening skills.[363]

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[363] Being knowledgeable in a language, however, does not necessarily mean that one is able to listen. Listening skills even in a culture using consent dialogue have to be learned and are acquired as sometimes heated debates show.

The leaders transform the needs and the vision of the community by their own example of self-transformation or authenticity. Kerygma and martyria match where they become a sign of hope and faith. The leaders themselves are experienced as the proclamation of God's presence. The basis is their spirituality. It is a spirituality of presence with which they are facing death with a significant composure. The leaders reflect what was called detachment from the mundane and a bonding with the spiritual world. Their culturally-initiated and compassionate spirituality differs significantly from the old style of spirituality that deviated from the vision in regard to the leadership style as in much else. It acknowledges the dignity of the person through the equal ability to communicate with God and to communicate God.

The transformational influence process happens through both the commitment of the pastoral workers towards the leaders and the leaders in their own actions within the community. The pastoral staff plays an enabling role. They urge improvements as in the process of the selection of leaders, and by enhancing their qualities. The leaders try to communicate the message of communion with God, enacted in the community of believers. Hence the occasional emphasis on repentance, *ukuguquka*. Leniency and an inclination to mercy find their right place here as both the expression and means of transformation. They are expression of a spirituality of compassion. It finds its limit when it could distort the community longed for. We observed it both among the leaders and communities in their way of making decisions on funerals and in selecting leaders as well.

Though mainly working with the transformational influence process the reflections on entrepreneurial leadership point also at the dangers of transactional influence processes. They became obvious, particularly in the area of decision making. With the genuine concern about community building certain perceived requirements may lead, for instance, to a coerced attendance at SCCs as a criterion for qualification for a full church funeral. People finally comply with the policy of building SCCs not for the vision but in this case, for a funeral. This strategy is counterproductive as the motivation and vision of SCCs becomes obscured and the actual community within the SCC may be distorted by the presence of mostly old people (and children). When, as happened in very few cases, money is involved as a motivating stimulus, transactional influence in the context of the church takes the form of pastoral bribe and contradicts the basic message. The underlying motives are alien. Kanungo and Mendonça assume that in these cases the focus shifts towards the objectives of the leaders, their needs, and

concerns. This "offends the dignity of the human person; it also frustrates the basic human need of maintaining self-worth and, as a result, causes much psychological and sometimes physical harm to employees..." (Kanungo & Mendonça 1996:55); in our case one could also speak about spiritual harm done to parishioners.

The commitment of the leaders is informed by the ethical powers as reflected by Kanungo and Mendonça. In particular "perspective" plays a role in the community concern. It is fostered by formation, which exceeds a mere technical approach and helps the leaders to attend properly to concrete cases where vision and perspective can become a source of mercy. Formation thus contributes to the vision being a communal one, enriched by African perspectives.

While leadership ideas can be conveyed by training, qualities like listening and integrity are personal gifts that can be developed. The communities, who select leaders suitable for leadership according to the vision, detect them.

The satisfaction of leaders depends also on their involvement in teamwork. The task-teams or workgroups that work on their own reflect the African style of co-operative teamwork. Their independence extends to decision making, performing the task, and maintaining the community and the vision. Independence and discretion are steered by compliance through commitment.

5.3.2.11.2   A ministerial structure that supports the contextualisation of the vision

The rather loose structure of the ministry allows contextualisation to happen in different ways, culturally and case related. It favours the initiative and creativity of the leaders in adapting to a situation. This includes the freedom to pronounce the message without dependence on preformulated texts. As a flat structure the hierarchy allows for much autonomy. Dependence in the hierarchical structure is maintained in a dialectical way while allowing much independence in the performed ministry. This dependence is accepted and appreciated as supportive.

The leadership is subjected to few controls. In mutual accountability of the leaders to the community and of the community for its leaders, it is rather self-control that leads to ownership and satisfaction, as expressed by saying: "Now we are the same." The accountability is essentially bound to the vision, the score of building community.

Without exercising coercion the priests' role becomes more like that of a manager.[364] They are ultimately responsible for the objectives, for loyalty to the vision, by empowering and facilitating. They exercise the same ministry with another accent. Their new role enhances also their acceptance. Though they are officially authorised, they nevertheless depend on the consent and acceptance by the community to become effective managers and leaders through collaboration. The recognition of the local cultural values is a must for managers. The lack of an interface between leaders and priests may have contributed to the failures in the past. While the leaders give a lead, in the transformational sense, the priests or pastoral workers manage this leadership while providing it in part themselves. The idea of hierarchy changes. It becomes flat, determined by and leading to co-operation. This will happen more easily when a mutual perception resembling the "human resources model" is at work. For the leaders, as we saw, their own goals, like satisfaction, personal growth through formation, and autonomy and accountability in the execution of their ministry, are a reality.

Clericalism seems to be a connotation of hierarchy (Uzukwu 1996:124). What Uzukwu aims at is indeed a dialogical (listening) church on all levels, with consultation and deliberation (:126). Rahner (1968:359) had the impression that the hierarchical apostolate can give the impression of being more concerned about the administration of the system while the lay apostolate gives the impression of the original missionary. This understanding of administrative management appears now as rectified and redeemed because it extends to the maintenance of the vision. With its new and indispensable role it assumes a specific attractiveness.

5.3.2.11.3   Towards an inculturated leadership

I note with joy that in this case the cultural and managerial ideas match easily with the local practice because the context is shaped by a high community spirit and not by individualism. Harmony between the new leadership structures and culture is achieved easily in this way. In many ways the leaders themselves contribute to this harmony by their eagerness to receive training, their sensitivity in selecting leaders, their care for an inculturated liturgy, and their acceptance of family customs. They contribute to

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[364] Ugeux (1988:199) observes a similar development: "Bref, l'innovation d'un style d'autorité plus collégial n'est pas réservée aux seuls responsables de communauté. Elle ne peut se réaliser avec fruit et dans la sérénité que si le clergé accepte d'évaluer ses practiques de pouvoir et de s'engager dans un nouveau style de collaboration avec les laïcs."

overcoming the kind of petty inculturation deplored by Makang. They implement values such as hospitality, trust and dignity, which, according to Mbigi, are a contribution from the *ubuntu* philosophy to leadership.

It does, however, remain a sad fact that the ministry of the leaders is quite restricted in implementing these values. It cannot give full dignity and respect to the deceased because it is unable to include the celebration of the Eucharist. The eschatological value of communion as enacted by the funeral leaders thus lacks its full expression. The openness and hospitality always displayed in Jesus' time can not be practised in today's burial celebrations. As we saw above, Eucharistic hospitality in the form of temporary membership would appeal quite naturally in the circumstances. Jesus did not refuse to celebrate with his disciples although he knew that even the traitor was present. The celebrations today should radiate and express trust, even if it involves risks. This expression of faith is still lacking in the ministry of funeral leaders, a ministry that otherwise is so comprehensive.

At the beginning of the missionary work we saw an undeniable dependence on and influence of the European church and its forms of ministry. Now one sees new forms of ministry as a culturally fitting response to local needs. The concrete form of ministry shows a local – catholic – realisation of a well-adjusted leadership structure within a church organisation that developed its leadership structures in a different sociocultural context. The various models of moulding community or lay ministry in the worldwide church, as discussed in the course of the reflections, show that different models or systems of leadership can exist concurrently at different places as they do in secular systems of leadership. With the ordained ministry as the common feature the diversification happens in the crucial area of community ministry, which in turn affects the performance of the ordained ministry. This thesis shows that with the process in which culture starts penetrating ministry and proclamation a new level of inculturation is achieved, leaving behind an initial rather folkloric approach.

5.3.2.12   The quest for the church's vision: A documentation of change and permanent search

The reflections of the previous sections indicate that the community ministry forms part of a response to the deficiencies of ministry in the past. With the variety of forms ministry can actually take it reflects a tendency of the early church which drew from existing contemporary leadership models at that time. The locally-introduced community

ministry corresponds well with contemporary reflections and strategies for leadership and management, which are concerned with providing the best ways for implementing the vision of an organisation. I will put it now briefly into relation with the church tradition as formulated in church documents and theological reflection. The history of the theology of ministry reveals a process of dynamic development concurring with theological trends, and in the attempt to deal with new situations. This tradition of change deserves some attention since the present situation appears as part of such dynamics. A synthetic conclusion will again link up the following reflection with the local leadership phenomenon.

The introduction of deacons is one of the first examples of new ministries in response to new needs (cf. Acts 6:1).[365] This is a true reflection of catholic faithfulness, to look in all given situations for appropriate answers to promote the apostolic faith. It ensures that the faith will be conveyed at all times in contextually appropriate ministry structures.

Reading Bosch's statement:

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[365] Collins (1992:36-43) gives a revealing account of the development of ministry in the writings attributed to Luke. The Twelve were teaching in the temple and the houses. A new group with another language was neglected by the ministry rendered. The Greek-speaking widows could not possibly attend the Aramaic teaching in the temple. The solution was to provide a new ministry serving them. The difference in the ministry of the twelve and these newly introduced deacons is not in the social area. While the apostles' time was occupied by preaching in the temple, nobody could render this specific service in the houses, at tables (see also the parallels with the private meals in the presentation of Klinghardt, above). "Luke's omission of the preposition is no accident, for in the omission he is displaying precisely the difference between serving at tables, in the expression of which the Greek language uses the preposition, and carrying out one's ministry in the vicinity of tables, to express which the Greek language does not require a preposition; he intends us to understand that the Twelve will not be ministering their teaching to these small groups of women at the occasion of their gatherings around their tables" (:39). The qualification required for these ministers points at their preaching task (cf. Acts 6:3). "Luke probably suggests that the inculturation of ministry is the condition of its effectiveness; he clearly proposes that purveying the word of God is the inalienable duty of a church, that it is the essence of its ministry, and that ministry's mandate necessarily extends to keeping ministry versatile; finally he establishes that the tradition of ministry is the assurance of its integrity and of its fidelity to its divine mandate" (:40). Needs discovered within the Christian community found an immediate response. Collins' findings allow perceiving the Xhosa Bible translation as justified in some way, while it may otherwise appear rather incomplete. It emphasises the idea of one ministry, which experienced diversification. Important for our context remains the fact that diversification was developed to maintain the ministry serving the concrete needs. It guarantees full, competent, and authorised service of the word in different contexts. This practice of the early church is in contrast to the present context. Here a diversified ministry was introduced prior to contextualisation. It is still unable to address the existing needs in a comprehensive way. If faithfulness to the origin does not mean to copy the contextualised practice of that time but to maintain the basic intention of rendering sufficient ministry by again contextualising, then one may even ask whether the incomplete and unsatisfactory practice of the moment puts a threat to the acclaimed apostolicity. The apostles' response differs in scope and immediate implementation from present approaches.

> Catholic missions have always had a significant lay involvement. Their participation in the missionary enterprise was, however, clearly auxiliary and firmly under the control and jurisdiction of the clergy (Bosch 1991:470)

one must realise that this lay involvement was normally restricted to semi-official lay people like catechists, nuns, or brothers.

Ela (1987:77-8) regards the building of communities as essential that allow scope for the laity to develop the necessary ministries. This implies the search for new solutions, which do not depend on models developed in different contexts. Ela strongly advocates declericalising the ministries in order to promote real local churches, which are able to live from their own resources.

Vatican II started redefining the role of the laity in several of its constitutions and decrees, following prior developments like the liturgical renewal. The encyclical *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (EN) of 1975 dealt with the evangelisation in the world.[366] The Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Christfideles Laici* (CL) reflects on the synod on laity held in 1987. It was *The Pastoral Plan of the Catholic Church in Southern Africa* (SACBC 1989) which actually re-shaped the local communities of Sterkspruit parish. *We are the Church* (SACBC 1994) is the title of the pastoral directive on co-responsibility in the church in Southern Africa. *The Church In Africa* (CIA) is the result of the Synod on Africa held in 1994. The latest document concerning the laity is the *Instruction on Certain Questions Regarding the Collaboration of the Non-ordained Faithful in the Sacred Ministry of Priests*, dated 1997 (ICQ).[367]

5.3.2.12.1   Communio theology and community ministry

The change in the theological patterns of thought also changes the perception of ministry. This applies also to the communio-theology. Contrary to the development in the 18th and 19th century interpreting the church as "perfect society" the ecclesiology of Vatican II (cf. LG chapter 1-4) was influenced by the NT and the patristic understanding of the church as communio. This was reflected in the subsequent documents and the view of lay-involvement in the church. Ecclesiology has unfolded according to an all-embracing communio-concept. To understand this concept of communio correctly one

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[366] Schreiter (1989:751) regards as a valuable contribution of *Evangelii Nuntiandi* that it is concerned with the evangelisation of cultures, not only individuals, thus underlining how much humans are cultural beings.

[367] George (1998) gives a synopsis on magisterial teaching on ministry since Vatican II.

has to see the church as a tool and sign of both the intimate unity with God and the unity of humanity (cf. LG 1), not as its perfect realisation (cf. Drumm 1994:1280-1282). This understanding of the church matches the mentality of contemporary people aware of democracy, participation and human rights and, especially in Africa, the movement towards independence (cf. Bertsch 1990:142). Locally the ecclesiology of communio finds its expression in the implementation of Small Christian Communities and leadership structures as intended by the Pastoral Plan.[368]

Drumm (1994:1282) expresses the strength of the concept of communio. It provides a mediating unity in relationship, which both presupposes differences and dispels them. The theological strength of the community model lies for Luzbetak (1995:376-379) in its scriptural roots. Anthropologically he traces its strength to the deep human need to look for fellowship in almost everything humans do.[369] The danger of this model he sees in the inherent temptation to become too introspective and to get lost in clichés and platitudes. He identifies the danger that the communal character can become so dominant so that the institutional dimensions can appear as unimportant. As specific characteristics of the Christian community, rooted in the New Testament, he identifies loyalty to faith-values, striving for freedom for (instead of freedom from), aiming at organic oneness, building on mutual trust, respect, forbearance, caring, sharing, and serving. Despite these alluring perspectives Luzbetak cautions that building and structuring a community in missionary work does not mean simply applying lofty ideas from elsewhere:

> The specific challenge to every Christian community is none other than to "demystify" the New Testament community model by translating it into the concrete sociocultural situation and real life here and now (Luzbetak 1995:380).

[368] The IMBISA (1993:37) study paper suggests with regard to the regulation of church life that: "the meaning of 'Church' as 'assembly' should be the guiding principle here. The people of Africa see a high value in this principle. They value the sense of consultation, of communion, of family and of togetherness, so much so that the idea of a command-structure of organisation would appear to be a contradiction."

[369] Dulles (1974:54-6) sees as advantage of the communio model that is has a basis in the biblical notion of communion and excellent foundation in the Catholic tradition. It accentuates the personal relationship between the faithful and the Holy Spirit and meets a human need expressed by the faithful. He notes as weaknesses some obscurity between the spiritual and visible dimension of the church by exalting and divinising the church beyond its due. He senses a tension between a network of friendly interpersonal relationships and the mystical communion of grace.

Dulles (1974) outlined five models of the church.[370] Whether one sees the church as an institution, as mystical communion, as sacrament, as herald, or as servant has an impact on the vision of ministry within such a church:

> This communal concept of the church calls for a concept of ministry as the fostering of fellowship (Dulles 1974:154).

The task arising is to build up a living community (cf. Bühlmann 1976:265). It is exactly the ecclesiology of communio, which provides a sound foundation for a theology of the different ministries (cf. Ritter 1990:382). It prevents us from seeing the people of God as mere objects of the ordained ministry. They are recognised in their own right (cf. Bertsch 1990:147).

