

## “They have opened their doors to black children at our expense”: The chronicle of Inanda Seminary during the 1990s

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### Introduction

The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM, or American Board) established Inanda Seminary in 1869 as its flagship secondary educational institution for black girls.<sup>1</sup> The school is the oldest extant high school for black girls in southern Africa.<sup>2</sup> The Seminary cooperated with its sibling school, Adams College (established in 1853 and again in 1865 as the Amanzimtoti Institute) to produce *kholwa* (“believing”) partners and families, who would be the harbingers of Western Christian culture, education, and religion to the Zulus and thus “native agency”.<sup>3</sup> The American Zulu Mission (AZM) utilised the Seminary as a lynchpin in its effort to foster “social reproduction”, “the gendered processes by which workers and children survive and are reproduced ... to effect a self-sustaining chain of Christian transformations”.<sup>4</sup> Despite and because of the patriarchal world, women held the key to societal transformation, for “the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world”.<sup>5</sup>

### Difficulties and demise in context

During its long history, Inanda Seminary experienced grave difficulties and escaped closure many times. From 1870 to 1876, the school experienced a gradual recession. The AZM “fathers” were not entirely convinced of the need to educate black girls and hence were often tight-fisted with funds. Fees from

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1. Though race categorisations are social constructs that crudely describe far more nuanced realities (races are better placed on a spectrum rather than in boxed “pigeon-holes”), I use them to describe historical events. “Black” is capitalised when used as a proper noun (“the Blacks”) but not capitalised when used as an adjective (“black girls”). I do likewise with other racial categories: “education for Whites” and “a white teacher”.
2. H. Hughes, “A Lighthouse for African Womanhood”: Inanda Seminary, 1869–1945”, in C. Walker (ed.), *Women and Gender in Southern Africa* (David Philip, Cape Town, 1990), p 197.
3. M. Healy-Clancy, *A World of Their Own: A History of South African Women’s Education* (University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, Pietermaritzburg, 2013), pp 19 and 20–28.
4. Healy-Clancy, *A World of Their Own*, pp 2 and 19, respectively. Healy-Clancy cites on p 201 (footnote 4): M. Hunter, “Beneath the ‘Zunami’: Jacob Zuma and the Gendered Politics of Social Reproduction in South Africa”, *Antipode*, February 2011, p 3. This explicitly emphasises the reproduction of people from social relations. See also K. Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy* (Vintage, New York, 1977), (first published in German, 1867; first published in English, 1887), p 711: “Every social process of production is at the same time a process of reproduction”. The American Zulu Mission was the local entity, “in the field”, of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.
5. Healy-Clancy, *A World of Their Own*, p 231. Healy-Clancy cites on p 231 (footnote 31): X.Y.Z. (R. Dhlomo), “Women and Their Responsibility”, *The Bantu World*, 30 September 1939, p 9.

students were almost non-existent. The school depended on grants made by the American Board, subsidies from the colonial government and the savings derived from the students' own labour. The school's operations were interrupted many times: in 1885 after an outbreak of "meningitis"; in 1890 due to "typhomalarial fever" and in 1901 by "enteric".<sup>6</sup> During the South African War which began in 1899, the school escaped confiscation from British and Boer belligerents – a distinct possibility given that the Seminary was near the old military road running through Inanda. From 1906 to 1912, the colonial government reduced its grant-in-aid, in existence since 1870. World War I brought strain to the school because high prices and a scarcity of ordinary building materials and supplies prevented progress. In 1919, the Seminary required infrastructural growth to absorb the transfer of many students from its sister school in Umzumbe that closed due to wartime cost-cutting measures. The school experienced hard times in the 1930s due to the American Board's struggle to raise funds during the Great Depression. Between 1930 and 1939 the Board's contribution to the school "dropped almost 50 per cent and every year ended with a big deficit".<sup>7</sup> In 1933 and 1934 there was talk of closing the school so as to prevent it from "starving to death".<sup>8</sup> Dr James McCord, superintendent of the American Board's medical ministry at McCord Hospital, "led the vote that Inanda Seminary *must* be kept going at all costs" (McCord and Wood's emphasis).<sup>9</sup>

