

**TOWARDS AN EDUCATIONAL  
CHARTER FOR LITTLE CHILDREN OF OUR  
BLESSED LADY RELIGIOUS CONGREGATION  
(LCBL)**

**BY**

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## **DEDICATION**

I would like to dedicate this thesis to the LCBL Community, my family and friends who were my sources of inspiration to realise my dreams.



## **ABSTRACT**

This study set out to investigate the Philosophical Foundations of Education for the Little Children of Our Blessed Lady Congregation (LCBL). In this regard I presented information obtained from research conducted from both LCBL and non-LCBL informants, information derived from archives, Church records and documents. Some of the material used was from the literature review, interviews and focus groups. The findings revealed that the LCBL Congregation has no educational policy and that it needs a manifesto to direct its educational activities. This is the central argument of this study: the LCBL needs an educational charter in order for it to understand itself better and to enable it to articulate its vision and mandate to outsiders.

The LCBL congregation has no written policies simply because it does not have its own institutions to run. In most cases the congregation works in collaboration with other organizations, which makes it difficult for it to make policies. The congregation has been working in Zimbabwe for the past 77 years offering services in education, health and administration, but all this has been done through other institutions, meaning the LCBL implements the policies of those institutions it works for and with.

The LCBL congregation has a special focus on women and girls, but to date it has not yet done something specific to cater for its target group. This attributes to a number of factors, which include lack of policies and institutions to implement the policies that lead to a loss of culture and identity. It shows that there is great need for the congregation to deepen its understanding on the charism and core values which should include education and the importance of policies.

## CHAPTER ONE

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study was to ascertain an Educational Charter of the Little Children of our Blessed Lady (LCBL) Congregation basing on its involvement in education in Zimbabwe.

### 1.2 AREA OF INVESTIGATION:

This study examines the need for an educational charter for the Little Children our Blessed Lady (LCBL) congregation. Essentially, the study is in the field of philosophy of education. It explores the need for the LCBL congregation to be in charge of its activities and to clarify its educational goals. The study endeavours to mobilise the congregation to reflect on its history and mission statement, as well as to become relevant to contemporary needs. The study adopts a historical and analytical thrust.

### 1.3 Background to the study

The situation and the setting of this investigation are best captured in the old Shona proverb, “*Dayi ndakaziva haitungamire*” translated into the famous Hegelian wisdom: “The owl of Mineva opens its wings when dusk has fallen.” This is a philosophical project rooted in empirical realities. As E. Dussell observed, “Philosophy is about the unphilosophical.” The religious congregation in question is significant. It is well established in Zimbabwe - 77 years old. LCBL has and continues to be active in the field of education. It runs schools such as Martindale, St Albert’s and many others. The congregation has stated and unstated core values. In matters of education there are no

distinct and unique philosophical documents to guide the Order in this significant area of its core activities. That is a glaring weakness.

#### **1.4 The Problem Statement**

LCBL is a congregation involved in education but without statement of educational values, vision, goals, missions i.e. a philosophical manifesto or philosophical charter to refer to. It is difficult for the congregation to have explicit educational values or policies because it is working within the framework of other institutions' policies. There is a gap between stated policy and implementation. This is partly due to little knowledge or understanding of charism and mission by the different levels of the congregation. This study examines the implications of operating without an educational charter, and proposes principles that will guide the LCBL.

#### **1.5 JUSTIFICATION:**

LCBL runs schools in Zimbabwe guided by 'borrowed' educational principles yet it has its own corporate identity and principles that should be the foundation of its educational activities. It follows from 1 that there is no document available to guide the congregation in its educational mission. The congregation needs to establish its own schools so that it can desist from using borrowed values since it has to use the employer's policies. Hence, this project that comes up with guidelines for the order to have its own schools is long overdue.

However, the point is not just about a document, but also about developing a philosophical tradition as part of the culture for the order. LCBL is a growing community, which needs to employ philosophical instruments to critically meet the challenges of the day. This community aims at working and empowering women and girls with necessary and appropriate skills required in the modern world where philosophy is a valuable instrument.

The LCBL vision statement states, “Reading the signs of the times”. Reading the signs of times needs a philosophical mind and an attitude to interpret the worldview and implement ideas accordingly. This topic becomes valuable in as much as it equips the institution with a new educational paradigm, a new focus, and a new construction that is viable and productive; a kind of educational system that is relevant to the needs of the day.

## **1.6 OBJECTIVES:**

The study seeks to:

- i. Search, construct and formulate ideas relevant to the needs of the the LCBL congregation and country.
- ii. Empower and equip LCBL sisters with relevant educational skills to interpret their worldview.
- iii. Empower women and girls with relevant skills to liberate them intellectually.
- iv. Provide knowledge to the Church and society.

These objectives facilitated the study focus and interrogation with different informants.

## **1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:**

The LCBL is rich in religious, moral, cultural and educational wisdom which has not been consciously harnessed for philosophical purposes. Very few of the principles contained in the mentioned wisdom were captured, formalized, articulated and secured as the foundation of this philosophical and educational project. The researcher used the desk research, Internet, Church and LCBL community records, classical literature review and archives, questionnaire, interviews, focus group discussions and congresses to collect data. These qualitative research methods employed enabled the researcher to treat sensitive issues in a most amicable way and helped to be objective.

### **Desk research**

The researcher studied church documents which deepened her knowledge on the place of religious congregations in the Church and society. Documents such as **The Second Vatican Council** and the LCBL Constitution were essential to this study. Some encyclical letters from Popes were also helpful since they provided information on the Church's position concerning religious congregations.

### **Questionnaire**

Besides desk research a questionnaire was used to establish the core values of the congregation. Forty hard copy questionnaires covering the core values of the congregation to determine the understanding of education as a core value within the institute were sent out. I received thirty five completed questionnaires, a response rate of 70%. This key information was the basis of the interviews and focus group discussions and aimed at clarifying concepts and misconceptions.

### **Interviews**

I conducted thirty –five face to face interviews in different categories which comprised both LCBLs and non- LCBLs. From the LCBLs I picked out 10 key informants: 4 LCBL Superior Generals in their succession, 2 LCBL Chinhoyi Diocese Regional Superiors, 2 LCBL Formators, and 2 Bursar Generals in their succession. The other LCBLs interviewed represented different age groups and apostolate within the congregation. I also interviewed key persons in leadership positions from other religious orders in Zimbabwe both local and international. These include the Jesuits, Redemptorists, Dominicans and Sisters of Jesus the Infant (SJI). My interviews stretched out to the laity who to some extent has interacted with the LCBL congregation. Information from the informants has been useful in giving flesh to the discussions in the various chapters of this study.

### **Focus Group discussions**

This study could not have been successful if I had not employed focus group discussions as another tool for information gathering. The main thrust of the group discussions was to

determine the LCBL members' understanding of their historical background, governance, values, charism and identity and how these influence education, mission and policy implementation. I facilitated 10 focus group discussions each with 10 people or more. In addition to this I participated in two big Congresses aimed at discussing the issues pertaining to the charism, mission, identity, policies and education in the congregation. Informally I also led discussions in LCBL community conventions and this was to get information without having to threaten some members by carrying out formal interviews.

### **1.8 Brief Review of Relevant Literature**

For the purpose of this project I looked at two types of relevant literature; archival and classical. Archival sources provided the basis upon which the project is build. In this case, I considered literature from different church records including some papers of Aston Ignatius Chichester, the Founder of the LCBL Order. In order to support and strengthen some ideas articulated in the archival sources, I made use of the classical literature. Classical literature gave the philosophical framework and was relevant for reference in this project.

#### **A. Archival Literature**

According to both archival and oral sources, Chichester's main purpose of founding a native order was based on justice, equality and liberty for the African woman. He aimed at seeing the African woman treated justly, the African woman being equal to the white woman and thus at liberty with her environment. Chichester desired to see the status of

the African woman raised. He achieved his project by founding the LCBL local congregation which reached out to women and girls through various apostolates. The Constitution of The LCBL community puts emphasis on the nurturing of women and girls, how it would be done is not specified and this project provided some recommendations on how the LCBL community may directly reach out to its target group.

### **B. Classical Literature in Educational Philosophy:**

On classical literature I considered the works of a number of educational philosophers: John Dewey, Maria Montessori, Paulo Freire and R. S. Peters gave the philosophical framework of this study. Other philosophers whose works were relevant to this project were also considered.

John Dewey, **Education and Experience**: He advocates for an educational system that prepares the young for future responsibilities, and for success in life by means of acquisition of the organized bodies of information and prepared forms of skills. This kind of education is based on life experience and education relevant to the needs of the day.<sup>1</sup> Dewey's thought is applicable to this study because the future of the LCBL congregation lies in the hands of the young. The study has shown that one way of realizing charism and mission is by coming up with policies as to how the sisters should be trained for mission.



Paulo Freire, **Pedagogy of the Oppressed**: His special interest is on humanization. The problem of humanization is for him inescapable and is the man's first vocation. He looks at the injustices constantly caused by dehumanization. Thus he calls for restoration and liberation of the oppressed through participation and involvement.<sup>2</sup> It is inevitable that societies and organizations at one point in their history require restoration and intellectual freedom in order to participate fully and be involved in the making of their groups. The LCBL congregation, like any other group, requires looking into itself and find ways of restoring its identity as indicated in the research findings.

Maria Montessori, **The Absorbent Mind**: Montessori conceives education as the defense of life, which touches all aspects life. Education has to conform to the facts of human life. She goes on to say that any reform of education must be based on the personality of man. Man must be the center of education.<sup>3</sup>

### **Other philosophers:**

Society is not static, neither are the different institutions and components that make it. Research has shown that the LCBL institution is part of the whole which needs to construct an educational system if it is to remain meaningful and relevant in its mission. The philosophy of Reconstructionism suggests that society is in need of constant reconstruction or change and that such social change involves both a reconstruction of education and the use of education in reconstructing society. According to Ozmon and

Craver, education is the most effective and efficient instrument for making such changes in an intelligent, democratic and humane way.<sup>4</sup>

Reconstructionists advocate for an attitude toward change that encourages individuals to make life better than it was or is. Today in our own age we are faced with a number of bewildering problems regarding race, poverty, war, ecological destruction and technical inhumanity which call for an immediate re-evaluation of all our existing religious and philosophical value systems. Ideas and values that once seemed workable for education no longer appear to be viable in the way they once were. There is need to cope adequately with the problems that presently exist and not only by the changes that have taken place.

However, Eskenberg quoting Plato in *The Republic* asserts that education is the building material for a new and better society.<sup>5</sup> For him education enables society to link thought with action, theory with practice and intellect with activism, thus making it productive and marketable. The kind of education advocated here is one that has goals directed toward a world of culture or civilization necessary for change and action. The idea of promoting change is based on the notion that individuals and society can be made better. Wisdom and goodness are the aim of higher education and can be reached by a good relationship of education to the improvement of society. Hence, according to Hutchins, an institution should aim at developing in its member's social consciousness.<sup>6</sup>

Moreover, to improve society there is needed to understand the nature, the purpose and the history of institutions which man has created.<sup>7</sup> In fact, the desire for social

improvement is a perpetual quest. This search needs straight thinking; needs a kind of education that helps to develop a social consciousness and social conscience, education that considers the history of society, its rise, development and decay. A good educational system cultivates whatever is honored in a country; intellectual honesty, love of truth, ability to think clearly, and moral qualities.

The aim of education is the communication of useful information. Education provides the greater peaceful means of improving society, but the character of the society determines the character of education. Education attempts the reconstruction of the educational system, a kind of system that promotes the common good. Dewey also asserts that education is the process of forming fundamental dispositions.<sup>8</sup>

**Philosophy as the general theory of education:**

The reconstruction of philosophy of education and of social ideals and methods go hand in hand. There is thorough change going on in social life accompanying the advancement of science, the industrial revolution, and the development of democracy. Such changes cannot take place without demanding an educational reformation, and without leading humanity to ask what ideas and ideals are implicit in these social changes, and what revisions they require of the ideas and ideals which are inherited from older and unlike culture.<sup>9</sup>

One of the popular senses of philosophy is calm and endurance in the face of difficulty and loss. It is even supposed to be a power to bear pain without complaint. Characteristic of philosophy is power to learn or to extract meaning from even unpleasant vicissitudes of experience and to embody what is learned in an ability to go on learning, it is justified in any scheme.<sup>10</sup>

According to Andy le Page, there is need of transforming education, but starting with leadership. Leadership plays a significant role in every organization; it offers direction, gets people acting, and gets them to believe in themselves and in what they are doing. In education, leadership needs to be creative, innovative and upbeat, leaders need to lead excellently. They need to sense the needs of their followers hence, the need to help them become transformed. In so doing, they will be open to their own transformation.<sup>11</sup>

According to Freire, there will be reversal of roles, thus a true leader fosters a paradigm shift in those who are ready. Educators need to be open to the new systems of education, to encourage students to take risks and be grounded in fundamental skills and enhance their sense of responsibility through new ideas and accepting the consequences of their actions.<sup>12</sup> For R. S. Peters, education should arise from the needs and interest of the child rather than from the demands of the teacher.<sup>13</sup> Education is there to guide the person stage by stage towards moral freedom, self-reliance and self-control, love of truth and justice. There is need therefore, to choose an educational system that is worthwhile, the kind that involves processes that introduce people to what is valuable in an intelligent and voluntary manner and that create in the learner a desire to achieve it and have its place

along with other things in life. Peters asserts that education is what it is, and not something else.

Through the studies I dialogued with various scholars and used their authority to cement my findings. These scholars have something in common which was fitting in this study. These scholars advocated for education of the young ones for the purposes of participating and contributing in societal activities, education for responsibilities and continuity and they saw education as life. Literature also helped to understand critical issues on governance that are proved to be pivotal in this study. In general the literature made it possible to explore into critical issues basing on the authority of the scholars. Having discussed the different methods used to collect data in this study, I move on to discuss the structure of the study.

### **1.9 Structure of the Dissertation**

The study commences with an introduction of Chapter one which comprises the area of investigation, background of study, the problem statement, justification, objectives, research methodology and literature review. It is followed by chapter two which provides a historical background of the LCBL. Chapter three captures the LCBL in the twenty first century and it deals with the contemporary issues of the congregation. The contemporary aspect introduces us to the fourth chapter on the charism of the congregation. The fifth chapter deals with issues of governance and gives an overview of different educational perspectives and their implications to the LCBL congregation. Lastly, we close with the conclusion which gives a synthesis of the whole study. The

research findings from the various research methods employed are not treated separately, but have been used for discussions in the various chapters.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

#### **THE FOUNDING OF THE LCBL SISTERS' ORDER**

##### **2.1 Introduction**

In this chapter we shall look at the historical background of the LCBL order. This will include paying attention to the following factors; cultural problems, racial problems, professional capacity, institutional dependency, early apostolate, education in the colonial period, formation, formal and informal education. These factors will be discussed in relation to the main purposes of the foundation of the order and also in relation to the church's call to promote local clergy.

##### **2.2 The Emergence of the Little Children of Our Blessed Lady**

The Little Children of Our Blessed Lady [LCBL] is one of the earliest religious orders locally founded in the then Southern Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe. The Order was founded in 1932 by Bishop Aston Ignatius Chichester, a Jesuit, from the British Jesuit Province who became the first Archbishop of Southern Rhodesia. The Order was founded at a time when there were only international orders, which were dominated by the white clergy from Europe, particularly Germany. The most prominent orders were the Order of Preachers (O.P), known to us as Dominican Sisters, the Sisters of St Francis of Assisi and the Precious Blood (CPS). Many people wondered why Chichester founded his own local order instead of just approving one of the existing Orders. It is said that Chichester

responded to the call made by Pope Pius IX in one of his encyclicals as quoted in Dachs and Rea. Pius IX was inclined to foster local vocations and he asserts,

You should consider honestly and in a religious spirit whether it is expedient that new congregations should rather be founded, better adapted to the character and background of the indigenous peoples and local conditions.”<sup>14</sup>

Yet for F.C Barr, Chichester would have been struck on his arrival in Salisbury, now Harare, in 1929 by the fact that there was only one Congregation of Sisters, the Dominicans. Again, he would have been told that there were also communities of the Precious Blood Sisters in some of the mission stations, which were staffed by the Marian Hill Fathers. “Yet in his English home diocese there were over twenty congregations and many others as well.”<sup>15</sup> Most probably it is against this background that Chichester was inspired to found a local order and it could also be part of his new developmental vision as Bishop of the then Salisbury.

However, Chichester with the college of other bishops and priests, decided to start a local congregation to cater for the local girls. This implies that the girls would work closely with their own people. The new congregation would help Chichester in his pastoral ministry to reach out to people. In fact, missionaries did not have the local language to communicate with people and they did not know the culture of the people, which would be an impediment to evangelisation.

It was necessary to have a significant group of local women familiar with the worldviews of their people to put across the intentions of the missionaries. One would argue that Chichester, like his white counterparts in civil offices who had black watchers - the



policemen, followed a similar trend to have women black watchers-, local clergy to spread the gospel values to the society. Hence, for the success of his mission, he therefore required clever girls who were educated and competent. From a religious point of view Chichester needed messengers of God to direct others. Abraham Heschel says, "Prophets are messengers, witnesses, watchman, and servants of God. The prophet's eye is directed to the contemporary scene, the society and its conduct."<sup>16</sup> Similarly, the LCBL sisters were prophets of their time and will continue to be in order to direct women and girls.

Presumably, it is from this pretext that the aims of founding the LCBL order could be best understood. Thus the main purpose of starting the Order was to reach out to people, particularly women and girls. Another reason of founding a local Order was to help the girls who were interested in religious life, but were not prepared to leave their relatives to work in another country. According to Barr, when Chichester visited the various parts of the country, he came across small groups of African girls who were living in a community determined not to marry, but had started practicing the beginnings of religious life in obedience, prayer and work under the guidance and protection of the missionary priests and sisters.<sup>17</sup>

Several of the groups were hoping eventually to go to Marian hill Natal in South Africa. Bishop Fleischer of Natal had set up the novitiate of the Daughters of St Francis of Assisi, a religious congregation solely for African women. However, in 1922 a group of nine Mashona girls received the habit of Postulants at Monte Casino Mission in Macheke where they were doing their pre-novice ship training for this.<sup>18</sup>

Among these girls was Bernadette Garatsa who later became one of the founding members of Chichester's new order. Although some of the girls appreciated religious life, still the idea of going to Natal was worrisome and incompatible with their cultural values **(Appendix 4)**. Therefore, the girls wished that something similar would be started in the country, which subsequently was the case. Sr Bernadette asserts,

After my Standard Six, I went to teach reading, counting, and my main subject was Bible. I later joined the sisters of St Francis of Assisi at Triashill Mission together with other girls. While in this Order, I taught Bible and Catechism. Other girls worked in the garden, laundry, poultry and fields because they were not as clever as I was. Since the Order of St Francis was International, eventually we were meant to work in other countries and our parents rejected the idea. When Chichester announced that he was starting a new local Order, we were happy including our parents. I personally did not want to leave the St Francis habit (dress) at Monte Cassino where we were working, but I had no choice except to join the other eighteen girls to be Chichester's pioneers of the LCBL Order.<sup>19</sup>

In January 1932 the following girls opened the LCBL curtains and became pioneers; Rosa, Pia, Genoveva Michaela, Felistas, Agnes, Matea, Theresa, Bernadette, Immaculate, Angela, Benigina, Clara and Bernadine. Some of the girls changed their names using baptismal or religious names because change of names symbolized a new beginning of life. Until today the practice of changing names is there, although there is now a bit of inculturation, which accommodates vernacular names. However, for Sr. Bernadette and a few others, the commencement of this local Order was a blessing in disguise since leaving their parents was not easy. Somewhat, it was also a blessing to most parents who rejected the idea of letting their daughters go to Natal in South Africa. It is quite common that people do not like to take risks of what they do not know. Chavunduka argues, "Then there was ethnocentrism that is the tendency to like what is familiar and devalue

the stranger or the foreign.”<sup>20</sup> This was the attitude contained in both the Africans and the Europeans pertaining religious life. Migration to far off place was not familiar among the Africans hence, the concept **roranai vamatongo (Appendix 7)**.

Chichester chose Makumbi in Chinamhora Reserve, thirty-two kilometres away from Harare, to be the Novitiate where the girls were trained as nuns. According to Barr, Makumbi by that time had not yet developed since it depended entirely on Chishawasha Mission allocated by Rhodes to Fr. Hartmann for his service as chaplain to the Pioneer Column.<sup>21</sup> Sr. Bernadette confirms that she and her colleagues helped to establish Makumbi Novitiate by moulding bricks which were used for the construction (**Appendix 2, 4**).<sup>22</sup> The buildings that the sisters constructed are still standing and resemble a strong foundation of the beginning of the congregation. In August 2007 the LCBL sisters held their General Chapter at Makumbi as a way of reminding themselves about their roots and reviving the spirit of the founder (**Appendix 7, 8**). The aspect of reviving the spirit of the congregation will be dealt with in chapter Four.

Chichester was assisted by the Dominican Sisters to train the sisters. In this endeavour, the Superior General of the Dominican Sisters ran the affairs of the new Order including hers. Later, Sr. de Mercede OP was appointed to be the Mistress of the Novices on whom responsibility for the day-to-day formation of the novices rested. Chichester subsequently drew up the constitutions to be used as guidelines for Order. According to Dachs & Rea, the Constitutions stressed the simplicity and humility of the sisters’ service to their own people.<sup>23</sup> The principles of simplicity and humility are the core values of the

LCBL order, which will be discussed, in chapters Three and Four. These values are extracted from Mtt 18vs 2, “Unless you become and change as little children you will not enter the Kingdom of God.”<sup>24</sup>

It however took thirty years for the new Order to run its own affairs and Sr. Theresiana Muteme was appointed as the first African Novice Mistress of the LCBL Order. There was further development in 1964 when Sr. Rocha Mushonga was avowed the first Superior General and during her term of office she was assisted by Srs. Linus, Clemencia, Gemma and Teresiana (Novice Mistress (**Appendix 4,6**)). Sr. Mushonga admits that it was not an easy responsibility to pave a way as the first leader of the congregation. She says,

I encountered a number of problems; resistance from the missionaries, resistance from my own members and financial constraints to properly establish the Order.<sup>25</sup>

It was relatively difficult for Chichester to establish his new project since he was opposed and criticized from many angles. There were problems of tradition, race, professional capacity, institutional dependency and participation in other people’s vision and mission. However, research shows that dependency and participation in other people’s vision are the main hindrances of growth in the LCBL congregation. Some of these problems shall be discussed in detail in the following paragraphs.

- Tradition (WITH FAMILIES)
- Race (WITH WHITE COUNTERPARTS)
- Professional capacity (DUE TO LACK OF TRAINNING)
- .Institutional dependency (DUE TO LODGING)

### 2.3 Cultural Problems

When Chichester founded the LCBL Order, Christianity had spread to a great extent to some parts of the country and people had fairly understood and embraced its values. With this assumption, Chichester did not think that problems of culture would be an impediment to his project since the idea of religious life was not a common phenomenon in the African tradition. The idea religious life was met with dissatisfaction by the African community which took it to be foreign and opposing their cultural values. This was the problem of ethnocentrism as already mentioned from the literature. In fact, they did not believe that their daughters could just leave their families for the sake of serving God without any bride price paid. Hence, the parents whose daughters persisted with the idea demanded compensation from Church authorities. Archival resources show that Chichester was often taken to court.<sup>26</sup>

In some instances, the girl could only join religious life on condition that she paid for her own lobola. Some sisters testify that they worked and paid for whatever their parents demanded. For instance, the father to one of the sisters wanted her to work before joining religious life to pay for whatever her father would have demanded supposing she would get married (**Appendix 4**). She maintains,

My father did not call me daughter, but ‘son’ because I was hard working. In order to discourage me to join religious life he claimed compensation and I worked to pay for my own lobola so to speak.<sup>27</sup>

It however took time for the concept of religious life to be understood in some communities since it was regarded as abominable and violating the African tradition value of marriage. From an African point of view, communities recognized productive people; which implied procreation and rearing of children. It is against this background of cultural differences that Chichester encountered problems and as a result there was antagonism between the two parties; church and tradition. While, some people regarded religious life as something worthwhile and decided to go against tradition, others detested and felt it was only for white girls. Some elders within society believed that the white girls were possessed with inexplicable spirits and they would not want their daughters to be associated with evil spirits in fear of denigrating the family. In the African culture, particularly among the Shona people, not getting married was associated with some evil spirit possessing the person, which required being pacified. Common among the Shona people is ‘**Chitsinha**’, a spirit that impedes marriage rituals to take course.<sup>28</sup> In the case of death in the African culture, the spirit of an unmarried or married person who dies without children can never be fully mature, it remains powerless and unimportant.<sup>29</sup>

The concept of religious life was however, not readily accepted because in the African tradition, it was extraordinary for a woman to leave her family and seek employment elsewhere. Parents or society did not have any difficulties in letting their sons to migrate, than to let their daughters do so. Women could only leave their homes in the case of marriage. This was a practice which discriminated females from what their male counterparts were allowed to do. Leaving parents to start life elsewhere before one got married was equated to prostitution or marrying a stranger. Hence, the common saying

among the Shona people “*Roranai vematongo*” (literally it means marrying from the same neighborhood). Similarly, joining a foreign religious order was construed as detesting tradition.