Keller (1973:400-417) remains sceptical about the changes brought about by Vatican II. Despite all the changes, he still finds the old negative differentiation of non-clergy prevailing. Some difficulties arise from the lack of a clear conception of the laity. A clear definition was not attempted. New visions were combined with attempts to please traditional thinking. In his attempts to bring about some more clarity Keller states that charism is not limited to the official ministry. The texts on the concept of the laity attribute the charisms for building up the community to all Christians. When LG 12 refers to 1 Thess 5:12.19-21 to indicate the duty of the officials to check the charisms the NT source itself sees this as the task of the community as a whole.

For *Christfideles Laici* (CL 10,11,14) all the baptised and confirmed are disciples who are called to their ministry according to their gifts or charisms. The ministries of the lay faithful are there to serve the community; they exist in communion and on behalf of communion (20; cf. 18-19). Especially for mission, in order to foster community, it recommends promoting the participation of the laity in pastoral responsibilities (26).

Like Vatican II (cf. Bertsch 1990:142) the Pastoral Plan of Southern Africa is based on the mystery of the Trinity. It builds on the human community, which is the image of God's community of Father, Son, and Spirit. Referring to *Evangelii Nuntiandi* it states that this human community shares in God's plan to renew the world by bringing the Good News into all strata of humanity (SACBC 1989 1). As one way of building community spirit it points at Small Christian Communities (SACBC 1989 8). Ministries,

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[370] In a different sequence Luzbetak (1995: 374-397) deals with the same five models. Also Azevedo (1987:208-232) outlines these models and hints at a sixth one as described by Dulles: The church as

then, are seen as another way to create a spirit of community. This will be achieved even more if ministries are shared. Monopolising is seen as hindrance to community building (SACBC 1989 13). This will be much enhanced by a deep sense of oneness between bishops, priests, deacons, and the communities they serve.

> Such ministry of service will encourage and enable all members to share in the ordering of the community's life. By sharing responsibility for the community people become active participants in a common enterprise and this makes a powerful contribution to community building (SACBC 1989 14).

The Pastoral Directive *We are the Church* (SACBC 1994 9) understands ministry as a service to the community exercised within the community. And even if some have the particular role of unifying the whole community, speaking on its behalf, or presiding over its liturgical celebration, this is for the good of the community and not for the sake of a particular person.

Ela (1987:75-76) sees a future for Christian communities only insofar as they rely on their own dynamics and resources and grow towards autonomy, rooted in their local tradition. The fundamental ministry in the church is the ministry of the people of God (Ela 1987:78). It is also in this line that Boff (1980:68-9) can speak about the church as the koinonia of power. The community as a whole has the power. This is by no means an anarchical notion but an expression of the idea that power within the church is not the monopoly of a few specialists. This implies that ministries, which arise as answers to concrete needs, are not limited to a few but are open for all.

The communio-theology as developed by Vatican II requires taking the principle of subsidiarity seriously. This principle requests that everything that can be done at the level of the local church should not be regulated by other church levels. This includes all efforts towards inculturation on a local level as well as the liturgy and particularly the accommodation of community-ministries within the local church (cf. Bertsch 1997:278).

5.3.2.12.2   *Rediscovery of an active role*

The number of documents on the ministry of all Christians composed since Vatican II shows a developing awareness of the ministry of Christ. Vatican II brought considerable changes to the understanding of the ordained ministry. Formerly the priests were seen as the actual ministers of the church. The focus shifted to the bishops. The priests'

discipleship or community of disciples.

office is now understood as deriving from that of the bishop. And if priests traditionally derived their ministry from the threefold ministry of Christ as the priestly, royal, and prophetic ministry, one now learned that the council attributed exactly this to the laity (Neuner 1995:135). Neuner states that sorting out these differences was left to the theologians.

The changes extend to all Christians. They are urged "to collaborate in the work of the Gospel, each according to his opportunity, ability, charism and ministry... they might together devote their powers to the building up of the Church" (AG 28). This is to truly establish the church (AG 21). The decree *Apostolicam Actuositatem* (AA) of Vatican II deals with the Apostolate of Lay People. Still influenced by concerns about the scarcity of priests or their state of being deprived of freedom to exercise their ministry, the laity are seen as helpers (AA 1; see also AG 17 speaking about auxiliary functions). This is in contrast to its further deliberations, stating that in a living body no member plays a purely passive part and that a passive member must be considered useless. The laity are assigned to mission, in the church and in the world (AA 2). In actual fact: the involvement of the laity is neither at its own nor at the clergy's discretion.[371]

> From the fact of their union with Christ the head, flows the laymen's right and duty to be apostles (AA 3).

The root of the ministry of lay people is seen in Christ himself. *We are the Church* (SACBC 1994 5) reinforces this by closely linking responsibility and participation. This points at the obligation of every member to play their part in the community. *Christfideles Laici* (cf. CL 23) refers to Canon Law (can 230§3) to identify the ministries of the laity. This paragraph states:

> Where the needs of the Church require and ministers are not available, lay people, even though they are not lectors or acolytes, can supply certain of their functions, that is, exercise the ministry of the word, preside over liturgical prayers, confer baptism and distribute holy communion, in accordance with the provision of the law.

The Church In Africa urges us to make the laity aware of their role in the church and in the political, economic, and social area (CIA 54, 90). This document also shows that even a very modern document on the church in Africa can be limited in its perception. It

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[371] With the reality of a permanently developing ministry within the church, and given the fact of some constant traits, Schillebeeckx (1981:112-113) states that Vatican II gave a synthetic theology of the

sees the catechists as the lay-people primarily involved. It therefore retains the narrow perspective of paying attention mainly to the pastoral workers. It assumes that the role of catechists has been and remains the determinative force for the implantation and expansion of the church in Africa (CIA 91).

The *Instruction on Certain Questions Regarding the Collaboration of the Non-Ordained Faithful in the Sacred Ministry of Priests* (ICQ) is in stark contrast. It understands ministry firstly as the sacred (ICQ:7) or pastoral ministry (:8) of the clergy, and refers to the activity of the laity mainly in terms of mission in the temporal or spiritual order (:6), New Evangelisation (:7), and pastoral initiatives (:6). The non-ordained faithful collaborate but do not substitute in the "more restricted area" of the sacred ministry (:7). This collaboration is judged as fruitful but regarded as emergency (:8).[372] ICQ is not striving for semantic congruence since the terminology of Vatican II allows speaking about the substitution of priests by lay-people (LG 35). If one reads the "more restricted areas" as referring to the "essential difference", ICQ correctly rejects this idea of substituting since essentials can only be substituted by ordained priests.

I assume that the terminological ambiguities can be taken as an expression of ongoing development in the theological discourse dealing with a widening of ministries formerly reserved to clergy. The inductively gained insights show clearly that a fruitful participation already exists and that it is rather the deductively gained ideas that contrast with the reality. Ela regards it as only fair to consider the different services of the church as authentic ministries (Ela 1987:71). For Bertsch the term co-operation or collaboration seems to best express the relationship between different forms of ministries (cf. Bertsch 1990:151-152). By 1973 Cardinal Marty had already stated that the French church wanted to make the transition towards a church in which all members of the people of God take their share in responsibility. This is a church totally borne by the ministries of all (*une Eglise tout entière ministérielle*) to become a wholly missionary

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existing order of the church, attributing the fullness of priesthood to the bishops. But this must not be regarded as a dogmatic fact.

[372] ICQ talks about a restricted area (:7), without defining the restrictions. It claims that laity acted within its proper limits (:8; 14) without outlining them. It states clearly that the lay-faithful are called to assist in the ministry of the clergy (:7), only to continue claiming that the participation in certain roles and offices is "not merely of assistance but of mutual enrichment of the common Christian vocation" (:16) and then later to return to a formulation of "'supplementary' assistance" (:34). It sees the community ministry as emergency measure and alerts to avoid "the abuse of multiplying 'exceptional' cases" (:17). Wherever they exist it does not ask for causes.

church (in Bertsch 1990:143), *We are the Church* (SACBC 1994) picks up a term used in *Christfideles Laici*:

> In the context of Church mission, then, *the Lord entrusts a great part of the responsibility to the lay faithful, in communion with all other members of the People of God* (CL 92).

This reflects the fundamental equality of all church members mentioned earlier on. Equality brings a kind of responsibility, which is seen as complementary. The responsibility of laity and clergy are linked to each other. So it becomes co-responsibility (SACBC 1994 3).

> The word "co-responsibility" does not imply that there is only one kind of responsibility which is given to both; nor does it mean that all differences are abolished. It implies rather both equality and difference. It means that each one can exercise responsibility only in a way that is linked to the responsibility of the other (SACBC 1994 2).

With the responsibilities of both laity and clergy intertwined there is no taking away from the one side if the other exercises hers, nor does the responsibility of one make the other redundant. Intimately linked, all forms of ministry promote each other mutually. They actually cannot function without each other (SACBC 1994 4).[373]

5.3.2.12.3 Ministries and ministerial priesthood

The inductive approach allows one to look at what the Spirit says through the ministries existing in his communities instead of primarily looking at ministry through the lens of a particular theological framework. This means taking the church seriously as one "locus theologicus" (cf. chapter 1.4.2 with reference to Aquinas). This approach showed the funeral leaders as independent actors when carrying out their ministry. Their collaboration with the pastoral workers, especially the priests, took place mostly behind the scenes. Rather than discovering a one-way dependence the local analysis allows one to identify a mutual dependence with differing roles.

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[373] Further reflections on co-responsibility reflect a lot of the observed reality (SACBC 1994: 30-40): Co-responsibility becomes concrete in the liturgy where roles should be shared (:30). It transforms ways of decision-making by striving for consensus. Moreover, it states that co-responsibility is best served by having as many leaders as possible. They are entrusted with their tasks in a definite and permanent form. So they are not simply regarded as "helpers". Their task is to assist the co-responsibility of the whole community as kind of intermediaries. They bridge the gap between ordained and a less structured community. So they enrich the concept of co-responsibility. Women and men can take this role alike. The possible claim that this was against local traditions is countered by the notion that not all traditions are in conformity with God's will. - Parra (1996:970) dislikes the term "entrusted" since it suggests that the community ministry participates in the ministries "from above."

To determine the relationship of the ministries involved, the dogmatic constitution on the church, *Lumen Gentium*, made the well-known distinction:

> Though they differ essentially and not only in degree, the common priesthood of the faithful and the ministerial or hierarchical priesthood are none the less ordered one to another; each in its own proper way shares in the one priesthood of Christ (LG 10).

The instruction on collaboration (ICQ:12) reaffirms the essential difference of the ordained ministry in its service for the common priesthood of all. As far as the local context is concerned this is a true task for the ordained ministers. But the local leaders also participate in this area. They also serve in various ways the common priesthood of all with the assistance of the ordained priests and pastoral workers.

ICQ in itself is an example of contextualisation. It refers to the possibility of delegating marriages to non ordained people (:32) and, albeit with some caution, to have non-ordained people baptising (:33). It expresses the desire that priests or deacons should preside over funerals personally, with the non-ordained doing so in exceptional cases (:33). The picture given does not reflect the local situation, where the presence of priests at funerals is often impossible. To administer baptism and marriage however is no problem for the priests in this part of the world. The context envisaged by ICQ seems to be a situation where sufficient priests are available to conduct funerals. Admittedly the instruction was actually aimed at some European countries.[374] Methodologically, therefore, the instruction appears as an invitation to thorough contextualisation and understanding of ministries within their particular context in the wider church.

When ICQ refers to the apostolic succession to show that the ordained ministry acts in the person of Christ the head (:13) it enters shaky ground for two reasons. Though the service of maintenance of the apostolic tradition appears in the analysis as a main task for pastoral workers, based also on their specific competence by their theological training, the apostolic succession is attributed by many (cf. footnote 316, p. 388) to the

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[374] ICQ's own allusion to "many pressing requests" (:8) for clarification rather obscures but clarifies the context. The document thus is a real instruction and less witness of religious communication in frank dialogue. It limits itself as not being exhaustive and addressing every variation (:9) and reinforces thus again its own contextual limitation. In a later admission the scope was vaguely clarified. ICQ is a reaction to events related to laity involved in full-time pastoral work in northern and central Europe, in North America, and Australia (The Tablet 1998:391).

church as a whole, including its ministries. Likewise the reference to Christ the head is used authoritatively in differing ways and does therefore not contribute to clarification.[375]

The Instruction, then, continues to see the essential difference in the "authoritative proclamation of the word of God, the administration of the sacraments and the pastoral direction of the faithful" (ICQ:13). The ordained ministry acts for the upbuilding of the church (:13).

It is stunning to see, not from a bounty of quotations but from the life of the Christian community, that the overwhelming majority of these criteria are emerging with the ministry of the leaders. They are sent[376] and proclaim the word as elaborated earlier on in an unfailing manner. They administer – with given conditions – sacraments dependently. They collaborate in directing the faithful and are concerned about unity within the church.[377] The ministry of unity is also exercised also by them. It is not exercised exclusively as it is not exercised exclusively by any ordained minister. While delivering an effective service to meet the needs of the people it remains not so much a question why they are doing this but why they are not admitted into the ordained ranks. This should become the central question, instead of the attempts to limit their service through this instruction, which is clearly a contextually grounded document.[378] Osborne (1993:30) sees that

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[375] The reference to acting in the person of Christ the head experiences various connotations. Sometimes it refers to the ordained ministry. At times it seems to fit all Christians in a kind of contextualisation to the respectively preferred pattern of theological thought. Christifideles Laici like the later ICQ sees the ordained acting in Persona Christi Capitis (CL 22,23), referring to Vatican II and Presbyterorum Ordinis (PO 2), whereas Apostolicam Actuositatem (AA 3) derives the right and duty of laity to be apostles exactly from their union with Christ the head.

[376] Their solemn blessing is clearly distinct from an ordination for a lifetime commitment by its repeated rhythm (annual or less frequent as locally intended with a three-year rhythm).

[377] Unity is a point Ratzinger (1969:113) stresses for the ministry of ordained. We saw this concern, however, strongly emerging among the funeral leaders and their communities. Lohfink (1982:153-5) sees a threefold service for unity: unity with the origin (which one may call apostolicity), unity with the whole church, and unity within the local community. The former two concerns observably lie more in the hand of the ordained ministry, albeit not exclusively. Likewise Bosch (1991:474) sees some forms of ordained ministry as essential, as guardian to keep the community of the faithful to the teaching and practice of the apostolic Christianity.

[378] Contextuality here means that the validity of the statement may be perceptible for people of a certain context, whereas for others it may not be understandable at all. Durrheim (1997) points at the social constructionist account of meaning. Opposed to an empiricist understanding of meaning, where the meaning of a statement is defined purely in terms of its truth or its falsity (:176), it understands language generally not as referential, but constructive (:179-80). "Language has a doing function, and all speech is performative and constructive of reality. By transcending the dualism between the (external) real world and the (internal) world of ideas, social constructionism must reject the notion that language reflects, mirrors or purely describes reality, in favour of an understanding of language as constructive" (:180). The subsequent method of discourse analysis aims to account for how particular perceptions become fixed

some perceptible and ritualized installation process has its rightful place. Such a ritualization is both the public acknowledgement of such ministerial leadership and the celebration by the community that God has given such a grace to a particular community.

Looking at ordination as a sacrament, it is for Van der Ven (1996:331-2) just the rite of the laying on of hands that makes the difference to the pastoral worker in his context, or to the leaders in ours. In the actual role one finds many similarities in the leadership of ordained and non-ordained. The contents of leadership are rather equal as just shown above. The actions of both can be a sign of God's salvation. The sacramental function of their office increases in the way they comply with the four aspects of office: to be evangelically inspired, apostolically oriented, democratically participational, and carrying out their ministry in a pastorally professional fashion. The more their functioning in the liturgy meets these four demands, the greater is the chance of liturgical-sacramental density in their leadership (Van der Ven 1996:331).

