Resistance to and Acquiescence in Apartheid

St. Paul’s Theological College, Grahamstown, 1965-92

Henry Mbaya
# Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreword</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thabo Makgoba, Archbishop of Cape Town</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviations</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training Anglicans in the Context of Apartheid 1965-71</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 2</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflicting Theological, Ideological and Spiritual Orientations? 1972-75</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 3</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through the Strong Winds of Change 1976-78</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 4</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racially Segregated Amenities 1977-81</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 5</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“A ‘Normal’ Community in an ‘Abnormal’ Society” 1982-83</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 6</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“A Little Pocket of Normality”? 1983-85</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 7</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living through the ‘Kairos’ 1986-92</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Paul’s College: A Site of Struggle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index</td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Acknowledgements

As a final product, this book was made possible by the efforts of a host of people. First and foremost, I wish to convey my gratitude to the Research Committee of the Faculty of Theology of the Stellenbosch University. In 2013, the Committee awarded me a Hope Project grant, which enabled me to conduct research for three years. In this respect, I am greatly indebted to Prof. Nico Koopman, then the Dean of the Faculty. Part of the research grant for this project was used to run a workshop on Oral History methodologies, which Prof. Philippe Denis and Christina Landman conducted and to whom I am also indebted.

In a very special way, I am indebted to Fr. Austen Jackson, a colleague in the Church and a friend. It was Austen who initially prompted me to embark on this project in 2013 at the time when I was feeling reticent to do it. Throughout the process of research and writing, Austen’s inspiration and encouragement and support was invaluable. I am also indebted to Prof. Johan Cilliers and Karlie August (the latter retired in 2015) in the Department of Practical Theology and Missiology, who have always been very supportive of this project.

Similarly, I am indebted to my elder brother, Dr. Patrick Mbaya, and my sister-in-law, Marlene Mbaya, for their encouragement during the process of writing this book. I am also indebted to Bishop Peter Lee, who gave me institutional consent in 2013 to use the Anglican Archives at Wits University in Johannesburg. I am equally obliged to Prof. James Amanze of the University of Botswana, who, in much earlier years of my theological training, gave me a lot of support and encouragement. The same applies to Bishop Geoff Davies (the former Bishop of Umzimvubu), who over the years was very supportive of my academic journey while working in full-time ministry in the Diocese of Umzimvubu. Likewise, I am indebted to Di Buchanan who kindly allowed me to interview her, but also gave me beautiful photos of some former students of St. Paul’s College.

I am greatly indebted to all who granted me interviews, amongst them Charles van Heerden and Howard Bradshaw, former students of the College. These two also facilitated some contacts with former students of St. Paul’s College. Canon Prof. John Suggit, Revd. Canon Dr. Chichele Hewitt, Bishop Philip Le Feuvre and Charmian Le Feuvre also deserve special mention for granting me a number of interviews. In a very special way, I am greatly indebted to Michael Worsnip, who from the beginning of the project until the very end not only tirelessly offered very critical and invaluable comments, but also gave me contact information of important informants. Worsnip was also very generous to lend me personal documents that shed light on some aspects of this study. Proff. McGlory Speckman and Louis Jonker (a colleague) have similarly played a very important role in reading the manuscript and offering their valuable critical comments. Likewise, I am indebted to the staff of the Historical Section of the William Cullen Library at Wits University in Johannesburg, who always made manuscripts and other documents available to me. I cannot fail to mention Mr. Endson Jabu (shemeji), who for a while was my research assistant. I am grateful to Manitza Kotzé, whose invaluable editorial work enhanced the literary quality of this book. If there are any mistakes in this book, I take full responsibility.
Finally, but not least, I am very grateful to my wife, Nobandla Anna Mbaya, for her enormous support throughout the period that I worked on the project. I am also very grateful to my mother, Mrs. Rosemary Mbaya, who raised me from the age of nine, and has always been a pillar of support and strength. My gratitude is also due to our children: Thoko, Anina, Thomas, Brandina and Zukiswa, and now the little granddaughter, Eliana T.I. (ETI) Phiri and the little grandson, Luzuko Mbaya, for enduring my long absences when they needed me. It is indeed a great privilege and honour to dedicate this book to my late dad, Canon George Samuel Mbaya, and my late mother, Catherine Mbaya, who would have been very proud to see this book. May they rest in peace!

Henry Mbaya
Stellenbosch 2018

About the author

Dr. Henry Mbaya is Associate Professor in Missiology at Stellenbosch University. He graduated from the former University of Natal, the University of KwaZulu-Natal and Rhodes University. He is an Anglican priest and currently serves in the Anglican Diocese of False Bay. He recently authored *The Making of an African Clergy in the Anglican Church in Malawi: 1898-1996*. 
In a foreword to Henry Mbaya’s recent study of the growth of locally-born ministers of the Anglican Church in Malawi, I appealed for more scholarship like it, noting that the enormous contemporary challenges facing the Church in Southern Africa had resulted in the writing of our history taking a back seat.