Archival records state that till 1948 parents disregarded religious life to such an extent that some parents sought legal assistance from government offices to suspend their daughters from joining religious life.<sup>30</sup> The parents reported at the Native Commissioner’s offices in Goromonzi arguing that they were receiving nothing from the church and that their daughters were being eliminated from the family lineage.<sup>31</sup>

In addition, women were not involved in decision-making since culture considered them as being of a lower class. Joining religious life in this case was making a serious decision that required the consent of parents. Furthermore, some parents thought that the lesser evil was to see their daughter staying at home unmarried than becoming a nun. The antagonism between church and tradition carried on and saw some girls failing to become nuns.

Nonetheless, the idea of religious life was not really as foreign as people assumed. In the African culture there were some men and women who chose not to marry because they wanted to remain chaste. These men and women practiced what was known as **mbonga** and **pfunda**. Society recognized **mbonga** and **pfunda**, but could not grasp the notion of religious life. It is amazing why some parents could not grasp the idea of religious life if they had an equivalent notion. However, as mentioned earlier on, the case took some

legal course and both parties the church and parents made correspondences through the court. The legal route was a blessing in disguise since it opened way for some codes that eventually necessitated women's liberation in Rhodesia {Zimbabwe}.

In 1952 Chichester received a letter from the Secretary for Native Affairs, which informed him on the general question of the emancipation of Native women upon attaining the age of twenty-one years discussed by the Native Affairs Advisory Board. It was considered that a native woman according to the customs in the colony was always under the tutelage either of her father; guardian or if married of her husband and this was a question of fundamental human rights.<sup>32</sup>

Concerning the issue on liberating the African woman, a report was produced from St Joan's Social and Political Alliance on the Status of African Women. It was submitted to the League of Nations asking why African girls were denied the privilege to become nuns. The report granted women equality of rights and responsibilities, for example education was considered fundamental.<sup>33</sup> Following the deprivation of African girls to become nuns, New Native Codes of emancipation of African Women were formed followed by declarations by the parents of those girls who wished to enter religious life.

However, the matter of African girls desiring to join religious life was under serious considerations by the government for some time. The government was advised that the status of Native women was governed by Native Law and Custom, and there was no way a native woman would make herself heard. Way back in 1931, through correspondences



with the Native Offices things improved and once the African girl attained the age of majority she could decide for herself. Thus, the dividing line was now 21 years and one was able to make decisions.

Nevertheless, Chichester was not alone in the struggle for the African women's rights; some priests including Father O'Hea who worked at Kutama Mission supported him. Eventually, Chichester fulfilled the requirements and acquired the necessary papers from the Native Offices to start an order. Chichester opened and continued to open the gates to sisterhood for the African girls and wanted them to be like their white counterparts. The founding community in Chichester's order saw it as a great achievement to break tradition and to have a new identity. Moreover, the achievement brought a lot of tension between Chichester and his white community as they totally opposed his idea of starting a new Order. Many whites thought that it would be difficult for the Africans to take the religious vows. Ethnocentrism led many early Europeans to regard those who failed to act in accord with their own practices as being ignorant or superstitious.<sup>34</sup>

From this cultural point of view, it is clear that it was not easy for Chichester to start a local order because of the different cultural values. It also took time for the local community to understand the compatibility of religious life with the African values. It was however unfortunate to most girls who had to work for the bride price. Chichester however did not give up despite the challenges he encountered from both the white and black community. Again, the intervention of the law helped both parties to come to a consensus and finally that was a blessing to the local woman to be given the platform of

making decisions. Nonetheless, Chichester's challenges were not only on cultural, but they were also racial.

## **2.4 Racial Problems**

Racial prejudice was rife during the time Chichester founded the Order and the Church just like any other institution, was confronted with a difficult situation to handle. The European religious, influenced by racial sentiments, disregarded local vocations. They forgot that failure to recognize local vocations meant the failure of missionary work. The African girls were ill-treated and not appreciated at all. In fact, it was the order of the day that blacks and whites could hardly mix. It was therefore, difficult for black girls to join religious life in international congregations that were dominated by white girls. Hence, Chichester faced opposition from his fellow white priests and sisters who thought that religious life was incompatible with African culture. What the whites failed to understand was that both cultures had a similar concept of not getting married out of choice. So, the whites did not want to explore the idea of **Mbonga** and **Pfunda**, which the Africans were already practicing.

Values like celibacy, obedience and poverty, and possibly community life were considered very difficult for the Africans to observe. Apparently, the Europeans doubted the intellectual and moral qualities in Africans and thought that the Africans would not grasp both religious and secular knowledge. This mentality contradicted Pope Pius XI's recommendations of co-operation between partners with respect for each other.

Pope Pius insisted on equality of education for the Catholic priests and religious anywhere, black or white and without difference in standards at all. It would appear Pius was arguing on the basis of the Church being universal and that there should be no disparities seen among the different races. Sr. Bernadette Garatsa, one of the founding members of the LCBL Order, refutes the notion that the idea of religious life was foreign to Africans: “The equivalent to nun was **mbonga** and **pfunda** for priest or brother (Appendix 4). **Mbonga** and **pfunda** did not marry; but remained single for a purpose to serve one’s society without any hindrances or family attachments.”<sup>35</sup>

Furthermore, Sr. Bernadette argues that living in community was not a problem for the African girls since Africans valued community life. Kwame Gyekye in his book *African Culture Values* argues,

African society places a great deal of emphasis on communal values. The communal structure of African society has created a sense of community that characterizes social relations among individual members of the African society.<sup>36</sup>

Thus Mbiti in trying to define the importance of community asserts, “I am because we are and we are because I am.”<sup>37</sup> This explains how impossible it is in the African setting to separate a person from community and likewise separating community from person. So the idea of depriving African girls the chance to enter the convent on the basis of inability to uphold religious values and community life was typically down to racial prejudice.

Both men and women religious could not go against their culture of not interacting closely with the blacks. Yet the church had reached a stage where she needed local vocations to run her own affairs. According to Dachs and Rea, by 1931 the time had come for the Rhodesian Church to prepare for its own Local priests and rulers. Side by side with European priests, there should be African priests so that in the course of time, the church in Rhodesia should stand on its own, self-supporting in every way, without the necessity of help from elsewhere. It was Chichester who recognized this and began a seminary to raise an African clergy and founded an Order of African Sisters.<sup>38</sup>

There was now a need to look for local priests and sisters to serve the local church in Rhodesia. In this case the white community had no choice except to divert the African candidates from the European Sisterhood to Chichester's own foundation of a local Order. The beginning of a new order was a relief to the European religious since there was going to be very minimal contact with the blacks in their own convents and monasteries; a practice by the secular white community of isolating their sleeping quarters from the maids' and gardeners.' The LCBL founding community reiterates that its experiences in the early stages of Religious life was not easy at all. One member says, "it was difficult for us because food was rationed, when we visited the Dominicans at Fourth Street we were served meals differently and at different places".<sup>39</sup>

The idea of separation was not only among the religious but was also extended to the Catholic laity. Outstanding Christian villages were founded at Kutama Mission, Chishawasha Mission, St. Joseph's - Hama and Driefontein and these were successful.<sup>40</sup>

Unsuccessful attempts were made at St. Michaels Mission - Mhondoro and Gokomere Mission due to the different religious values. The local people in these areas valued their traditional rituals which contradicted with Christian values.

The Europeans disregarded the African culture and concluded that it was evil and against Christian values, suggesting that it was impossible to have vocations to religious life from such a background. Thus, some Christian villages were formed as a way of promoting Christian values. Fr. Loubiere initiated the idea of Christian villages, a practice adopted from early Christians and from Jesuit missionaries such as Francis Xavier.<sup>41</sup> The early missionaries thought that missionary work could not succeed if Christians continued to live among the heathens. Of course some missionaries opposed the idea on the grounds of centralisation, meaning diminishing the growth of the church. Centralisation meant that people remained in their clusters and not interacting with other people in case they would regress to their tradition. This concept was also practiced by the new religious order. The sisters were not allowed to visit their relatives more often in case they would be influenced.<sup>42</sup> With time some rules were loosened, for instance, the sisters could not pay regular visits to their relatives to spend more time with them, but now they can do that. While the concept had its own advantages, it was not helping the cause because of the different worldviews.

Fr. Loubiere stressed the advantages of Christian villages as to promote the rights of the women in the home, raise their standard of living by having good housing and good environment. Subsequently Loubiere's suggestions were going to work towards

promoting local vocations as Christian values were instilled and the status of women raised. What Loubiere did was to challenge the status quo of the Africans of looking down upon women during that epoch. The idea of Christian villages did not last since the economy of the country required African labour and Africans started drifting to towns for urban employment.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, the collapse of these villages did not affect recruitment of local vocations, but most probably strengthened them. Whatever was done was a way of discouraging African vocations and doubting their success. These petty racial sentiments continued to determine local vocations over the course of years.

## **2.5 Professional Capacity**

Chichester selected girls who willingly committed themselves to religious life without being compelled. He started the LCBL Order with nineteen girls who during that time had completed Standard Six with others having just done Standard One. This was a humble beginning of the order with semi literate candidates.

Chichester did not bother much on the level of education: what he required was the kind of education that was practical and relevant to the needs of the people he was going to serve. For a start, he needed girls who would teach catechism and help people to read the Bible alone. This shows that Chichester did not consider education as a priority from the initial stages. In subsequent chapters we shall see how education remains a problem in the LCBL congregation. The idea of sending sisters for the apostolate one has not trained for, still surfaces in the LCBL congregation (**Appendix 4**).<sup>44</sup>

Fundamentally, the sisters were supposed to reach out to people and so they needed very little education to enable them to impart the values to their African folk. Hence, the first group of sisters consisted of women who had no training in any field, but could teach women and girls in the community. They taught Bible Knowledge and later intensified their programmes incorporating Mathematics. Reading and practical skills followed thereafter (**Appendix 4**).<sup>45</sup> The objectives of a new order were realized and expressed in the different activities the sisters did. The major activity was teaching and since then teaching has remained the major apostolate for the LCBL congregation.

It is interesting to understand why Chichester considered teaching as the main activity for his order. It is believed that Chichester thought that teaching was more effective than nursing in terms of reaching out to people. Sr. Rocha Mushonga, the first Superior General of the LCBL, reiterates that Chichester was interested in teaching, since for him a teacher would save forty souls while a nurse would probably save a quarter.<sup>46</sup> He therefore, preferred the largest number of the sisters to teach. Sr. Rocha remembers vividly that she wanted to train as a nurse, but Bishop Chichester denied her that privilege.<sup>47</sup> Chichester found teaching effective in reaching out to people.

Apparently, the time Chichester founded the congregation, opportunities of formal education were limited for the blacks, and especially so for girls. Formal education was a nightmare to most Africans and traditionally parents denied the daughters the chance of going to school. Education was all about reading to enable the person to communicate.

In the case of girls by the end of Standard Three, one had acquired adequate reading and writing skills essential for communication and correspondences. The white community thought lack of literary education would impede the project of training the religious in Africa, but this was not the case with Chichester. He recruited the girls with that low level of education and groomed them for the challenges of the time.<sup>48</sup>

Sr. Rocha Mushonga asserts that Chichester encouraged the sisters to learn informally from the European nuns how to do certain things. For instance, Chichester would tell his congregation to observe other religious how they ran schools and their affairs to prepare them for future responsibilities (**Appendix 4**).<sup>49</sup> Despite little or no education at all, Chichester's objective of wanting the sisters to work with their people was still achieved. It is amazing how the sisters managed to teach without having acquired any teaching methods. During the time the Order was founded there were no training colleges like teachers' colleges. The clever sisters had their own ways of imparting knowledge to the people. They advocated a holistic approach in their educational system, meaning they were concerned with the development of the whole person. Sr. Bernadette, one of the founding members of the Order, reiterates that the sisters taught everything and were supposed to teach anything as long as it helped to mould the whole person.<sup>50</sup> Thus, for quite a long period the sisters were engaged in education, but without any training. They were competent in their own simple ways and made great contributions to society, helping many people to realize their talents.



The sisters worked effectively in spite of the racial and colour differences. Since Chichester did not have institutions for the sisters to run their own affairs, he continued to send them to teach and work in the missions run by some other prominent International Religious Orders. Working in other people's organizations, as we shall see in Chapter Four and Five, continues to diminish the LCBL identity and affects designing of policies.

## **2.6 Institutional dependency**

The sisters were sent to schools like Makumbi, Chishawasha, Mhondoro, Musami, Wedza and St Albert's Mission and other surrounding schools run by the Jesuits, Dominican and Precious Blood sisters. It was not an easy task for Chichester's sisters to teach or work in these places, because the question of race and colour prevailed. The sisters were exposed to harsh living conditions since they did not own any property. Sr. Bernadette Garatsa reiterates the resistance they experienced in the Missions. She asserts that their presence caused discomfort to the White sisters and some priests and that there was resistance from the local people who considered the white nuns superior to the African nuns.<sup>51</sup>

Whenever a sister was transferred to a new place, it was the Mission Superior's responsibility to assign or allocate the sister with some duties. The Mission Superior was given too much power to the extent that he could control the sisters' affairs. Life was difficult for the sisters because unlike the European sisters, the African sisters were given little responsibility in terms of running their own affairs. This will be discussed further in the chapter on governance showing how the LCBL congregation was not groomed for

governance. Research shows that the sisters were not involved in decision-making; everything was decided for them. Nevertheless, the sisters still enjoyed working with people since this was the prime aim of the founder that the sisters reach out to people regardless of the negative experiences.

## **2.7 Participating in other's vision and mission**

### **As Auxiliary/Utility sisters not as spiritual or moral equals: Early Apostolate**

Fundamentally, Chichester's main purpose of starting a local congregation was in line with the formation of local clergy; a call seen in the New Code of Canon Law in 1918. The local clergy would help their own people in the different social, emotional and spiritual needs. The overwhelming importance of forming an indigenous clergy could best help the spread of Christianity in a more profound manner and help in the understanding of Faith.<sup>52</sup>

In response to this call, Chichester implemented the church's need to reach out to the people by letting his congregation work specifically with girls and women. Bodkin quoted by Dachs argues, "The Church could not consider itself established until it could draw from the soil not only its material sources and supplies, but, still more, men and women to carry on its soul-saving mission independently of external assistance."<sup>53</sup>

Thus, the sisters' responsibility of soul saving was expressed in the different apostolates the order still does to date. The different apostolates were teaching, nursing, and social work, domestic and pastoral duties. The first sisters who were involved in all these

activities did not have any training. They worked as auxiliaries and did so under the guidance of a white nun. Sr Colleta remembers how it was irritating to take her schemes and plan books to the Mission Superior who did not have any teacher training for supervision (**Appendix 4**). The teaching sisters were in the classroom in the morning, afternoons and during weekends they went out to evangelize since this was Chichester's main goal of reaching out to the local people.

Part of evangelisation was to listen to the women and girls, giving some spiritual advice. For instance, empowering women with some skills on how to run their home affairs and take care of their husbands and children (**Appendix 4**). They taught the women what they called domestic science which included cooking and sewing skills. During the first years since the foundation of the order, the sisters had no training at all and thus they had to work under the patronage of the white nuns and priests.

## **2.8 An Overview of LCBL Education 1932-1979**

As regards education, Chichester advocated both formal and informal education, but this was not written down as a policy. For the young sisters' curriculum, Chichester recommended both secular and religious education. The underlying motive was to see the sisters competent and relevant in society.<sup>54</sup> Subsequently, Chichester wanted to see the sisters imparting relevant skills to the people's needs and experiences. Thus, Chichester made sure that the sisters received basic formation and education necessary for religious life. Archival records state that Chichester communicated with his nuns by

sending them some reading material to read and analyse in order to deepen their spirituality and general knowledge.<sup>55</sup>

The sisters were exposed to the teachings of the church, community life and the three vows: poverty, chastity and obedience. Religious formation equipped the sisters to meet the challenges of the day and to embark on any kind of apostolate and this was done in stages, which lasted for six years. The two years of Novitiate were very crucial along the line of formation and they still are today. Religious Formation did not end with the assigning of sisters to their new places after taking their first vows, but there is an ongoing formation as part of education to cater for the different phases of religious life after Novitiate.

However, in terms of going to school Chichester left the responsibility to the Dominican Sisters who were the Formators of his new congregation. This did not augur well as some of the sisters were denied the privilege to go to school because they were needed in the boarding schools and domestic work in the priest's house and the white nun's convent. Research shows that some sisters who were capable lost chances of going to school due to the fact that they were assigned to other auxiliary duties (**Appendix 4**).<sup>56</sup> This could have been a strong educational background for the congregation.

As part of the an ongoing formation and to constantly empower his sisters in the communities, Chichester sent monthly letters to the sisters with the intention of educating, encouraging and advising them on prayer, on the vows, community life, and

evangelization and how to remain steadfast and committed religious. Chichester designed a formula on how to read the letters; first read the letter, study it and pray. He advised the sisters to use pictures and stories as a way of understanding prayer. It is in some of his letters that one gets Chichester's main intentions of founding the Order and how he wanted it to run in terms of education, identity and apostolate. Indeed, his aims for founding the Order are expressed in the various activities the sisters still do. Annually, the sisters were encouraged to do eight days retreat, a time to reflect about one's life.

## **2.9 Formal Education**

During the time Chichester founded the Order there were many problems concerning the blacks going to school. Opportunities for blacks going for secondary education were slim and perhaps not available at all. Dachs & Rea cite that educational segregation came easily to the Church's schools in Rhodesia. At first the white and black populations were separated by settlement, by literacy and by employment interests and prospects.<sup>57</sup> This situation affected Chichester's vocations because it meant that he was going to recruit girls with primary education and not more than that. Interviews show that a large number of sisters had only done Grade Seven until Independence in 1980.<sup>58</sup> However, it was only in 1961 that the church moved rapidly to reject its previous role as part of the segregationist Rhodesian pattern.<sup>59</sup>

## **2.10 Evaluation**

This chapter on historical background captured Chichester's aims of founding a local Order in response to the church's call for local clergy, since it was not easy for missionaries to evangelise to the local people because of language barriers. The answer to this call was by involving the local clergy. Hence, Chichester founded the first local religious order in Zimbabwe as an effective way of reaching out to people to improve their standards of living, particularly women and girls. The sisters taught people how to read and do simple mathematics. Teaching then became the major apostolate of the LCBL order. In his frantic efforts to evangelise, Chichester was opposed by his white counterparts as they found the idea absurd.

There were mixed feelings about the whole idea of a local congregation coming from both the local community and white community hence the founding the order met with challenges.

There were cultural, racial, professional and institutional dependency challenges. The sisters suffered from both ends, they did not receive any support from their families and at the same time were ill treated by their white counterparts who doubted the compatibility of religious life with the local people. The founding community did not have something, which they called theirs; instead they worked under the patronage of the Dominican sisters. In other words, they participated in other people's vision and mission, a problem which the order still faces. Lack of a vision and mission resulted in a lack of an identity. Some of the issues raised in this chapter will be discussed in subsequent

chapters. However, the past history of the LCBL order reflects a vague character of the congregation in terms of mission and policies to guide it.

The position of the congregation from the historical background shows that right from the beginning the congregation has not been liberal to run its own affairs, hence difficult to make its own policies to direct its mission. In the coming chapter, the discussion on the hierarchical character of the congregation will help us to understand the reasons why the LCBL congregation lacks educational policies.

## CHAPTER THREE

### LCBL IN THE TWENTY FIRST CENTURY

#### 3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter we discussed the environment in which the LCBL order was founded. The various issues discussed in the preceding chapter will help us to understand the initial formation of the LCBL congregation and how it continues to apply some of the aspects. This chapter, however, deals with the present structural systems of the LCBL. There are a number of elements that will be discussed in order for us to understand the character of the congregation. This chapter will basically use data from interviews and discussions held with some members of the LCBL.

#### 3.2 Structures of the LCBL

Ozmon quoting Aristotle says that there is design and order in the universe, for things to happen in an orderly way.<sup>60</sup> It is true of the LCBL congregation that its structures have been designed in a systematic form to comply with the hierarchical structures of the church in which it operates. Such systems require harmony with the different structures so that there is concordance. Ozmon adopts Plato's concept of the ideal state where the good state is one where all its classes are in balance and harmony.<sup>61</sup> This harmony is believed by Aristotle to be promoted through a good education and thus balancing both soul and body.<sup>62</sup> The LCBL order thus works in harmony with the entire church, it acts as the soul and the church as the body.



The LCBL Order operates in three dioceses in Zimbabwe, namely Harare, Chinhoyi and Gokwe. Its headquarters is in Archdiocese of Harare where all matters of administration are done.

The Little Children of our Blessed Lady founded by Archbishop Aston Ignatius Chichester SJ in 1932 is a Religious Institute of Diocesan Right, whose Mother House is in the Archdiocese of Harare Zimbabwe.<sup>63</sup> (**Appendix 7**)

The character of the congregation mentioned above makes the LCBL different from International Orders, which have acquired Pontifical Status (**Appendix 7**). The Right implies that the Order is not independent in the running of its affairs but answers to the Bishop. In contrast, International Orders for instance the Dominican Sisters, are Pontifical meaning that the Superior General of the Order makes final decisions independent of the Bishop. It is this status that the LCBL order has not yet acquired and thus cannot independently run its own affairs without first consulting the Bishop.

Nonetheless, the church is hierarchical, so are its components. The LCBL order is part of the whole within the Church and is also hierarchical (**Appendix 1**). The hierarchical nature of the church can be better understood from Aristotle's principle of the First and Final Cause. For Aristotle, everything can be organized into a hierarchy. God is the First Cause and the Final Cause, the Unmoved Mover, beyond all matter and form.<sup>64</sup>

This structural order of the LCBL starting from the Bishop right down to candidacy also implies a bureaucratic kind of structure. The structure signifies the powers that people have at each stage of decision making in the congregation. The Superior General does not have autonomy in making some major decisions, nor can she implement major changes

like acquiring property without the consent of the Bishop. Therefore, the hierarchical aspect, to a certain extent, impedes growth and stifles creativity. In this regard the order lacks autonomy to effect major changes which may benefit it. According to some LCBL members interviewed, the character in which the congregation continues to operate is not favourable in terms of development (**Appendix 4**).<sup>65</sup> The members opt for the Pontifical status which has room for expansion and growth.

Besides, it is also clear that within the order itself there are some categories which are quite distinct which signify ranks and positions of authority certain members take. The sisters live in the houses known as communities and each community has a sister in-charge who reports to the Superior General (**Appendix 7**). *Vatican Council II* document on The Religious Life claims;

Superiors must organise the life of the community, distribute offices to its members, take care of special mission of the institute, develop it and work at its effective insertion into the ecclesial activity of the bishop. There is then an internal organization in religious institutes which has its proper field of competency and a measure of real autonomy, even though in the church this autonomy can never become independence.<sup>66</sup>

The structure within the LCBL order leaves it without absolute autonomy, but it should conform and comply with the rules and laws of the church in order to maintain its status. The church thus requires Religious communities to give a visible testimony of their total consecration to God.<sup>67</sup> However, the communities make up what is known as the status, (**Appendix 2**).