Both kinds of priesthood are on the basic level essentially one. That is the way they share in the one priesthood of Christ. Rather on a second level, which I may call specialisation, they differ essentially. By no means does this essential difference express a certain inferiority of the common priesthood (cf. Parra 1996:953). After all the considerations one feels urged to draw the line in another way. One can doubt whether the application of the distinction between the common and the ordained priesthood is appropriate in this case of the community leaders. It seems to be fitting when considering the relationship between the (ordained and non-ordained) leaders and their fellow Christians without a (specific) leadership role in the church. This would not contradict the intentions of *Christfideles Laici*, but would shift the scope since it would eventually include at least some of those actually performing a ministry into the ministerial priesthood. CL (23) is concerned about a too-indiscriminate use of the word "ministry" and a subsequent creation of an ecclesial structure of parallel service. What I intend to demonstrate is a shared service with some interchangeable elements, as, for instance, when a priest conducts a funeral. ICQ intends to avoid a devaluation of the ordained ministry (cf. The Tablet 1998:391) and intends to bring about some clarification

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and pass as truth, but to describe and explain the world. "Discourse analysis is a critical enterprise, a form of ideology critique" (:181). Applied to our context this view allows us to understand such statements as contextual with a certain and not necessarily revealed purpose. What is clear is that they do not necessarily reflect the reality, which is simply different. Whether this is the reason why people using performative language with a purpose sometimes seem afraid to admit precedents because they present actual reality and a result of (different) purposes, may be subject to further research.

(ICQ:9). The whole analysis so far has showed nothing of a devaluation but rather an increase in value and importance.

In the apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* Pope Paul VI is certain

> that, side-by-side with the ordained ministries, whereby certain people are appointed pastors and consecrate themselves in a special way to the service of the community, the Church recognizes the place of non-ordained ministries which are able to offer a particular service to the Church (EN 73).

In the fundamental equality given with the common priesthood and the similarity in the service as leaders of the church one can see a difference in the different forms of consecration or commitment.[379] Referring to Rahner (1968:339-373) Werbick (1997:593) characterises this commitment as a "life project" with ecclesial-public accountability. It appears ironical that the funeral leaders appeared to have a more developed and consistent sense of accountability than some among the especially committed priesthood, particularly from the point of view of the church as communion. Public accountability appeared in the local context in the ways of dealing with problematic leaders, whereas the accountability of priests remained within the confines of the episcopal supervision and some deliberations in the senate of the diocese. The difference identified here might be that of a life project, if one looks at it in terms of exercising community ministry for some years or being ordained for a life time. In terms of intensity of dedicating one's life even this distinction already starts fading away if one recognises the immense commitment of some leaders.

The emphasis for each side lies on service-ministry to the church. The ministry of the ordained is still specified by their specific but not exclusive responsibility for the unity of the church and as builders thereof. The importance of a serious preparation, especially for those who will be in the ministry of the word, is clarified (EN 73). It is here, rather than in the area of caring for unity and building up the church that the prerogative of the ordained priesthood as it is known at present lies. With its effort to qualify the other ministries it contributes to unity and building up the church in a unique and particular way.

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[379] The distinction between ordained ministries and other certain people as given by Pope Paul VI seemingly does go beyond the "essential" difference. It makes its point with regard of the consecration, done in a special way. This seems to acknowledge that the ministries of certain people are already on the side of the ministries that are serving the community as such.

As ordained persons, some have special functions and hold different offices. Still, it is the same ministry they carry out; it is the same source, Jesus Christ, from whom their authority stems (CL 22). To speak about shared ministry does not mean that ordained ministers give away a share of their own particular ministry to leaders. It means that both, the ordained and all the other followers of Christ, share in *his* ministry, the ordained working for the ministry of the others (cf. CL 22; Schillebeeckx 1970:191). The role of the ordained ministry becomes that of an "enabler", helping the faithful to fulfil their role in the community and in the world (cf. PO 6).

> Priests should also be confident in giving lay people charge of duties in the service of the Church, giving them freedom and opportunity for activity... (PO 6).

This requires, according to the pastoral directive *We are the Church*, training to qualify them for the different tasks (SACBC 1994:13-14). Priests acting in this way follow Jesus, who enabled the people of his time, and the people help the priests to fulfil their task. This leads to the requirement of local training through which leaders and priests grow together (SACBC 1994:14).

This captures what Greinacher (cf. 1980:72) perceives as community leadership: enabling people in their charisms, creating links between communities, dealing with conflicts, to call to mind the intentions of Christ, creating connections to the wider church, and serving while presiding over the Eucharist. He regards this as an extremely spiritual task. Lohfink (1982:152) understands the accumulation of a lot of roles or tasks in the hands of the ordained ministry as an expression of poverty in our trust in the Holy Spirit.

5.3.2.12.4   The Canon law on community leaders

The Canon law knows and provides a long list on possible lay involvement within the church.[380] The commentary on Canon law assumes that community ministry is not a

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[380] This includes the tasks as readers and acolytes, as assistant ministers of the Eucharist, by giving baptism, solemnising marriages and giving sacramentals (canons 230, 759, 910§2, 1112§1, 1169 CIC), by serving the word (canons 759, 766 CIC), in catechetical instructions (can 776 CIC), as catechists (can 785 CIC), by religious instructions (canon 804 CIC), in theological teaching and science (canons 229§3, 810, 818 CIC), and by participating in leading the church (canon 129§2 CIC). They may be commissioned with tasks and offices (canon 145§1 CIC) in administration (canons 483§2, 494§1, 1279§2, 1280, 1282, 1287§1, 1289 CIC), in courts (canons 1421§2, 1424, 1428§2, 1429, 1435 CIC), as experts and advisers (canons 228§2,1064, 1189,1216,1280, 1293§1 n. 2, 1574-1581 CIC), and on synods and advisory bodies (canons 339§2, 443§4, 463§2, 512, 536 CIC) (cf. Reinhardt 1997:594-595).

threat to the traditional form of ministry. While the ministers enhance the community leaders it is this task that simultaneously widens the role of the ministers:

> The ministers do not take away from the role of the lay persons but are meant to support and promote their role (CLSA:131).

Canon 230§3 "permits lay persons to be authorized to exercise the ministry of the word and to preside at liturgical prayer. This could range from Sunday celebrations without a priest to the celebration of the Divine Office or funeral services" (CLSA 1985:169).

The provisions of Canon law are a reflection of the general theological environment at the time of its creation and promulgation (cf. Bühlmann 1985: 196).[381] It somehow captures the situation of a given time and freezes it into the word of law to maintain the church (cf. Eicher 1980:36).[382] The ongoing development requires an adjustment from time to time.[383] The law follows change. This change happens in society and in theology as well. The new Canon law of 1983 was an attempt to catch up with the developments initiated with Vatican II. The innate situation of law alerts us not to prematurely call a specific, starting development unlawful. It may, in fact, be just an indication for further development that the law has to catch up with once again. The development towards Bakambi was much later reflected in the new Canon law. Likewise the reality of the community ministry observed here may also one day be reflected in a new, inculturated edition of the law. This will again be open for further development in order to accommodate directions it may still take to become more complete in its service.

Faithful adherence to the principles of law implies both application and innovation. It has to be applied and followed, and adapted to different situations and cases. At the same time it comes under scrutiny for its own faithfulness to its foundation, and thus is

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[381] The law is rather an outflow from theology but not its point of departure. Shorter (1994:121) cautions that even the new Canon law (from 1983) reflects Western culture and assumes that the church is culturally monolithic. A new - pluriform - model of church actually requires a new - pluriform - Canon law, taking into account the variety of contexts.

[382] Does one always have to call into mind "Daß das kirchliche Recht nicht apriori oder durch die Verkündigung Jesu entsteht, sondern zur Lebenserhaltung der Kirche sehr aposteriori?" (Eicher 1980:36) – that Canon law does not come into existence apriori or by the proclamation of Jesus, but for the maintenance of the church quite aposteriori.

[383] Osborne (1993:42) reminds us of the differing views affecting the law. The Code of Canon law from 1917 for example claims with reference to the first letter of Clement and the Council of Trent in Canon 107 that by divine institution clerics were distinct from laity in the church. Osborne points at the ambiguity of the language used here. At the time of Trent tonsure marked the entry to clergy. The term lay was used opposite to cleric, not opposite to "ordained". "At the time of Trent, not all clerics were 'ordained,' since some clerics had merely received tonsure, and not all ordained were ordained through an ordination which was of divine institution" (:42).

exposed to change. Openness to this change is built into the law. It gives a typological, not an ontological description of clergy and laity. It just describes what is done. *"How a cleric or lay person is described in the code is not necessarily what a cleric or lay person has to be. Pastoral necessity might easily occasion a change in these typological descriptions"* (Osborne 1993:45). Though the present ministry is much in line with the law, future development, covering in particular the detected deficiencies of the ministry of funeral leaders, may call also for a more refined law. This could address concerns coming from culture, from the needs of the people, and from the needs of the ministry itself, protecting it against arbitrary interference, and reflecting ways of collaboration in ministry.

5.3.2.12.5   Church documents on funerals

Two official documents dealing with funerals, the Code of Canon Law (CIC) and the Catechism of the Catholic Church, reveal the contextual framework as Western-centred. At the same time one can logically infer from them a plea for widening the faculties of the funeral-ministry.

Canon 530 CIC states in no. 5^0 that the performing of funerals, among other things, is especially entrusted to the pastor. It presupposes the availability of pastors for funerals, which is not always the case in most so-called third-world countries. While they were formerly reserved to him the new Canon law speaks about "entrusting" ("commissae"). This reflects the development after Vatican II in sharing functions once reserved to the pastor (cf. CLSA:427). From the perspective of the needs of the church and of a lack of ministers Canon 230§3 CIC states that lay-persons can be authorised to exercise the ministry of the word.

> This could range from Sunday celebrations without a priest to the celebration
> of the Divine Office or funeral services (CLSA 1985:169).

Though funeral services are not mentioned in the law, the commentary includes them. All the envisaged functions will not be done on the leaders own initiative but under the responsibility of the bishop (CLSGB:131; CLSA:169). They are not reserved for any gender, but open for women and men (cf. CLSGB:131).

In Canons 1176 – 1185 CIC the code deals with funerals. The fact that the law is not able to deal with all possible situations is reflected in Canon 1177§1 which claims as a rule that the funeral rites for any of the faithful must be celebrated in his or her own

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parish church. One may also choose another church or chapel. The reason given for this provision is the assumption that the church during the lifetime of the deceased was the centre of their spiritual life (CLSGB:838; CLSA: 669). We now observe that under the local conditions funerals are held mostly at the homes of the deceased (which may even be the centre of the spiritual life, if home for instance to SCCs).

The Catechism of the Catholic Church states after a short spiritual introduction that funerals neither confer a sacrament nor a sacramental (CCC:1684) while Vatican II refers to the funerals under the heading: The other Sacraments and the Sacramentals (SC: Chapter III). This may be due to the importance attributed to funerals as a rite of passage. The Catechism continues to emphasise the purpose of the Christian funeral:

> The ministry of the Church aims at expressing efficacious communion with
> *the deceased*, at the participation in that communion of the *community*
> gathered for the funeral, and at the proclamation of eternal life to the
> community (CCC:1684).

Most important is the expression of communion. This communion includes the living who themselves express this communion with the deceased. They are constitutive part of this efficacious communion. Thus eternal life can be proclaimed, grounded in the experience of existing communion. It also makes clear that the funeral service is a service to the living.

Funeral rites and their order are supposed to go with the situations and traditions of the different regions and local customs (CCC:1685-6). In stating this, the Catechism complies with the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy of Vatican II:

> Funeral rites should express more clearly the paschal character of Christian
> death, and should correspond more closely to the circumstances and
> traditions found in various regions. This also applies to the liturgical color to
> be used (SC 81).

This is a clear encouragement for practising the already mentioned variety of local customs surrounding funerals, which entail more important issues than colour. The Catechism does not assume the church as the only location for a funeral celebration. But when it takes place in the church it supposes that the Eucharist is at the heart of the Paschal reality of Christian death:

> In the Eucharist, the Church expresses her efficacious communion with the
> departed: offering to the Father in the Holy Spirit the sacrifice of the death
> and resurrection of Christ, she asks to purify his child of his sins and their
> consequences, and to admit him to the Paschal fullness of the table of the

Kingdom. It is by the Eucharist thus celebrated that the community of the faithful, especially the family of the deceased, learn to live in the communion with the one who "has fallen asleep in the Lord," by communicating in the Body of Christ of which he is a living member and, then, by praying for him and with him (CCC:1689).

It is the merit of the Catechism to state this spiritual consideration of the Eucharist clearly. One can assume that the advice that a pastor should preside over a funeral is not inspired firstly by the intention to attribute status to the celebration. It is rather seen as a logical consequence of the assumption that the Eucharist is the central rite of the celebration, which requires the presence of pastors. The commissioning of others like the funeral leaders takes the scarcity of pastors into account but not the profound concern about the Eucharist. This again raises serious questions about all those celebrations where the ordained minister cannot be present and where others preside without being commissioned to preside over the Eucharist. One can conclude that the provisions given for funerals are not in conflict with the practice experienced locally. They are in conflict with themselves and call for redemption.

5.3.2.12.6   Synthetic conclusion: Community ministry advances communio theology

If one compares the analysed community ministry with the Canon law one can easily see that it moves within the framework of its provisions. While it does not contradict the law it can contribute to its further development. This would be in line with the ongoing development that is also reflected in the church's documents. The provisions of the law allow for a ministry that does not suffice to accommodate its own and the Catechism's provision for the celebration of the funeral, namely the celebration of the Eucharist. This celebration is expressly linked to the concepts of communio and community which are part of the communio theology.

Nevertheless, the communio theology as reflected by Vatican II and the Pastoral Plan finds an important partner for its implementation in the community ministry. With its wide net of relationships it appears even as an antidote against the assumed danger of a community model of church being too introspective. It supports and enhances the institutional and communal dimensions of the church. In a dialectical dependence it enhances the different ministries to act for the church in an appropriate structure of ministry. The desired oneness of bishop, priests, and leaders is a reality. A statement like "We are the same" expresses this oneness in the diversity of roles.

The funeral leaders are a crucial part in bringing about essential features of the communio theology as for instance contextualisation, diverse ministries, co-responsibility, and the upbuilding of community in subsidiarity. The principle of subsidiarity is implemented where the principle of locality plays a role in communities that become autonomous and self-reliable. The desired accountability is observable where these leaders are accountable to their communities. Moreover, it is not only theological reflection on "Christ the Head" but also the self-perception of leaders within this community church that it is God who called them into their ministry. They are acting on his behalf, backed by the community of the faithful, and not as representatives of the priest. All this indicates that the communio theology has taken roots in the local context.

The community ministry within the framework of a communio theology makes an important contribution to the strengthening of faith not only for the faithful but also within the ministerial structures. While the priests provide an essential contribution to maintain the quality of the service, the leaders enhance the ministry of the priests and contribute to their growth. The priests receive, as Jesus by the acceptance of his proclamation by others, a reconfirmation of their faith.[384] The same also applies to the leaders. In the communio church the faithful strengthen the faith of the leaders by the acceptance of their proclamation. The leaders in turn strengthen the faith of their community. Taking into account the considerable number of leaders, this indicates that ministerial structures fitting to a communio theology allow these dynamics to happen in a much larger scale as it would be the case with the few priests. This is an important contribution to the growth of faith in the whole community. This implies furthermore in a missionary's and missiological context the exciting experience that the faith, remaining itself, becomes corroborated in various cultures and contexts. It is the experience of the compatibility of the faith that was originally acquired within a certain context with another context, the same faith taking different shapes.