So I am pleased that Henry himself has taken up the challenge and delivered this extensively researched history of the struggles of the old St. Paul’s College, Grahamstown, to transform itself from a racially segregated institution that prepared only White students for ordination, to one which more closely reflected the Church it was meant to serve.

Through archival research and interviews, he has not only produced a detailed study of St. Paul’s from the 1950s to the early 1990s, but he has given valuable pointers to more research that he believes could enrich the story. Suffice it to say, in just about every aspect of our common life as a Church in South Africa, our attempts at transformation were characterised by failure as well as success, and Henry has demonstrated this admirably.

As it turned out, and appropriately, it took the closure of both St. Paul’s and St. Bede’s College in Mthatha, and their amalgamation with St. Peter’s College (formerly of Johannesburg, Alice and Edendale) and le Lapa le Jesu in Lesotho, to create a single, united, non-racial College of the Transfiguration (COTT).

Is it too much to hope that one day we will see published a history of theological education as a whole through the life of our Province, beginning with the formation of St. Bede’s in 1879, including all the colleges, and ending with an assessment of the achievements of the early years of COTT?

The Most Revd. Thabo Makgoba
Archbishop and Metropolitan
7 July 2016
Abbreviations

ANC        African National Congress
Ansoc      Anglican Society
ASATI      Association of South African Tertiary Institutions
ASF        Anglican Students Federation
BCM        Black Consciousness Movement
BOSS       Bureau of State Security
CI         Christian Institute
COSAS      Congress of South African Students
COTT       College of the Transfiguration
CPSA       Church of the Province of Southern Africa
DRC        Dutch Reformed Church
Fedsem     Federal (Theological) Seminary
GADRA      Grahamstown District Relief Association
ICT        Institute for Contextual Theology
IDASA      Institute for Democratic Alternatives in South Africa
LIC        Low Intensity Conflict
NUSAS      National Union of South African Students
PCR        Programme to Combat Racism
PSC        Provincial Standing Committee
SACC       South African Council of Churches
SACLA      South African Christian Leadership Assembly
SACOS      South African Council of Sport
SASO       South African Students Organisation
SPCK       Society for the Propagation of the Christian Knowledge
SPROCAS    Study Project of Christianity in Apartheid South Africa
UCM        Universities Christian Movement
UDF        United Democratic Front
USPG       United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel
UWL        University of Witwatersrand Library
WCC        World Council of Churches
Introduction

Resistance to and Acquiescence in Apartheid: St. Paul’s Theological College, Grahamstown, 1965-92 is an historical account of a major Provincial Anglican theological college, St. Paul’s Theological College. The College was based in Grahamstown, South Africa, during the era of colonialism, and later apartheid in the years 1902 to 1992. As the title indicates, it highlights the College’s two contrasting responses to apartheid: the one positive and the other negative.

The book tries to show that there were many instances when the College (and the leadership) sought to resist some forms of apartheid policy and practices. Equally, there were also times when the College seemed to yield to these. The reality, however, was that the College’s response to the challenge of apartheid was not a simple matter. Sometimes the line between resistance and acquiescence seemed very thin.

This book seeks to respond to the questions: How did St. Paul’s College live through the apartheid era in the years 1965 to 1992? In what ways did apartheid impact on the College? How did the various role players in the College or those associated with it respond to these challenges?

Archival documents

In seeking to answer these questions, this book constructs a narrative out of various sources. One of these is the documented information of the Anglican Church deposited in the Historical Papers section of the Research Archives of the William Cullen Library at the University of the Witwatersrand (UWL) in Johannesburg. Among these sources is the College logbook.

College logbook

To some degree this source of information is unique. It derives from the narratives recorded by the College logbook scribes over the years. According to Leslie Adriaanse, a former student of St. Paul’s College (1983-1985), himself one time a logbook scribe, the scribe used to be appointed by the Warden on the recommendation of the outgoing scribe. His duty, so Adriaanse recalled, was to record personal stories of students, and some events that took place in and outside the College that affected the College. Sometimes the scribe recorded these with some humour and wit. The fact that these recordings were not subjected to audit or were checked by the authorities does not render them less valuable historical documents. In many instances, the logbook narratives shed some light on important contemporary events and issues in the life of the College.

---

1 Hereinafter, St. Paul’s College.

2 Personal communication with the author, 12 January 2018.
Oral interviews

This book has also extensively utilised oral source information of 43 interviews (and a few questionnaires) conducted with some former students and members of staff of St. Paul’s College. Stories from interviews are intended to give a voice to various people about their own experiences of apartheid during their time of theological training. Enabling them to relate their experiences was intended to foster some sort of healing of memories during the traumatic period of apartheid. I have tried my best to give a fair representation to the racial and gender composition of the College, although tracing Black African female former students of St. Paul’s College has been unsuccessful.