In 2006 the status of the congregation comprised of 229 members. Beginning of 2007 the number had dropped to 215 because of deaths and also a few leaving the order to start

new life. The LCBL congregation has 46 houses which make up the different (**Appendix 2**) communities. The average number of sisters in each community however, shows that in terms of human resources to cover all the 46 houses, the congregation is at stake because the large number is on retirement (**Appendix 2**). Interviews have shown that the human resources number is becoming less because the congregation is not consistent in sending sisters to colleges,<sup>68</sup> (**Appendix 4**). In other words the congregation has no policies that govern the training of human resources for the different apostolates. Interviews have also shown that the congregation does not have a systematic way of training its members for the various apostolates because it has no policies and does not have its own institutions upon which the policies can be implemented. Instead, the congregation uses the policies of its employers.<sup>69</sup> The congregation only provides labour in the running of schools and hospitals but does not own the means of production. This, according to Karl Marx's theory of the relations of production, is alienation from owning the means of production.<sup>70</sup>

Research also showed that most of the LCBL members working in different pastoral ministries are not skilled. They work with women or the youth without any skills at all.<sup>71</sup> It is however, the concern of most members that sisters should be empowered with counselling skills particularly in this HIV/AIDS era so that they remain relevant in their ministries.<sup>72</sup> In this regard, most members recommend that the congregation should take seriously its vision statement and revisit the mind of the Founder and the values that should be followed (**Appendix 1**).<sup>73</sup>

The LCBL congregation, like any other corporate organisation, is an institution which should have fundamental values and principles. Research shows that the LCBL congregation is based on values that have been derived from various sources; the Gospels, the Catholic Church documents, the Constitutions of the Order and the ideas of the Founder Aston Ignatius Chichester as well as from the character of Mary the Mother of Jesus (**Appendix 3**). The values are presented in the form of a vision statement and are designed and revised in a big assembly called the General Chapter which is conducted after every six years (**Appendix 1, 7**). The General Chapter is the supreme authority in the institute as it represents the whole institute<sup>74</sup>. The selected Chapter members evaluate the different aspects of the congregation and thus coming up with a vision statement to guide the institute for a period of six years (**Appendix1**). The present vision was drawn in the 2001 Chapter and will be revised again in 2007 and it expresses the theme **‘Called to be prophetic witnesses of our time; in hope we journey together.’**<sup>75</sup>

Besides, the purpose of the vision is to constantly remind the institute about its identity and the values which should be guiding all activities. It is evident from the findings of the research that while the LCBL congregation has a vision statement to channel all activities, the problem of not having its own institutions and lack of policies remains a major draw back in the development of the order. As mentioned earlier, it is essential that the congregation should have its own places to run its own affairs and thus implement its own policies (**Appendix 4**). The present state of the LCBL congregation puts it under serious problems of identity because it is through the vision statement that the identity of

an organization is realized. However, the issue on identity will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

In addition to the common values implied in the vision, research revealed that there are also individual values that determine the life style of individuals. Principles such as, prayerfulness, truthfulness, hardworking, community, cheerfulness, honesty, sense of belonging and authenticity are common values among the individual members(**Appendix7**).<sup>76</sup> When members practice such a life style, they are trying to build an identity, which shapes them, and makes them unique from other religious groups. The document in **The Vatican Council II** states how Religious institutes differ from one another.<sup>77</sup> However, it is quite interesting that responses from the questionnaires on the core principles rank education at the periphery and very few members consider it as a core principle (**Appendix 3**). This analysis may also help us to understand why policies have not yet found a place in the LCBL institute. The understanding of certain values however, should help the LCBL congregation to appreciate the importance of education in building its character and culture.

The LCBL identity is engraved in the charism and then translated in the Vision Statement and it is this identification that differentiates the Order from other existing entities in the Church and Society. Since the values of a group make it different from other groups, LCBL as a group identifies itself with the core values that keep it functional in the Church and society. However, as already mentioned, the values keep on changing in order to be compatible with the needs of the Order at a particular time. The values as

given in the vision statement help the members to function as a group independent of other groups. In his book *In My Father's House*, Kwame Appiah talks not only of one identity, but identities, yet at the same time he acknowledges that there is always a core identity surrounded by other identities through the different social groups people mingle with.<sup>78</sup> Likewise, the LCBL congregation interacts with different groups and thus influenced by the demands of those groups. What is important is for any group to have its own core values to maintain its culture and identity. Values are essential in forming a distinctive character of the organization making it different from other institutes. Interviews have shown that the LCBL sisters need to constantly deepen their understanding of values so that they are not wavered with other identities they interact with (**Appendix 4, 5**).

### **3.3 Values**

We mentioned already the sources of the values of the LCBL congregation. This section discusses the sources in detail and how members are introduced to the core values. Poverty, Obedience and Chastity and community life are values central in any religious institute. Most importantly is the Charism of the Order which makes any religious group significant. The LCBL congregation identifies itself with the words; **“Unless you become like little children you will not enter the Kingdom of God”**. In other words the values of the Order should find their roots and anchor in the charism. Charism implies the core aspect or the spirit of founding an Order and this aspect remains the original idea of the Founder throughout history. Values may change, but the Charism

does not change and everything else revolves around it and should be passed on from one generation to the next in the order of events of the Order.

The values as rooted in the qualities of Mary Our Mother, Chichester's values and the qualities of the little child mould the LCBL culture.

Community values and rights are seen to protect the stability of cultural communities. A community should seek constitutional recognition of its existence, as well as the rights and powers necessary to ensure its continuation, thus protecting and promoting identity.<sup>79</sup>

However, while group values take precedence, individual values should not be forgotten, but given place as they form the foundation of understanding communal principles. In other words there is a relationship between the individual and the community. Baker Judith in her book *Individual and Community Rights* says,

The relationship between individual and community rights is one of the underlying themes in contemporary... this reflects the value of equality that accommodates difference ...community rights exist alongside individual rights.<sup>80</sup>

The LCBL congregation is founded on the patronage of Mary the Mother of Jesus and hence the title LCBL (**Appendix 7**). The Virgin Mary is a model for every consecrated person and for participation in the apostolic mission of the Church.<sup>81</sup> Research shows that the LCBL congregation recognizes Mary as its Mother, but has not yet taken the Marian spirituality seriously by sending one member to study Mariology.<sup>82</sup> A deeper understanding of Mariology will add essence to the LC BL values and identity.

### **3.4 Qualities of our Blessed Lady**

In the Catholic Church Mary has a significant place and has been given so many titles that signify the different roles she plays. For the sake of this research I have picked a few examples that are relevant to the LCBL congregation character.

#### **Mary as the model of liberation**

Throughout history in the Catholic Church Mary has been given a place and receives the same respect as that of her son. Some religious groups in the Church use the different titles of Mary for their names. The LCBL order is one such order which uses one of Mary's title, 'Blessed Lady'. Mary is the spiritual mother of the Church and thus she plays an important role in the life of the Church and in the lives of the different entities in the Church as well.

The Marian tradition has liberating effects on women. While on the other hand it has oppressive effects to those cultures that diminish the position of women. The liberating aspects have kept the image of women central to the process of salvation. The oppressive, or rather negative aspects have seen women not involved in any significant way in public or political life. It is not open to the full participation of women in public ministries particularly to those countries that have strong devotions to Mary<sup>83</sup>.

Most women are against the images that represent Mary as a woman valued chiefly for her virginity and maternity and confined to domestic and familial roles. Mary is placed as model of all feminine freedom and woman of liberation.



### **Mary as the source of strength**

The poor and deprived have sought in Mary a strength that enables them to interpret life, feel accompanied and not abandoned and to hope, no matter how their tragedies and bad circumstances of their life.<sup>84</sup> She is a companionship in sorrow and suffering between mother and son. Mary is seen as a woman of strength who experienced poverty and suffering. The flight and exile accounts of Jesus display this quality. Mary is the source of strength for the Apostles after the Ascension. She remained with them while waiting for the Holy Spirit to come.

### **Co-operative Redemptive Aspect**

With God's plan of salvation, Mary is seen as co-redemptrix and as mediatrix of all graces to the Church. Mary is regarded as supreme minister of distribution of graces and holds an intimate relationship with the Church and the Son. She is co-operative by obedience, faith, and hope, and burning charity in the Saviour's work of restoring supernatural life to souls.

## **Motherhood**

Mary's role as mother does not diminish Christ's unique mediation. Rather it reveals its effectiveness. Her maternal duty shows power of Christ and she continuously prays for those who are still on the way and beset with difficulties. Hence, she is called in the Church by titles as Auxiliary or , Mediatrix. She becomes the model of the Church's pilgrim life of faith.<sup>85</sup>

## **Service**

**The Second Vatican** praises Mary as the woman in the service of others, of God, of Christ, of the Church and of redemption.<sup>86</sup> Today women in contemporary society are responsible for the running their families. They have assumed new positions in politics and public life. In today's' society women have access to a whole range of employment options and to new possibilities in scientific research and higher studies that bring them out of the restricted surroundings of the home. In the Church on the other hand Mary's role is to assist the needy and witness to the love that builds up Christ in people's hearts.

## **Humility and docility**

The historical representations of Mary that encourage only docility, humility and self-effacement have disenchanted most women. Taken negatively, this quality of Mary does not see women voicing in the affairs of their homes. Nonetheless, Mary's qualities offer

new hope to those who suggest that Marian devotion is empty of moral significance. Her discipleship model is an example to both men and women who work for justice and for freeing the oppressed. Hence, Mary witnesses to the love that builds up Christ in people's hearts.

### **Corporate and Commitment**

Mary is seen as the corporate personality who embodies symbolically the past, present and future of Christian life. Mary committed to God's plan of salvation has exceptional function in salvation; desire to change sinful social realities of her time model of active discipleship, accepted God's will. These are lasting and essential things that make healthy families and strong races and civilization that deserve to endure influencing the world to goodness, leading mankind to Christ. And those men and women who walk her way, exercising their power for goodness and truth and purity and justice are, like her, the real precursors of Christ to the world.<sup>87</sup>

### **3.5 Implication of Mary's Characteristics on the Little Children of Our Blessed Lady Congregation**

When Chichester founded the LCBL Order he put it under the patronage of our Blessed Lady. There must be very good reasons for Chichester to choose the Mother of Jesus to be the Patroness of this congregation. Presumably, the reasons may confirm or affirm his reasons for founding a female religious order other than a male congregation. In fact,

Chichester's main and prime reason to start a new Order was to empower a group of women who subsequently would educate the local women in their own little way to uplift their status in society. Similarly, Mary played a major role in raising the status of women by the new position she assumed as the mother of Jesus. While Mary's liberation was by divine intervention, her example to take up such a position liberated other women as well. Mary liberated women of her own time and helped to breakthrough the oppressive systems and structures of her society. She became an example of how to challenge the status quo of her culture. The liberating aspect of Mary implies that the LCBL Order is there to challenge certain practices within the systems of society and culture. This actually is the main reason of its foundation. The time the Order was founded women were not recognized by society. Today even if things have changed to suit women in some higher positions, there are new problems arising and affecting women and need to be challenged. Each epoch is characterized by its own experiences and challenges. Therefore, Mary's liberating role does not grow old, but can be applied to today's era. Thus the LCBL Order can also assume such characteristics and liberate itself from the different unfreedoms that impede its growth.

On one hand, Mary is seen as the source of strength to the poor and the deprived. Today many people suffer abject poverty and are deprived of so many basic things like food, shelter, health and security. The LCBL Order is part of this whole scenario where everyday they experience poverty and suffering in their own ways and among people they work and interact with. Mary became the source of new hope to those who suffered, including her son. The LCBL is called to be and to do the same.

LCBL as a congregation has a special role to play in today's social, political and economic hardships because of its vision which stresses a special option for the poor and those suffering from HIV and AIDS and its effects. Women and children are abused and are prone to sexual harassment and diseases and they suffer psychologically and need some counselling therapies to boost their confidence and have a sense of meaning in their lives, in spite of the circumstances surrounding them. Research findings show that the sisters in pastoral work are limited in counselling skills and yet this is an essential skill in order to reach out to people effectively. The sisters should be a source of hope to their vulnerable community.

The LCBL congregation influenced by the Marian spirituality should take Mary in such situations to be the example of influence and inspiration. In every society we need people who lead by example, influence and inspire others. This should be the mission for the LCBL sisters: to influence and inspire those around them to an extent of making their standards of living better as this was Chichester's vision.

In the previous years some LCBL sisters worked with women in what were known as Clubs. In these clubs women were taught how to take care of their homes, husbands and children. It was a very good practice that taught women to be self-reliant. Skills such as sewing, knitting, cookery, hygiene and agriculture were imparted. There was really a difference between homes of those who joined clubs and those who did not. One sister reiterated that clubs were the most effective way of transmitting education to women by

uplifting them in the way that was relevant to their needs and level. Men also liked the idea of their wives joining clubs because of the moral significance these clubs contained.

Mary has some religious qualities that describe her redemptive position in religion. She participated in the redemptive plan of salvation by accepting to be the mother of God's son. In a similar manner the LCBL Order wears this redemptive quality as it aims at dealing with people with various needs. In fact, in this age humanity groans to be saved from the problems encountered in societies. Thus, Mary's redemptive quality finds a place within many people's lives particularly the religious. LCBL has the redemptive mission to redeem people from the different evils that threaten their lives.

In social and economic spheres people need to be redeemed because all people have a final destiny and people long for improvement of their lives. Since Mary participated in the plan of salvation, the LCBL Order, whether directly or indirectly, participates in the continual plan of salvation in their different apostolate. Perhaps this is the most significant mission the LCBL sisters have been called for. They are called to participate, to work with the church, and other groups within the church and society. This implies that the LCBL order collaborates with various groups in this spectrum.

On one hand it is ideal to work as collaborators, while on the other hand it is a disadvantage as it tends to diminish development by following someone's initiative. When one is not given the full platform to do his or her own things, one remains a slave in some way. One is denied the freedom to think and to make his ideas realized and

subsequently losing one's identity. Such a situation of working in collaboration is similar to a situation where a mother in –law in the African setting cannot let his son and daughter in –law run their own affairs. Working in collaboration with other groups requires childlike qualities like dependency, humility and simplicity among others. The LCBL order is founded upon childlike qualities since it bears the title '*Little Children.*'

### **Qualities of a little child**

A child has the following qualities: forgiveness, humility, tolerance, acceptance, trusting, believing, dependence, freedom of speech, willingness, sense of humour, unity, obedient, considerate, reliable source of information, availability, original, creative, natural, inquisitive, curious explorative, desirous, respectful and experimental.

### **3.6 Influence of the childlike qualities on the LCBL Order**

LCBL stands for Little Children Of Our Blessed Lady. What has this title to do with the identity and behaviour of the members of the Order? Names have meanings and should not be taken for granted. In the Shona culture names are not just given, but they usually carry with them some meaning best known to the family members. This could be retelling a story about the family or reminds the family about a particular event that occurred in their life.

Similarly, in the Catholic Church names are not just given, but they tell a story to help persons form their characters from the names of saints whose names they take. The LCBL Order has been named after Mary the mother of Jesus, implying that the order forms its character and identity through and with that of Mary. The members are called children of Mary suggesting that in whatever they do, they should emulate Mary. Having discussed the different values derived from the character of Mary and from the qualities of children, one can ask how these values are transmitted from one generation to the next in the LCBL order. In any organization be it religious or secular, there are different modes of disseminating information or transmitting values to the members. In the LCBL order it all begins at the initial stages of formation when a young girl is received as a member.



### **3.7 Transmission of Values**

In the LCBL order, transmission of values is done at different stages of formation. The formation of members is of two fold. There is initial and an ongoing formation. Those in leadership organize seminars and workshops as a way of communicating to others the core values of the order. For instance after designing a new vision at the General Chapter as previously mentioned, delegates from the Chapter facilitate in workshops to inform the members about the concerns of the Order in the period already mentioned.

Besides, transmission of the core values is also done at the different stages of initiation or formation into sisterhood. The different stages socialize the recipients into the ideas of the Founder, of the Church and other secular related values. It is from these different sources that the members get their true identity which makes them different from other religious groups. It is however rather difficult for the sisters to have one identity since they mingle with people from different spheres.

### **3.8 Problems of implementing the values**

However, the general norm is for individual members and the communities to be conscientised and socialized into these values as spelt out in the vision and constitutions. According to some members no matter how knowledgeable they might be about the values, problems normally come with the implementation part of it. They argue that since

values are action guiding and compelling in that they provide initial reasons for having a certain way independent of context, the values of the Order are theoretical and not made practical because of the reasons discussed below. Members cannot freely express themselves since they do not work in their own institutions. Instead they are employed either in secular or church institutions and this makes it difficult for them to put into practice their values. They cannot express their vision because they are supposed to implement the values and policies of their employers.

The members find it difficult to implement their ideas because the employer wants his or her ideas or values practiced. He or she seeks to continue to shape and maintain his or her identity. Thus the sisters promote and enhance the values of the employer at the work places and would be gradually drifting away from their own values. If one spends three quarters of her day at a particular place on daily basis, the result is that one is acquainted with that environment. The congregation being studied is at stake because most of its members live in the situation described. The tendency is to lose sight of one's life style and identity. In other words, they end up with different acquired identities since everything they do is geared towards promoting the values of the employer.

Besides, there is a problem of decision-making. The sisters are not fully involved in making serious decisions. The sisters do not own the means of production, but only provide labour and are thus denied the privileges to own property and ownership. In fact, there are so many restrictions that go along with the deprivation of property. The idea of identity when working on someone's property is a nightmare. Hence, one's identity is

blurred resulting in lack of commitment since there is nothing to motivate, shape or maintain one's identity. Talents and potential are stifled since there will be no room to show one's capabilities. Besides, development and growth are impeded because one always answers to the needs of the employer. Vision is limited and this results in unnecessary conflicts between employer and employee. Following one's values will result in limited or wrong type of education because one aims at satisfying the needs of the employer, thus becoming too dependent.

Apparently, most members seem not to be familiar with their values contrary to what the vision statement articulates. This implies that the members are not clear about what the vision spells out. On the one hand, it may suggest that the vision does not give concrete and practical aspects, hence members may find it difficult to interpret and to implement it. Ultimately, they end up practicing foreign values that are not theirs.

### **3.9 Practical ways of living the values**

As values are actions, guiding and compelling the LCBL Order values are intertwined with the values of the mother Church, that of the local church and of society. Hence, the order is involved in different activities in which they are expected to practice their values. The idea is to share these values and thereby ultimately benefiting society and the Church. Thus, the fundamental values of the LCBL sisters are expressed in the different apostolate the Order is involved in. The Order is involved in education and other activities in the three dioceses of Harare, Chinhoyi and Gokwe. The Sisters work in both

in secular and church institutions as domestic workers, teachers, nurses, social workers and as administrators.

### **3.10 Evaluation**

In this chapter we dealt with some current aspects concerning the LCBL structure, values and title of the congregation and how these help in shaping the LCBL congregation. Research showed that values are essential in the continuity of any organization. We also discussed the purpose core values of the Order and how they are transmitted. Again this chapter looked at the sources of the values and how they are derived from the characteristics of Mary and from childlike qualities pertaining to the title of the congregation. LCBL order has a two fold pattern of transmitting values; initial and ongoing stages of formation. This chapter established the difficulties the LCBL order has in living up to their values because of the lack of institutions to practice them.. The predicament of lack of understanding of values shows that the LCBL requires a philosophy to deepen its knowledge on values. The values should help to understand and express the spirit of the Founder known as the charism to be discussed in the following chapter. There is in fact a close relationship between charism and values as they both manifest the LCBL identity. Issues raised in this chapter form the basis of the next chapter. The values of any religious group are better understood in the context of the purpose of its establishment.

## **Chapter Four**

### **The LCBL Charism**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter seeks to discuss the essence of the LCBL charism and how it is understood and implemented by its members to carry out their mission. The discussion in this chapter will analyse the responses from the interviews by looking at the different perspectives of charism as given by different scholars. This chapter helps to envisage the place of governance and education in the LCBL congregation in the next chapter. In the previous chapters we discussed at length the LCBL values. Values are derived from the charism implying that a poor understanding of the charism will distort the principles that would be expressed in the mission of the order. A good understanding of the charism will pave way for the educational system of the order.

#### **4.2 Views on LCBL Charism**

A Charism is better understood when it is explained in the light of the main aim for which the organisation was founded. However, the word charism and spirit will be used interchangeably. Different organizations, institutions and groups have been founded and are still founded for different purposes, which are outlined in their charism. The LCBL order, which is the subject for this study, was founded with a different charism from the Jesuits or the Dominican Sisters. Its nature, purpose and spirit as outlined in the Constitution are that of cheerful simplicity and humble charity.<sup>88</sup> This spirit forms the main objectives of the congregation and thus helping it to remain focused, have direction

and to create an identity. In fact the tone and culture of any organisation is best understood in line with its goals, which keep the group functioning and distinct.

Thus the church acknowledges the distinctive character of every institute.

Religious institutes are numerous in the church and they differ one from the other according to their own proper character. Each, in fact, contributes its own vocation as a gift raised by the Holy Spirit through the work of outstanding men and women and authentically approved by the sacred Hierarchy. The charism of the Founder's appears as an experience of the spirit transmitted to their followers to be lived by them, to be preserved, deepened and constantly developed... The true marks of an authentic charism in any Institute demand both in the Founder and his followers, a constant re-examination of their fidelity to the Lord...<sup>89</sup>

The characters may seem to vary in the different institutes, yet they all carry out the same mission; the mission to diversified forms of evangelisation. In other words, the charism of each institute gives it its outlook from which it can be viewed.

From a secular point of view, one's ideas or concepts are best understood as aims or objectives. From a religious viewpoint, one's original ideas and intentions of starting a group are understood as Charism. Chichester's ideas of starting a local order under the spirit already explained was to carry out the mission of Christ; to reach out to the less privileged of the society. The congregation has a special concern for women and girls and for those whose needs are greatest especially in communal areas.<sup>90</sup> It is therefore, essential for any institute to deepen the understanding of its own character in order to fulfill its mission.

The presentations from the interviews carried out shows that the LCBL sisters need to deepen their understanding of the charism. Research shows that an appreciation and

deeper knowledge of the charism should be introduced right at the initial stages of the formation of the sisters.<sup>91</sup> Both LCBL and non-LCBL members are not clear of the charism (**Appendix 4**). Interviews and discussions revealed that the congregation is in a serious crisis concerning its identity. Loss of identity is attributed to lack of education to carry out the mission, which will help to form identity. Sr. Lena's view of the charism is outward where people see the sisters in the blue and cream-white habits. As members, she concludes, "we are not sure of the nature of our charism and this creates problems for us when we encounter other congregations in colleges..."<sup>92</sup> The Archbishop of Harare Robert Christopher Ndlovu, addressing the LCBL sisters on one of their major congresses at Chishawasha Seminary challenged them,

"Where are you as a congregation, ...you should be able to distinguish yourselves from other congregations by virtue of your unique charism, love your charism and conduct yourselves accordingly... As a congregation you have a specific charism, which I cannot tell you, it is you who can teach us. Guard it with jealousy; it is your unique pride (**Appendix 4**)."<sup>93</sup>

Ndlovu's presentation indicates how serious it is when people do not understand the nature and purpose of a group and what it is serving. For instance, people the world over talk about Jesuits or Dominicans because of their clear goals, which imply a clear charism. It shows that from the interviews and responses given, the LCBL congregation has a long way to go in shaping its charism. Distortion in charism means distortion in the mission and education of the congregation (**Appendix 4**).

Hence, the Vatican Council II articulates the importance of both the Founder and followers to constantly revisit and re-examine their fidelity to the nature of the charism.

There is one danger when the followers do not understand the essence of their charism. The culture and identity of the institute disappear slowly to the extent that the people they are serving do not appreciate their presence.

However, a Charism is two fold, spiritual and activity. From the notion given above it is clear that both men and women who found Religious Orders are guided by the Spirit, who initiates, and direct all their activities. This two-fold nature of the charism suggests that congregations base their activities on their spirituality. Spirituality is abstract and can only be realized in practical forms. Different institutes express their spirituality in terms of emblems, symbols, dress code, apostolic activities like teaching, nursing and many other activities.<sup>94</sup> The LCBL congregation is founded on the spirituality of humble charity derived from the Scriptures. “Unless you change and become like little children you will not enter the Kingdom of God.”<sup>95</sup> The LCBL express their spirituality in the picture or statue of Mary the Mother of Jesus holding the baby Jesus (**Appendix 5**).

Research shows that there are some of the LCBL sisters do not know the emblem, which expresses their spirituality. Some think it is the statue that signifies Mary the Immaculate Conception. On the other hand others take it to be the one Mary is holding the baby. This explains the Bishop’s concern over the ignorance the LCBL sisters have on their charism. In chapter two we discussed some of the values of the LCBL and how they are centered on childlike qualities in the context of the title of the congregation.



However, from a layman's view, it is difficult to explain the spiritual nature of the charism unless it is translated into something concrete, which for the LCBL is working with girls and women as already mentioned. The LCBL congregation has to this point not yet concretised its charism because nothing specific has been done for its proposed group (**Appendix 4**).

However, in the Catholic Church several Religious Orders continue to exist using the same Charism initiated some centuries ago by their Founders. The Orders nurture charism into an identity that remains relevant and preserved from one generation to the next. As mentioned above, followers should constantly re-examine their relevance in every age in order to carry out their mission. Re-examining of the charism is done in a General chapter in view of the life of the congregation in a period of six years (**Appendix 7**). The LCBL congregation reviews its mission in relation to its apostolate after every six years. However, when reviewing their charism, some orders may divert from the original intentions of the Founder and thus distorting the Charism. Each member in any institute requires a better knowledge and understanding of the charism.