The ministry of the leaders helps to widen a perception of lay participation that is still at times limited to catechists. Their ministry is a vibrant expression of the local participation in an open process of developing ministry. What is reflected in the church documents as a searching "to and fro" movement finds here a practical expression. Its particular value

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[384] Knauer (1991:237) states that for the assurance (not the truth; M.W.) of the communion with God, Jesus as his followers depended on the communication with other people. The relation to other people helps to distinguish it from mere illusion. It is about handing over faith and experiencing its effects on others. Faith develops its full certainty or assurance in the witnessing tradition.

is that it actually reinforces a main concern of the official documents. If the cautious among them really intend to safeguard the traditional form of ordained ministry, then the local ministry appears actually as a contribution in this regard.

Since the leaders are involved in a contextualised process of upholding catholicity in apostolic faithfulness to the tradition, and while they are involved in efficacious proclamation, the inductive method employed allows one to discover that, though not ordained, they are actually on the side of the ordained priesthood. They are in service for the common priesthood of all the faithful. There is a difference in the degrees of commitment in the different forms of ministry. The analysis, however, indicates that at least some of the leaders show quite a high degree of commitment in terms of involvement in actual funeral procedures as well as in the duration of their office.

This experience of service for the community may incite further development. We saw a diversity of ministry in the community church. Likewise one can observe quite some diversification among the present ordained ministry. On the basis of these experiences the regulations of the law concerning the admission to an ordained ministry could be widened in order to allow further diversification. This would help to implement its own regulations for funerals referring to the pastor. A pastor would be able to preside over the Eucharist which is understood as the prominent celebration in the Catechism. This would be a further major step to advance the vision of the community church. It also may assist the concern of Vatican II that funeral rites should correspond with the local tradition, which includes the communion in common meals. The provisions and restrictions of the church's law will, as they did in the past, hopefully follow in due time to reflect the development and to protect it. In a courageous step a truly catholic law could even provide for different practices in different contexts. In chapter six I will revisit this issue with some suggestions.

5.3.3 Celebration

The *isibongo* closes the theological reflection. It is part of the celebration of the blessing of community leaders ready to commit themselves to the service of their communities. It expresses the theological joy about the "Big Things" God is talking about. Theology likewise can celebrate its objective. As intellectual celebration it recapitulates in a particular way the elements that describe the transformative power of interpretation as identified by Boff (cf. chapter 1.3.4): con-vocar, pro-vocar, e-vocar.

The local leadership celebration already brings people together and creates community. The community widens as it includes all levels of the local church hierarchy, which become visible at this moment. The reflection on it still widens the assembly by bringing in the interviewees and other contributors, the referenced people and documents, the bereaved, and finally the reader. All of them in a kind of intellectual celebration may bow before the "Big Things" that bowed themselves. By bowing they express respect for the ministry rendered. This celebration brings them together: con-vocar.

The celebration amalgamates all the thoughts of reflection in its own way and challenges. It influences people to celebrate the change of a position, conviction, or attitude. It solemnly addresses the leaders in performative speech and action. It reaffirms to the communities the origin of the leaders in their trust and selection. It confirms the religious dimension of the leadership. As an intellectual celebration it widens the local scope with all the other contributors. It attempts to reconcile and include those whose differing views are welcome in a consensus-oriented dialogue, which nevertheless aims at a particular direction. All of the participants are challenged to reconcile the inductive view with their views, be they influenced by inductive or deductive strategies or both. This includes the reflection of possible change and bowing before the thought provoked by the ministry. This means pro-vocar. Bowing here may be much more difficult than in the first case of con-vocar.

As the celebration recalls existing experiences it points also towards future ones: This can happen again. This foresightedness is not unusual, as we saw it in the funeral celebration. E-vocar calls on the future. It suggests that the future can be even better than the past. While thought prepares the change, the e-vocar calls for its implementation. It can be an expression of thankful acceptance of all that has been considered so far and of still a deeper kind of bowing by actively contributing to further development of a ministry that is grounded in its context.

5.4 Conclusion: "Mini-pastors" turn out to be "Big Things"

Evangelisation is the agency of local communities. The structures that developed around their community ministry are important tools for bringing about the epiphany of God's plan. By building up community they give a foretaste of the kingdom of God. The ministry of the funeral leaders in particular helps to enact eschatology. They are crucial agents in the competent proclamation of the love of God in their particular context. They render a comprehensive decontamination of death in the proclamation through word

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and ritual. They contribute to its comprehensibility and epiphany exactly by employing the grammar of the local culture in many ways.

It is the witness of self-transformed leaders that calls for conversion in order to restore hope and faith. The effort to decontaminate the many aspects of life affected by death is grounded by them in a locally perceptible and acceptable spirituality. It is both, the ministry these leaders have and the ministry they render, it is what they are and what they do that contributes to their proclamation of the kingdom.

More than ten years ago Ela (1987:78)[385] identified the need to de-clericalise ministry in order to allow the laity access to the ministerial character (*ministérialité*) of the church. He demanded that self-reliant young churches must become real local churches living from their own resources drawn from their own soil. This did not mean that they cut themselves off by rejecting any contribution from outside which is not alienating. Some ten years later we analyse significant steps taken towards this ideal. The involvement of the leaders is a tremendous step forward on the road towards a local church. It is a gift to a church that has failed at many points of history in Africa to take roots in the local environment and culture in terms of philosophy, religion, spirituality, and ministry.

"What is our response when the kingdom of God has come?" This was the question of Mbovu at the final stage for T Lahlo. A similar question could be asked when looking at one particular stage in the ongoing process of developing community ministry. With all the dimensions their ministry includes, they offer an experience and a view on the "already" of the "not yet" in the kingdom of God.

I do not suggest transforming the "Big Things" into "mini-pastors" (cf. Bosch 1991:473). On the background of the findings it would be an underestimation to call the "Big Things" mini-pastors. The term mini-pastors can express some of the fears a new kind of ministry can raise. A predicament for the theological reflection and even the provisions for funerals seems to be the intention to provide adequate ministry and to safeguard its historically developed shape. In an inevitable situation local funeral leaders substitute in an area that is with good reason understood as a domain for the

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[385] "Es geht also darum, die Dienste zu 'entklerikalisieren', um die Laien Zugang finden zu lassen zum Dienstcharakter (ministérialité) der Kirche... Wenn man die jungen Kirchen eigenständig machen will, dann muß man sie 'lokalisieren', zu wirklichen Ortskirchen werden lassen, indem man sie aus den Ressourcen leben läßt, die sie aus ihrem eigenen Boden ziehen; dies bedeutet nicht, daß sie sich abschotten und jeden Beitrag von außen zurückweisen sollten, der nicht entfremdend ist" (Ela 1987:78).

pastor. They collaborate and substitute. It is not mere assistance. It is a ministry that serves the intentions of the communio theology in a comprehensive way. This does not entail abolishing the traditional ministry, which developed together with the needs of a growing social body, which is always in need of social structuring:

> But, as always, Christ is not intent on destroying, but in fulfilling. This applies also to the ordained ministry (Bosch 1991:473).

The road towards fulfilment knows different theologies, developments, and changes. It must be expected that the development of certain sections of community ministry may lead to further development also within the area of ordained ministry. Küng (cf. Küng 1967b:170) asked the question whether for instance in a special situation of mission something similar to the situation of Corinth could happen: That the charism of leadership will open up again under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Schillebeeckx (1970:189) states that ministry can be organised in very different forms as long as it stays within and serves the apostolic tradition.

Suess (2000:4) speaks about missiological exogamy as opposed to ecclesiocentric incest. A sound development requires the acquisition and integration of new and fresh entities. The changes in theology and the adaptation of new ways of ministry encourage an understanding of the local development as fitting well into its context. This study has so far showed that there is no reason for fear. Only one alternative could give cause to real fear. That would roughly be a sclerotic freezing of an arbitrarily chosen status quo by only emphasising the traditional form of ministry and not admitting new life into it. In the concrete case this would ultimately mean preventing the comprehensive ministry of decontamination from death and restoring life.

Mission work is creative. It cannot just simply apply or implement some general guidelines, perceptions, and practices from elsewhere within a new context. Initiating and accompanying something new combines innovative courage in fidelity to the old. The observation and analysis of the ministry of the funeral leaders showed exactly this: The development of the community ministry takes into account the traditional dynamics as well as the contextual and contemporary requirements and reflections on leadership. This is exactly what should happen when inculturation is taken seriously, in apostolic catholicity.

6 Chapter 6 – Avenues for action

> He who has never travelled thinks that his mother is the only good cook in the world (African proverb in Mbiti 1977:29).

In this final chapter I first summarise the main findings and conclude the chapters of analysis and theological reflection. I then deal with the concerns of the fourth step of the pastoral spiral (cf. chapter 1.4.5). A research design based on the model of the pastoral spiral is interested in development. After years of research done while involved full time in the field, some influence can be expected. Therefore I will indicate some of the impact the research has made already. Then I will suggest some further steps that could be taken locally and in church structure to enhance the ministry offered. This includes suggestions for further research in theology and missiology. A brief final conclusion will close the study.

6.1 Funeral leaders: Towards a genuine African ministry

In chapter one I assumed from general experience that the funeral leaders acted on the boundaries of the church and that they crossed those boundaries in cross-cultural encounter. They acted in different identities, and had an influential role through conducting a ritual. Their role was an important one. I believed women were underrepresented among funeral leaders. I assumed that the funeral leaders performed their task in co-operation, and that they were local theologians and missionaries. The findings of the study confirm my initial assumptions and go beyond them.

Funeral leaders share the ministry of comfort with others. They make a specific religious contribution towards restoring life or decontaminating from death, which affects the faith and hope of the bereaved. Their ministry responds to a need of the bereaved by affirming community in the face of death. It is based on spirituality and grounded in the biblical and apostolic tradition; it is carried out in a catholic contextualisation. The leaders' insertion into both the cultural background and the religious realm encourages contextualisation. Their verbal proclamation is done in various ways and is linked to ritual. It reflects the three dimensions of the model employed in pastoral theology by taking life seriously, interpreting it in the light of faith, and leading a celebration that opens up the future of the participants. The leaders' proclamation is sincere when they link cultural family rituals with church rituals in a parallel way. Sincerity suffers when community leaders, used to provide a comprehensive service, cannot preside over the promised celebration of the Eucharist, which could be the culmination of the rite of

passage. Their ministry remains incomplete because of factors beyond their control. It nevertheless contributes to justice in many ways, in particular by employing local people. While the ministry is carried out independently, it depends on collaboration with the pastoral staff, in particular the priests. They safeguard the quality of ministry by formation and through supervision. The collaborative formation contributes to the cultural insertion of the local and expatriate staff and enhances their competence. This collaborative ministry serves the bereaved, the community of faith, and theology. It allows the development of a contextualised liturgy, and a local theology. It is a step forward on the road towards a genuine form of community ministry in this particular African context. It corresponds with contemporary secular approaches towards leadership and management. African approaches emphasise the need for contextualised management forms. They assume the compatibility of different practices employed in different contexts. The comprehensively-grounded ministry seems to help to avoid or overcome some of the grave shortcomings of the ministry provided in the past.

6.1.1 A competent cultural representation of a vision

In looking at "what is going on" the initial assumptions became clearer and assumed varicoloured hues. The corroborated findings inspire the imagination to envisage new forms of church life (cf. Ela 1987:74).

The encounter with a comprehensive community ministry is important missiologically. Local people play a crucial role as serious partners in the proclamation of faith. Building up the faith community, they help to avoid the individualistic save-your-soul approach of former times. Their ministry serves justice in a surprisingly broad sense.

While the underlying vision of a *Community Serving Humanity* is not present in a very articulate manner, it does permeate the ministry from within. Within a mission with a vision, the ministry rendered is a crucial missiological tool. It appears that the congruence of cultural values and the vision is an advantage for this ministry in Africa. Apart from an understanding of African leadership, distorted by colonial influences, the emerging ministry matches in various ways with cultural values like accountability and consensus-oriented dialogue. It acts competently at the creative interface of culture and faith. The ministry is community related and community-enhancing in itself. It serves its own and the broader community even beyond the narrow confines of the effective ritual provided. Skills and attitudes acquired by the leaders play a role in other areas of their

commitment. So the ministry actually contributes to a service or servant ministry serving the various communities. These include the Christian community, the local community, the cultural communities, and the communities of the clans.

The extraordinary normal-life event of a funeral turns into an opportunity to proclaim faith to a broader public. The leaders competently lead the bereaved with their distinct ministry of faith within a rite of passage. The grounding in life and culture allows a comprehensive proclamation in word and deed that understands and henceforth respects the given reality without forcing into a "dual system". It allows an integrated, complementary approach.

The leaders utter a prophetic voice, helping people to grieve and to heal. As local agents they spread the powerful word of God to transform a sensitive situation in order to open it up for new life. Unlike in the past, the leaders and community members, in a mutual process of acquisition, began owning their church and their faith by progressively developing a local theology and practice in co-operation with their priests. In this context the somewhat paternalistic concept of the option *for* the poor is being transformed into an option *with* the poor or, even more precisely, an option also *of* the poor. They opt for the church and its message as their source of hope and keep an inclusive spirit of community, welcoming others. People feel at home since the church is becoming their own.

By giving direction and in their concern for the maintenance of their community the leaders provide immediate leadership. With their spiritual and theological depth they lead by their witness. Their self-transformation is an offer to the bereaved in a situation longing for transformation. Their self-transformation is marked by the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, of counsel and power, of knowledge, and the fear of the Lord that leads to justice (cf. Is 11:1-4). The role of the pastoral staff is changing to a management one, by providing the leaders with the required tools and maintaining the vision.

The leaders and their communities participating in formation qualify the missionary in the cultural-grammar as the missionary qualifies them theologically in an ongoing dialogue. They have distinct functions in ministry. Culturally-informed formation emerges as a substantial missionary tool. It serves the proclamation of faith and the cultural initiation of theology.

From the point of view of maintaining the mission, the local ministry appears to offer economic and personnel independence. The heavy reliance on overseas funds is being transformed. It is being used more and more for managerial maintenance rather than for providing immediate ministry or leadership in the local communities. This development seems to be a major step forward towards becoming a financially independent, dignified church that will be self-ministering, self-propagating, and self-supporting (cf. Kalilombe 1977:195).

6.1.2 Discoveries beyond the immediate expectations

The initial intention was to research community ministry in general. Limiting the scope to the funeral leaders as a concrete example of community ministry proved worthwhile for the reasons given in chapter one. Their comprehensive ministry includes a rich variety of aspects of community ministry in general. It is comprehensive enough to deal with such problems as the limitations in celebrating the Eucharist, and conflicts in leadership. A catechism teacher is not expected to provide the Eucharistic celebration within the framework of her or his ministry. She prepares and helps people to reflect. Leaders or priests of other communities would not feel urged to interfere in catechism teaching. They are much more likely to do it with funerals.

My experience with the community ministry was the point of departure for beginning the research. Initially the focus was on shared or collaborative ministry. These terms at first appeared somewhat interchangeable. As the study progressed, however, they came into sharper focus. "Shared ministry" is one in which all who are involved have a share. This is generally the ministry of comfort and particularly the ministry of Christ. The ministry of funeral leaders contributes to this clarification. They carry out their ministry independently from the pastoral workers. The term "collaborative ministry" refers to both the readiness of the leaders to collaborate among themselves and also their co-operation with the pastoral workers. The latter is essential and happens mostly in the background, in particular through formation and supervision. The shared ministry succeeds when it is done in collaboration. Without collaboration the share in the ministry may still be carried out but to the detriment of its comprehensive effect in community building. A funeral may superficially appear to be done properly, albeit led by unauthorised and interfering leaders. It nevertheless may be detrimental to the general goal of community building through the negative impact on the community concerned, because of the lack of collaboration.