In 1948, the National Party won the South African elections and thus ushered in a new era of the school's struggle to survive. The National Party implemented its political ideology, apartheid ("separate-ness"), that manifested itself most dramatically at Inanda Seminary through Bantu Education. The Bantu Education Act of 1953 sought to diminish the quality of education provided to people of colour in South Africa, confining them to be inferior and subject to Whites.<sup>10</sup> The mission schools, though often paternalistic and condescending, sought through the Christianisation and Westernisation of Africans the eventual integration of people of colour into society and thus realise political, economic and social equality. According to the architects of apartheid, these mission schools had to be closed or taken over by the white supremacist government as their pedagogical objectives were deemed deviant.<sup>11</sup> For example, in 1956, the government forced Adams College to close.<sup>12</sup> Adams College and many other mission schools were denied permission to continue as private institutions because they engendered an education, and thus learned products, that were at variance, both in quality and substance, with apartheid. In time, all other American

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6. Typhomalarial fever and enteric may be the same ailment by different names. Both are water borne diseases, usually via sewage. Meningitis, particularly viral, is spread by the faecal-oral route and through sewage. See S. Nettina (ed.), *Lippincott Manual of Nursing Practice* (Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, Philadelphia, 2006), pp 1042–1043, 677–681 and 502–503, respectively.
  7. A. Wood, *Shine Where you Are: A History of Inanda Seminary 1869–1969* (Lovedale Press, Alice, 1962), p 101.
  8. Wood, *Shine Where you Are*, p 102.
  9. Wood, *Shine Where you Are*, p 103.
  10. M. Morris, *Every Step of the Way: The Journey to Freedom in South Africa* (Human Sciences Research Council, Cape Town, 2004), p 164.
  11. M. Horrell, *Bantu Education to 1968* (South African Institute of Race Relations, Cape Town, 1968), pp 12–13.
  12. P. Ngonyama, "'The Struggle for Survival': Last Years of Adams College, 1953–1956", *Journal of Natal and Zulu History*, 28, 2010, pp 36–52.

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Board primary and night schools were also closed or taken over by the government.

On 20 September 1956, in an effort to remain open, Inanda Seminary applied to the government to continue as a private unaided school.<sup>13</sup> At the close of 1957, the government approved the Seminary's application. Although the school escaped direct government control and closure, the negative economic, educational, social and political ramifications of Bantu Education continued to haunt the school.

Bantu Education with other draconian apartheid policies created political and social turmoil in South Africa and thus negatively affected Inanda Seminary over time. For example, the 1976 Soweto uprising sparked decades-long opposition to inferior education and the 1986 State of Emergency, in response to the liberation movement's rendering the country ungovernable, impacted upon the school. During the 1990s, the profound internal and external dysfunction caused by apartheid repeatedly interrupted education at the school.<sup>14</sup> Yet, despite internal and external boycotts, strikes and riots, the Seminary survived.

Three factors brought about the demise of Inanda Seminary during the 1990s leading to its closure in 1997. All three causes of the school's closure, one of which can be termed "acute" and the other two "proximate", are linked to the implementation of Bantu Education.<sup>15</sup> First, Bantu Education diminished the school's financial and human resources. Prior to 1958, the school relied on three primary sources of income: tuition fees; a government subsidy; and American Board mission grants. By denying the school the ability to charge students tuition fees *and* denying it a government subsidy, Bantu Education forced the school to rely on only one of three primary sources of income, foreign mission grants.<sup>16</sup> The institutional link between the United States of America and the Seminary weakened from 1964 when the successor of the American Board, the United Church Board for World Ministries (UCBWM), relinquished control of the Seminary to the Bantu Congregational Church (BCC), the successor of the AZM, as part of its ongoing process of missiological "decolonisation".<sup>17</sup> The transoceanic link further weakened from 1967, when the BCC dissolved into the newly formed United Congregational Church of Southern Africa (UCCSA). The process of decolonisation neared completion when in the 1990s the UCBWM, through the UCCSA, decreased and at times withheld grants, for reasons both related and unrelated to the Seminary.<sup>18</sup> In 1989, the Reverend Dr Bonganjalo Goba, executive of the Africa Desk for UCBWM, visited the school and conveyed that he could no longer justify a R200 000 annual subsidy to the Seminary.<sup>19</sup> The wider