### **4.3 Perspectives of Charism**

According to Leonardo Boff in his book, Church: Charism and Power, Charism is **charis** or **chairein**.<sup>96</sup> The two words come from the theological understanding of the Old and New Testaments meaning of gratuity, benevolence, and God's gift that is granted to the individual.<sup>97</sup> From a biblical point of view Charism is conceived as the concrete function that each person exercises within the community for the good of all.<sup>98</sup> The practical

aspect of charism has been discussed above showing that any charism should be translated into action. It becomes then a manifestation of the Spirit's presence in the members of the community causing everything that they are and do to be done and ordered for the good of all.<sup>99</sup>

A charism therefore signifies the call of God, addressed to an individual with a particular ministry in a community, which brings with it the ability to fulfill that ministry. Furthermore, a Charism can be defined as consisting of the concrete calling received through the salvific event exercised in the community contributing to that community, continually building it up and serving all people in love.<sup>100</sup> The point being stressed here is that of making the charism real. However, on the same point of seeing charism as a calling, Catherine Harmer asserts,

Religious life by its nature of reaching out to meet new needs and serve the uncherished has at its best moments been prophetic and as a result often seen to be rebellious. Many of the ventures that eventually came to be honoured began in conflict. The prophet must stand in challenge to the status quo; church leadership has a role in preserving. When religious life is at its best and strongest it is lovingly prophetic vis -a -vis Church and world.

The prophetic role of the religious can be traced over and over during the long history of religious life from its inception among widows.... Sometimes the need was in their own area in other cases it was to other parts of the world.<sup>101</sup>

Harmer, like Boff, is emphasizing the prophetic role of religious life and she reiterates that religious have often been the entrepreneurs of the Church and there is need to reaffirm this role as part of the charism. Furthermore, charism is seen as service and function. In the preceding paragraphs we pointed out the essence of charism of spirituality and activity. Here it is put slightly different. Charism on the other hand is both ordinary and extraordinary; and coming from God and the Spirit.

There is not only one type of charism, but there is simultaneity of charisms. Each one according to its place, function, and capacity serves the others. This means that each one has his or her field serving all others.<sup>102</sup> Boff's point of view helps to explain the diversity of Religious Orders serving in the Catholic Church each having a special function within the larger community. In each he noticed that there are different religious groups in Zimbabwe as already mentioned in Chapter For Boff, each person is invited to view his or her function, profession, and abilities as gifts that have been received and that must be exercised in service to the entire community.<sup>103</sup>

Affirming the point on viewing functions,

Harmer calls it rediscovery of the early enthusiasm of the founders. Harmer suggest that it is ideal to rediscover the original ideas of the founders in order to get an excitement to get out of bed in the morning knowing what to do.<sup>104</sup>

Furthermore, Harmer brings out a vital idea on revisiting the central and original objectives of why an Order was founded. She talks of refounding or rediscovery as a way of reviving the main purposes and as a way of seeking God's Spirit.<sup>105</sup> The fundamental idea is of fulfilling the prophetic mission of the Church; call to service.

Nonetheless, the principle of the structure of the Church is not the institution or the hierarchy but rather the charism that is at the root of all institutions and hierarchy One's place in the community is determined by the individual's charism.<sup>106</sup> What Boff is trying to say is that the place and function of different Orders is determined by their charisms. A charism is only considered true when it is seen as a gift from God and for service. Hence, the church critically verifies certain concepts brought in by individuals to guard against falsehood. Moreover, charism comes from God for humanity; and is meant to build up the community's horizontal dimension and thus charism is for the common good. When charism is not preserved as charism it destroys the community. A true

charism blossoms where the individuals place all that they are, all that they have, and all they can do at the service of God and neighbour.<sup>107</sup> This last point on the notion of charism summarises the different dimensions given above. The whole issue on charism is that it is a call from God to serve his people through the different assignments the institutes undertake.

#### **4.4 Perspective of Charism basing on Acts of the Apostles**

The Acts of the Apostles can be divided into three parts or rather themes. One part to explain the rise of Christianity, second part to explain the expansion of growth of Christianity and lastly further expansion of Christian Communities to other parts. These three segments will help us to understand the nature of charism in the first Christian communities.

In Acts of the Apostles the commencement of Christianity is inaugurated by the coming of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit gave all the believers the same spirit of community life. The first Christian communities shared everything in common and whatever they had was for the common good. The guiding line was that they had one thing in common which they all valued and aimed at fostering it. They had faith in Christ and allowed the Holy Spirit to move and guide them to remain focused. However, the spirit referred to in Acts is the one idea to remain faithful to God and to one another and it is this same idea that governed all community activities. The early Christians had the same goals and objectives to achieve and these goals helped them to remain focused and not to divert from the original purpose of the staying in the community. However, this does not mean

that the first Christians did not encounter challenges of living apostolic life. There were some who were; the case of Annanias and Sapphira (Acts 5). This is quite obvious where there is a group of people because there are no utopian communities.

Furthermore, there was fellowship among the believers and all aimed to see the Church growing and expanding. The message that the believers received on the day of Pentecost was the source of inspiration and thus becoming the pillar for the Church. The believers derived their values from the Pentecost message and moulded their life style from it and were kept united. These were values of prayer, boldness, and community life, the common good and obedience and these values defined a way of life for them. In other words the early Christian's mission and vision were centered on the Pentecost message. The mission was that of prophetic witness to the Word of God, to spread the Good News and to live community life. They remained faithful to the teachings of the Church as transmitted by the Apostles. Ultimately their work made a deep impression on all the converts. Those who joined them did not have problems of faithfully living together and having things in common to such an extent of giving up their property thereby responding to each one's needs.

In Acts it is stated, "... whole group of believers was united heart and soul; no one claimed for his own use anything that he had.... Everything was held in common..." (Act 4: 32). Besides, they always moved as a body praying together and thus attracting many people and numbers of those who joined increased day by day. The expansion and growth of the communities was a sign that the mission to preach to the pagans was

successful and that was the message through the Holy Spirit to go out to the whole world regardless of race and colour.

However, life was not easy for the apostles as well as for the first Christian communities. They encountered problems and challenges in their mission. On one-hand, constraints like resistance, unfaithfulness and persecution from non-believers challenged their mission. On the other hand, expansion of communities brought in some administrative problems among themselves. For instance, some of the communities complained about disparities when it came to sharing resources since everything was in common. Some of the believers launched complaints that some of their members were skipped during food distribution. Those who were in charge did not exercise justice and fairness. In other words there was bad governance that resulted from people who did not allow the spirit to move and guide them. Nonetheless, the apostles did not want to deviate from their main mission of preaching, of spreading the good news, so they incorporated others in their mission to cater for other things. In Acts 6, the apostles asked the believer's to select a person of remarkable stature to take the responsibility of distributing food. While the apostles realised that it was not a good thing to neglect those in need, they did not want to let that need distract their mission; hence they proposed that some one be put in charge and work in collaboration. This idea of sharing duties enabled the apostles to be led by the spirit and to concentrate on their mission.

The apostles managed their mission not of their own accord, but it was through the Spirit they received at Pentecost. The mission was manifested in the different works the

Apostles did. In other words, the spirit that moved the apostles and the early Christian communities was expressed in the knowledge and the commitment displayed. Moreover, people did not understand where the Christians got the energy from that drove and motivated them to work in that manner. It was the Holy Spirit that moved them which was invisible but just showed itself in the life of the believers. From a spiritual point of view, the life of the early Christians guided was by the spirit that moved them to give up everything for the sake of the Kingdom. This same life style can also be viewed philosophically to apply to present Christian communities.

The rise of Christianity has seen the Church expanding to all the ends of the world. Christian communities that have emerged since then reveal this growth in the Church. The Church is a big whole comprised of different parts as her components. The various Christian communities are the components that make up the Church and each component is lead by the spirit-charism that enables it to perform the duties it does. Many people still wonder why some groups in the church until now do not die, but continue to exist from time immemorial. Taking into consideration some prominent groups like the Jesuits and Dominicans who are found internationally, one wonders what makes these communities survive. From Acts of the Apostles the answer is very clear. It is the work of the spirit that moves them and guides them. Such communities have remained focused responding to the spirit and doing what they are directed to do.

In light of the above dimensions of charism we now look at some of the responses given by both the LCBL sisters and non-LCBLs during interviews and discussions.

#### 4.5 Critique of the LCBL Charism

The LCBL Order was founded seventy-five years ago and like any other order it was founded with a Charism “Child like simplicity and humble Charity.” The Charism as noted above is derived from a gospel text; Matthew 18 “Unless you change and become like little children you will not enter the Kingdom of God. It is from this Charism that the Order gets its title Little Children Of Our Blessed Lady (LCBL). Aston Ignatius Chichester with this Charism in mind wanted his members to promote the life style of the local women and girls in humble charity and cheerfulness. Today, the Order after Seventy-seven years of service, has no specific area of working with women and girls. It is engaged in a number of apostolic works through other organisations. The literature above showed how essential it is for an institute to have an identity if it is to carry out its proper mission. The LCBL falls short in this manner because the aspect of making the charism functional and concrete is still missing. In order to make the charism real David Kaulem talks of a sense of history and identity.<sup>108</sup> People can perpetuate their history by learning about it, interrogating with written information and having the proper worldview of who they are.<sup>109</sup>

From our understanding of Charism it appears that the LCBL Order has an unclear Charism, which could be the reason, why it is difficult to run specific projects directed towards empowering women and girls (**Appendix 4**). The different interviews and discussions revealed to a great extent lack of knowledge of the charism by some members.



Basing on the results of the Congress held at Chishawasha Regional Seminary; it is evident that the majority of members are unclear (**Appendix 4, 5**) about their Charism. At this Congress, sisters Gaudiosa Mangava and Tariro Guvheya presented a paper on the Charism of the congregation. Even though, they tried to define Charism in general and went on to give what they thought was the Order's Charism, they did not convince their audience. They gave the values implied in the Charism, which are characterized by the qualities of a little child. These values included cheerfulness, simplicity, exploration, obedience, dependency, trusting, loving just to mention a few. Nonetheless, the presentation failed to elicit the Charism and left people more bewildered than before and with so many questions. The following are some of the responses given during a panel discussion on LCBL charism following a presentation by two members of the order.

#### **4.6 Responses to the presentation**

##### **1 Sr. Jane Faith Jemwa (Appendix 4)**

Sr. Jane Faith Jemwa Dietician at Mary Mount Hospital in Rushinga sees charism as a mission that channels all activities of the Order including training personnel to keep itself going and fulfilling its mission in the Church. If ideas of what people should do are not explicit, the result is that people end up doing anything since there will be no guide. The question to ask would be; Does the Order require Dieticians or does it have an educational guide to decide on what to train people for?<sup>110</sup>

### **Sr. Gertrude Madzinga**

Sr. Gertrude Madzinga a junior sister in the Order also expressed concern over the Charism.

She says,

What does one say or tell people when asked about the Order's Charism. It is not difficult when a Dominican sister is asked to tell people about her Charism. She would describe the Charism just in a phrase. Yet in our case it is something else, I do not know what to say. Is the verse "Unless you change and become like a little child you shall not enter the Kingdom of God" our Charism? I am confused because I hear others saying simplicity, humility and cheerfulness. What exactly can one say in short about the Charism?<sup>111</sup>

From Sr. Madzinga's response one can tell that there is a big problem of clarity concerning the Charism. It is not clear to the members and it shows the urgency of looking at the issue seriously. The literature emphasised the importance of re-examining the charism for the purpose of the mission.

### **Sr. Florence Muchingami, the Postulancy Mistress of the**

**Order** has a different understanding and she argues,

Our Charism is quite clear. It states child like simplicity, humility and cheerfulness. The problem is that when the Constitution was revised it did not take the old form that explained the Charism clearly to an ordinary person. The revised Constitution is not explicit; it leaves out some important phrasing. It actually focuses on the Biblical text and fails to come up with a simplified and understandable Charism (**Appendix 4**).<sup>112</sup>

Sr. Florence's view of the charism left some sisters puzzled and they still required clarification. Such a dilemma shows that the Order is in a serious identity crisis, which needs immediate attention. The literature mentions that, those in leadership should help to carry out the mission which in this case is the charism. The LCBL leadership has a

long way to go to make sure that the members understand the charism. The lack of understanding of the charism results in loss of identity and of culture within the order. In fact, the foundation and continuity of the congregation lie in the charism.

In the next chapter on governance we shall see how charism affects education and governance and vice versa. The individuals and the Order do not know their Charism, which affects progress and growth in the Order. It is difficult then to continue in the spirit of the founder when members do not know what they want and what they are following. It is clear why members are disgruntled over the slow progress and development of their Order.<sup>113</sup> (**Appendix 4**) Without clear guidelines of what people should do diminishes growth of the congregation.

As a result, the Order then will not see any need to train people in various areas, no need to have an educational system and no need to have policies that determine the nature of courses members should do. Again, the Order will not see any need to run its own affairs, but to continue working in collaboration with other institutes on contracts and thus failing to see its own needs for its continuity.<sup>114</sup> (**Appendix 4**)

The speech by the Archbishop of Harare Robert Ndlovu at the Congress held at Chishawasha Regional Seminary on 13 August 2006, brings awareness to the LCBL order on the need to re-examine their charism. In his speech, the Archbishop quoted the Old Testament, the Fall of Adam and Eve, when God asked, “Adam where are you?” Similarly as a congregation you should ask yourselves where you are.<sup>115</sup>

The Bishop's point was that if the Charism is not clear it means that the Order is naked and has no direction at all. There is need to shift focus and find a new paradigm, hence making it self-known. The Bishop alluded to the Dominican Sisters saying that what they do is very clear, meaning they have a distinct Charism that directs their activities.<sup>116</sup> The Bishop expressed the urgency for the LCBL to rediscover its Charism that is clear which makes it to grow and to develop. The Bishop's speech helped to put together the jigsaw puzzle of the Charism. Moreover, it was good to hear from an outsider that something needed to be done to make things clearer. However, the question of identity puzzles many organizations and groups and even Christ asked his disciples to confirm his identity. The LCBL could ask a similar question about its identity. The question will help to know what the outsiders know about the LCBL Order.

### **Responses on the Outside's View of LCBL Charism and Identity**

Sr.Lena Dhikanifuwa is a primary school trained teacher and finds it appropriate that at this stage the Order should admit that it does not know its Charism.

She says,

There is a confusion of what we are and what we should do. One good example that shows we do not know our Charism or rather confused about it is that the Martindale School bus where our sisters are running the school has an emblem that signifies a Jesuit emblem, IHS. Besides, the bus is written Little Children of Our Blessed Lady, together with the words "unless you change and become like little children you will not enter the Kingdom of God." Such a mixture tells us we do not know our Charism and what goes together with it.<sup>117</sup>

In attempt to explain the confusion, she goes on to describe the Order's dressing code.

She says,

Our habit is more of Dominican and this sometimes confuses many people. Again it is shows we do not have an identity. As an Order we do not know what exactly we want and how we should dress. At the end we do not know what to maintain and what not. When I was at Bondolfi Teacher's College as a student we went to a Vocation promotion seminar, the girls who attended the seminar identified me with the Dominican sisters. They told the priest that they wanted to join the Order of the Dominican that was wearing a cream habit; white veil and a blue wrap which forms part of our dressing. Calling me a Dominican conveyed a big message that we need to do something even with our dressing. For instance banks and some organizations are identified with their dress code and emblems. What about us, so it is high time that we do something.<sup>118</sup>

Sr.Lena commenting on the choosing of apostolates (Appendix 4) says,

The Charism is translated into action through the apostolate. The people outside us should know us through our apostolate. Hence, the Bishop in his address was right to challenge us where we are as an Order. He was correct to remind us that even he as the highest authority does not understand who we are.<sup>119</sup>

Lena offers a solution to this problem of charism and she recommends:

Our Charism, I suggest, should be introduced at the initial stage of our formation so that our candidates know what they want right from the beginning. It is high time that we should challenge our own formation if the members after formation still do not know who they are. It actually contradicts the whole idea of grooming future members of the Order because they do not know what culture to preserve and to hand over to the next generation.<sup>120</sup>

The fact that the LCBL work in parishes and missions with women and girls is not a good reason enough to say that it knows its Charism. In all these places the order implements policies of the institutes they are working with and for. This stifles growth within the order. May be from the context of the LCBL charism the order is displaying as part of its Charism to collaborate with others in humble charity and cheerfulness.

However, the fact remains that the LCBL should revise its correct Charism because without a clear Charism the Order will not operate effectively among other groups. The development and growth of an Order is governed, directed and measured by its Charism. An unclear Charism results in an unclear identity of the Order and eventually loss of focus. The literature on religious life shows the importance of revisiting the writings of the founder and find out his original intentions of founding the congregation. This can only be done through reading; a question of education which will be dealt with later in the next chapter.

Research showed that the order has not yet acquired property for example having a school. Some members attribute this to the lack of a clear charism (**Appendix 4**). Any Organization, whether secular or religious, should have defined and clear goals of how it should run its affairs. Clear goals enable Organizations and groups to make progress in terms of educating and staff developing members, upgrading members so that a certain culture is maintained. Most organizations update their values and goals so that they keep abreast with time. Updating their values does not mean moving away completely from the original aims of why the organizations were formed.

Similarly the LCBL Order needs to revise its present Charism, reconstruct it and come up with measurable goals in order to improve its standards and know exactly what it wants. The congregation is experiencing an identity crisis and this crisis is evident due to the fact that most of the members cannot confidently spell out their Charism at all.

We can conclude from this presentation and from the views of sisters that the Charism is not clear, which also could be a source of problem for deciding the educational system of the organization. Using the ideas of Catherine Harmer, the LCBL Order is at a stage where it needs to rediscover its central spirit, why it was founded. It needs to ask itself many questions in order to redirect and refocus itself on the founder's enthusiasm.

Similarly, the LCBL Order as a component of the church is also founded on the same platform. It was founded by Chichester who allowed himself to be moved by the Spirit to come up with a vision. It is this vision that should continue to guide and move the congregation to remain focused. In the Book of Acts, the Spirit is invisible but reveals itself in the works the believers did. They were united in heart and soul, owned everything in common and lived community life. This is what the Spirit prompted them to do so that the mission could be achieved. Thus, the first believers aimed at carrying out the mission. Likewise, when Chichester founded the LCBL Order, he had the intention to carry out a certain mission, which the Spirit prompted him to follow. The spirit is invisible, but should express itself in the works the congregation continue to do. The spirit is the charism that guides the Order and moves it to participate in the Church.

However, in some instances some communities die a natural death, meaning they cease to exist because they have moved away from the spirit. This is the reason why now and again groups review whether they are following the initial spirit. In the case that something crops up that needs attention and is not in line with the spirit, when a group unconsciously moves away from the original idea and thus realises the mistake, it

restructures itself. There is danger when a group fails to see the need to turn around because moving in the wrong track has its problems. In the history of the Church and even society, people talk about reform, renewal and other terms to suggest a turning around in the life of an institute or culture. Similarly, the LCBL as an Order at this point and time needs to turn around in order to refocus itself to the vision and mission that moved the Founder right at the beginning.

The different responses given by different members concerning their charism show that there is a big problem of understanding charism and wish something could be done to clear the ambiguities. In other words, what the members are suggesting is a philosophy that reshapes the Order and let one spirit move all the members. The Order needs to adopt the ideas that led and guided the early Christians as described in Acts. There is emphasis of the spirit moving the believers to an extent that they shared everything in common and that they did not allow themselves redirect their activities according to other spirits, but to remain faithful to the same spirit of Pentecost. In the same light, the LCBL Order has many things to look at in order to be moved and guided by the spirit in which it was founded. The Order needs to be radical and make a big turn around.

To begin with, there is need to attend to the issue of uniform. The two hundred and fifty members wear a different habit/ dress. If put together one thinks there are two hundred and fifty Orders and now the question of uniformity is just history. This may sound trivial, but it manifests some internal problems of governance and lack of policies. It is through good corporate governance that a group will always stick to the original spirit;



always refer to it and in finding new ways of adaptation, but not moving away from the initial spirit. This brings us to a new chapter on the LCBL governance and education.

#### **4.6 Evaluation**

The interviews and the Archbishop's address (**Appendix 1**) showed that the congregation is not clear about its character. Its identity remains vague because the order has not been able to implement its own values directly. The charism of any congregation is translated into a mission, which is then carried out in the apostolate of the order. The LCBL collaborates with other organisations and that is making it difficult for them to have clear goals. The charism of the LCBL aims at empowering women. The interviews showed that so far nothing specific has been done to empower women and girls. The involvement of the order on women's empowerment is through other organisations. Both LCBL and non-LCBL members recommend a turn around of values so that the mission of the congregation is carried out. They suggest that it is of paramount importance that the order starts thinking of creating opportunities for itself in order to implement its own policies.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Governance in the LCBL Order**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

In the preceding chapters I discussed both the historical background and the contemporary aspects of the LCBL order. The background information helped us to understand the role played by the Dominican sisters to govern the newly formed order. The chapter on LCBL in the Twenty First century defined the hierarchical structure of the order. The chapters imply that governance in the order is hierarchical. In this chapter, the study looks at the effectiveness of governance in the LCBL order. I shall do this by looking at the different dimensions of governance as spelt out by different scholars. Information from interviews and questionnaires will also help to discuss the concept of governance and how it is applied in the LCBL Order.

#### **5.2 The Concept of Governance**

Governance is a concept that is applied in all sectors, be it public or private. It helps to assess growth and development. In most cases the type of governance that exists measures successes or failure within societies and institutions. Governments have been assessed and evaluated basing on the notion of good and bad. Success or failure of the society is attributed to governance. Similarly, a good leader is also judged basing on good or poor governance.

However, there are different ways of understanding the concept of governance. It can be understood from a political, social or religious point of view. Governance as an

important aspect in the running of both large and small groups in secular or religious circles is either bad or good depending on how it is employed. The different viewpoints given by scholars will help us to understand what the concept entails. Hyden and Bratton define Governance as:

...how social systems are organised and managed, how resources are allocated, managed and consumed, how power is acquired, distributed and exercised, and how life styles of present and future generations are determined. Governance is the exercise of political power to manage a nation's affairs.<sup>121</sup>

The definition addresses almost every aspect that concerns the running of affairs of different social systems. Furthermore, governance is explained in terms of the conscious management of regime structures with a view to enhancing the legitimacy of the public realm.<sup>122</sup> This concept sees governance as a systematic and professional framework within which legitimate public enterprise activities are conducted. On the other hand and more specifically, "Governance implies creative interaction designed to promote full and effective participation by the citizenry in public affairs, accountability by the state to civic activism, continuous state-society and intra-society nexus and ultimately the existence of institutional arrangements founded on and designed to sustain those values."<sup>123</sup>

From an analytical perspective Hyden and Bratton see governance as both a standard of measurement and an outcome of what constitutes acceptable conduct of public affairs at several levels. Hence, they assert,

In the context of political decision- making, governance is a crucial variable in the distribution of power and the allocation of resources in virtue of that power distribution. To that extent that economic and social planning depends on an appreciation of the interplay between human needs and the stock of resources

available to society, to that extent will governance as a standard and an outcome determine the values that must enter into the calculus of development.<sup>124</sup>

This view of governance describes how society builds and sustains structures and institutions necessary for the management of its affairs. It is a view that also confirms the other viewpoints Hyden and Bratton have already explained concerning the managerial aspect of governance.

Furthermore, when governance is judged from its outcomes and from what constitutes acceptable conduct of public affairs, it brings in the aspect of quality. The quality of governance however varies from several levels of management of public affairs as already elicited in subsequent paragraphs. Hyden and Bratton maintain that governance varies with the empirical manifestations of particular regimes of management or mismanagement of public affairs.<sup>125</sup> In addition, they say that governance as a standard of measurement should not therefore be confused with government, which may be good, or bad depending on who is in charge of public affairs at a specific point in time.

There are differences between governance and government, and the quality of a government is judged by the disposition of those in charge at a particular time. Nonetheless, the quality of governance determines the extent of commitment to or the level of habitual acceptance of constitutional rules or principles. In simple terms quality of governance explains good or bad governance. Hence there is need for good governance in every group, big or small.

Good governance is attained by constant renewal of principles and rules. According to Hyden and Bratton there is need for imperatives of governance or good governance for a meaningful effort to reverse the socio-political and economic crises in Africa. They argue that better governance requires political renewal that attacks corruption from the highest to the lowest levels.<sup>126</sup> While these scholars focus on the political renewal of Africa their concept of governance can still be adapted by other organisations.