Linked to the shared and collaborative part of the leaders' ministry is the discovery of the way accountability is handled. The leaders experience a direct accountability to their communities. It differs from the distant accountability of pastoral workers who are accountable in the first place to their bishop. Communities can withdraw their co-operation or complain to the bishop about problematic pastoral staff. They can act directly on problematic leaders. They do it mostly in integrating ways.

The use of the leaders in teams emerged as an important feature. It enhances accountability, motivates leaders, and encourages them. It helps to integrate weaker and uncooperative people. The quality of service delivery improves through common preparation.

The concept of shared and collaborative ministry clarifies the motivation for the use of local leaders. It is not to alleviate a perceived lack of priests. We noticed that there is at times even a lack of leaders. Community ministry actually calls for more priests to maintain the quality of the local leaders and their ministry. The local leaders are first a means of enhancing community, to enable communities to share in the serving ministry of Christ. Instead of speaking about a lack of priests or vocations the analysis allows us to conclude that there are quite a number of vocations for people proclaiming the word of God to the communities. This in turn allows us to assume that we find a lack of ordinations rather than a lack of priests or vocations.

The focus of the study shifted to the ministry rendered by leaders as service to the community, albeit in complementary collaboration. This service ministry is in line with the basic vision of a *Community Serving Humanity* as set out in the Pastoral Plan for Southern Africa. It includes both of the key concepts that emerged, community and justice. Both unfolded an unexpected variety of complex relationships. Both concepts are well served by the use of local leaders. The pastoral staff contributes to this but would be unable to attend to them thoroughly on their own.

A ministry that is rooted in the local context appears to advance the kerygmatic potentialities. It facilitates a comprehensive approach to restoring life in a variety of ways. This comprehensiveness leads to the formulation of the concept of honesty or sincerity in missionary activity. This emerged especially when uncovering the discrepancy between a locally grounded theology that is offered in formation on the one side and the practical ministry on the other. This discrepancy became obvious when an otherwise inculturated or contextualised ministry had to exclude a crucial area, namely

the ministry of serving community by offering communion through the Eucharist. While this problem with sincerity still persists, proclamatory sincerity was enhanced in another respect through the involvement of funeral leaders. The former exclusion or rejection of cultural practices at funerals of Christians caused dissatisfaction and cast some doubt on sincerity since it led to a hidden continuance of cultural practices that were in no way inconsistent with faith. The involvement of culturally-initiated leaders helped to overcome this unreconciled practice.

This study itself served the development of a local theology when it delved into the cultural rituals.[386] With this widening of scope beyond the immediate confines of a funeral this study presents them as important elements of a locally grounded ministry at a given time. This includes practices, perceptions, and spirituality. The wide spectrum of the culture provides the concept of hospitality. The encounter of the local theology and the traditional theology can enrich each other. The provision of the core celebration, the Eucharist, can reinforce identity and contribute to the development of commensal hospitality within the denomination concerned. Moreover it can help to develop hospitality towards members of other congregations. The concept of temporary membership emerged in the local context. It is missiologically important to discover such critical areas and local concepts that may contribute to a solution of the problems on the local and possibly on the wider level of the whole church.

The discovery that the local leadership pattern coincided with developments in management and culturally-informed approaches towards management is amazing. This includes the desired leadership styles, forms of organisation, granted autonomy, respect for the dignity of people, the consideration of ethical aspects, the importance of a vision, and spiritual aspects. Kanungo and Mendonça observed that among other things these dimensions are empirically present when dealing with successful leadership. The local case in the different realm of voluntary religious leadership allows a similar conclusion. Here it is not personal promotion but the satisfaction of both the leaders and the communities with the ministry rendered that indicates success. In our case the results produced so far indicate that missiology has no reason whatsoever to avoid the comparison with contemporary leadership styles.

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[386] For some the space devoted to reflections on local customs and practices concerning meals, funerals, and the ancestors may seem to be too backward looking, but they are indispensable to a grounded understanding of the ministry under investigation. They deserve still more attention in separate studies focusing exclusively on them.

An interesting finding was the fact, not only the assumption, that at least in part the developments and styles outside the church were experienced as having an impact on its structure. This includes developments in other churches and general development. This is not only a matter of ancient church history. The concrete changes in Southern Africa -- in Namibia and in South Africa -- were understood as an encouragement to see changes in the policy of the church as feasible and desirable. The changes brought with democracy enhanced the perceived position of women. They are seen as an indication for possible change within the church concerning female funeral leaders. The fact that something happened elsewhere is a sign of hope for the church's realm.[387]

In chapter one I indicated the considerable amount of ethical thought applied to sociological research, as for instance by Mason (1996). In the course of this study the need for ethical considerations in the field of mission work emerged. Honesty is one such area. One has to deal with the demand for inculturation and offering inculturated formation while not providing for a corresponding practice. This includes the use of leaders without equipping them for the actual needs. Another ethical consideration is the loyalty of the leaders to their church and its regulations when they adhere to them even in pain. They were taught and were themselves involved in developing a local theology of communion in the Eucharist. They know about the longing of people for this sacrament. Nevertheless they maintain unity with the general policy, forced to leave the expression and the effective sign of communion either unutilised or resorting to the incomplete distribution of one species. This has ethical implications for the management of leadership in the church. It has to pay attention to this pain and its root-cause.

The methods of social science opened the encounter with them and the discovery of common concerns. The inductive method allowed the study to be widened beyond a merely deductive study without denying the value of the latter. The contribution here is to access a particular area of church ministry and to see "how the Spirit is working" there: "And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly" (Acts 4:31). This is a challenging undertaking. It is risky since it leaves the well-trodden paths of the past and takes present experience seriously. For some this may raise the fear that this could pose a threat to the existing patterns of ministry. The results can

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[387] Van der Ven (1996:372) identifies one way of policy making as changing the environment, which in turn has an impact on one's own system. In the particular case the system was neither changed by the church nor changed with the intention of influencing the church's own system. But the actual change in the environment has had an impact on the church's system.

alleviate these fears. The local experience teaches that ministry is actually enhanced at all levels as is the vision of the church in Southern Africa.

The considerations of Moloney (1995; 1996/7) about the naïve or critical realism concerning the Eucharist also play a role in the perception of the ministry. If the real should be defined by reason, a comprehensive inductive study helps to assess the real. It does not remain with the simple, superficial observation but goes into reason. Such an inductive study gives a new thrust while exploring the reality of the "Spirit at work". What is really going on has theological relevance. The holistic way of looking at the features of the funeral leaders and community ministry is more than merely observing what is done; it explores local philosophy and spirituality. Ideas about change generated in this way are not simply unwarranted demands. Such an emic approach opens up the encounter with "the works of the Spirit" in the tradition and in the local context. This leads to the exciting discovery that in fact many of the etic contributions speak in favour of the local practice. Though some may think that this is no longer Catholic, the encounter of church tradition and local practice suggests the opposite. It is catholic and apostolic. And it is much concerned about oneness.

An exciting experience for me personally was the rich discovery of interrelated issues emerging in this study. The hidden came to the fore. This includes the needs of the people, their spirituality, their cultural philosophy, and their concerns about faith. Beyond mere observation a whole horizon emerged, revealing the multiple interface between culture and faith. In their mutual penetration they enrich each other with the leaders as crucial agents of inculturation. In the particular sort of ministry this allows an informed and enhanced service delivery to the bereaved.

Initially I mentioned the problem of finding similar studies on the subject of community ministry. Many communities around the globe have devoted themselves to building up coherent community ministry but little is known about their efforts and experiences. This must result in some kind of ignorance. This study may serve in particular those who are concerned about ministry. It contributes by revealing the hidden treasures and moving beyond assumptions and rumours. I hope that it can positively contribute by informing decision making processes in church policy. The results of this study should help to dispel a kind of anxiety that may still prevail in some minds. The changes from the optimistic apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (for example EN 73) to a rather anxious document like the Instruction (ICQ) indicate such anxiety, suspicious of the activity of a laity, which seems to be understood as posing a threat to the priestly

ministry. The tendency seems to point towards more restrictions. The findings here allow an insight into exercised ministry, which otherwise would remain concealed. They can help to liberate people from this kind of anxiety. The shared ministry is not a threat but enhances both partners in ministry, the leaders and the priests, in their specific, complementary roles. This experience may inspire further development and make it possible to serve the needs of the people and to live up to the promises given in proclamation. It may encourage others to tackle the remaining problems.

6.1.3 Remaining problems

The inductive study shows a fully-hatched ministry with clipped wings for the time being. In the perceived self-image it is understood as borne by the presence of the Spirit. It appears as on its way to becoming fully-fledged.

From a missiological point of view the discrepancy discovered between the ministry expected, the ministry taught, and the ministry actually offered is an irritation. This questions the seriousness of the ministerial approach, its honesty or sincerity. The bereaved people expect, for good reasons, that the Eucharist will be celebrated in appropriate cases. The celebration of the Eucharist is culturally a happy fit, covering most of the needs expressed by bereaved people. This most fitting celebration within the rite of passage is offered by the official teaching and reflected in the local formation. However, the otherwise comprehensive ministry is limited exactly at this point. The offer of consecrated species in some cases is a limited remedy. The formation process in mission finds itself on the horns of a dilemma. As desirable as it is to inculturate, to contextualise formation, it is unsatisfactory if what develops as local theology cannot be implemented properly and remains an empty promise. The alternative could be to leave out this kind of formation and to admit a failure with regard to inculturation, which is not desirable. To leave it and the Eucharist altogether is likewise undesirable. This would mean abandoning the best means of implementing the basic vision. It would further threaten the denominational identity.

Related to this is the predicament of the leaders. Introduced to do justice, they are invited to take over an incomplete ministry that is obviously not allowed to respond to all the essential needs it should be able to respond to. A lack of faithfulness towards the leaders leaves them in an unsatisfactory situation.

The underrepresentation of women in the ministry of funeral leaders remains unresolved. This is a question of justice.

The analysis indicated two areas in particular where the pastoral staff provided to promote mission could fail. The formation work appeared as a crucial link between the pastoral workers and the funeral leaders. It is where the encounter of culture and faith is reflected upon and developed. The formation work is the main area where pastoral workers experience and are challenged to a role change. Collaboration is important to ensure faithfulness to both the concern about apostolicity, the origin of faith, and to catholicity with the required contextualisation of the apostolic faith. Where pastoral workers do not recognise the importance of this task and neglect it they pose a threat to the witness of both these crucial items of the profession of faith. The same can happen to the professed oneness of the church when church leaders discard the principle of locality by interfering in other communities. They threaten the vision of community.

The preoccupation with the community vision can have adverse effects if it is not properly employed. Groups of Catholics that are too small cannot provide an appropriate leadership. I do not attempt to suggest the critical limit for a community by the number of its members. This investigation suggests that one should determine whether a group is a community or not in terms of the available charisms. This means that even a small community can provide leadership if committed and able people are available. Community building depends on leadership that contributes to it in many ways. Where suitably qualified leaders are not available the communities are exposed either to weak leaders of their own or leaders from outside who are not accountable to them. Both are detrimental to self-respect and dignity. From a missiological point of view this calls for a clearer use of the terminology employed. It is not about discrimination but eventually about justice for the group concerned if one does not call any assembly a "community".

The lack of systematic attention to the use of music and song does not appear to be a major issue. The experiences with the composition of some praise-songs and the inclusion of dance into the singing of psalms encourage the suggestion of making more use of them. The easy employment of music, an area so familiar and close to the cultural ways of expression, seems to conceal the potential of still more powerful and prepared use of music with a contextual, proclamatory character. This applies especially to funerals where the paradox of life and death can easily be expressed by music. The analysis showed that people did not feel that anything was lacking in the music. Since people were not aware of a problem, it is a missiological concern to promote a more systematic use of the excellent potential of music in proclamation.

6.1.4 Vision and mission correspond

This study could create the impression of an idiosyncratic approach, which needs to be corrected. Many of the documents and authors describe or aim at a similar leadership model to the one set out here. I quoted their main concepts. To summarise, I refer only to the concise presentation of Holland and Henriot (1983:31-44). They provide three interpretative models to describe the dynamics of change, the traditional, the liberal, and the radical model. The findings of this study locate the analysed reality on that scale mainly on the side of the radical model. This model is transformative, interdependent, and participative. Its basic metaphor is artistic. The underlying social virtue is community. Conflict is understood as creative. With regard to the church Holland and Henriot (1983:44) understand the radical model as one of recreation, oriented towards the experiences of the early church. The development of basic Christian communities belongs to it, as does the seeking of greater participation of ordinary people. New lay-ministries take shape, perhaps even a restructuring of priesthood. For them all three models operate concurrently with differing emphasises (:45). In the local context, in particular in the instances of conflict, the problematic occurrences are witness to this assumption. Under the heading of the development debate Holland and Henriot (1983:55) contemplate the question of self-supporting local priests. They would not be university graduates but guided by in-service training. They regard such development as genuine transformation of the current missionary strategy.

It is amazing to see how much of this vision is captured in the area under research. The ideas of Holland and Henriot, drawing much from the Latin American context, did not at all serve as script or manual here. For me the correspondence indicates several things. The local development is in touch with developments and reflections in the broader church community; it shows that the practice is not idiosyncratic. Most important, the comparison of the visionary model and the reality informed by a vision shows that a vision or expectation can become real, that a vision is translated in mission. In the context analysed, this happened within the relatively short period of some ten years with considerable difficulties in the beginning. It appears that the collaborative efforts of pastoral workers who subscribe to the vision contributed much to this success. Though ministry and vision are still incomplete this result in itself is a sign of hope.

This has to do with the quality delivered. Van der Ven (1996:463) gives five criteria to assess quality delivery. The transcendent criterion indicates the extent to which a service meets a certain value, conviction, or ideal image. The technical criterion

measures by norms of soundness. The criterion of content is measured by the features a service should have. The user criterion looks at how the needs of the user are satisfied and how content the user is. The economic criterion asks whether price and value correspond. For Van der Ven (1996:464) the delivery of a pastoral service can be determined when the transcendent and the content criterion are met. The transcendent criterion deals with ideals and convictions. "The highest priority is not being aimed at the user but at the gospel" (1996:464). The content criterion evaluates the theological knowledge. The analysis in this study showed that these two criteria, especially, are met in a contextualised way to the satisfaction of the "user". While the technical criterion creates no problems, the economic criterion about price and value is often regarded as not so crucial in the European church. In our context the economic criterion took on another hue. The immediate service rendered by community leaders is simply an affordable one if one disregards the expenses of formation and the pastoral staff needed for its maintenance.

6.1.5 Researchers gain

This study on community ministry also made an impact on me personally. While the vast area I am working in is still a very small place, the study exposed me to a broader community of dialogue in a common concern. This study allowed a simultaneous encounter with the levels of theology as outlined by Boff and Boff (1987:12-14) and Wijsen (1993:159-160): popular, pastoral, and professional theology. While familiar with the pastoral level the encounter with the wide professional and the local realm appeared in particular as mutually enriching. This process shows the participant researcher at an interface. The researcher translates the professional theology on the pastoral level into the popular level. With the exchange, and eventually the presentation of the thesis, the local theology becomes accessible to the community of professional theologians.

The exchange with the people from UNISA and the access I gained to SAMS and IAMS broadened the perspective and allowed me to put local experiences dialogically into a wider context. The same applied to those who contributed with their writings. From a missionary perspective this scientific encounter allowed me to go beyond the initiating Germanic insertion into theology. The bibliography mirrors a biographical feature; with its intercultural scope it is the bibliography of a missionary. My encounter with the English-speaking theological community from all over the world widened my own theological perspective towards a needed, polyvalent contextualisation in a universal church.