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13. S. Couper, "Fearing for its Future: Bantu Education's Threat of Closure to Inanda Seminary", *Journal of Gender & Religion in Africa*, 17, 1, July 2011, pp 74–95.

14. S. Couper, "...it is clear something is wrong here!": Inanda Seminary's Continued Survival during the 1980s", *Historia*, 58, 1, May 2013, pp 74–105.

15. I thank Thembisa Waetjen for her suggestion to use this terminology because it is preferable to "direct" and "indirect" causes.

16. The government also allowed the school to collect boarding fees which were (unofficially) inflated to cover, in part, tuition.

17. Healy-Clancy, *A World of Their Own*, pp 143 and 189.

18. Healy-Clancy, *A World of Their Own*, p 189.

19. Bonganjalo Goba next visited the school in May 1991 and again articulated much the same. Inanda Seminary Archive (hereafter ISA), Board of Governors Minutes (hereafter

church no longer could afford such largess. In addition to questions over the school's fiscal worthiness, the UCBWM deemed the amount donated to the Seminary inequitable when compared with what other partner churches received for entire African countries and regions, let alone institutions.

The combination of an inferior education for black South Africans and the withdraw of American Board teachers and principals rendered very few qualified black women to lead the school after the last American principal, Roger Aylard, departed in 1973. Constance Koza, who served from 1979 to 1986, proved to be the exception. In 1985, only five per cent of South African black adults matriculated.<sup>20</sup> As late as 1991, less than half of the black population possessed a sixth grade education.<sup>21</sup> Not until 1978 did the percentage of female higher secondary students equal male in KwaZulu.<sup>22</sup> In 1985, less than half of black university students were female.<sup>23</sup> These statistics reveal that Inanda Seminary's pool of potential black female leaders was very dry in the 1990s. In addition to the low quantity, Bantu Education decreased the academic quality of students and black teachers coming into the school so that by the 1970s virtually all teachers and students were "products" of Bantu Education.<sup>24</sup>

Second, Bantu Education created decades of comparative disinvestment (due to its removal of subsidies and the prohibition to charge tuition fees) from Inanda Seminary and decades of investment into private and public schools reserved for Whites. Government subsidies and tuition fees charged to economically advantaged parents rendered public Whites-only schools superior to Inanda Seminary. Ironically, though apartheid's legislation of Bantu Education caused decades of financial and staff turmoil at the Seminary, its de-legislation wreaked even more havoc on the school, and thus is a proximal cause of its closure in December 1997. In 1986, the Private Schools Act permitted former Whites-only private schools to admit students of colour. Just two years later, the Education Affairs Act of 1988 permitted students of colour to enter former Whites-

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BoGM), 28 May 1991, pp 1–2. Bonganjalo Goba is a black South African from Inanda who received his ordination and higher education in the United States (University of Chicago) in the Congregational faith tradition. Daniel Hoffman replaced Goba in 1992 as the Africa Executive. Goba later led the Africa Office again in the mid-2000s for Global Ministries, a joint mission instrumentality and successor to UCBWM for the United Church of Christ (UCC) and Disciples of Christ (Christian Church) in the United States of America.