### **5.3 Constraints to good governance**

According to some scholars governance got marginalized in the various African social formations. Most African groups are a result of colonial structures and continue to suffer the hang over. As a matter of fact, colonial rule did not promote the values associated with good governance in Africa. Institutions created were first and foremost instruments of domination.<sup>127</sup> Kenneth Kaunda says,

Colonialists destroyed our self-confidence. They dinned into the African mind the idea that we were primitive, backward and degraded ...The result is that even today in an independent African State you will find a certain sector of the population suffering from a *Bwana* complex. They cannot stand on their own feet as free men, but must look over their shoulder all the time for the approval of the white man.<sup>128</sup>

Kaunda's view pertaining to the lack of self-confidence in African States governance agrees with the views of most of the LCBL (**Appendix 4, 10**) members on governance. In Chapter Two it was mentioned that the white congregations of the Dominican and Precious Blood Sisters formed the LCBL congregation. The chapter revealed how the LCBL sisters were observers, auxiliaries and looking from the periphery.

Colonial rule promoted or stressed functional utility, law and order, but not participation and reciprocity. Connections between ruled and rulers were vertical and bore competition, which resulted in antagonism.<sup>129</sup> In other words, colonial and post –colonial orders were not structured to promote the values of good governance. Nonetheless, people are quick to notice if there are problems or not in a ruling government. One writer looking at the situation in Zimbabwe argues; “Zimbabwe is facing a crisis of governance, “ I contend that at the heart of the problems facing this country is the key question of governance... the rule of law has been undermined...”<sup>130</sup> In other words, what this writer means is that whatever challenge the country is facing is a result of bad governance. Governance thus plays a pivotal role in the development of a country. If the form of governance that exists judges the progress and development of country, it means that for any government to operate properly it should employ the right form of governance.

In fact, it is ideally good for any government to know the components and values of governance. Governance is systematic, political and administrative and according to Dr. Kurasha governance has four major values; truth values, moral values, monetary values and aesthetic values. The values again promote and foster good governance. The values help to build good conscience in both the ruler and the ruled (**Appendix 6**).

#### **5.4 Dimensions of Governance**

Governance is characterised by transparency, openness and organic bonds between the government and the governed. The two parties coexist because there is no way a

government can exist without people to rule. This however, implies that should be an ability and competence in the government to use the structures of the state for the betterment of the populace. In this case governance is seen as a condition for development and is the conscious management of regime structures with view to enhancing the legitimacy of the public realm.<sup>131</sup>

### **5.5 GOVERNANCE -A Religious Perspective**

There could be a slight difference between secular and religious understanding of governance or rather how it is implemented. Present approaches to governance in the different sectors may vary according to the rapid change of societies as opposed to the past. From a religious point of view, governance can be understood in two ways. Firstly, governance is for mission and should be like the skeleton in the body, very necessary, but not so large that it protrudes. Secondly, members can be empowered not only to do the work, but in many cases to make the necessary decisions involved, thus eliminating the necessity for excessive numbers of leaders, councils and boards.<sup>132</sup>

According to Harmer,

In individual congregations there will have to be serious consideration regarding organisation, particularly how we govern ourselves. In the past, because congregations were organised according to hierarchical principles and structures, there was a need for many levels of government and many people involved at each level. One result is that more time and energy that is truly needed is being expended on running the congregation and governing ourselves. Given dedicated and intelligent members structures can be simpler, with the number of people in leadership reduced to that needed to facilitate the movement of the mission. Thus would require good and simple policies so each member would know where the decision could or should be made and would be able to function within it. In order to be more accountable to one another simple approaches could work and would involve less personnel and less time.<sup>133</sup>

This view puts much stresses on quality governance rather than quantity in numbers of leaders, boards and councils involved in any governance in religious spheres. In other words this view does not consider the hierarchical structure of the church. Governance would do well with a few trained personnel in leadership. Hence, the answer for the future is not in adding numbers, but in empowering the religious who are already there with managerial skills in order to be effective.

## **5.6 Principles of Governance**

In chapter four we discussed the charism of the LCBL order. Our understanding of charism shows that for every group to function and to be successful, a well-structured vision and spirit to move and guide it is of paramount importance. The spirit that moves any institution gives it its mission and vision (**Appendix 1**). Thus, for any mission to be carried out efficiently, good governance is of great importance. Harmer's two-fold understanding of governance based on mission and empowerment is quite relevant and applicable in any organisation if it were to run proficiently. The first and foremost aim of every institution is to have governance geared towards the mission and to provide structures to further it. According to Harmer,

Governance is concerned with the vision, with the future and its demands, and with supporting and forwarding the ministries that have been identified as those that will most bring about the desired mission of the congregation, which is part of the mission of Jesus. Governance involves participation by every member in



order to carry out the mission effectively. “There must be greater involvement by the members in mission related decisions at local or regional levels. The central levels needs to keep in mind that the whole mission is centred on the good of the whole group. Both local and regional levels focus on the good of the ministries in the local and regional area. These groups then need structures and processes that will keep them interconnected so that the whole and the parts are in healthy relationship rather than in a competitive one of struggling for power.<sup>134</sup>

Nevertheless, Harmer thinks that some of the areas of decision making will be centralized because the impact will be over the whole group or large parts of it, and that other decisions will be made at regional or local levels insofar as the impact is primarily regional or local. Harmer’s concept of governance advocates some structures and processes that discourage power struggle within members of any institute. While Harmer sounds contradictory in her views, she still recognizes the importance of sharing responsibilities and working in collaboration with other groups. Thus for the sake of diversity in religious circles, Harmer suggests that lay empowerment and involvement in carrying out the vision and mission is important.

The chief and central purpose for every organisation is to remain functional and developing. Today for one reason or another many religious communities have collaborated with other groups in order to remain focused. They have incorporated other people lay or religious in order to meet the demands of the day; though to a certain extent there is danger for smaller groups of losing identity as they can be easily swallowed by larger groups. For instance, larger groups dispose off their properties to smaller groups and ask them to run them on their behalf. They do this in order to remain focused and concentrated on a small property thus being effective.

In fact there are a number of reasons why companies or groups end up merging. Thus Harmer argues, “Still another area religious may wish to consider for the 21<sup>st</sup> century is the possibility again in collaboration with one another, of conscious developing mobile groups of religious and laity capable of moving into areas of sudden emergency”<sup>135</sup> (Harmer 112). The whole idea of groups coming together is to maintain the original goal the group was started for. According to Harmer, the number of units and the degree of complexity of structures is based on what is really needed to move the mission forward.<sup>136</sup> The whole idea of expanding or minimizing the group is to carry out the mission and that is what good governance is all about. Good governance allows the leaders to see the need for widening horizons or the need to reduce as long as the mission is continues. Ultimately good governance will influence the different structures that make up society.

## **5.7 Influence on society**

Most developed societies are where they are today because of the involvement of the religious missionaries who groomed them through education and exposing them to good governance. This shows how religious orders have the greatest impact to change the world. Religious groups are quite effective and rigorous in the way they execute their duties. Today the world over, people talk of Jesuit, Dominican and many others prominent religious groups because they have left a mark in the way they conducted themselves in education and governance. They have impacted on most prominent

members of our world today. In Zimbabwe, the state President has been through Jesuit and Marist education and governance. It does not matter how many they are, few as they might appear sometimes, they can still produce quality work and make a good turn around. Thus in the preceding paragraphs Harmer highlighted the importance of quality than quantity.

Sharing the same viewpoint on effectiveness, Jameson Kurasha in one of his presentations gives an analogy of one lion leading five hundred impalas. What Kurasha is alluding to is good governance. An influential and effective leader is capable of leading thousand of people and making the organisation function proficiently. Good corporate governance is all about having the ability to exercise power and authority. Harmer asserts,

Religious congregations can interconnect with and influence the political and economic bodies that have so much power for good or ill in the world. As more of the international connection develops among nations, across continents, whether in political or economic realms, religious need to interface with these groups, bringing a vision of what is right and just. National religious can do the same kind of interconnecting themselves to impact the national bodies in their own countries... What religious need to become convinced of, honing the skills needed, is that a collaborative effort to influence civil governing bodies is crucial.<sup>137</sup>

In relation to the above discussion, we may consider Jameson Kurasha's views on governance. Kurasha defines governance as the capacity to exercise authority and authority as the power to cause belief or action. Further, Kurasha has four ways of understanding good corporate governance. His ways include; Traditional Authority, Legal Rationale Authority, Skilled Authority and Charismatic Authority.<sup>138</sup> Kurasha's understanding of governance alludes to some forms of governance in African institutions.

The first category is Traditional Authority, which is culturally based. This category takes its roots in the African customs, where grandparents, aunts and uncles participate in the directorate of the family. According to Kurasha this form of authority is necessary in any business or institution because people work as a team, its not one man's business, but there is collective effort<sup>139</sup>.

The second category has to do with the rule of law. Laws have reasons and good reasons for that matter, hence good governance is a legal as well as a logical matter and not a romantic matter and not a family matter. It is therefore essential for institutions to apply and to respect law and reason.<sup>140</sup> It is unfortunate that most African organisations lack respect for the legal rationale kind of authority. Kurasha affirms one point mentioned earlier on that in Africa there is lack of respect for law, which is attributed to the legacy of colonialism.

The third aspect refers to a leader with knowledge and skills of what he is doing. According to Kurasha, the secret of good governance requires this third component of directors, managing directors and frontline engineers with knowledge and skills necessary to determine the market, to determine strategies and to implement policies.<sup>141</sup> Further, Kurasha cites how the cultural dimension has affected this basic principle of business management. People are appointed into directorship not only because they represent the tradition of the institution or company even though that would be good. However, Kurasha commends that people should be appointed into boards because of legal and rationale requirements.<sup>142</sup> In fact, it would be even more commendable if people were appointed into boards or management because of their educational skills.

It is however quite common that many Directors, Managing Directors and Foremen are appointed because of patronage or family associations including political alliances. There are cases, at least half a dozen cases, where people were appointed to company boards through influential mothers of Managing Directors and that cannot be of good consequences in competitive business.<sup>143</sup> Instead, good governance requires taking all these factors into account where people can exercise their authority because they have got the capacity and the capabilities and the values to direct institutions. The fourth category describes leadership based on personality and it's given the name charismatic. A charismatic leader is appealing, infectious and has an inspiring personality. According to Kurasha a charismatic governor has a presence that inspires others to do things that are good. It is a spiritual character, which can also be applied to the other types of authorities already discussed. Finally, Kurasha purports that the exercise of good governance makes any business community competitive. More so, good leadership exercising meaningful authority displays good corporate governance. Before we move on to discuss governance in the LCBL order, I shall highlight the main points that were discussed above and these will form the basis of our discussion in subsequent paragraphs.

## **5.8 Highlights on governance**

Governance is of paramount importance in any institute. The following highlights were found useful to this study pertaining to the role of LCBL governance. Governance is seen to:

- ❖ Measure, assess and evaluate growth, progress and development of the organisation
- ❖ Shows competent and incompetent leadership

- ❖ Sustains values, principles and rules of organisations
- ❖ Promotes effectiveness and distributes power and responsibilities
- ❖ Encourages participation and reciprocity
- ❖ Promotes equitable allocation of resources
- ❖ Employs planning skills and manages affairs
- ❖ Promotes quality and not quantity
- ❖ Encourages renewal of principles and rules
- ❖ Attacks what does not promote life e.g. corruption
- ❖ Focuses on the vision, mission and empowerment in decision making
- ❖ Encourages collaboration with other groups
- ❖ Influences and impacts on key groups of society

In light of the above views on the various dimensions of governance, which form our basis to understand the LCBL governance, we now discuss governance in the LCBL order.

### **5.9 Implications of Good Corporate Governance on the LCBL Order**

The LCBL Order as an institution adopts to a certain extent some of the forms of governance already discussed. The order to date is 77 years old and research findings show that there are little signs of growth and development. This is attributed to the fact that the congregation has worked and continues to work within the framework of borrowed principles, a problem also attributed to subsequent leadership of the

congregation for not coming up with a strategic plan. One aspect of good governance is that of measuring progress, growth and development. Research shows that at 77 years the LCBL congregation has participated in education and other social services working in collaboration with other Church related institutes and civil institutes as well which to some extent has limited its growth.

Informants show that the congregation has taken into account the traditional authority, which comprise of the elders of the community who may not have the leadership skills to execute good governance helpful in the running of the congregation. The LCBL congregation employs the traditional form of authority which ascribes responsibilities to members not out of leadership skills, but may consider religious experience and necessity. Hence, we find the Sisters in-charge and Bursars of small communities participating in the directorate of the congregation. The leadership uses laws and reason to make decisions that they think benefit the congregation. In most cases they apply a variety of laws that include; Church, Religious rules, civil society laws and the Order's rules. However, on this second form some members found in different leadership positions of the congregation are ignorant of the legal rational kind of authority.

The third aspect that looks at knowledge and skills may or may not be discoverable. This type of governance might not exist because taking for instance the sisters who run the small communities and even those in the highest offices, have not been trained to do the jobs. This is a big problem because leadership at different levels has limited knowledge and expertise. The sisters are appointed for different reasons to represent the communities

not because of any administrative skills they have, but may be looking at experience. The LCBL Constitutions state,

After due consultation with those concerned the Superior General with the consent of her council appoints local superiors. ... One form of due consultation would be to invite the community to propose one of their own member whom they think suitable.<sup>144</sup>

Lastly, the fourth aspect of governance, applies very well to the LCBL Order. A number of sisters with leadership roles are sworn into office because of their charisma. The same applies to the Superior General of the Order; she is appointed or elected because of her worthiness and competence. The LCBL constitutions point, ‘ ... and appoint or elect only those whom they know in the Lord to be worthy and competent.’<sup>145</sup> Such appointments suggest that most sisters in leadership have no managerial skills, but have been appointed because of need.

In this case governance in the LCBL Order lacks the other types of governance as research has shown that it is the charismatic which seems to be employed. And this could be one reason why the congregation is grappling with development. In subsequent years, leadership lacked adequate knowledge to close the gap that is between policy statement and policy implementation. It means that the congregation has to make great strides to employ some of the points noted above. It is only through good governance that the congregation can take shape and have worthwhile policies to forward its mission. It needs a philosophy of education that empowers the members with knowledge and skills of good governance.



The congregation originated in a colonial environment and has been affected by colonialism and there was no way it could have not been infected by the same disease that affected other groups. Like other institutions in the African continent, which lack good corporate governance, the LCBL order has not also been fully equipped with good governance by its Formators. The pace at which the congregation is developing portrays a serious deficiency of good governance as indicated by research findings. The Formators of the congregation neither imparted nor fostered governance values. This takes us back to the chapter on historical background, which pointed out some of the racial challenges the founding community encountered. Their masters and mistresses doubted their vocation to sisterhood and thus confined them to auxiliary responsibilities.

It is then, the responsibility of the LCBL governance to empower members with the capacity to exercise power and authority. There are many areas that the congregation in question has to consider in order to necessitate growth and development. One way of achieving this is through education and which comes by a deeper understanding of the charism. On the other hand, understanding the congregation's core values is also key in carrying out its vision and mission (**Appendix 6**). This brings us to a section on educational perspectives, which is the key section of this study. Education and governance are interconnected as they all depend heavily on the other. Good governance is a result of good education and like wise sound education result in good corporate governance.

## **Evaluation**

The key issues raised on governance showed that governance in the LCBL order has been greatly affected since its foundation (**Appendix 6**). To a larger extent governance is affected by the hierarchical structure of the church and thus some members opted for a Pontifical status, which allows flexibility in decision-making (**Appendix 7**). There has been little progress in the congregation in terms of self-reliance and sustainable projects and some members attributed this to poor governance and lack of resources. The literature showed that the growth and development of any organisation lies in good corporate governance.

While involved in different activities, some informants still feel that there is no specific project the congregation is doing to carry out its mission of empowering women and girls. This also implies lack of creativity in the governance. The congregation still has a long way to go in terms of good corporate governance. The literature also showed how governance in the African states has not been good due to lack of grooming from their colonial masters. LCBL order is not an exception from this legacy. The only way out is to engage in an educational system that will groom members on good governance. This takes us to a section on education and its significance in the LCBL empowerment.

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## **B Education**

### **5.11 Introduction**

The literature review shows the importance for transforming education, which starts with leadership since leadership plays a pivotal role in every organisation. This section will also show the relationship between governance and education and thus examining various educational perspectives and how these perspectives can be employed in the LCBL order. Education is a vast field which touches on various perspectives and so for the purpose of this study we shall focus only on aspects relevant for LCBL empowerment.

### **5.12 Philosophical Educational Perspectives**

Education is a broad term and can be understood differently depending on the context in which it is used. Scholars have defined education in so many different ways. Education can be understood from a social, psychological, religious and philosophical view. For the purpose of this study we shall consider the philosophical perspective. . In this chapter our main focus will be on the philosophical perspectives of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, R.S Peters and John Dewey and others whose ideas will be relevant to this study. Philosophers of education explained the concept of education in terms of its aims and goals in relation to life experiences However, before looking into the different philosophical views, it is good to look at the general concept of education and how it applies in the life of the LCBL congregation.

### 5.13 Concept of Education

Education is understood as a help to the unfolding of the child's inborn psychological capacities and according to Montessori the central point of education must be the defense of life.<sup>146</sup> Education in its subjects and methods of instruction should have some reference to the demands of practical life. Montessori emphasises the inseparable aspect that exists between education and life. Painter affirms Montessori's point,

A great thing education has to teach is to prepare us for complete living. Education is the guidance of the individual towards a comprehension of the development of the art of life and by the art of life I mean the most complete achievement of varied activity expressing the potentialities of that living creature in the face of its actual environment. Education is the corollary of the development of the whole person. Education is discipline for the adventure of life and for successful education there must be certain freshness in the knowledge dealt with.<sup>147</sup>

Furthermore, Painter purports that there are aspects of development and acquisition that go together in education and he explains how education has existed among all nations no matter how imperfect or varied.<sup>148</sup>

The study showed that education as a value among other core values of the LCBL appears at the periphery. It is not a priority as shown in the questionnaires and out of every 10 questionnaires sent out, one respondent listed education as the last value on the list of 10. The order has played a major role in the society's education, but without laid down statements of educational values. The interviews showed that it would be difficult for the order to come up with policies because it is not directly involved in matters of

education. It is true that the members participate in running schools, but running does not mean owning. The owners of the schools design policies for them and theirs to implement. There is a big problem as pointed out by members (**Appendix 4**). Lack of policies means lack of development for the order. Painter talks about development in education and he understands it as following certain rhythm and stages. He refers to an educational system or policy that characterises every nation basing on certain patterns.

Our educational system in Zimbabwe follows a certain rhythm and has different stages or levels starting from zero grade to college or university. Similarly the LCBL congregation may design its own patterns to meet its needs. Some informants suggested that the congregation should design an educational system that allows every member to train in some profession before making their final commitment (**Appendix 4**).

Dewey in his book *Education and Democracy* also agrees with both Painter and Montessori that education is about the process of forming fundamental intellectual and emotional dispositions, towards nature and fellow men.<sup>149</sup> Education is the laboratory in which philosophic distinctions become concrete and are tested.<sup>150</sup> Again the mention of a laboratory emphasises certain procedures and stages followed in order to come up with complete results. The LCBL structure shows the different stages in the hierarchical form. Research reveals that these stages should not be taken for granted in terms of education for the congregation (**Appendix 2**). Education should be taken seriously and members should go for training at the correct age so that resources are not wasted by misplaced

concreteness.<sup>151</sup> Education is the process through which the needed transformation may be accomplished and not remain a mere hypothesis as to what is desirable.<sup>152</sup>

Ultimately the main point discussed here by the three philosophers culminates that education is for life whichever way it takes. Thus, we find it catering for the different life aspects such as communication, social functions, formal education, direction, and growth. What has been discussed could be summarised in Whitehead's conception of education, "Education is the acquisition of the art of the utilisation of knowledge and it should be useful whatever you aim in life."<sup>153</sup> This point brings us to look at the aims of education. It is of course, rather difficult to talk of education and live out its purposes or aims. The idea of stages and processes presume that education should have aims that enable these processes to come to fruition. According to Oksenberg, proper education requires not only the redirection, but also the reconstitution of the soul.<sup>154</sup>

#### **5.14 Aims of Education**

Education as mentioned above is meant to prepare people for a complete living. Thus according to Dewey,

The main purpose of education is to prepare the young for future responsibilities and for success in life by means of acquisition of the organised bodies of information and prepared forms of skills, which comprehend the material instruction.<sup>155</sup>

A retired teacher in the LCBL order Sr. Theresina Saki commenting (**Appendix 4**) on the importance of education says,

Education improves the financial position of the order and improves living conditions. Lack of education leaves standards very poor. I can safely say

education changes society because it grooms the leaders of both church and society. I taught the late Archbishop Patrick Fani Chakaipa, Fr. Matthew Mhishi, and Sr. Dolorosa at St Michaels Mhondoro.<sup>156</sup>

This point tallies well with Harmer's point on good governance as regards to the place of religious in promoting good corporate governance in society. Painter uses the word function instead of aim. These words are sometimes used interchangeably. Hence, according to Painter,

The function of education is to assist and direct processes of physical and mental growth during formative periods of childhood and youth. Education fosters the individual to fit in life. The end of education is complete human development and its essential nature is to develop a noble type of manhood.<sup>157</sup>

In other words one chief aim of education is knowledge. The whole idea of going through all the processes is to gain knowledge, knowledge that brings about freedom and discipline. Education should stimulate and guide the student's self-development and impart an intimate sense for the power of ideas.<sup>158</sup> The essence of education is that it be religious as religious education inculcates duty and reverence. Scheffler Israel says that in short the purpose of education is three fold; inheritance, participation and contribution.<sup>159</sup>

The proper aims of education are for preserving harmony of civic life, individual salvation, artistic, creativity, scientific progress, empowering individuals to choose wisely preparing citizens to enter a productive labour force.<sup>160</sup>

The whole purpose of education is to transform peoples' lives in the different aspects of life. In fact good education should enable citizens to participate and contribute fully in an organization or society. This brings us to a section on the significance of education.

### **5.15 The significance of Education**

In this section, we shall discuss the importance of education interacting with a few philosophers of education. Their thoughts will help us to appreciate the relevance of their philosophies in our present age particularly in the LCBL congregation. We shall start by discussing what philosophy is and then move on to discuss what philosophy of education is all about.

Education is life and there is need for a new education based on life experience.<sup>161</sup> Dewey advocates for an education system that is relevant to the needs of the day. Thus, his emphasis on a new education based on life experiences. Dewey in a way he agrees with Montessori who says that there is need for education for reconstructing a future. Hence the reform of education must be based on the personality of man, meaning that man must become the centre of education at the earliest stage.<sup>162</sup> Montessori advocates education for life that touches all aspects of life.

#### **Philosophy**

According to Dewey philosophy is an attempt to comprehend meaning to gather the varied details of the world and of life into a single inclusive whole, which shall either be unity, or, as in the dualistic systems, shall reduce the plural details to a small number of ultimate principles.<sup>163</sup> Dewey summarises the above definition of philosophy by saying that philosophy is love of wisdom. He goes on to say that whenever philosophy has been taken seriously it signified achieving of wisdom, which would influence the conduct of



life.<sup>164</sup> There is direct connection of philosophy with an outlook upon life and this differentiates it from other disciplines. Again one of the popular senses of philosophy is calm and endurance in the face of difficulty and loss. And it is actually supposed to be a power to bear pain without complaint. However the general characteristic of philosophy is a power to learn or to extract meaning from even the unpleasant vicissitudes of experience and to embody what is learned in an ability to go on learning, it is justified in any scheme. Philosophy is defined as the generalized theory of education and it is a form of thinking.

### **5.16 Philosophy of education**

Philosophy of education is only an explicit formulation of the problems of the formation of right mental and moral habitudes in respect to the difficulties of contemporary social life.

#### **R S Peters Concept of Education**

Education like reform picks out a family of processes culminating in a person having an outlook and form of life that is in some way desirable. It has norms built into it, which generate the aims, which educators strive to develop or attain. Education implies that a man's outlook is transformed by what he knows and it transforms living into a quality of life.<sup>165</sup> Countless aims of education are therefore possible depending upon what features of worthwhile forms of life an educator considers important to foster. The aim of reform in education is to make men better so the aim of education is to initiate men into a reflective.<sup>166</sup> Some aims of education are for growth, self-realisation of the individual.

The other aim is to initiate man into a worthwhile form of life seen to be. The aims of education can relate to principles such as freedom and respect for persons.