The encounter with the local philosophy of *ubuntu* and its different perception of relationships enhanced my own understanding of the need for contextualisation and the related difficulty of translating it adequately. Linguistically a new world appears if one cannot "have" things but just links up, and unites with them as in Bantu languages. This is theologically relevant to one's relationship to God. I do not have him; instead I am with him. It is important for ecclesiology and being in community. And it affects the understanding of the Eucharist, which creates a vital link. These were valuable discoveries for pastoral work.

Though there were earlier attempts at inculturation, the systematic approach opened up a still broader picture. It allowed one to understand inculturation in a much wider and more comprehensive way. It is a gift to get insight into the cultural perceptions underlying the thoughts on cultural meals, the Eucharist, community, and leadership. It is a gift to be shared with the wider theological and missiological community in order to develop comprehensive contextualised theological working models.

The findings in this research contributed to a more focused approach towards my own ministry, serving the leaders to render a qualified service to the communities. At the same time the appreciation for their ministry grew still more when discovering its multifaceted contribution to community building and justice. The issue of female leaders became a concern. It kept demanding attention in an unobtrusive way. This seems helpful, especially in a context of close-knit communities where women cannot address it on their own. The findings, then, helped me to verbalise needs and to pursue sensitive issues in an informed way. This applies in particular to the issues of the Eucharist and dealing with an incomplete ministry. The existing inconsistency of answering a need by providing a ministry that is intrinsically unable to fully match the demand is still regarded as normal.

In particular these issues also caused most of the pain in the research. The difficulty is not so much to reconcile time-consuming pastoral work with research, but the discovery of the discrepancies. As a participant observer taking an active part in a leading position within the setting under research, I became closely exposed to the needs, longings, and the perceptions of the people. Sensitised by the context and taking part in the creation of a local theology I started to own it myself. That means that it became an integral part of my theological thought. At the same time the awareness grew that I am myself a participant in a system that continues to provide an incomplete ministry. This in turn drives my own attention into two directions: to expose this dilemma as much as possible

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and to engage in pastoral strategies that at least partly cover the needs of the people. This thesis is part of this by giving insight about the procedures "on the ground" to those who otherwise would have no access to them.

The concern about ethics is not only an academic one. It permeates the reflected pastoral practice and the limits it faces in a given situation. It is the experienced and analysed change that encourages going ahead with the issues I find attached to leadership, community building, and inculturation. Without the powerful changes experienced so far it would appear to be unethical to continue with the comprehensive efforts towards inculturation if they only raised promises devoid of a chance of being realised.

6.2 Development induced by the research

The method of the pastoral spiral has a policy thrust. Its analysis is meant to enhance the actual practice. Though it is always difficult to determine cause and effect, especially in complex settings, observation can pinpoint in a cursory manner some developments related to the research. I can only give a few hints on this, since the main purpose of this study is not to reflect on how the study itself has influenced the subject being studied.

As a long process the research led to repeated reflections by the pastoral team. The research influenced the setting being investigated by raising awareness and detecting areas in need of refinement such as leadership selection and the size of communities. This does not mean that the research made the only contribution to those changes, which have already happened or are still under way. It increased and qualified the awareness of the status quo among the pastoral workers.

The study enhanced formation efforts. In particular in the field of investigation it required and inspired workshops on the Eucharist and funerals. In that way it contributed to local inculturation and a change in the awareness of people and pastoral workers. The mode of a local theology increased the theological understanding of things that had been done for a long time. People gained the power to articulate issues concerning the Eucharist that they only felt until then. They learned to communicate these concerns to others.

The circulation of drafts of this study made them available as a basis of formation material. In particular the sections on leadership qualities were used in training programmes to further enhance the process of selecting leaders. The richness of the

statements of interviewees could not be exhausted in its whole range within the limits of this study. This locally-produced material helped to overcome some of the limits of publications such as *Our Journey Together.* While they offer as point of departure for their reflections a section on a virtual "Our Life" (cf. chapter 3.4.6.1), here real life issues of competent contemporaries were used in the local formation. While such local material can be used as access to the participants' life only in similar contexts, the method of retrieving life issues from local people that was used here seems useful in all contexts. As fruit of the inductive method employed in a qualitative research design, the conversation with a purpose led to a quality enhancement in formation work.

The research required a more focused approach to issues at stake. This seems to have contributed to a more qualified demand for formation, including theological issues such as inculturation instead of a mere technical training. This is also due to the enhanced training methods, especially the reference to culture. The grounded approach is reflected in the findings, for instance on the needs of the bereaved, and in the relationship between funeral and meal practices in the local culture and their Christian equivalents. All that happened in formation events.

Through these continuing discussions a number of leaders expanded their knowledge of issues of culture and faith. This way the study contributed to the efforts to make people feel more at ease and at home in their church. Culture and faith, which had previously been seen as incompatible, came to be seen as complementary, in particular with regard to funerals. This led to statements like "the church came to fulfil culture" (Sermon of Mdange in Wüstenberg 1998c).

The focus on funeral leaders also contributed to the liturgy. This includes prayers and songs. Selected verses of John, chapter six were transformed into a song. Sung at the time of the distribution of communion at funerals they are meant to give a kind of biblical comment, especially to those guests present at funerals who are not familiar with the Catholic tradition.

The findings of the study helped to put the theme of female funeral leaders on the agenda. The awareness of the differing practices in different communities grew. Though there is no significant change yet, the repeated appearance of the topic changed the liturgical role of women, beginning with less sensitive areas like the full inclusion in the leadership for Sunday liturgies. The awareness of the presence of the topic can also be measured by the chagrin it causes for some male leaders in few communities.

The research brought the concept of the critical limit of the size of a community to the fore. This has not yet produced a concrete change but an ongoing discussion in order to address this problem. A study day of the pastoral team (cf. Sterkspruit Parish 2000) identified crucial features as when to regard a group as a community: A community should have sufficient human resources to minister to its own needs. That means to have a sane leadership structure. It should gather on Sundays for worship, have a functioning committee, and contribute in an appropriate way financially.[388]

For the pastoral workers, the repeated talks in connection with the study increased the awareness and appreciation of their changed role. An important result of the study is its contribution towards the change of attitudes of pastoral staff. The preoccupation of the local people with the time-consuming funeral procedures is at times cause for some unease among (expatriate) pastoral workers. The funeral arrangements were sometimes called "waste of time". With this study a deeper understanding of the cultural procedures and their inherent opportunities arose. In the local context this new comprehension helped to make the staff more comfortable and ready to grasp the opportunities. While this result remains statistically irrelevant with the small sample affected, it shows the transforming power of qualitative research.[369]

The considerations in the pastoral team also helped to corroborate the findings of the study itself. They helped to show that the thick description and the analysis matched the reality experienced by others.

6.3 The way ahead

The critical areas indicate that there is a need for further development. Though tremendous progress is being made towards justice some issues still lag behind. Among them we still find the remains of the "80% phenomenon": still we find few local priests, yet we have gained a huge number of community leaders. The analysed reality, which was also triggered by this phenomenon, may even contribute to changing the approach towards the solutions for the problem, which have yet to be found. Without

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[388] This finding of the pastoral team agrees with the criteria to regard a group as community in Oshikuku region (Namibia): Existence of a committee, sufficient leaders, considerable financial contribution, care for the needy (Leu 2000).
[369] One co-worker called such studies required reading for people involved in intercultural encounter within the framework of mission.

outlining a detailed strategy of how to achieve further change, some suggestions for future action conclude this study.[390]

6.3.1 Listen to the people – a methodological suggestion for mission

The chosen way of research opens up new dimensions of faith in a particular context. It is a way of interacting and sharing in the concern of ministry. In the "conversation with a purpose" (cf. Mason 1996:38) the principle "listen to the people" emerged as a valid principle of theological reflection and pastoral action, concerned about the co-responsibility with the faithful. It can be recommended for use as a tool in various fields of mission. It has already served as the basis for pastoral approaches (ETSA, Pastoral Plan). It demands the participation, in particular, of those who commit themselves to full-time ministry. The whole design of their pastoral approach should be shaped by the listening virtue (cf. Uzukwu 1996).

A kind of qualitative missionary approach supports the development of theological insights based on the lived reality of the Holy Spirit in the communities of faith. It allows one to see what is going on and to try to understand it from within. This means listening to what the Spirit has to say through the churches, and through the existing customs and reality since "through him all things were made" (Jn 1:3).

6.3.2 Professional team leadership

Much depends on those in office, since there is an "over emphasis on power" in clerical hands (Uzukwu 1996:121). This power was negatively demonstrated in the introductory phase of community ministry with its delaying and hampering force. It appeared in interfering action, and in the ways accountability was handled. The good experiences with teamwork among the leaders and the pastoral team suggest that pastoral workers should be deployed in teams. This balances their power to some extent by exposure to constant dialogue and common planning. Genuine teamwork can positively affect the local work and practice.[391] By genuine teamwork I mean that the team-members must be willing to co-operate closely under the guidance of the common vision. It will probably not work with so called "absentee" priests who just happen to live together at

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[390] Van der Ven (1996:335-413) elaborates on policy development, which needs a policy plan, programme, and projects. He reflects on the conditions of policy implementation, the policy circle, and policy organisation.

one place. The idea of teamwork should influence strategies for personnel planning within a diocese for the sake of formation and community building by leadership.

Changing their role to one that resembles Christ the teacher poses a challenge to the education of future priests. It has to kindle the joy for this task, to equip them for it, in order to support a mature leadership structure. Local history showed that priests who are unwilling and unable to do this are an obstacle to sound community leadership.

6.3.3 Including women among the funeral leaders

Though no revolutionary statements were made to introduce women as funeral leaders, this problem needs further attention. In this case it is not church regulations that limit possible future developments. The findings of this study give a possible lead for an area that needs more study. While in places culture seems to support male funeral leaders it also seems to provide a concept for tackling the issue with its basic concern about community. The idea that "community comes first" (MP Elia) does not contravene the cultural concern. The community, widened by faith beyond the confines of certain clans or nations, is the principle to be maintained. In this regard Christianity supports and fulfils the basic idea (or root metaphor) of community while widening the ways of fostering it. It does this by, among other things, allowing appropriate changes such as admission of women to this ministry. This applies especially to places where there is a lack of leaders.

One assumption is that the exclusion of women from the ministry of funeral leaders stems from the intention to protect them - as the givers of life - from defilement. If the assumption is true this could also become an issue to reflect upon in greater depth. Could women as givers of life actually be destined in the context of decontamination of death to get effectively involved in a still more holistic approach towards decontamination of death and restoration of life?

We saw that the context played a role for the admission of women to ministry both in history and locally. It could be worthwhile to reflect, supposing that one wants such a development, on the ways in which the church could actively contribute to such a

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[391] How far genuine teamwork could positively affect change in areas beyond the grass roots level could be a worthwhile topic for a further study. The team spirit would then affect bishops and the international level for decision making on issues relevant for all.

change in the context or environment, as Van der Ven (1996:372) calls it, that finally supports the development within its own system.

6.3.4 Concerning songs

The choice of songs seems at present to be informed by experience, tradition, and other influences. Though the choice is sometimes guided by emotion, it is not inappropriate. It may well catch the needs of the moment. A prepared choice, taking into account the known feelings, could contribute to a still more thorough proclamatory approach. The creative forces of skilled people could be set free through appropriate formation in a more comprehensive approach. It could be a policy to qualify certain pastoral workers to do this. It is astonishing to see the energy taken to appoint chaplains for sodalities. The area very next to the psyche of the people with a huge potential in proclamation however is barely considered in personnel planning and allocation.

6.3.5 Enhance publications

A further challenge concerns the material provided for formation. The publication *Ministers of the Eucharist* (Kramer 1997a) seemed not to meet the needs of the local formation work. This could be an incentive to develop attractive material suitable for the various cultural backgrounds of South Africa in many areas of pastoral work.[392] A suitable manual could contain several modules, dealing with the cultural meals and the Eucharist, exploring both the meaning of body and blood of Christ. It could address the need to assist the priest in the Mass to distribute both species, to distribute the consecrated species when the celebration of the Word is done on Sundays, and to cater for the sick. It could help people to reflect on the meaning of having the Eucharist at funerals.

Such publications would best be made in a manner that is open for local adaptations to the different cultures and contexts of South Africa. The modules would mostly invite the creativity of the facilitators. They would also, even if it seemed quite concise, contribute to a wider adult-formation, since the target group of the training is not leaders alone, but the whole community. This would contribute to a grounded approach towards inculturation and proclamation of faith. It could help to open up the bounty of cultural

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[392] Makobane, Sithole & Shiya (1995) may hint at few areas with the published conference papers: Marriage, reconciliation (confession), dances. Healing, confirmation, baptism, preaching, social commitment, and others could be added.

values to translate the language of faith into a comprehensible vernacular. The people with their *sensus fidei* as indispensable partner for the pastoral workers could gain their rightful place. References would of course mainly come from African sources.[393] Such an approach would not only concern the Eucharist but all strata of life like initiation, reconciliation, healing, marriage, and ministry to name but a few.

In a really comprehensive approach such publications could find creative use in the training centres for priests (seminaries). This could help to allay fears concerning their role as formators. It would prepare the candidates for an apostolic, catholic, and unifying approach in one main pastoral task: becoming like Jesus the teacher of the people, learning in the encounter with the people, and matching their needs.

6.3.6 A call for proclamatory sincerity and integrity concerning the Eucharist

The analysis identified a couple of serious problems concerning the Eucharist. They need attention since they compromise the credibility of the missionary approach. The problems surrounding the Eucharist include the appropriate formation, the lack of the Eucharist at funerals, and the lack of hospitality. One solution would be to ordain some of the existing leaders to that they could celebrate the Eucharist. This approach differs from those who see the communities entitled to participate in the Eucharist (cf. Küng 1967a; Schillebeeckx 1981:58), who talk about "Eucharistic starvation" (cf. Kanyandago 1993:155; Lobinger 1998a:6) or "Eucharistic famine" (Healey & Sybertz 1996:277). This is bad enough, but the persistent discrepancy between teaching and practice aggravates the problem. Continuing to teach people about the importance of the Eucharist while depriving them of the opportunity to celebrate it looks like dishonesty.[394]

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[393] Shorter (1988) says that the church must be committed to cultural education if it takes inculturation seriously. "It must help to give people the means of developing their culture" (:262). An attempt to pay more respect to the local culture in teaching material was recently done in the new book for the preparation of children for receiving the First Holy Communion (SACBC 1999b). This book takes into account the different nations. It is published exclusively in African languages.

[394] The concept of dishonesty may appear to be too strong a term. Discussing this problem with bishop Lobinger (2000) he had reservations because of the connotation of a deliberate denial of consistency. Moreover, he pointed out that a document like ICQ showed that some church officials strongly advocate that priests should conduct the funerals; this would discard a claim of dishonesty. For me, however, it does not ease the displeasure if one calls the practice infidelity, or being unfaithful to the promises made in the proclamation of faith. An alternative term could be inconsistency. This term may fit in a complementary way. It has the disadvantage that is does not have the connotation of ethical accountability for a situation as clearly as the term dishonesty. The long-lasting, well-known and often-deplored discrepancy between teaching and practice and the prevailing non-provision of an adequate ministry allows one to assume a deliberate maintenance of the dissatisfactory status quo. ICQ appears to be a contextual document, aiming at a situation in certain areas for instance of Europe. With regard to

Shorter (1985:133) called it infidelity when elaborating on the Eucharistic famine in Africa. The questions of hospitality towards those non-Catholics longing for participation and the appropriate provision of presiders over the Eucharistic celebration are a matter for urgent reflection and action.

6.3.6.1 Hospitality as missionary tool

Trying to inculturate the gospel calls for a comprehensive transformation of theology. If one admits that cultural values inform the faith also with regard to the Eucharist, then one should go further.