20. Healy-Clancy, *A World of Their Own*, p 165. Healy-Clancy cites on p 256 (footnote 10); E. Unterhalter, "Can Education Overcome Women's Subordinate Position in the Occupation Structure", in E. Unterhalter, H. Wolpe and T. Botha (eds), *Education in a Future South Africa: Policy Issues for Transformation* (Heinemann, Portsmouth: NH, 1991), pp 65–84, 79 and 82.
21. Healy-Clancy, *A World of Their Own*, p 165. Healy-Clancy cites on p 256 (footnote 11): ANC Women's League, *Status of South African Women: A Sourcebook in Tables and Graphs* (ANC Women's League Policy Division, Marshalltown, 1993), p 57.
22. Healy-Clancy, *A World of Their Own*, p 166. Healy-Clancy cites on p 166: C.T. Verwey, P.D. Cartens and A. du Plessis, with E.B. Gumbi, *Statistical Review of Education in KwaZulu, 1979–1984* (Research Institute for Planning, University of the Orange Free State, Bloemfontein, 1985), pp 3–4.
23. Healy-Clancy, *A World of Their Own*, p 167. Healy-Clancy cites on p 167: M. Saleem Badat, *Black Student Politics, Higher Education and Apartheid: From SASO to SANSCO 1968–1990* (HSRC Press, Pretoria, 1999), p 202.
24. S. Couper, "What am I Fit For?: Negative Manifestations of Bantu Education at Inanda Seminary during the 1970s", *Prism: A Theological Forum for the United Church of Christ*, 25, 1, Spring 2011, pp 99–125.

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only public schools, now known as “Model C” schools. Therefore, during the late 1980s and 1990s, when the apartheid laws began to relax in respect of allowing and/or requiring schools to admit students of all races, the Seminary lost its “market niche” on quality education available to black girls. During the 1990s, the Seminary haemorrhaged. As the principal, Fanyana Mhlambo, explained in 1995:

The school has not kept up with technological acquisitions to match its white counterparts. As a result in the past three years the school failed to attract the best science, mathematics and business teachers. A consequent backlash was the exodus of children from high income families to white schools, depleting the revenue source of the school even further.<sup>25</sup>

Students who fled the Seminary for private and former Model C schools were its brightest and most economically secure. Often, but not always, those who remained were academically and financially weak. Students whose parents who could pay private and Model C school fees possessed the means to depart. Conversely, those who could not afford the better education now legally accessible to them also did not have the means by which nor the motivation to reliably pay the Seminary’s school fees. Accessibility to the favoured multi-racial schools “in town” or the suburbs left the Seminary with many students who had behavioural problems as well as academic and financial problems. Student numbers dropped and fees failed to be collected to such an extent that the school’s dire straits condition forced it in 1996 to accept day scholars from the local area. This decreased standards and the school disintegrated. It then sought further government subsidisation. However, the financial benefit was paltry compared to the effect the increased subsidy had on the staff. Most staff began to view themselves as government workers, to the extent that the school was viewed by the staff to be a public school and thus unionised. Standards plummeted even further. The Governing Council struggled with one seemingly insurmountable difficulty after another, flailing without vision, purpose or direction.

Third, a “lack of creativity and leadership” from the UCCSA and the Governing Council undermined Inanda Seminary’s survival while it experienced rapidly changing and highly antagonistic socio-political conditions.<sup>26</sup> The UCCSA demonstrated itself to be unable to uphold the Seminary financially in the wake of the American Board’s decolonising vacuum. The Council and UCCSA neglected to factor into its institutional strategies the inevitable fall of apartheid, and thus Bantu Education, and the reality that the Seminary would thus soon lose its “monopoly” on quality education for black girls. The Seminary experienced ecclesiastic abandonment; the church failed to shepherd the school out of a relatively protected foreign mission supported context during apartheid into an unprotected and highly competitive domestic supported context during the post-apartheid era. The church’s failure is the second of two proximate causes linking Bantu Education with the school’s closure in 1997.