### **Socratic concept of education**

Socratic education is a kind of seduction into a way of thinking characterised by discontent with any answer that falls short of knowledge. Socrates seeks by education to help people think more clearly and thereby to become better citizens.<sup>167</sup> Socratic education is useful mainly in the moral sphere, and will therefore, have the most public utility in a society that is organised along moral lines. Education has the potential to transform peoples' lives for the better. Socratic education puts responsibility of learning on the learner. It is teacherless education, which trains critical, and consistency thinking. Consistency as Socrates understands it requires high standards for knowledge claims, so that Socratic learners will be modest in what they claim to know. He also holds that a consistent and well –examined life will serve certain moral ideals particularly the Socratic thesis that it is worse to do wrong than to suffer it. Education is a life long pursuit consistency and a serious desire to learn.<sup>168</sup>

### **Plato**

Plato advocates education for the entire republic. The education for the rulers is pivotal for all education; they structure social practices and institutions, they regulate and direct culture, they effectively form the opinions, desires and practices of all sectors of the polis forming educational policies. The policies should ensure a sound education for its citizens.<sup>169</sup> Plato emphasises movement from the particular towards the universal. The

starting point of that education forms a common culture shared by all members of the polity. Education should instill a spirit of order and reverence for law.<sup>170</sup>

### **Aristotelian Concept of Education**

Men are by nature political animals. Education therefore perfects their nature as citizens. Education is a part of politics. Because virtues differ from constitution to constitution, the education that inculcates them must differ as well. It must suit the constitution, furthering the stable, long-term achievement of its characteristics and defining goal. In the first place be provided by city-states. For education should suit the particular constitution. Legislators should be particularly concerned with the education of the young, since in city states where this does not occur, the constitutions are harmed.<sup>171</sup>

Priory, education and habituation are required in order to perform certain elements of the task of any capacity or craft. Since the whole city-state has one single end however, it is evident that education too must be one and the same for all and that its supervision must be communal not put as it is at present. Public education should be provided to all citizens suiting them not just for their public political functions but for their private domestic ones as well.<sup>172</sup> Aristotelian education has three broad constituents; training for the body, habituation for the appetites and emotions, and instruction- education through reason for the rational part. The educative goal is to produce an integrated person, one whose soul is organised so as to best promote his true happiness. Whenever it is possible to create habits, it is better to create them right from the start, since whatever we encounter first we like best. Aristotelian education takes stages and each stage is

essential. Education is indeed what makes us what we are, but there is also a point that what I am depends on what I make of my education.<sup>173</sup>

**Augustine** – education should be for desire of God. Ultimate value and ultimate end is God. For Augustine education should be for the service of the love of God.<sup>174</sup> There is no man who teaches man knowledge except Christ. Augustinian concept of education implies a deep moral and religious education. His concept of education touches on formulation of educational policies and those entitled to receive the education. He argues,

Who should bear the primary responsibility for formulating educational policy; philosophers, religious authority, scientific rulers, elite, psychologist's parents or local councils? Who should be educated- everyone equally according to potential need... The institutions of the polis, its laws and political structures its customs and observances are its central educational instruments forming the mentality the typical motives and habits of citizens.

Augustine's shifts in life mark a radical revision in his views about the proper directions of a human life and they also redirect his views about the aims of education'.

His views may be relevant to this study as they put God first in education implying that policies should be formulated on the basis that God is the ultimate end. This concept can be adapted by the LCBL congregation since its first and foremost purpose is carrying out its vision and mission for Christ on whose foundation it is built. This brings us to a section on educational policy which is one of the key issues raised by this study. The educational foundations helped us to see the need for a sound and structured educational

system within the LCBL congregation. Literature has shown that the role of education is to train leadership and in turn leaders to train their followers.

### **Educational Policy**

Earlier on in our literature Plato's form of education advocated for educating the whole republic starting with the rulers are the decision makers in structuring institutions, regulating and directing culture, forming opinions and policies. Considering who should make policies, it is clear that it is the responsibility of those in leadership. It is not the purpose of this study, to look at policies in detail, but to understand them in the context of what education does to its recipients.

### **5.17 Implications of the concepts of education on LCBL Congregation**

The concepts of education discussed above were to a greater extent intended to help us to connect all our findings in the various chapters dealt with already. Chapter Two highlighted four key issues which tell us more about the foundation of the congregation: tradition, race, professional capacity and institutional dependency. Chapter Three dealt mostly with responses from both LCBLs and non-LCBLs touching on aspects that give us the picture of the congregation in this present age concerning values, empowerment and the structure. We moved on to other critical chapters on charism, governance and education and research shows that there is no clarity in the charism which then tends to affect governance and education.

The different educational concepts listed above are essential in understanding the position of the LCBL in their charism, governance and education. The ambiguity in the preceding chapters tell us the urgency the LCBL has in breaking through tradition evangelizing without having undergone some professional training (**Appendix 4**). Unless the LCBL leadership takes seriously the urgent need to make policies that determine the kind of education its members should have, some aspects will remain unclear. Kaulem David a Catholic laity and philosopher argues,

The LCBL congregation needs at this point and time some internal restructuring in terms of its spiritual formation and educational formation. Then it can talk of acquiring property to implement its values. Its pointless emphasizing the need to have institutions, what is necessary is to see that members have received good religious and secular education then other things follow (**Appendix 4**).<sup>175</sup>

### **5.18 Evaluation**

The study showed that the LCBL congregation has for many years been involved in education and has worked within the framework of borrowed principles. This is attributed to the fact that the congregation does not own schools or some property and thus it is difficult to implement policies when one is employed. Taking Karl Marx's concept on the means of production,<sup>176</sup> may help us to understand the position of the LCBL congregation as it works on other people's institutes. This reflects a serious deprivation towards development and growth for the congregation. Amartya Sen in his book *Freedom Towards Development* talks about the unfreedoms that impede growth in any organisation and how they should be removed. These unfreedoms could be social, emotional, educational and many others.

Both responses from LCBL and non\_-LCBLs indicated that it is high time now for the order to be radical and embark on congregational projects that will help it to design its own policies rather than to continue on borrowed ones (**Appendix 4**). As long as the order does not own the means of production, it will not develop in terms of education and governance. Ultimately, it will also be difficult to carry out its mission effectively. Hence, it is the responsibility of those in leadership as already spelt out that education should start with the leaders so as to educate their citizens.

The LCBL congregation is slowly losing identity by using borrowed educational principles. Research showed that the documents that the congregation uses do not consider education as a priority. The documents focus on the spiritual formation of the members, but leaves out principles of education, which should go side by side with the formation so as to form a sound religious (**Appendix 3**).

## CHAPTER SIX

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 6.1 Recommendations

In his book *Development To Freedom*, Amartya Sen discusses elements that impede growth or development in a country and he calls these elements unfreedoms. These are social, economic, political, educational and religious among others. According to Sen, such unfreedoms should be removed in order to allow development. Amartya's ideas could be adopted by smaller organizations to shape their ideals. Today, most communities small or big talk of turn around programs. Turning around involves reshaping the structures of an organization so that it runs smoothly catering for the needs of its members proficiently. Turning around also implies a new paradigm shift focusing on those aspects that give a new outlook. In other words a turn around in Amartya's words is replacing the unfreedoms with the freedoms that rejuvenate life.

The L C B L congregation is an organization within other organisations, which at this particular moment requires a turn around of its structures. My task in this thesis was to find out if the congregation has an educational policy. The findings both in interviews and questionnaires tell that education is not a priority. This suggests that the order lacks a written a philosophy of education which helps to design an educational policy to guide and to determine its educational structures for the members. At this juncture, the order requires a philosophy of education from which a systematic structure could be put in



place. The congregation needs to revisit the spirit of its Founder and assess his chief aims of founding the Order. Surely, he must have had a specific reason and purpose of grouping the local girls and forming them into nuns.

R.S Peters talks of functional education that allows for a desirable state of awareness for a society. In this case functional education will help to examine values that enhance autonomy and educational development of the existing Order. Education according to R.S Peters should be functional so that it helps individuals and groups to survive. For any organization to survive it needs internal changes before it thinks of moving to its peripheries. The LCBL order needs to create awareness within its members so that they identify themselves with the core values of the order, thus enhancing autonomy.

The philosophy of education the LCBL requires should include technology in various aspects. For example, it needs computer technology in order to keep abreast with the global village. It requires farming technology because it cannot survive without farming skills in order to generate income. I suggest internal education which is essential for the members' empowerment and keep in line with government's concern on women empowerment. The philosophy social construction advocates reconstruction of values and ideas. It is clear from the research findings that the LCBL as an institution needs to look back into its own history and reconstruct policies and principles to suit the signs of times. One practical way is by asking the church for a school to run, implement policies and thereby making its charism realised.

The research findings show lack of property as one of the Order's biggest deprivations. Owning property in terms of assets like owning schools, a farm or hospitals in order to implement its charism will keep the spirit of the Founder burning. Besides, the institute must have an identity and having property as a way of curbing poverty within the Order. At this stage 99 % of the members work in collaboration with the church and society helping to run schools or hospitals. This is an overdue project because at seventy seven years the order still cannot operate owns its own. I think the time for breast-feeding the baby has expired and it calls for the baby to feed itself.

In this environment of economic hardships, initiating new projects might be a dream that will not be realised, but nothing is impossible, as scripture says. The other way round is to demand compensation from the church fathers in the dioceses the order works. The aged sisters have given of their best by working in the missions thereby contributing towards the development of society. The church and society should do something to help the order have something it can call its own.

Most corporate organizations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century continue to empower their members so that their mission and work remain relevant. The LCBL congregation talks of "reading the signs of the times", so reading the signs of the times requires, designing educational policies and other relevant policies in order to implement educational systems that answer the call of the day. It is recommended at this stage that the order reconsider its recruitment policies and thus accept candidates with similar college entry points. From a religious point of view, this dimension might be opposed as it violates the mission of a

prophet implying that few girls would be accepted, especially those who come from poor educational backgrounds.

The order, having fulfilled internal needs, can also move outside to empower those around it, particularly women and girls. The girl child has got special needs and so the Order needs to empower its members focusing on the needs of the society. Women today suffer emotionally and spiritually. In other, words, I am recommending both internal and external educational policies. Today, our society is faced with so many problems that with a proper educational policy and guide the order could have great impact.

The modern woman experiences challenges different from the time Chichester founded the congregation, meaning that a new educational policy would help to cater for these new challenges. For instance, during the time Chichester founded the order his main aim was to help women to improve their standards of living. However, today most women live in better conditions than the nuns, but they lack in some areas. Today especially women need the emotional, social and spiritual support and the LCBL congregation has more chances to run social support system groups to help those affected by HIV/AIDS. Such groups can be done by identifying children who need educational help and meet their educational needs. The congregation can also open centres where people can come for HIV/AIDS testing and for free treatment.

Finally, this research should bring awareness to the order so that it designs policies to guide all its projects in education. The research has also managed to enlighten the order about the need to be autonomous, the need to understand its charism which in turn will

give it identity. The research helped to look at the past, present and thus plan for the future of the congregation basing on the contributions from both the members and outsiders. Adopting Plato's ideas on his plan for a just state in which education was to become the building material for a new and better society would benefit the congregation. Likewise the LCBL congregation may propose a radical departure from the practices that impede development for its members.

## **6.2 CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, the different ideas offered above shows that the LCBL Order has no educational policy or a system to guide its proceedings in education. The findings too show that the Order is meant to raise the standards of both women and girls, but there are no distinct programs put in place for women. The sisters, though they seem to work directly with women, in fact work indirectly because they have no congregational policies that determine their programmes for women and girls. The sisters work in dioceses that have their own goals to fulfill and hence it is difficult for the sisters to implement their own policies.

Furthermore, research shows that the Order is slowly losing its identity because its members have no platform to show who they are. It is clear that the Order has no schools of its own but wherever the sisters are, they are working in collaboration with other Religious Orders. It is from this point that the whole problem of not having an educational policy is centered. At this point the Order does not realise the need to have an educational policy. Hence it is taking too long for the Order to develop and thus

becoming an overgrown baby. Over the years, the Order trained some of its members in different areas, but this has been done to meet the employer's needs. The Order was founded to cater for both women and girls with the idea of raising their standards of living. This was to be done in the spirit of humble charity, simplicity and cheerfulness. These values have been derived from a profound spirit of the Order: "Unless you change and become like little children you will not enter the Kingdom of Heaven". Everything else is centered on this statement and should revolve on it. Chichester did not explicitly outline the structure in which the Order should follow to help girls and women. Yes their standards need to be raised, but the how was left open. In this case, it is rather difficult for the Order to see its line of progression since there are no structures to direct.

From what we have above as the main idea of founding the LCBL congregation, it appears that the Order needs first of all to raise its standards and uplift itself as a women group. It is only after the Order has improved its standards of living that it can also be able to help others. Scripture says that one should not aim at removing a speck in someone's eye before one takes out the one in one's eye. I think this is one of the ways the LCBL can consider in its effort to live a meaningful vision. There is need to put in place its own educational systems so that it can ultimately focus on relevant ways of helping women and girls.

The underlying principle is to remain focused on the original ideas of the founder of helping women. What the Order needs to do is to find relevant methods of catering for the needs of today's woman and girl. These days most women are educated and hold

powerful administrative positions in society, but they lack the spiritual, emotional and social support systems. In order for the Order to remain relevant, it has to look into these present needs and find ways of uplifting women from the socially constructed situations they are in. As I mentioned earlier on, this is going to be possible when the members of the LCBL Order are well equipped to empower today's women and the girl child.

The findings of the research reveal that most of the LCBL members are not knowledgeable about their charism and what they were founded to do. Both interviews and questionnaire show that education is not a priority at all in the Order. Most members talk of values such as prayer, charity, and cheerfulness, many others but without mentioning education. Out of ten people one respondent mentions education and this indicates a serious deficiency of the Order in education. How then is it viable to uplift one's life style when you are the one to be uplifted? Hence, the Order needs to design an educational policy or plan that caters for its members in on order to remain relevant and functional.

It is clear the Order has no educational policy even if it runs schools and hospitals. Research shows that the main reason for not having an educational policy lies heavily on the limited or absence of property and resources by the congregation; hence it does not see the need to have any policy to govern its educational affairs since it works in collaboration with other groups. In most situations the Order is working on contractual basis and thus it cannot implement its policies on someone's property suppose it had any

policy. The only way out is for the Order to liberate itself and realise that the project is long over due.

It is high time that the Order should acquire its own property and make itself identified and recognised with something. The Shona culture encourages elders to wean off sons from their parents' household when they are married. One good reason this is done is to promote maturity and responsibility in the new couple. When they are left for too long in their parents' household they do not see the need to handle their own affairs. As a result they are not capable of anything. Similarly the Church in Zimbabwe has not done justice to the LCBL Order, by not letting it run its own affairs. The growth of the Order has been stifled, because at Seventy –Seven years the Order by now should have been somewhere. The Order is like a child who is not growing, growth is impeded due to many factors. Unless the factors are identified, the child will continue in that state and ultimately dies. Thus the LCBL Order needs to identify the factors that are impeding its growth in designing an educational policy that allows it to structure its own activities that brings about progress.

There is need to challenge the status quo, and challenging everything that does not give life as outlined in the Order's vision statement. Research has pointed out that the Order needs to review its contracts and allow sisters to further their education. The Order needs to look at the present skills it is imparting to its members and ask whether these skills are still necessary in contemporary world; the skills have to be meaningful to the society. Research shows that the Order might be training its members to satisfy the needs of the

employer, forgetting that it has its own needs to cater for. This could be a result of some colonial legacy and the way the Order has been raised.

The LCBL Order, being one of the first local Orders, cannot escape the virus that affects to a greater extent all indigenous groups. Colonialism did not foster good governance to its colonies. It is a fact difficult to understand from a religious point of view, but should not be taken out of context as political. Hence there is need to remove all the unfreedoms that impede growth and reconstruct a future that is based on freedom and responsibility. In fact, it is the aim of education to improve one's way of life and liberate people by developing their mental processes (**Appendix 9**).



## ENDNOTES

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<sup>1</sup>Freire Paulo, **Pedagogy of the Oppressed**, p.27.

<sup>2</sup>Montessori Maria, **The Absorbt Mind**, p.8.

<sup>3</sup>Oksenberg Emelie, **Philosophy of Education. New Historical Perspectives**, p. 41

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>.Hutchins27

<sup>6</sup>. Ibid.p.28.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Dewey, **Education and Democracy**, p.259.

<sup>9</sup>Ozmon and Craver, p.260.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.p.257.

<sup>11</sup>

<sup>12</sup>LePage Andy, **Transforming Education**, p.156.

<sup>13</sup>Peters R.S, **Philosophy of Education**, p.88.

<sup>14</sup>A.J. Dachs and W.F.Rea, **The Catholic Church in Zimbabwe, 1879-1962** , Mambo Press, Gwelo,1979,p.140.

<sup>15</sup>F.C. Barr, **Archbishop Aston Chichester, 1879-1962**, Mambo Press, Gwelo, 1978, p.21.

<sup>16</sup> Heschel Abraham, **The Prophets**, p. 20

<sup>17</sup> Ibid 23

<sup>18</sup>Ibid. p.6.

<sup>19</sup>Sr. Bernadette Garatsa LCBL, interview, 20 August 2004, Chichester Convent, Silveira House, Harare.

<sup>20</sup> Chavunduka Gordon, 6

<sup>21</sup>F.C. Barr.,op.cit.,p.21

<sup>22</sup>Sr.Benadette Garatsa., op, cit.

<sup>23</sup>A.J. Dachs and W.F.Rea., op.cit. p.132.

<sup>24</sup> H. Wansbrough, **The Jerusalem Bible**, New York, Doubleday, 1985, p.1639.

<sup>25</sup>Sr. Rocha Mushonga LCBL, interview, 20 August 2004, Chichester Convent, Silveira House, Harare.

<sup>26</sup> Archdiocese of Harare Archives

<sup>27</sup>Sr. Gregor Munyaradzi Dakudzwa LCBL, interview, 16 May 2005, LCBL Regional House, Chinhoyi.

<sup>28</sup>Boudillion MFC. **The Shona People**,p23

<sup>29</sup> Chavhunduka Gordon **Traditional Medicine in Modern Zimbabwe**, p.6

<sup>30</sup> Archival Records 1957, Archdioceses of Harare Archives.

<sup>31</sup> Archival Records, 1957

<sup>32</sup> Archival Records 1957, op., cit.

<sup>33</sup> Archival Records 1957, op, cit.

<sup>34</sup> Chavhunduka p 6

<sup>35</sup>Sr.Benadette Garatsa., op, cit.

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- <sup>36</sup> Gyke Kwame
- <sup>37</sup> J. Mbiti, **African Religions and Philosophy**, Nairobi, Eastern African Educational Publishers, 1992, p16.
- <sup>38</sup> Dachs and Reap 131.
- <sup>39</sup> Interview 25 August 2005
- <sup>40</sup> Dachs and Rea p 79
- <sup>41</sup> Ibid p80
- <sup>42</sup> interview 30 August 2005
- <sup>43</sup> Dachs and Rea p 133
- <sup>44</sup> Interview August 2005
- <sup>45</sup> Interviews August 2005
- <sup>46</sup> Interview August 2005
- <sup>47</sup> Interview August 2005
- <sup>48</sup> Dachs and Rea p 132.
- <sup>49</sup> Barr p.18 Interview August 2005
- <sup>50</sup> Interview August 2005
- <sup>51</sup> Interview August 2995
- <sup>52</sup> Dachs and Rea p132
- <sup>53</sup> Ibid p133.
- <sup>54</sup> Bar F C p 23
- <sup>55</sup> Archival Records, 1948.
- <sup>56</sup> Interviews June 2005
- <sup>57</sup> Dachs and Rea p108
- <sup>58</sup> Interview July 2005
- <sup>59</sup> Ibid
- <sup>60</sup> Ozmon and Craver, **Philosophical Foundations of Education**, p39.
- <sup>61</sup> Ibid
- <sup>62</sup> Ibid
- <sup>63</sup> Constitutions and Directory of the Little children Of our Blessed Lady
- <sup>64</sup> Stumpf Samuel Enoch ed, **Socrates to Sartre A History of Philosophy**, p.93
- <sup>65</sup> Interview August 2005
- <sup>66</sup> The II Vatican Council p 198.
- <sup>67</sup> Ibid
- <sup>68</sup> Interviews April 200 5
- <sup>69</sup> Interviews August 2005
- <sup>70</sup> Stumpf Samuel, **A history of Philosophy**, p411.
- <sup>71</sup> Interviews April 2005
- <sup>72</sup> Ibid
- <sup>73</sup> Interviews august 2006
- <sup>74</sup> LCBL Constitutions and Directory, p48
- <sup>75</sup> Appendix 1
- <sup>76</sup> LCBL Constitutions p 55, 57
- <sup>77</sup> The Vatican Council II p217
- <sup>78</sup> Kwame Anthony Appiah, **In My Fathers House**, 74
- <sup>79</sup> Baker Judith, **Individual and Community Rights**, p 17.
- <sup>80</sup> Ibid

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- <sup>81</sup> Flannery Austin ed , O.P **Vatican Council II**, p250.
- <sup>82</sup> Sr. Colleta , interview 26 June 2005
- <sup>83</sup> Koyle Katleen p64.
- <sup>84</sup> Ibid
- <sup>85</sup> Ibid p 72
- <sup>86</sup> Vatican Council II, 219
- <sup>87</sup> Ibid
- <sup>88</sup> Constitutions and Directory of the Little Children of our Blessed Lady, p.10.
- <sup>89</sup> Vatican Council II, p.217-218
- <sup>90</sup> LCBL Constitutions, p10.
- <sup>91</sup> Sr. Gertrude Madzinga, interview. Arrupe College.14 May 2005.
- <sup>92</sup> Sr. Lena Dhikanifuwa, Interview, Martindale School 26 June 2005.
- <sup>93</sup> Presentation by Robert C Ndlovu Chishawasha Se3minay 13 August 2006.
- <sup>94</sup> Boff Leonardo, **Church: Charism and Power**, p156.
- <sup>95</sup> The Jerusalem Bible, p
- <sup>96</sup> Boff Leonardo, p 157.
- <sup>97</sup> Ibid p 156.
- <sup>98</sup> I Cor 12:7 Jerusalem Bible.
- <sup>99</sup> Boff, p 158
- <sup>100</sup> Ibid, p158.
- <sup>101</sup> Harmer Catherine 77-78
- <sup>102</sup> Boff,p159
- <sup>103</sup> Boff p.159
- <sup>104</sup> Harmer 127
- <sup>105</sup> Ibid,p130
- <sup>106</sup> Ibid,p160
- <sup>107</sup> Ibid 162
- <sup>108</sup> David Kaulem Interview 25 July 2006
- <sup>109</sup> Interviews
- <sup>110</sup> Sr. Jane Faith , Panel discussion Chishawasha Seminary 13 August 2006
- <sup>111</sup> Sr. Gertrude Madzinga 13 August 2006
- <sup>112</sup> Sr. Florence Muchingami, Chishawasha Seminary13 August 2006.
- <sup>113</sup> Interviews 2005
- <sup>114</sup> Appendix 4 on interviews 2005
- <sup>115</sup> Chishawasha Seminary 13 August 2006
- <sup>116</sup> Ibid
- <sup>117</sup> Sr Lena Interview July 2005
- <sup>118</sup> Ibid
- <sup>119</sup> Ibid
- <sup>120</sup> Ibid
- <sup>121</sup> Hyden p. 37.
- <sup>122</sup> Ibid. 38.
- <sup>123</sup> Ibid. P38.
- <sup>124</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>125</sup> ibid. 39
- <sup>126</sup> ibid. 39
- <sup>127</sup> Kaunda Kenneth A **Humanist in Africa**, p 19.

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- <sup>128</sup> Ibid 21  
<sup>129</sup> Ibid p26  
<sup>130</sup> Prophetic Witnesses in Zimbabwe, p.3  
<sup>131</sup> Harmer. p.109.  
<sup>132</sup> Ibid. 108.  
<sup>133</sup> Ibid 107  
<sup>134</sup> ibid 108- 109  
<sup>135</sup> Ibid, 112  
<sup>136</sup> ibid 110  
<sup>137</sup> Harmer 111-112  
<sup>138</sup> Kurasha Jameson , Presentation  
<sup>139</sup> Ibid  
<sup>140</sup> Ibid  
<sup>141</sup> ibid  
<sup>142</sup> ibid  
<sup>143</sup> ibid  
<sup>144</sup> Constitutions and Directory of the LCBL, p 72 D80  
<sup>145</sup> Ibid, 47 C84.  
<sup>146</sup> Montessori Maria p 4  
<sup>147</sup> Painter, p.1,39  
<sup>148</sup> ibid  
<sup>149</sup> Dewey p332  
<sup>150</sup> Dewey p332  
<sup>151</sup> Interviews April 2005  
<sup>152</sup> ibid 332, 339  
<sup>153</sup> Whitehead, p 4.  
<sup>154</sup> Oksenberg p4.  
<sup>155</sup> Dewey p .18.  
<sup>156</sup> interview 18 October 2005  
<sup>157</sup> Painter p 1.  
<sup>158</sup> Whitehead p 12.  
<sup>159</sup> Sheffler Israel p123  
<sup>160</sup> Oksenberg p. 1  
<sup>161</sup> Dewey John Democracy and Education, p18  
<sup>162</sup> Montessori Maria, p5.  
<sup>163</sup> Dewey John, p .324  
<sup>164</sup> Ibid 324  
<sup>165</sup> Peters R S p15, 17, 19.  
<sup>166</sup> Peters R.S, p21  
<sup>167</sup> Oksenberg , p 26  
<sup>168</sup> Ibid p .28  
<sup>169</sup> Ibid p .28  
<sup>170</sup> Ibid p 37.  
Ibid p. 41  
<sup>172</sup> Ibid 54  
<sup>173</sup> Oksenberg p 77.