> There is such great potential in some aspects of African culture for living the Christian faith that one wonders why the theological and pastoral attitude seems to be one of "Could anything good come out of Nazareth"? (Magesa 1991:25).

The analysis produced the concept of temporary membership. This corresponds with the cultural value of hospitality. There can be a genuine African contribution in the field of the admission of members of other denominations to receive the Eucharist at a particular celebration. Further research on the possibility of a sort of temporary membership or integration can evaluate and extrapolate such suggestions for the missionary approach. It could become a momentous practice proclaiming the invitation of Jesus to all, an emphasis laid on Jesus' meal with the sinners. Hospitality - not rejection - in such a case could develop into a prime missionary tool.

6.3.6.2 Leaders of the Eucharist ought to be among the funeral leaders

Chapter one (1.2.2) referred to Ela, for whom ordained married men are not a daring solution in the concern about developing new forms of church life. Donders (1986:108) believes that young men attracted by the old fashioned style of priesthood not only spell difficulties, but disaster. The positive experiences with the funeral leaders as one

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funerals it contributes nothing to the local context studied here. Even if one disputes traces of dishonesty on the upper church level that is responsible for such documents, it remains a problem on the local level. Here teaching is undertaken in full awareness that the practice will often not correspond with it. The community leaders find themselves in a predicament. At the same time and with good reasons their ministry is propagated and provided, which serves the community but does not and cannot address in a comprehensive manner the needs it should respond to. Part of the felt inappropriateness of the term dishonesty may be seen in the fact that this situation is beyond the immediate moral accountability of the local role players. It serves as a reminder, however, that the situation continues to be tolerated. A study like this exposes this ethical problem in the concern about missionary or proclamatory honesty and consistency. At the same time it hopefully helps to alleviate fears towards the admission of a complete ministry of community leaders by indicating their immeasurable contribution in proclamation and in

example of community ministries suggest that a solution may be found in widening the range of these ministries. The ordination of some proven leaders to preside over the Eucharist as *ordained community leaders* (OCL), a term coined by Lobinger (1998a), could be a creative change. Leaders already deliver a full ministry. The ordained among them would differ from other leaders in their commitment and reliability (cf. EN 73).[395] Besides them one would still aim at many local priests as formators but admit selected local people to serve the Eucharist. Also they would best work in teams to serve their respective communities.[396]

The qualitative research design with its inductive method allows one to arrive at a perception grounded in the context. In chapter one I referred to Bertsch (1990:24) who spoke in favour of local leaders because of their familiarity with the situation. The fundamental theology by Knauer (1991:297-305) saw the difference between common and ministerial priesthood in the function of the latter for the faith of the community. The option with the poor assumed that the wise and learned would be introduced into the mysteries of the kingdom by the poor (cf. Kehl 1992:245). What may have sounded abstract in the beginning has now become grounded, corroborated by the analysis and its interpretation. Such competent leaders exist and act. They serve their communities and their faith, and they introduce the local culture into the mysteries of faith by using their cultural grammar. It is not only to overcome starvation or to guarantee the right to have the Eucharist that I urge for the ordination of such leaders. It is for the honest maintenance of the general function of the church, which is religious communication (cf. Van der Ven 1996). This communication makes use of all kinds of grammars, including the theological grammar of tradition and the grammar of the context, the culture. This includes the central concept of the meal. We have leaders able to engage these grammars competently. To prevent them from doing this to the full is damaging to comprehensive religious communication. This causes the church to fail in its general function.

Contextualising by ordaining community leaders, though new, nevertheless remains faithful to tradition. In the past ministry was rooted in the contemporary situation, and

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building up the church. This could be a major contribution to enhancing consistency and therefore credibility and honesty.
[395] For Van der Ven (1996:331-2) it is just the rite of the hand that makes the difference to the installation of a pastoral worker or, in our context, a leader.

shaped by culture and tradition. Tradition is not about freezing a one-time solution for all occasions and eternity. This actually means to consider practice as the field of the Holy Spirit, worthy of unbiased reflection.

The introduction of the ordination of community leaders would pose no threat to the ministry of the present priests. The experiences analysed in this study showed a faithful collaboration. An awareness of a fundamental equality in ministry is already present; the differences are also known as the awareness of mutual dependence. Kirchberger also (1998:298) reassures in this regard:

> These ministers would work under the guidance of the more highly trained priests. The problem of two classes of priests would not be serious since two very different things are not easily compared.

The difference between the traditional ordained priesthood and OCLs will always be felt and present. The professional priests will be needed to provide theology with a role rather of an overseer (Hastings 1973c:179). A complementary and integrated ministry would exactly avoid the feared threat of a parallel service as expressed in CL (23).

If ICQ (1997:7) speaks about restricted areas I am not going to argue for a lifting of restrictions. The essential difference between common and ordained priesthood is the proclamation by the latter for the community as a whole. Therefore I suggest the ordination of some of these leaders who show a special commitment and to accept them where they actually are. They should officially be included into the restricted area and so allowed to preside over the local celebration of the Eucharist.

Such Eucharistic ministry would promote honesty and proper service delivery without exposing the leaders to a permanent awareness of a deficiency, which they are not able to overcome on their own. It would be a further contribution to justice and community building and serve in the concrete case comprehensively in the decontamination from death.

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[396] With regard to ordaining community leaders see the study by Lobinger (1998a). Such change in ministry would require a prudent and inclusive strategy. It would resemble the steps taken with the Pastoral Plan. It would demand the inclusion of the basis when entering such new field. This would be well served when culturally and contextually fitting awareness and formation material could be provided.

6.3.7 Suggestions for further research

During the course of this study I have already hinted at some fields for further research. Because of the natural limitations of a single study there are many possible topics this thesis could only touch in passing.

It would be interesting to investigate the relationship and potential mutual influence of the different realms of management and church leadership on each other. With basic patterns applying to all of them they can enrich each other and so widen the missiological field into that of management. This can enhance the church's choice when resorting to secular leadership patterns as it did in the early ages. This includes traditional and managerial leadership. In a poly-centred church with (possibly emerging) diversified ministry-structures this can become essential. It needs an informed choice able to weigh implications. This would most probably lead to the discovery that many of the values pursued in the church are also at work in so called secular areas. Moreover, in the pursuit of inculturation further studies could research ways to make cultural values that emerged in this study integral features of ministry. Such studies could focus on how traditional values, such as the traditional way of consultation and consensus seeking, could enhance the mutual relationship of the different kinds of ministries and with it, community building. They could also look for ways to safeguard such procedures and how to make them binding for all involved. This would show that their importance goes beyond the respect and liking of individual office holders.

In chapter one I noted the lack of other studies like this one. It would be a worthwhile exercise to provide more analytical insight into community ministry exercised in different settings. That would provide material for comparative studies.

Chapter three showed the need to address the value of the collaboration among priests and its possible rejection. Further studies could focus on the impact the deployment of pastoral workers as teams has on the "community leader" issue.

Chapters three and five dealt with the lack of female funeral leaders. A possible explanation was the assumption that some men want consciously or unconsciously to preserve a kind of safe haven. It would be worthwhile to examine this assumption. If there were uprooted men who needed to secure a dignified social position, this would be a field of urgency to be addressed. For the church this would mean the challenge to contribute by developing and providing suitable means to safeguard the dignity of men. That should also have a positive effect on the dignity of women. It would avoid making

ministry the scapegoat for a struggle that cannot substantially be won there. Such a struggle would only cause harm to the women rejected and to the effectiveness of the ministry.

The question whether women, as givers of life, could actually get effectively involved in a more holistic approach towards decontamination of death and restoration of life deserves more attention in future research.

Chapter four invited further studies in the area of proclamation. A study of funeral sermons against the background of local culture would be helpful in understanding basic mechanisms of local homiletics and their relationship towards the audience.

Chapter five touched briefly on the image of the church as the family of God. It has a certain appeal though many reservations exist. If one wants to maintain this image it could be worthwhile to investigate the impact mature leadership structures can have on its development.

Concerning the Eucharist, this study opened up a broad scope for further studies. A study on the alleged low participation of Africans in receiving the Eucharist could explore the root-causes of the phenomenon and compare different situations, including the different customs and philosophies. It could include the impact contextualised formation has on the changing behaviour or attitudes of Christians towards this sacrament. This could develop into a demonstration of the transformative power of contextualised proclamation.

The question of the lack of Eucharistic sharing is a remaining wound in the Body of Christ, which is also the church. A broader discussion could compile models of hospitality, referring to African models and practices in the early church. The value of such study would be, among other things, a contribution to tolerance and a promotion of Christian witness and unity.

Last but not least, the ministry of the Eucharistic leaders needs urgent attention. Lobinger (1998a:3) called for more studies on this topic. It needs attention for the sake of Catholic identity, missionary honesty in proclamation, and for justice to the leaders who are seriously restricted in an otherwise satisfactorily executed ministry.

6.4 Final conclusion: A gift of God to the local and universal church

What initially looked like becoming a short thesis turned out to be a long thing. This thesis on the "Big Things" is an expression of respect for the comprehensive reality that emerged in the process of research. The prism of the qualitative research method shed light into many directions concerning community ministry, though the focus was narrowed to the service of the funeral leaders.

Their ministry is an important contribution to the community-based approach in the South African Catholic Church. It contributes to justice in many respects. It can inspire further planning and fine-tuning. It is a demonstration of the importance of a culturally initiated ministry. The specific cultural background makes it unique. The emerging importance of the extensive reference to culture with regard to leadership is a contribution to the wider church in its attempt to incarnate itself into diverse situations. The shape the ministry takes coincides with both worldwide and specific African tendencies concerning leadership. The various theories assume and presuppose a compatibility of different practices in different contexts within one organisation. This can inspire a polycentric church in its reflection on an accepted diversity of concurrently working leadership models. On the other hand this cautions against superficially transferring the local model into another context. What is transferable is the culturally grounded method and the basic vision of the church.

Initiated by "the hierarchy", the community ministry of funeral leaders takes over the entire ministry at the ritual of funerals. By doing so it shares in the concern of ministry about unity, holiness, apostolicity, and catholicity. It serves these central aspects of faith in close co-operation with the priests and pastoral workers. So it by no means diminishes the hierarchical form of ministry. On the contrary, it enhances it.

Community ministry contributes to the evangelising mission of the church. It proclaims the life-giving love of God to the people. It builds up community as a practical part of this proclamation. The leaders, enabled for this task by the pastoral workers, in turn enhance their missionary competence in a mutual dependence. So they prove to be essential assets, partners in mission.

With regard to their specific ministry the funeral leaders assist the bereaved to cope with their loss and to regain what is lost and threatened by death. This process, indicated by the word of decontamination from death, restores in a culturally sensitive way a

community that embraces the whole scope of the world view: the deceased, the ancestors, the bereaved, and God.

The prism of the method employed revealed a major deficiency in the ministry. The restriction of the celebration of the Eucharist to the ordained ministry limits the efficacy of the offered community ministry. This celebration addresses many facets of the needs of the bereaved yet it cannot be provided in many cases. This deficiency had to be dealt with to some extent and needs further attention.

Formation appeared to be a major key to the ministry. It needs constant attention and commitment of the pastoral workers, the priests. With its whole scope it is a major opportunity and contribution to the proclamation of faith, employing the cultural grammar. It is essential in many ways to maintain the quality of the ministry rendered by the leaders. This only indicates that the praise for the "Big Things" actually includes all those involved in the whole network that enables, facilitates, and maintains their ministry.

The findings of this thesis may resemble in a kind of variation, *mutatis mutandis*, both the report of Peter on his experiences among uncircumcised "others" in Joppa, and the converted reaction of those who initially criticised him: "'So if God gave them the same gift as he gave us, who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could oppose God?' When they heard this, they had no further objections and praised God" (Acts 11:17-18):

Bow, all, before the Big Things	*Thobani nonke zinto ezinkhulu*
As if you were bleeding!	*Xa ngathi niyophisa!*
Bow to show your respect!	*Thobani ukubonisa intlonipho!*
All of you bow	*Thobani nina nonke*
To show your respect!	*Ukubonisa intlonipho yenu!*

Appendices

Appendix 1: List of interlocutors in the intensive interviews

Elia, Michael Papiso, is a funeral-leader in Barkly East. He was born in 1960 in Barkly East. He finished standard 10 (grade 12) in 1995. In 1977 he dropped school after standard 6 to work first with a carpenter and then with a road construction company. Since 1983 he worked with the Director General for Agriculture in Barkly East. In 1986 he resumed his school studies with the Nzuzo Adult Centre in Barkly East. 1995 he became an active member of NEHAWU. A father of two children, Elia married in 1986. The interview was done in Xhosa at the presbytery in Barkly East. Elia is Mosotho.

Elia, Motsoanyane Anastasia, is a funeral-leader in Barkly East. She was born in 1940 in Barkly East of parents who were farm workers. She started an interrupted school-career in 1947 and left school in 1960 after standard 2. From 1963 she had various employments as a domestic worker. Since 1997 she has been working in a shop (*ishishini* – small business). She started the process of customary marriage in 1970. A widow for ten years, she has brought up five children. The interview was done in Xhosa in the church of Barkly East. Elia is Mosotho.

Jeremia, Queen Mpotseng Lillian, is a funeral-leader in waiting in Jozanas Hoek. She was born in 1971 in Jozanas Hoek. She finished standard 10 in 1991 to take some courses in paralegal training. Since 1995 she has been working for the Legal Advice Centre in Sterkspruit. She is also involved in the Eastern Cape NGO Coalition, Lawyers for Women's Rights, the ANCWL and the ANCYL. The interview was done in Xhosa at the presbytery in Sterkspruit. Jeremia is Mosotho.

Gqalaqha, Mphithizile Mackson, is funeral leader in Voyizana. He was born in 1945 in Voyizana. At the age of 11 he started schooling. At 19 he left school after achieving standard 5. He began to work as a cook in the mines of Alexandra, later on in Virginia. Before he returned home in 1988 he worked for 23 years in Ceres. At present he is working as a driver for Umlamli hospital. Married in 1968, he is the father of seven children. The interview was done in Xhosa at his home in Voyizana. His wife was present. Gqalaqha belongs to the Xhosa nation.

Lobinger, Fritz, is the bishop of Aliwal Diocese. He was born in 1929 in Germany and attended school there. He received his academic training after matric in Germany where

he was ordained priest in 1955. In the same year he came to South Africa and commenced working in the parish of Umhlanga in Transkei. From there he went back to Germany for two years to write his doctoral thesis on the role of catechists. After his return he joined the staff of the pastoral department of the LUMKO Institute, then in Cacadu, Transkei. He was adviser to the SACBC and has published many articles and books focusing on community ministries. Since 1987 he has been bishop of Aliwal Diocese. The interview was done in English at his home in Aliwal North.

Makhobokoana, Motsamai Jacob, is a funeral-leader in Tapoleng. He was born in 1932. He began working as a teacher and changed later to the banking sector where he was finally manager in the Sterkspruit branch till his retirement in 1992. He is an active member of the ANC and member of a school governing body. Makhobokoana wanted the interview in English. It was done at his home in Tapoleng. Makhobokoana is Mosotho.

Mangaliso, Thamsanqa Floris, is a funeral-leader in Barkly East. He was born in 1957 in Barkly East. He was baptised in 1967 after some encouraging encounters with the Catholic Church. His parents were not baptised. He attended school in Barkly East up to standard 6. From 1979-1980 he worked as a fire-boy in the hotel of Barkly East. After this interlude he continued his school career. He finished school after standard 10. In 1984 he began a teachers' course in Bensonvale College next to Sterkspruit where he dropped out in 1985 to start working as an unqualified teacher in the township of Barkly East. Later he continued on a farm school next to Barkly East. He started to take special courses for upgrading with the SA Teachers College in 1993. The same year he married his teacher wife. They have two children. The interview was done in Xhosa at the presbytery in Barkly East. Mangaliso is child of a mixed marriage of a Sotho mother and Xhosa father.