The inspiration to embark on this project was partly prompted in 2012 by my reading of Philippe Denis and Graham Duncan’s book, The Native School that Caused all the Trouble, a story of the Federal Theological Seminary (Fedsem) in Alice, and later on at Imbali in Edendale, Pietermaritzburg. After reading that book, I could not but ask myself: To what extent was St. Paul’s College in Grahamstown politically engaged or not politically engaged? In what ways did the College try to resist apartheid?

Likewise, the motivation to research St. Paul’s College also rose partly out of my own reflection on an institution that shaped others and my own theological training in the late 1980s. In this respect, this is merely an attempt to write the history of a very important theological institution in the Anglican Church in Southern Africa.

Flora Keshgegian noted: “All history is a construction.” The stories that the informants give are not intended to tell the ‘truth’ about what actually happened. Rather, they convey an approximation of what and how it took place. As Keshgegian further noted: “Historical meaning is not fixed.” As recollections and reflections, the stories, which form the bulk of the narrative, are essentially interpretations of what happened. In some instances, what the informants say is supported by and elucidated by archival documents. I have also used secondary sources on various aspects of the socio-political and religious history of South Africa and the Anglican Church.

But the book is more than just a history of the College. It is a story that gives insight into the various struggles that related to socio-economic, cultural and political issues as the College sought to respond to the challenge of apartheid. These struggles or tensions, by groups or individuals, derived from different perceptions and interpretation of issues related to apartheid. Fundamentally, these tensions and conflicts derived from a religious ideology and outlook that projected reality into binaries – the ‘sacred’ versus the ‘secular’, ‘religion’ as opposed to ‘politics’, or ‘church’ versus ‘state’.

The year 1965 is particularly significant as the year when apartheid was being entrenched. It was also a golden era of the Ecumenical Renewal, as well as an era characterised by the ‘death of God’ debate in the Anglican Church. To some extent, the story of St. Paul’s College covered in this period

---

3 Denis, P. and Duncan, G. The Native School that Caused all the Trouble. Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 2011.
5 ibid.
is a history of transformation. The book traces the changes that the College went through from 1965 to 1992, the year that the College closed, and gave way to the establishment of the College of the Transfiguration (COTT). These changes entailed racial, cultural, gender and theological perspectives.

Apartheid had many faces to which the College sought to respond. Essentially, this book is about the mission of the Church in theological education in the context of apartheid. Hence, it could also be viewed from the perspective of the following question: What missionary role did St. Paul’s College play in the context of apartheid? The mission of the Church and theological education are in fact inseparable, as will become clear throughout this book. This book, however, does not pretend to cover all issues or challenges that the College went through. This would be an almost impossible task to achieve. The book has nonetheless tried to grapple with some of the major ones.
Chapter 1 | Training Anglicans in the Context of Apartheid 1965-71

KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENT THAT WHEREAS in the year of Our Lord One Thousand and Nine Hundred and Two the Bishop of Grahamstown established a residential Theological College for the training of European candidates for the Sacred ministry, and allowed the said College to use, during and his successors pleasure, certain ground in Grahamstown.¹

Through this proclamation, St. Paul’s College was officially established in Grahamstown, South Africa, in 1902. It was exclusively to train male European Anglicans, who responded to a vocation to the priesthood. By then, the Anglican Church in South Africa had made significant inroads in both ‘Black’ and ‘White’ communities and had consequently inspired a lot of vocations. Despite this development, overseas mission agencies such as the United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (USPG) and the Society for the Propagation of the Christian Knowledge (SPCK) had not stopped sending missionaries, some of whom were already qualified priests, while others received their training in South Africa and a few were sent to England. The money invested by mission agencies also determined the kind of training that was provided; it had to be an extension, if not a mirror of the training provided to Anglican ordinands in Europe. The staff initially employed to teach there also came directly from Europe. Consequently, the English model was transplanted to South Africa without regard to the marked differences in the two contexts. If anything, one of its unintended consequences was to advance cultural imperialism.

This appears to have been accepted as a divinely ordained order of things until the winds of change began to blow following World War II. By then,² the apartheid ideology in South Africa was slowly beginning to crystallise and by the mid-1960s, it had become a political system. Enforced racial segregation, which was one of its cornerstones, challenged the Anglican Church to lay bare its identity and theological foundations. While social stratification was not new in British societies, the fact that apartheid was intended to create a ‘pure’ White race, as well as to preserve its privileges at the expense of dark-skinned Africans, was an embarrassment to both the Church and the civilised world. However, not all Anglican leaders (who were entirely White) perceived it in the same way. Nor did those who expressed different views agree on how to be Church of God in the apartheid context. Theological education and training was not spared from this controversy. In fact, it could not escape it, because the ambassadors of the Anglican Church and what it stood for were products of its theological education.

¹ ACT X, Constitution and Trust Deed of St. Paul’s College, AB 2568, B 4, 1983-86 (emphasis in original document), Historical Papers, Research Archives, UWL.
² The apartheid system was ushered in by the National Party in 1948. Its policies were being constantly perfected and implemented between that time and the mid-1980s when the National Party was forced to water down or scrap some of the policies, starting in Namibia. For the purposes of the book, the period focus is 1965-1971.