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<sup>174</sup> Ibid

<sup>175</sup> Interviews September 2006.

<sup>176</sup> Marx Karl Manifesto p.

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## **APPENDIX**

### **Appendix 1 The LCBL Vision Statement**

'We are Little Children of our Blessed Lady,  
Religious Women,  
Rooted  
in Effective and Transforming  
Prayer.  
We create  
Participative Communities  
Fostering Loyalty and responsible Dialogue.  
Committing Ourselves to Nurturing  
Family Spirit,  
We deepen Unity through  
Forgiveness and Reconciliation.  
Responding to the Signs Of The Times,  
We are Prophetic Witnesses  
and Challenge  
All that does not Author Life  
In ourselves and others.  
Collaborating with those in Church and Society,  
We commit ourselves to  
Evangelisation  
And opt for the Poor.  
Especially those suffering from HIV/ AIDS and its Effects.

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## **APPENDIX 2 Analysis of the LCBL internal structure**

1 Generalate – where Administration for the whole congregation takes place  
1 Regional House -Administration for those sisters working in Chinhoyi diocese only  
1 retirement house (Chichester Convent) with 29 sisters  
3-formation houses- Postulancy, Novitiate and Juniorate  
40 houses constitute the working members of the Order  
An average number of sisters in a house is 5 and the average age group -40 years. The Order specializes in six major apostolates, which are as follows.

Nurses  
Administrators  
Social and pastoral  
Domestic  
Studies  
Teachers

### Human Resources

34 teachers  
15 nurses  
10 administrators  
3 social workers  
5 domestic workers  
7 Pastoral workers  
14 on studies  
The rest are either retired, in Administration or in formation of the Order.

### Property/ assets of the order

Out of the 46 houses mentioned above 10 houses only belong to the order, the rest belong to the dioceses where the sisters work.

### Vehicles

2 Day Care Centers Regina Mundi Crèche -Highfield Harare and Tariro Day Care Centre –Chinhoyi.

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**Appendix 3: Questionnaire**

M.Phil. Thesis Research Questionnaire

Explanatory notes

The objective of this project is to produce a philosophy of education document for the Little Children of Our Blessed Lady a religious congregation in Zimbabwe. The initial step lies in the identification of the Congregation’s unique fundamental values such as a ‘signs of times,’ simplicity and cheerfulness. This questionnaire requests for your assistance in at least 10 of what you consider to be the unique principles or values of the LCBL congregation. You don’t have to declare your identity but you are most welcome.

**FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES**

- 1.....
- 2.....
- 3.....
- 4.....
- 5.....
- 6.....
- 7.....
- 8.....
- 9.....
- 10.....

I thank you most sincerely for your time and wisdom.

Sr. Claris Gladys Gow

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## **Appendix 4: LCBL Sisters interview Responses on the character of the Congregation**

### **Responses**

The following interviews were carried out to find out the sisters' general understanding of the present state of the Order, but focusing mainly on their view of education in the Order. The interview was done randomly picking on sisters in different age groups, apostolates, and those in different administrative responsibilities of the Order.

### **The Retired**

The retired sisters have a different perspectives altogether about the present state of the Order in comparison to their knowledge of the Order twenty or thirty years ago. Some of the retired sisters had a chance to know the Founder Aston Chichester personally and recall some of his ideas about the Order's future and his desires concerning education.

**Sr. Bernadette Garatsa** a founding member who comes from St Killian Mission Makoni in the Rugoyi area comments how she joined the Order.

I was not Catholic in the first place, but Methodist. I went to a school that was headed by Mr. Nyamusamba who built the school with the villagers to educate their local people. Basically, the school specialized in Religious Education and Catechesis catering for those who wished to be baptized. Besides the school taught reading and a bit of Maths. I was then baptized by the name Pelagia and I had devotion to Mary Our Mother. I constantly prayed asking Mary to intercede for me to be a nun.

The idea of becoming a nun was contrary my parents wish who were not Catholics. My parents reported to the Government Offices and later I was detained. They told the Commissioner that I was too clever, hardworking and loving, so my parents could not just let me go. When defending myself I based on the traditional idea of Bonga and Pfunda that existed in our area. These were titles given to men and women who did not want to marry, but to remain chaste. I also used the scriptures to defend myself giving the example of Mary who remained chaste. After my Standard 6 I went to teach others how to read, count, and the main subject was bible. I joined the sisters of St Francis of Assisi at Triashill Mission together with other girls. While in this Order I taught Bible and Catechism. Other girls did other things like working in the garden, laundry, poultry and fields because they were not clever as me. Since the Order of the Sisters of St Francis, was International, it meant us going to work in other Countries and our parents refuted this idea. When Chichester announced that he was starting a new local Order, we were happy including our parents. I personally did not want to leave the St Francis habit (dress) at MonteCassino where we were working. I had no choice except to join the other eighteen girls to be Chichester pioneers of the LCBL Order. We went to Makumbi and help Chichester to establish the Novitiate. We moulded bricks and built the place on our own. After the Novitiate at Makumbi we were posted to various Missions to evangelize in our different apostolate. Some went and worked in the Laundry, fields, but I preached to the people. I visited families, taught them about God and not Catholic. My point of departure was that everyone was a child of God, thus unity and love should prevail among the people of God. I also taught women and girls the moral values expected by society and this was Chichester's concern, to up lift the status of women.

I am happy to be a nun because the little education I received helped me to do my mission unhindered. I was actually implementing what our ancestors taught. They talked



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about sharing, unity, justice and love. So whenever I visited people I was up lifting the nation.

Now that I am old I want to recommend that the sisters be taught Rudo Rwechinyakare literally traditional love that did not discriminate. I want the sisters to learn many things, to have many courses, to be educated in various fields. I am happy that I was a jerk of all trades. I want also the sisters to promote dialogue between denominations. There is need to bury the differences that existed between white nuns and us. The white nuns did not like us at all. By so doing we will be fulfilling what Jesus proclaimed; Go and teach, preach to all nations. It is also good to consider some things in the past into the present. Sisters should be able analyze the bible wisely so that it becomes relevant and contextual. It is also my wish that one day the Order will own property, for example given a piece of land and explore it. This reminds me when I worked in Zvimba, the first thing I did was to ask for a piece of land to cultivate from the Chief Zvimba. There is need to have land where we can empower women and girls with skills. I wish too that our Leadership as many people to school as possible without looking at colour, tribe or persons.

#### **Sr. Teresina A retired teacher- Educational Views**

It was Chichester's wish that sisters be trained as teachers. The sisters who were intellectually capable were sent to Monte Cassino for teacher training. I trained as a teacher before joining the Order and I was deployed to Driefotein Mission. Chichester did not accept 'vakadzima' literally meaning the dull. One had to be educated then accepted later. Vanenjere vaiendeswa- those with the brains were sent to school. Kuchikoro.

According to Chichester, aim of education aimed at helping the sisters:

- to help the Order to be self reliant,
- to reach out to people particularly women and girls,
- to teach the women how to sew and cook,
- to preach, catechize and have good communications skills when visiting people in their homes,
- and education would help the sisters to develop the whole person.

For Chichester, those who could not go further with their education were sent to missions and were given work that suited their ability. This created tension between sisters, , those who did not appreciate education thought the teachers or nurses were better off. Classes within the Order emerged unconsciously until now the tension is still felt.

Education improves the financial position of the order and improves living conditions. Lack of education leaves standards poor. I can safely say education changes society because it grooms the leaders of both church and society. I taught the late Bishop Patrick Fani Chakaipa, Fr. Matthew Mhishi, and Sr. Dolorosa at St Michaels Mhondoro. About having property, as subjects we just thought the leadership knows it all.

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**Sr. Cecilia.**

I worked as a domestic science teacher and then as a boarding matron. Teaching skills helped me to be satisfied with my new work as a matron. Finally I was in charge of the house and I was still happy.

As a teacher I did not feel happy when children failed. I always encouraged women to have better life through education. My experience as a domestic science teacher helped me to influence women to improve standards of life in their homes with their husbands and children.

I did not see any difference at all teaching in these schools. We were just part of the system, but now we can see the need of having our own school or hospital where we can be creative and do what we want. But do we have enough finance to help us run our own affairs.

Recommendations to the Order

I recommend junior sisters to preserve what we already have and in future if we have enough money it is not too late to start something that promotes education for the sisters and for society.

Concerning values lets us take education as one of our biggest value. Money is not life; hence our education should not detach us from Church ministries. We need the type of education that has people at heart that creates time for others. We need education that makes us participate and involve us in secular and church activities. If possible to have a farm, piece of land where we can start something we call ours is ideal.

**Sr. Celine Retired Orphanage Matron**

I did not have education enough to do the kind of work I was doing. It was through obedience to the Bishop that I found myself in the hospital, orphanages and schools. I worked throughout my life as unskilled labourer. I did Standard 6 which I did not pass. I worked as a missionary in Zambia teaching women primary health care. I learnt some of the skills from the Dominican sisters.

I remember one experience of having to interpret for the doctor what mothers were saying when they brought their children for medical assistance. Since, I was interested in learning new things, a non-govenemental organistion called World Vision offered to help me with short coueses on how to look after children. I got encouragement from the people I rendered my service, they appreciated what I was doing fro them.

Recommendations

I encourage sisters to work wholeheartedly and humbly. People being served should be able to say 'tapiwa munhu' meaning we have a mature and devoted person. Sisters should be educated and competent for the job they are assigned to do.

**Sr Rocha Mushonga Retired First LCBL Superior General (RIP).**

Education during Sr Rocha's term of Office.

Sr Rocha says this about education

Without education there is no way of advancing and improving oneself and the congregation. Lack of education ruins the congregation and this was challenge from

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other Orders. Sisters from other Orders were well versed and quite informed about certain things concerning the church. It was piecing to see how the sisters struggled to interpret the Bible due to lack of knowledge. The life of sisters is centred on prayer, so how could they improve their prayer life if they cannot read and analyse given information. Religious Life concerns understanding prayer, Church History and many other aspects that go together with that. Without education the sisters are limited to understanding, reach deeper and search deeper, but only on the surface.

Looking at the nation it required teachers, nurses, bright leadership and knowledgeable personnel in various disciplines. I met with challenge also from the secular world, young girls were being educated, and likewise I needed to educate the sisters. Even if the desire was there I faced financial constraints. Where there is a will there is a way. I talked to the other leaders of other congregations both male and female Orders. Both Black and White assisted with finance and the Jesuits in particular listened to my problems and thus I sent some sisters to further their education in various fields. Really in the world that time was challenging.

However, this was something to do with the Founder. I am sure I was inspired Chichester because when I joined the Order I did well in different school levels. It was Chichester's suggestion that I trained as a teacher. Chichester looked at the intellectual capacity and used this as his criteria to select girls who were practically useful. He also encouraged the sisters to copy from their white counterparts (Dominican and Precious Blood) in case one day they would run their own things. In the first place the sisters should have sufficient education to help them.

I enjoyed working as a teacher and I was satisfied. Chichester liked to have more teachers because for him teachers reached out easily. Looking at the Precious Blood sisters they had a good witness. The Dominican sisters as well as the Jesuits made me grew up in the spirit of having education as a priority. The Jesuits were Lions when it came to education, they educated their young ones. The Jesuits emphasized that education witnesses and it challenges people to teach the Gospel without fear. Chichester emphasized action and thus encouraged the sisters to work hard and to emulate from the other Orders how to run affairs. Chichester told the sisters to study, and to take everything in a gentle way and thus he gave the sisters chances and exposed them to learn, to have knowledge and share a lot about the future. Education for Chichester would help to reach out to people, to listen and to help them. Education will provide the sisters with the counseling skills to help women and girls in particular. Chichester loved teachers because they pass on knowledge to a large group of people, and not nurses.

As the superior general I considered that education would parade us. The Jesuits were and are still known for their education. During my term of office that ran for 12 years I educated quite a number of sisters. While others left after being educated I did not regret since I knew I had also educated the nation. I looked at the capacity of the sister and sent to renowned places like St Ignatius and some big colleges abroad.

Sr. Basilia Dembetembe is one of the 1st sisters to be sent at our Local University-University of Zimbabwe, followed by Sr Tendayi Maminimini and Sr Getrude Matsika who later left, but still effective in society.

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I kept on reminding my self that the future of the congregation would be dwindled and stifled if I do not encourage sisters to read. I still encourage the present leadership to educate the sisters.

Concerning owning our own property, it was difficult to breakthrough, thought I thought of it. I did not have enough strength to breakout from the Jesuits, Dominicans and Precious Blood in whose schools and hospitals we were working. It was for one simple reason of dependency. What I needed at the moment was to send sisters to school. Hence they controlled us in the schools and mentioning ownership of property for me meant ingratitude and competition. Basically, it was maintaining relationship with our leaders. Again without having a large group of sisters educated it meant lack of personnel and thus having our own things to run was just a nightmare.

The desire to acquire property was there, that is why we had Chichester Convent near Silveira House founded on a big piece of land. Later we had Regina Mundi Convent Crèche. The idea to set up the Crèche in the High Density suburb, was to reach out to people, to have touch, with parents, help spread Catholicism and to help with finance.

I kept on looking for donations to cater for educational needs and sending sisters to school.

#### Present Progress

There are many congregations around and we can ask ourselves what we have to offer. Sometimes we have too little numbers of aspirants coming to join. There is still limited education, and sisters should be free to choose professions and courses. We need competent sisters to also engage in public speaking, Consultancy and many other challenging disciplines.

Education has liberated us to a greater extent. Religious Education has made us what we are. Education has allowed us to mix with a lot of people and to understand the people we work with. Secular education enables us to read the signs of the times and to remain relevant. Education enables us to be critical to our environment and to apply things rightfully. Education permits us to take criticism seriously.

#### Recommendations

##### Education and culture

Education plays a pivotal role in our religious life. It helps us to understand our culture and to accommodate other cultures that make up the Order. With education we continue to ask ourselves such questions as is sisterhood still valuable and worth pursuing, valid or just a show? We can still go back to our moral values but in a different angle. Does the type of education help us to conform to culture and to shape our values? Parents want to send their children where there are sisters, meaning the idea of having schools to run is an idea worth taking. Hence, we need education with a vision for the future. Education that is effective, helpful and productive. An educated nun is contented and happy with Religious life because she can exploit her environment and can communicate flexibly without any barriers. I encourage the present leadership to open more avenues that allow sisters to be exposed to different educational opportunities.

#### **Sr Gaudiosa Chirambaguhwa Second LCBL Superior General**

I did my term of Office when things were tough for everyone. This was during the liberation struggle. I met with challenging problems of sending sisters to school; since this was the time most schools were shut down during war. However, I did what I could

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to send some of the sisters who had qualifications to study abroad and also at Wadzanai Training School. In post independence I made frantic effort to send sisters and candidates to Study Groups and Upper Tops. Those who were capable made it while others could not. As a teacher I valued education and thought that the Order would not grow without trained personnel in various fields.

There was demand of qualified personnel from most of our employers. In fact, the idea of expanding in education came from our Founder who sent anyone capable to school. My predecessor had also opened avenues for me, which I just needed to widen.

Again, our white counterparts looked down upon us and with education we were actually liberating ourselves and new opportunities opening up to take over where they were running.

### **Sr. Coletta Muchapondwa- Third LCBL Superior General**

During my term of office I valued education and thus send sisters with national requirements for courses such as teaching, nursing and administration, both abroad and locally. My view of education is that our educational system as a congregation should be identified with Mary Our Mother. Before anything else, we should have enough knowledge about our Lady, meaning those with the brains should study Mariology. We should have our education based on reading literature about our Lady. Clusters, retreats, workshops and prayer sessions should be based on our Lady's spirituality. Secondly, our education should find roots in honour of our Founder. This will encourage us to have scripture scholars among ourselves. Constantly we should ask ourselves what the title Little Children of Our Blessed Lady mean to us?

The field of education should help us to seek knowledge that improves the living standards of the Order. Thus any motive of sending sisters to school should look at raising our own standards.

During my term of office as superior I used my own experience as a teacher and my encounter with Chichester. In 1956 I was sent to Gokomere by Chichester and I was enrolled in Form One. Gokomere was a boys school but Chichester created opportunities for us since there were no girls secondary schools that time. This tells me Chichester had Education at heart. His main reason for sending me to school was to raise the status of the African woman. In order to influence women in society there was need to educate a handful, and these were the sisters.

The education I received opened my mind and I realized my call to liberate other women who were oppressed by culture.

My predecessors helped me to priorities education. Sr. Rocha Mushonga the 1st Superior general had education at heart. In spite of fears and financial constraints she realized the urgency of sending sisters up through university level. In 1968 the Order got its first degreed person Sr Dembetembe. In 1970 Srs Kizita Chikamba and Sr Roseline Mwoyoswi, were sent to England, one for teaching and the other one for nursing.

In 1962 the need for sending those in Pastoral apostolate was seen and sisters were sent to Hwange to train as Catechists. In this field, Sr. Ursula Bungu was sent to Rome to study Catechesis.

Sr Gaudiosa Chirambaguhwa who succeeded Sr Mushonga continued with the noble idea of sending sisters to study abroad. In 1985 Sr Letwina Musekiwa was sent to study Psychology in Rome a new area altogether in the Order. I was also sent to Australia for a

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renewal course, which was an eye opener for me to see the need for education. My other experience at Rockwood spiritual Center for the Diocese of Harare helped me to cherish education. There I was working with people from all walks of life.

While at Rockwood I humbly admitted that sisters in the Pastoral fields needed counseling and communication skills.

The most trying moment was the year I was elected Superior General. I wondered how I was going to lead the Order with limited level of education. I definitely did not have enough education to run the Order. However, the crisis I faced was lack of personnel to send to the missions whenever the priest asked for sisters to do the different apostolates.

The congregation did not have proper ways of accounting for the monies spent, hence it was difficult to plan for long term projects. Sr. Gregor who worked with me as the Bursar general together with a few sisters initiated a finance handbook for the Order that is still in use. Really that was another area that needed education. Nonetheless as the leadership of that time, we tried to send sisters for tertiary education locally and abroad.

But I also did not feel comfortable sending sisters to the missions. I felt that they were abused; the working conditions were not good. This goes back to lack of property; the Order does not have schools or hospitals to run. I do not remember having any educational policy to follow or to guide us as we selected sisters to train in various fields. What guided us were the contracts that we had with different Dioceses and Parishes. Other than that there was nothing put in place as a yardstick for our educational policy. However, in spite of the discrepancies I think we are capable of running our own affairs given the chance one day.

### **Sr. Electa Mubaiwa First and former Regional Superior of Chinhoyi Diocese.**

Sr Electa Mubaiwa is the first Regional Superior of Chinhoyi and now works as an Administrator at Chishawasha Regional Seminary. She describes her challenges as pioneer Regional Superior in the Diocese of Chinhoyi. She says

It was not an easy task for me to be elected as superior to work with the Bishop, Priests and sisters in the Diocese. The biggest challenge was where to get qualified personnel for the jobs the Dioceses offered in its various Missions.

My experience of staffing the different places enlightened me to prioritize education for the sisters.

I realized that the sisters needed to be knowledgeable about the work they were doing. Looking at the apostolates, it was sometimes risky to just allocate responsibilities when I knew the person is not qualified for the post, but I did not want to lose the vacancy. Again I realized that a sister would give proper service if they were trained for the job. The world is not static and thus it required competent persons. Education for me removes frustration and promotes efficiency and harmony in a person. I began to send sisters for training in various fields if they had requirements.

However, this was not possible all the time due to financial constraints and some unavoidable obstacles like qualifications, shortage of personnel to replace those who had secured vacancies in colleges. In spite of qualifications, the question of personality came into play. In some instances there were clashes between the priest and sisters and somewhat I was forced to transfer sisters and to close some of the contracts. I later realized that some of the personality problems emerged simply because the values of the sisters contradicted with those of the priest(s). For instance, my sisters would want to

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implement an idea that is refuted by the priest and felt underutilized in such cases. It was understandable because these would be two entities with different values and goals to achieve. My conclusion was that as an LCBL sister, my sister had a Charism to live, but was restricted to express her values into action.

My experiences of the problems I encountered gave me courage to find a big place where the sisters are free to express themselves. Today we have a Regional House in Chinhoyi Town, a place where we call our own. I also accepted Sr. Ellen Shanghai's request to establish a Day Care Centred for orphaned children.

Nonetheless, for our wary forward I think we need as an Order to educate our sisters to the highest level one can reach. If we are to enter into contracts we need to take up those contracts that are well paying, because we need money to develop. We need eyes to see the present needs of the Order and so develop along those lines. We also need to take care of the property we already have, I mean the houses we have.

### **Sr. Tariro Kuvheya- Psychologist and Mistress of Novices**

As Mistress or teacher of Novices in the formation of sisters my approach is to take the whole person. I consider that I am dealing with a young lady who is already groomed with human and cultural values. I am dealing with a woman who is identified with societal values. Again I am looking at a woman whose values coincide with Christian. On top of this there are LCBL values, an identity and charism meaning the spirit of the Founder for which the Order is founded/

Considering the human values I am looking at the nationality, identity and concept of woman in society. On Christian values I am looking at religious life, aspects of religion and vows which all religious profess-obedience, poverty and chastity. In line with this I consider the spiritual level and use the scriptures to derive the values. Above all I need to emphasise on the LCBL spirituality- derived from Matthew 18:3 "Unless you change..." It is from this charism that the LCBL values are derived.

I also consider the values of Mary whose qualities we imitate and to a greater, extent integrate with our Founder Aston Ignatius Chichester's values. I focus on the need to open to change and to see the need to help the marginalized particularly women and children in society.

There is a lot of carrier guidance I do in order to help the sisters choose the right apostolate where one can bring the spiritual values into her apostolate. The contemporary aspect of the Order is stressed allowing the sisters to read the signs of the times. This is essential to the young sisters so that they bring about transformation by showing the aspects of Jesus present in our day. There is need again to look at the quality meaning the way we express the values into our apostolates. Where there is a sister, there should show a difference in terms of quality.

The qualities of a child of showing curiosity should help the sisters to respond to the needs of the time and thus remain relevant. In this case the present Vision Statement helps the sisters to understand AIDS related issues. As a congregation we collaborate with other departments. Here we are bombarded with too many colours that have some negative effects concerning our values and policies if there are there. I am using the analogy of colors thinking of a rainbow. This will help to explain the many identities a sister has by the end of the day.. For instance, a sister who has an African Identity, a

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religious identity and apostolate identity, has a different way of the sense of identity since she carries too many colours.

Now coming to Recruitment of sisters, the level of education is very poor. As a formation mistress my standards are lowered by level of education of the girls I train as sisters. There is need to comply with societal qualifications and consider accepting girl with present qualifications accepted by society. There should be special dispensation to send girls to colleges.

### **Sisters already educated**

One asks questions can the sisters already educated sustain the congregation. It is a drop in the ocean. Some of them are not competent- scattered administrative responsibilities. The quality of education is poor and low. If you give peanuts you get monkeys. There are problems associated with this form of education. I come to a conclusion that many persons- no personnel in terms of profession qualifications. Or to put it in another way, blind people leading those with sight. Now if education cannot sustain the Order, then there is something wrong with it.

What is the way forward?

Change of recruitment system

Shifting from the education of the employer

All apostolates are equally important- need to take one that suits one's ability

Continue with current stance- sisters are up grading themselves

Lack of freedom

Most sisters are handicapped, cannot decide. There is need for a certain degree of autonomy. The Canon Law should be consulted on acquisition of property, work on contracts and Bishop as last authority. The process of consultation is long compared to the International Orders. It is too bureaucratic.

### **Sr. Gregor Munyaradzi Dakudzwa- once Bursar General, now Regional Superior of Chinhoyi**

Commenting on the present state of the Order Sr. Gregor says,

I gather from other Orders that we LCBL sisters are the resource persons for other Order in and outside Zimbabwe. We have two Psychologists quite recognized and one Doctor of Canon Law. Being the first local Order we are stable and in as much as we can move around helping other Orders we can safely say we are renowned.

That rightly puts us on a safer place to say we know our identity and we have it if people can call on us for help. We do not operate in a vacuum, we know who we are. We are aware that we operate with and within the church.