Mathis, Walter, is a priest in Sterkspruit parish. He was born in 1938 in Switzerland. After school and theological studies there he was ordained priest in 1966. He worked first as youth chaplain. Nine years of work with communities in Colombia followed. There he had an experience of a church depending on community ministries and related organisational structures. After further eleven years of pastoral work in Switzerland he came to South Africa in 1994. He has been working since then in Sterkspruit parish. The interview was done in English at the presbytery in Sterkspruit.

Mbovu, Paulos Madela, is a funeral-leader in Umlamli. He was born in 1946 in Umlamli. When he left school after completing standard 7 in 1964 he started working with "Grikualand West" in Kimberley. In 1965 he became engaged, first in the process of traditional marriage. He began working in Namaqualand for five years in a welding plant. He got some training there. He married in church in 1967. He then worked as stores attendant in the power station of Cape Town. In 1983 he returned to Umlamli and was employed with the Department of Health in Umlamli Hospital where he is at present Transport Control Officer. He is the father of eight children. The interview was done in Xhosa together with RN Mpambani at his home in Umlamli. Mbovu is Xhosa.

Morar, Mokesh Kanti, was a priest in Sterkspruit parish till June 1993. He was born in 1956 to Hindu parents, immigrants from India. He grew up in De Aar where he attended school. He started his priestly studies for De Aar diocese in a seminary in Pretoria and continued in the United States. Back to SA he was ordained priest in 1989. Morar worked in several parishes of Aliwal Diocese. He was appointed to Sterkspruit Mission from 1990 till 1993. He then went back to his home diocese De Aar. During the time of the struggle he was involved in empowering people. Quite a considerable commitment was dedicated to Young Christian Students (YCS). He indicated that his emphasis was more on building SCCs than on leadership issues during his time in Sterkspruit. The interview was done in English at the presbytery in De Aar.

Mpambani, Richard Nzilo, is a funeral-leader in Umlamli. He was born in 1948 in Umlamli. He attended school up to standard 4. Years of work followed, first in Cape Town, then in Durban, and then for 25 years in Kleinzee. He obtained diplomas of operators. He finished the customary marriage process in 1978. He is father of eight. Since 1993 he has been staying at home in Umlamli as early-pensioner because of health problems. The interview was done in Xhosa together with P.M. Mbovu at Mbovu's home in Umlamli. Mpambani is Xhosa.

Mpambani, Zolile Petrus, was working as a priest in Umlamli mission and Sterkspruit parish. He was born in 1957 in Umlamli. He attended school in Umlamli and then in Sterkspruit till he passed matric in 1978. Then he joined the Institute of the Priests of the Sacred Heart. He attended his theological training in Cedara, Kwa Zulu-Natal. Ordained priest in 1987, he worked in different parishes of Aliwal Diocese; first in Umlamli and then from 1990 in Burgersdorp. In 1992/93 he attended a formation course in order to become a novice master. In 1994 he came to Sterkspruit to lead the pre-noviciate; and

he assisted in parish work. In 1995 he was appointed to the noviciate in Bethulie. Later in 1998 he was transferred to the administration of the SCJ Generalate in Rome. The interview was done in English in the presbytery of Bethulie. Mpambani is Xhosa.

Ntaka, Matthias, was priest in Umlamli mission. He was born in Dangers Hoek in 1947. After matric he joined the Institute of the Priests of the Sacred Heart in 1966. He studied theology in Britain for five years and continued in Lesotho for further two years. Ordained priest in 1973, Ntaka worked in different parishes of Aliwal Diocese, including Umlamli (now Sterkspruit). At present he is the priest in charge of Bethulie. The interview was done in English at the presbytery in Bethulie. Ntaka is Xhosa.

Pitso, Tokelo Gilbert, is a priest in Sterkspruit parish. He was born in 1962 in Lesotho. He attended school there. After matric he started his theological studies in Roma, Lesotho. Then he joined Aliwal Diocese and continued his theological training in Pretoria. After his studies he worked as deacon in Aliwal, Dukathole township. After his ordination to the priesthood in 1995 Pitso was appointed to Sterkspruit parish. In 1999 he began taking courses at UNISA. The interviews were done in English at the presbytery in Sterkspruit. Pitso is a Mosotho.

Timati, Joseph Ntoa, is trainer-catechist in Sterkspruit parish. He was born in 1942 in Mfinci. In 1958 he finished school after standard 7. In 1960 he started the catechists' training course in Cwele. Over four years he received training of two months in the first year and one month's courses in the following years. After completing the course he started full time work. In the beginning he got time to work on the fields to increase the little allowance he received. He accompanied the priest and taught catechism. While working for many years on his own, also conducting funerals, he was introducing the Pastoral Plan with the priests. Timati liked the change brought by the Pastoral Plan and his new role as a trainer catechist. Fr Morar, Fr Walter, and I used him as interpreter for translations. Married since 1964, he is father of seven children. Two of them died as babies due to ill health. The interview was done in Xhosa at the presbytery in Sterkspruit. Timati is a Puthi.

Timati, Phillip Mahlomola, was a trainer-catechist in Sterkspruit parish. He was born in 1936. After school he started to work in the mines in 1954 and then as a driver for Umlamli hospital. While working there he was chosen by the priest to become a catechist in 1964. He received some training in Cwele. Married since 1958 and a father

of seventeen children, he retired in 1997 and died in 2000. The interview was done in Xhosa at the presbytery in Sterkspruit. Timati was a Puthi.
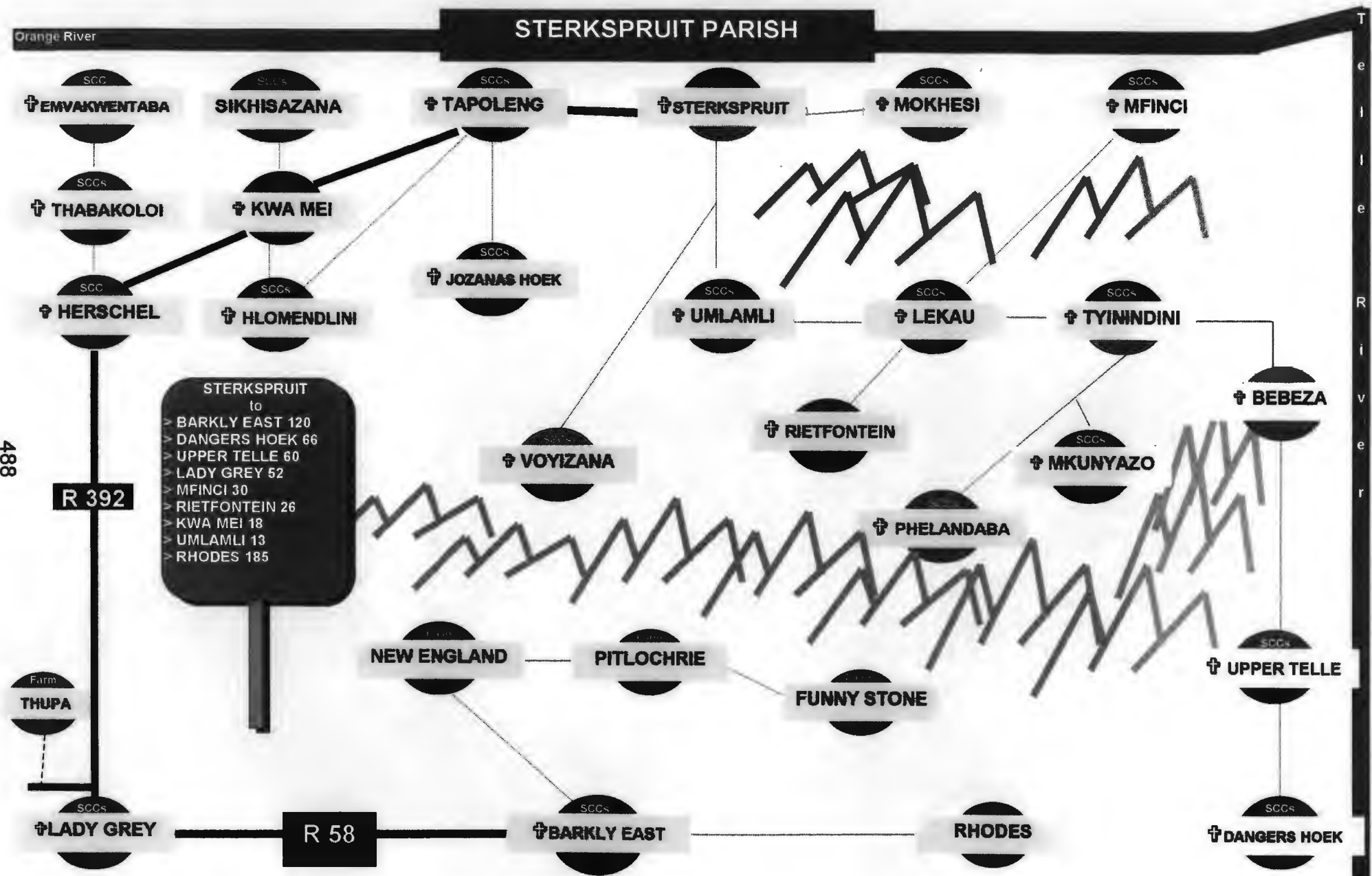
Appendix 2: List of other people who contributed to the research

The following are some of the other people who contributed to the research:

April, A (f).[397] Liturgy leader and Catechism teacher in Bebeza.
Belu, C (m). Anglican priest in Sterkspruit.
Bostander, J (m). Priest in Ojiwarongo, Namibia.
Bucher, H (m). Bishop of Bethlehem diocese.
Deillon, R (m). Missionary to Algeria.
Dlephu, J (m). Funeral leader (migrant worker) in Maphosileni (Umlamli).
Elia, V (f). Catechism teacher in Barkly East.
Giladile, WO (m). Former funeral and liturgy leader in Umlamli.
Gqalaqha, M (f). Wife of funeral leader in Voyizana.
Guirma, C (m). Bishop of Kaya, Burkina Faso.
Gunundu, A (f). Liturgy leader in Hlomendlini.
Hlanjwa, AP (m). Trainee in Tapoleng.
Hlazo, DC (m). Parish member in Voyizana.
Jonga, BE (f). Parish member in Barkly East.
Kalilombe, PA (m). Bishop in Malawi.
Lekau, H (m). Funeral and liturgy leader in Lekau.
Lekau, J (m). Funeral and liturgy leader in Lekau.
Lekhowa, C (m). Funeral leader in Lekau.
Letsoso, EM (f). Catechism teacher in Mfinci.
Leu, H (m). Episcopal vicar in Ojiwarongo, Namibia.
Magibili, B (m). Funeral and liturgy leader in Mkunyazo.
Mahlomaholo, TM (m). Parish member in Lady Grey.
Makautse, TI (m). Funeral and liturgy leader in Mokhesi.
Makoa, S (m). Committee member in Lady Grey.
Makututsa, MEC (f). Sister of the animation team in Sterkspruit.
Mangcotywa, MJ (m). Funeral leader in Mkunyazo.
Maponopono, MM (f). SCC leader in Bebeza.
Maqungo, TJ (m). Funeral and liturgy leader in Rietfontein.
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Mathieu, JL (m). Priest in Tema-Bokin, Burkina Faso.
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Mkala, HB (m). Funeral leader in Mkunyazo.
Moea, T (m). Funeral leader in Lady Grey.
Mohanua, G (f). Parish member in Lady Grey.
Mohlabanyane, A (f). Communion giver in Lady Grey.
Mohlalefi, AM (m). Leader in Tapoleng.
Moshasha, N (f). Catechism teacher in Barkly East.
Mosuhli, PM (f), Catechism teacher Lady Grey.
Motemekoana, MC (f). Funeral leader and catechism teacher in Barkly East.

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[397] "f" indicates a female, "m" a male person

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Mpambani, AS (m). Funeral and liturgy leader in Umlamli.

Mpekoa, A (m). Funeral leader in Lekau.

Mphaki, J (m). Funeral leader in Bebeza.

Mthwesi, T (m). Funeral and liturgy leader in Rietfontein.

Mweza, VT (m). Liturgy leader in Umlamli.

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Ndubane, J (f). Cook in Sterkspruit.

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Nsamba, M (m). Deacon in Sterkspruit.

Pöllitzer, P (m). Priest in Gobabis, Namibia.

Ponoane, M (m). Funeral leader in Umlamli.

Sedidi, K (m). Funeral leader in Umlamli.

Sedidi, M (m). Former funeral leader in Umlamli.

Sobalisa, A (f). Founder leader and former funeral leader in Bebeza.

Tabane, YT (m). Parish member in Umlamli.

Thibinyane, GC (m). Funeral and liturgy leader in Mfinci.

Thini, E (f). Committee member in Barkly East.

Vinco, L (m). Priest in GaRankuwa.

Yaphi, M (m). Funeral leader in Barkly East.

Zimmermann, D (m). Professor for pastoral theology, parish priest in Bremen, Germany.

Appendix 3 – Map of Sterkspruit Parish

STERKSPRUIT PARISH

Orange River

Telle River

SCC EMVAKWENTABA
SIKHISAZANA
SCC TAPOLENG
STERKSPRUIT
SCC MOKHESI
SCC MFINCI

THABAKOLOI
SCC KWA MEI
SCC JOZANAS HOEK

HERSCHEL
SCC HLOMENDLINI
SCC UMLAMLI
SCC LEKAU
SCC TYININDINI

STERKSPRUIT
to
> BARKLY EAST 120
> DANGERS HOEK 66
> UPPER TELLE 60
> LADY GREY 52
> MFINCI 30
> RIETFONTEIN 26
> KWA MEI 18
> UMLAMLI 13
> RHODES 185

BEBEZA

RIETFONTEIN

VOYIZANA

MKUNYAZO

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R 392

PHELANDABA

THUPA Farm

NEW ENGLAND
PITLOCHRIE
FUNNY STONE

UPPER TELLE

LADY GREY
R 58
BARKLY EAST
RHODES
DANGERS HOEK

STERKSPRUIT PARISH – STRONGEST DENOMINATIONS

Orange River

Tralla River

✝ EMVAKWENTABA

SIKHISAZANA

✝ TAPOLENG

✝ STERKSPRUIT

✝ MOKHESI

✝ MFINCI

✝ THABAKOLOI

✝ KWA MEI

✝ JOZANAS HOEK

✝ HERSCHEL

✝ HLOMENDLINI

✝ UMLAMLI

✝ LEKAU

✝ TYININDINI

✝ BEBEZA

STERKSPRUIT
To
> BARKLY EAST 120
> DANGERS HOEK 66
> UPPER TELLE 60
> LADY GREY 52
> MFINCI 30
> RIETFONTEIN 26
> KWA MEI 18
> UMLAMLI 13
> RHODES 185

✝ VOYIZANA

✝ RIETFONTEIN

✝ MKUNYAZO

✝ UPPER TELLE

✝ PHELANDABA

THUPA

NEW ENGLAND

PITLOCHRIE

FUNNY STONE

R 392

✝ LADY GREY

R 58

✝ BARKLY EAST

RHODES

✝ DANGERS HOEK

| METHODIST | ANGLICAN / CATHOLIC / METHODIST / ZIONIST | ANGLICAN / ST JOHNS | ANGLICAN / ZIONIST | CATHOLIC | ANGLICAN | ZIONIST (AIC) | Not yet known |

Source: Timati, J 1998

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Lobinger, F. 1999d. Personal conversation on 11.12.1999 in Aliwal North.

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