I still feel that we lack cooperation in our formation. We need to work as a team but shortage of manpower affects us a great deal. We have qualified formators, but with no replacement. As a result work is half done and consequently lowering standards. There is need also to improve the quality of our infrastructure.

Education



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Looking at education I would look at two camps. One camp with sisters who were accepted for a number of years without O level qualification and now are in middle age. This group of sisters did not obtain any course. Now the climate has changed and the group requires qualifications. The second camp comprise of people who have qualifications, haven taken up studies, upgraded, but are few compared to the first camp. It is therefore difficult to integrate one and two.

The Order at large finds it difficult to cater for the needs of the first camp in terms of insurances.

Again the first camp affects the distribution of personnel to cover all apostolates. There is little the Order can help to deal with the problems of the first camp. Society demands certain qualifications and these cannot be met. It is therefore the responsibility of the leadership to cover the gap between the two camps. The leadership should aim at producing a sister who has something to do.

#### Studies

There are sisters who are combining study and work. These sisters are rendering service to both the Order and society. Indirect motivation to society has impact that helps to keep sisters abreast with societal requirements.

#### The impact of our education

Education is helping us to explore, to liberate and to discover courses that were never done. Sisters now study Philosophy, CIS, Psychology, and Canon Law just to mention a few.

It is a kind of education that accommodates outsiders and exposes sisters to new technology.

We have reached an advanced stage as an Order. We involve the laity in some of our matter, for instance finance committee is and up of some competent lay person in the field of accounts.

For me education is not a problem. I see the problem with leadership. Speaking from a leadership viewpoint, there is need to be radical, close some of the contracts and invest in education.

#### Working with Women

We claim to work with women but I feel our education is not improving the educational skills of the sisters to work with women competently. We have to deal with the most educated woman of the day but lacking in some areas hence there is need to first of all empowered the sisters before they reach out. Our duty is to witness and in a more radical way. Thus we need to transcend the education of our clients.

The sisters are still relevant in the village, but they lack counselling skills to help those affected by HIV AIDS and its effects.

#### No educational Structures

As long as we remain sisters of the Diocesan Right, we continue to be employees of the Diocese. We can administer projects in the Diocese, but not take full control. In terms of acquiring property, we can only have it at the discretion of the Bishop. The status quo impedes development in the Order. We need as an Order to challenge it by seeking Pontifical Status so that we can decide things on our own.

I feel that the President Robert Mugabe raised the status of the sisters by asking them to run Kutama Hospital that he named after a Jesuit priest Fr. O hea. The President reiterated his speech on handover of the Hospital that he always wished that the local

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sisters be like the International Orders who run St Annes Hospital in Harare and Marte Deo in Bulawayo.

We have limited freedom when it comes to expansion, but I think we are capable. Sometimes there is lack of commitment from the sisters. This lack of commitment is attributed to lack of property. We do not have the means of production as sisters. We provide

labour and thus nothing really to motivate us. There is need to liberate ourselves. Some members are ignorant of their values of the Institute and this drags growth.

### **Sr. Helen Tendayi Maminimini – Current Superior General and Doctor Of Canon Law**

Sr. Helen Tendayi is the present Superior General of the LCBL Order. She has done doctorate in Canon Law. Besides Office work she is employed part time to teach the young men in Tafara who are studying for priesthood.

Concerning the present state of the Order, as Superior she has different perspectives about the way she perceives the Order. She has two ways of looking at the Order; she looks from an internal point of view and also from an external perspective. Her understanding of external is how the non-LCBL perceives the Order. Internal is how the members view themselves.

Sr Helen touches on a number of items that she identifies with the Order. She comments on the following.

On education she says:

There should be education for all, where people can read and write and count i.e. 3 Rs. The underlying aim is centred on improving the woman to be all round. Moving to 'The Signs of the Time' some sisters are now computer literate which I think upholds cultural values and building self esteem, patriotism, family spirit, courage and simplicity. The type of education the sisters receive help them to teach by example, to be good Christians and religious. This education helps us to promote gospel values, respect for life and respect for transcended love of neighbour.

Our education is centred on our Charism and through it we uphold values. The Charism stresses the principle of simplicity (MT5, LK 10, MK 10:14) derived from the Scriptures "Unless you become like little children..." this implies trust and receptivity.

Together with this we are guided by the Marian virtues. The virtues help us not to seek immediate gratification, but help us to identify with the Marian Faith-let it be done according to your word. We impart this to those we work with and again through living our vows we deepen our faith.

The External View

The outsiders see us as women of God. We have professed that we want to follow Christ radically. We are committed in our work because we do not have the family. Of course here and there we find the odd one out who are not committed. For example in schools Heads prefer to have a number of sisters because they know they are committed and go for extra time. This is what I think is the identity we have from our side- sisters who are committed.

Apostolates

On our major occupations of the Order, we fall short and far out stretched. Certain ministries where we work are limited. We have not yet trained our sisters to work with

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the modern woman and girl. There is need to restructure ourselves and fit the modern mind. Teaching was and is still our main apostolate and for a long time a big number of sisters were sent for teacher training. There is need for radical transformation in this area because we are overstretched in two ways- geographically and occupationally-apostolates.

Geographically we are found in three Dioceses and there we can doubt our effectiveness since we cannot stuff the places with our sisters in order to be more effective. Where is our focus and status going? We are crippled now because of age, deaths and those who leave. Sometimes you ask a sister what she wants to do, she dreams and tells you something that does not match with her capacity. We end up limiting sisters for training because it is difficult to convince the sisters on what to do.

However, the biggest problem is the present status the Order has- Diocesan Right status. This position places the Order under the authority of the Bishop. Implying that me as the Superior General I have very little powers concerning decision making particularly when it comes to decide on big projects like acquiring property. That is why we do not have our own schools and property to run.

This creates problems for us, it is difficult to really show who we are and cannot think of coming up with policies that guide us. Our values are stifled because they clash with the employer's. What we get is just the respect for the dignity of labour. We have remained without a character for too long and this makes us lose a sense of direction. We cannot assess or evaluate our progress and growth. Ultimately, our charism is not clear and not expressed fully, thus lack of confidence with our own spirituality. It is difficult to implement our own idea of working when working under such circumstances.

It is quite discouraging because we do not develop. In this situation we are not different from a girl who is not married, she does not take things seriously.

Our way forward in this case would be to restructure our way of doing things, review contracts we have with different employers. We need probably to have separate committee to review our vision, recommend a more viable vision and learn to trade carefully.

The only way to get away with this status is by seeking Pontifical Status. Pontifical status means that we are freed from the powers of the Bishop and can run our own affairs. It is the Pope who grants this status and there are certain requirements to this. Again it is the Bishop who recommends the procedures. Of course there are always two sides of a coin. What I mean here is that there are advantages and disadvantages of the two positions.

### **LCBL Pastoral Workers**

At a workshop held in Chinhoyi on 11 to 14 April 2005, I had a chance to discuss with a number of Sisters involved in Pastoral work in the Diocese of Chinhoyi concerning the present state of our Order particularly looking at education.

#### **Sr Alphonso a pastoral worker at St Peters Parish in Chinhoyi comments.**

Education is there, but emphasis is put on candidates (beginners) instead of sisters. There is need to educate those who are already sisters rather than concentrate on the beginners people are not sure of. Education is taking precedence over pastoral. I think this is wrong approach altogether.

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I want to say something about our education; I think it is wrong education when it promotes segregation among members. An educated person is simple and does not look upon others. There is tension between teachers and pastoral workers. It is a problem which the congregation must address. I suggest that Pastoral sisters need relevant education that makes them confident to deal with the issue at stake. We as pastoral sisters we feel inferior because we are not trained for the job, so suppose we were also qualified for our job, there would be no superior and inferior.

In our field we are dealing with people from all walks of life and they need someone who is competent. It is our own initiative in pastoral work to produce good results, not because we are trained to do that. It is actually a challenging field, which needs the same treatment like teaching or nursing. It actually demands a lot because one is dealing with souls and thus needs to have the rightful training.

Problems are created when people are not educated or trained for the job. What the congregation should bear in mind is that in whichever field one is, the most important thing is service, which the sister is rendering. The sisters in communities judge the other person with the salary one gets. That is absurd it should not be found in religious, as a result classes indirectly emerge. We the sisters in Pastoral work we need to be empowered and equipped so that we can give of our best.

I suggest that there are some short courses in Social communication, computers catechetical and counselling. We need such skills to form the basis of our carrier. I recommend that the sisters with a full O Level certificate be granted opportunities to do basic counselling skills. There is also need to assign mature sisters and not junior sisters for pastoral work. We should not waste time sending young sisters with 5 0 levels for Pastoral work before they are trained for something.

Considering our identity, it is still unclear; though we are trying our best in the places we work. The fact still remains that we are limited in the way we advertise ourselves, we cannot implement our values. We find with other Orders that run schools or Hospitals emblems of their spirituality and values they want to emphasise. Hence our identity remains blurred and slowly we lose it. Sometimes you hear priests saying mockingly “vakadzi avo” meaning those women. The problems we encounter from my own point of view are caused by this lack of focus and not having what we call ours. We see no need to venture into productive projects because we continue to think that when we train the sisters we are training for the Diocese. Until this is addressed I do not see us progressing well.

### **Sr Elizabeth Mudzimu- Pastoral Worker in Banket**

Sr Elizabeth is a Junior sister in the Order and is doing Pastoral work in Banket. She works with women and the youths. Ironically we can say she is the assistant Parish Priest because she works closely with the priest. Elizabeth has her own ways of understanding the Orders present state concerning the different Apostolate the sisters do. She says, I like being a nun, but the problem starts with the small community where as a junior sister am faced with big problems. The respect I get from the lay is quite encouraging. When the laity say sister they mean it. Whereas the sisters in the community discourage and cannot appreciate the service you are offering. Sometimes you feel there is no togetherness, but only pulling each other down.

I feel there is need to work as a team and protect one another in our different apostolates.

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To a certain extent yes we can say that we are having opportunities to work with women and girls, but we do not have the freedom to do what we would have wanted to do, because the whole programme is designed by the Diocese, we are there as implementers. In a way we are fulfilling Chichester's wishes to uplift the status of women and girls.

In Chinhoyi Diocese we are trying to read the Signs of the Times through our involvement with women and the youths. We have answered to a greater extent the cry to help those affected by HIV AIDS by starting Tariro Day Care Centre. The centre caters for the orphaned children both boys and girls whose parents died of Aids. One of us, Sr. Ellen Shingai Chawira has initiated this project and it is gradually taking shape. So, on one hand we can say it is possible to start something of our own as an Order. Still in Chinhoyi, Sr. Yullita Farai Chirau LCBL who works as the Health Coordinator in the Diocese has started a Herbal Centre where she is producing some herbs to help those who cannot foot hospital bills. However, I strongly feel that we need a proper vision for education. I think we need a school, hospital and big projects that we call ours. The reason to run our own schools is for us to have identity and be identified with our own things. One other thing is to have property in terms of schools or hospitals for expressing our Charism and to bring it to fruition.

My personal view on education is that we are a little bit behind compared to other Orders. While I cherish the idea of community experience as a junior sister soon after Novitiate, in some instances, instead of having community experience, I think it would be ideal to send the sisters for some Tertiary Education before they grow too old. It is an area I feel we should improve and not waste time having sisters working without training. Education is essential to improve our status, but I do not think that our Order realises this aspect. It seems to hesitate to send sisters to educate sisters for one reason or another. It thinks it is wasting resources and a waste of time to have sisters taking up different courses, which in the long run will improve the living standards of the Order. Right now in the field I am working I was just asked to work with women by virtue of being a sister. I do not have any training as to how I should work with the women and youths. There are some short courses of counselling and pastoral care one can do before assigned for the job. As a result one makes so many blunders and is accused for scandals, incompetence and inefficiency. There are so many opportunities and resources around and people are willing to help, but it seems the Order is hesitant to accept such chances. For instance, in pastoral work we deal with people who hold top positions in society who are willing to assist sisters to secure places in colleges.

Apparently, I think we have so many opportunities and a lot of talent in sisters, which is not yet realised and utilised. We just need to shape what is already there. Right now in Chinhoyi Diocese we have opportunities to work with women and girls, which is what our Charism encourages, but we have qualified personnel to do that. We are coordinating most of the women's activities, but due to lack of knowledge in the field we do not really parade ourselves.

I recommend therefore our leadership to give sisters opportunities to be trained before embarking on the contracts with the Diocese or Parish. In this epoch, the world has

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become a global village due to technology, I suggest that each house have a computer and if possible access to the Internet and to new modes of Communication.

### **Domestic Workers – Sisters working in Institutions as Boarding matrons or cooks**

#### **Sr Irene Manyemwe a junior sister and in charge of Arrupe College Kitchen.**

Sr Irene has been at Arrupe College since 2001 and she has this to say concerning her Apostolate and her views about education in the Order. She begins,

Everyday before I retire for the day's activity, I ask myself several questions concerning my assignment at Arrupe. My job leaves me dog-tired and I often ask myself weather I am exerting my energy on the right place and for the right thing. I get the consolation that I am doing my best serving the Lord as I prepare meals for the young men who want to work for the Lord. Of course this other disturbing thought comes asking why am wearing out on someone's project. I use the analogy of a concert where the host invites dancers to entertain the guests. After, the concert everyone praises the host for a well organised party, but none comments on the good and entertaining dancers. Similarly that is the nature of my job, providing entertainment, in this case labour.

I do not refute the idea of getting contracts; it is another way of getting ourselves known, but of course indirectly.

I suggest that such contracts need to be reviewed and sisters given opportunities to further their studies and not to satisfy the employers desires. Nothing wrong to take up such contracts but I think they require unskilled labour meaning that those with qualifications to do some training should be given chances to train for something that will benefit the Order. Surprisingly, those you are working for are educating their own and are planning their future. It is an area I think we need to review as an Order and make radical changes to review such contracts that stifle our future.

#### **Sr Hilda Manyumbo**

Sr. Hilda Manyumbo is a finally professed sister in the Order and is working as a domestic worker. Sr Hilda once worked as a Matron at Chishawasha Seminary comments on the present state of the Order concerning education and the apostolates.

She says,

I am satisfied with my apostolate because I know that is how far my potential can reach. I do not envy those who have better things to do, I am contented because I know I am serving God in my work. I only have problems when I see Our Order not taking initiative to send sisters with qualifications for tertiary education whichever field. Those with societal requirements should be given opportunities to develop.

I recommend that the Order take a better stance to see the sisters progressing in the field of Education. This position of education tells us that we do not value education, because society is ahead of us. People are actually fighting to secure vacancies in colleges.

### **Nursing Apostolate**

#### **Sr. Salome Kwanza –student**

Sr, Salome is a student at the University of Zimbabwe doing a Nursing Degree. She comments on the present state of the Order concerning education. She says,

The Order seems to be doing very little about training nurses. There are few nurses in the Order and not enough to stuff all the hospitals we are running. There is need I think to

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take advantage of the new nursing programmes that government has initiated and send as many sisters as possible. It is amazing how hard to take up such opportunities that are open for everyone and with reasonable qualifications required. Again we take too long to train people that we end up giving administrative responsibilities to unqualified or less experienced personnel. We stress people and we end up blaming them forgetting we all contributed.

There is need to have as many sisters trained so that we have competent people. I think there are so many opportunities; we just need to be radical and forget about some contracts that diminish our numbers in colleges. We still need to improve a lot in our educational system as a congregation. We should be well equipped ourselves before we reach out to others since society depends heavily on us.

**Sr. Bernard Chabikwa- resigned Hospital Administrator- now Bursar General for the Order.**

Sr Bernard worked as a Hospital Administrator for more than 10 years. She describes her experiences how she ran the mission hospitals without any administrative qualifications. The first five years as an administrator she had no training and later went to Polytechnic and trained for the job.

She says,

It was a nightmare when I was asked to go to MaryMount Mission Hospital and work as an administrator. It was through obedience that I went because I had just done basic book keeping and nothing else. I did what I could, but it is like the blind leading another blind. It is there that I realised how important it is for the Order to send many sisters for courses. I also thought that it is doing justice to the Order if some contracts are not accepted if we do not have trained personnel. The situation depresses the person asked to perform duties one is not trained for.

However, I did to the best of my ability until I got the opportunity to go to Polytechnic to study Administration. At Polytechnic I valued education and wished our Order could take it seriously to train sisters for the jobs before assigning them. I still recommend the Order to allow as many sisters as it can for training in many fields even open opportunities for sisters to upgrade themselves in their fields. We should take advantage of the distance form of Education now in our country.

**1 Sr. Jane Faith Jemwa (Appendix 4)**

Sr. Jane Faith Jemwa Dietician at Mary Mount Hospital in Rushinga sees charism as a mission that channels all activities of the Order including training personnel to keep itself going and fulfilling its mission in the Church. If ideas of what people should do are not explicit, the result is that people end up doing anything since there will be no guide. The question to ask would be does the Order require Dieticians or does it have an educational guide to decide on what to train people for.<sup>176</sup>

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### **Sr. Gertrude Madzinga**

Sr. Gertrude Madzinga a junior sister in the Order also expressed concern over the Charism.

She says,

What does one say or tell people when asked about the Order's Charism. It is not difficult when a Dominican sister is asked to tell people about her Charism. She would describe the Charism just in a phrase. Yet in our case it is something else, I do not know what to say. Is the verse "Unless you change and become like a little child you shall not enter the Kingdom of God" our Charism? I am confused because I hear others saying simplicity, humility and cheerfulness. What exactly can one say in short about the Charism?<sup>176</sup>

From Sr. Madzinga's response one can tell that there is a big problem of clarity concerning the Charism. It is not clear to the members and it shows the urgency of looking at the issue seriously. The literature emphasised the importance of re-examining the charism for the purpose of the mission.

### **Sr. Florence Muchingami, the Postulancy Mistress of the**

**Order** has a different understanding and she argues,

Our Charism is quite clear. It states child like simplicity, humility and cheerfulness. The problem is that when the Constitution was revised it did not take the old form that explained the Charism clearly to an ordinary person. The revised Constitution is not explicit; it leaves out some important phrasing. It actually focuses on the Biblical text and fails to come up with a simplified and understandable (**Appendix 4**) Charism.<sup>176</sup>

Sr. Florence's view of the charism left some sisters puzzled and they still required clarification.

Such a dilemma shows that the Order is in a serious identity crisis, which needs immediate attention. The literature mentions that those in leadership should help to carry out the mission which in this case is the charism. The LCBL leadership has a long way to go to make sure that the members understand the charism. The lack of understanding of the charism results in loss of identity and of culture within the order. In fact, the foundation and continuity of the congregation lie in the charism.



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**Appendix 5: Archbishop Christopher Ndlovu Speech at LCBL Congress In Chishawasha 15 August 2006**

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**Appendix 6: LCBL governance structure:**

The Bishop

LCBL General Council (Superior General and Council)

Regional Council

Communities – Local Superior & Members

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**Appendix 7 Definitions**

<b>Diocesan Right vs Pontifical status</b>	<b>The LCBL congregation is under the jurisdiction of the Bishop, its structures are different from the international congregations who have acquired a Pontifical status.</b>
<b>Order or congregation</b>	<b>Title given to a religious group of nuns, priests and brothers.</b>
<b>Status</b>	<b>States the number of sisters in the congregation.</b>
<b>Chapter</b>	<b>The highest board elected by the congregation to conduct elections of new leadership and to review progress of the congregation</b>
<b>Mbonga and Pfunda</b>	<b>Equivalent to spinster and bachelor by choice</b>
<b>Vows</b>	<b>Commitment by a religious to God by promising to live in poverty, chastity and obedience.</b>
<b>Community</b>	<b>Houses and also number of people in that house.</b>
<b>Charism</b>	<b>It's the main essence of the congregation</b>

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## **Appendix 8: : non-LCBL responses**

### **Fr. Fidelis Mukonori Jesuit Provincial in Zimbabwe Commenting on the identity of the LCBL**

Fr. Mukonori appreciates what the sisters have done particularly their contribution during the Chimurenga war. The sisters were courageous and supported the ordinary people in the missions. To a greater extent the sisters have made impact to the youth and have empowered both men and women in life skills. However, Fr. Mukonori thinks that in terms of development the congregation has taken too long to move. He is of the idea that the congregation should prove to other stakeholders that it is capable of running projects competently so that it can later be handed over some schools to own and run. For him the climate to start big projects like running schools is not conducive due to the economic hardship. Identity becomes difficult if one is not implementing his or her policies.

### **Br. Benjamin Posvo Redemptorist**

The LCBL identity unlike the Dominican or other international orders is difficult to see. For any congregation to survive it needs pillars to support it so that it can easily be identified. There is need to revise what the congregation is supposed to do so that its mission is carried out and thus its identity being recognised.

### **Canisio Tanyanyiwa MBA Student and Researcher**

The way I see the LCBL sisters is that they have no identity at all. They are not focused in education and the mission they are supposed to do. Look at the sisters at Arrupe College, how can you waste resources like that leaving Junior sisters to cook for the students at Arrupe when they are also suppose to be in school. There is no way the congregation can develop and have an identity when it does not educate the young blood. It is necessary to groom the young ones for continuity's sake.

### **Br Felix Majiche SJ.**

The Jesuits you see today world over did not begin big, they started small, but they had a vision. The vision gave us the mission and thus showing who we are. Jesuits wherever they are, are known for their education. The values of any organisation should be clear and people should be able to identify the group with a particular thing. Likewise the LCBL congregation should be able to spell out its mission through a specific apostolate that it will be well known for.

### **Fr. Peter Otieno SJ Lecturer at Arrupe College**

Otieno commenting on the development of Jesuits in Kenya says, The Jesuits in East Africa have made a name and thus creating any identity that cannot be taken away from them through education. We send our young men to colleges and universities so that they are competent in the way they deal with people. Education helps to carry out the mission and finally people will know who you are. There are so many ways of getting funds to send people to school. The LCBL congregation should not be shy to beg so that many sisters are sent to school.

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**Mrs Alice Chirawu a friend and catholic parishioner at Our Lady of the Way Side Mt Pleasant**

Mrs Chirawu is quite happy with the presence of the sisters among the laity, but she feels the sisters could do more in terms of keeping abreast with the signs of times. The sisters should keep improving themselves in terms of education so that they remain relevant for people to appreciate their service. It should also be clear what the sisters do because most people do not know the sister's life.

**Mrs Emengilda Wazara**

“I grew up in the hands of the sisters and what I know very well about the sisters is that they are poor’. Mrs Wazara bred up by the LCBL sisters at Musami Mission thinks that the sisters were and are still oppressed by the priests. They are not given the platform to show who they are, the sisters work under the governance of the priests which limits the sisters to expand and show their identity. The only way the sisters can liberate themselves is through education. She advises the LCBL leadership to take note of development in the congregation

**Mrs Mary- Anne Mhende Teacher and Catholic**

She appreciates the education she received from the Dominican sisters. What surprised her was that during her years in high school, the boarding matron was LCBL while the white Dominican sisters were the teachers. She thinks that there was segregation in the manner in which the African sisters were educated. She is quite happy now that she sees a number of LCBL sisters in colleges and in competent positions both in church and civil society. The LCBL sisters should build a school so that we can know them closely like the Dominicans and Jesuit.

**Dr. Maggie Okore Educationist and Catholic from Kenya**

What I am today, I got it from the sisters of Loreto and I can still talk of them proudly. The LCBL congregation is taking too long to stand up and run its own affairs. She thinks the LCBL congregation is capable of doing great things but may be lacking faith and trust in God. It is high time that the sisters should build a school even a nursing home so that it can impart its values. For Maggie it is a sin to waste away resources and not participating fully in what God requires from his people.

**Sr. Monica Nyachowe O.P Dominican Primary School Headmistress**

In our Dominican schools we talk of Veritas meaning truth. All the values we impart in our schools are centred on truth. The LCBL congregation should also design its values that are centred on its charism so that by the end of the day they have an identity. Most of the international congregations still have a mark because they are focused and do something specific.

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**Sr. Aleta Dube SJI**

Sr. Aleta is from a local congregation in the Diocese of Gweru and she thinks that local congregations are taking too long to develop and lack their true identity because of very little education. Few members are highly educated and it means they will make very little impact. Sr. Aleta lectures at Chishawasha Seminary and feels that men look down upon women in the church. It is high time the women religious should run their own affairs and develop themselves.

**Dr. David Kaulem University of Zimbabwe and AFCAST Director at Arrupe College**

While we look at the women religious in Zimbabwe, as a Catholic I feel that the sisters are taking too long to run their own affairs. Looking at the LCBL congregation, Kaulem thinks that the LCBL congregation needs a turn around. This turn around should start with the spiritual framework and then move to other things. There is danger to assess the growth of the congregation basing on tangible things. Start internally and then move outside, it might be that the congregation does not need to build schools but needs to strengthen its spirituality, which then forms the basis of whatever needs to be done.

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