For most of 1990, the Governing Council carried over without reports an item entitled the “Future of Inanda”. The Council recurrently placed the item in

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25. ISA, Correspondence File (hereafter CF), 1995, Correspondence from the Inanda Seminary Old Girls’ [Association], Inanda Seminary Principal and Governing Council to various United States Institutions and Organisations, 9 May 1995, p 3.
  26. ISA, Interview, Bonganjalo Goba with Scott Couper, via e-mail, 21 May 2013.

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agendas and thus in minutes; however, the Council always postponed discussion, for example, pending the appointment of the new principal or pending the appointment of an administrative manager. The Council prematurely agreed to remove the item “Future of Inanda” from the agenda in October 1990.<sup>27</sup> Nonetheless, the item periodically reappeared, but was always placed in abeyance for one reason or another (for example, until Bonganjalo Goba visits ... or until the next meeting).<sup>28</sup> A 1990 report to the Governing Council submitted by Gillian Maskell & Associates, an educational consulting firm, concluded that there existed a “lack of planning by the Council, particularly as this pertains to soliciting donations for the school”.<sup>29</sup>

Three years passed before any sort of strategy document came to light since Gillian Maskell & Associates submitted its strategic analysis in 1990. “Old Girl” Hixonia Nyasulu, who became a Governing Council member in early 1992, authored an erudite strategic report and submitted it in August 1993.<sup>30</sup> The Council postponed the review of the document until November 1993. In November 1993, the review was again postponed. In March 1994, there were no observations from the Council and it postponed the report again until June 1994. Not until August 1994 was Nyasulu’s report substantively discussed by the Council. In her report, she noted that Inanda Seminary’s curriculum streams needed to be widened; the results improved; the calibre of incoming students increased; and fees lowered in order to be competitive with other Model C schools. Nyasulu also reported that the KZN Region of the UCCSA’s sale of vacant and under-utilised church glebe land under the threat of expropriation during the 1980s and ’90s degraded the school’s environment by surrounding it with a township thus crippling its present and future ability to attract students.<sup>31</sup> Perhaps the most critical conclusion of Nyasulu’s report concerned the composition of the Council.<sup>32</sup> She advised that the incumbent Council members should include “skilled” younger professionals.<sup>33</sup>

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27. ISA, BoGM, 5 October 1990, Matters Arising, sub-item 3, p 1.

28. ISA, BoGM, 2 May 1991, Matters Arising, item 3, sub-item J, p 4. See also ISA, BoGM, 13 December 1991, item 4, sub-item D, p 2.

29. ISA, Board of Governors Reports (hereafter BoGR), 1990, “Inanda Seminary Report: June 1989 to March 1990” by Gillian Maskell & Associates, p 7.

30. “Old Girl” is not a pejorative term. Rather, it is an affectionate term for a former Inanda Seminary student.

31. The KZN Region of the UCCSA sold land around Inanda Seminary in the late 1980s. Innova, a development company related to the Urban Foundation, signed the sale agreement and managed the control of the glebe land. The church envisioned that the land would accommodate 2 000 houses, five primary schools, two secondary schools and a commercial centre. See ISA, Development Files, correspondence from the UCCSA to various glebe families, 25 October 1988, pp 1–2. Given the threat of expropriation, one can argue that the KZN Region of the UCCSA had little choice but to sell its land and thus degrade the school’s environmental surroundings. However, the church’s unwillingness and/or inability to manage its vacant and under-utilised land properly, rendered it a liability rather than an asset and thus left it especially vulnerable to the threat of expropriation by the government. Thus, indirectly, the church can be considered culpable and complicit for the sale of its land.

32. According to the 1971 Constitution, the Governing Council consisted of twelve persons elected by the UCCSA, plus officers and a secretary of the UCCSA. The intention and practice was to have educators, attorneys, a medical doctor, a nursing sister, an accountant, a person involved in the development industry and clergy from the UCCSA and other churches (e.g. Anglican and Catholic). See ISA, Constitutions, Inanda Seminary Constitution, 17 April 1971, article IV, sub-article A, sub-article i, p 2.

33. ISA, BoGM, 12 August 1994, item 7, p 4.

The Reverend Robin Thompson, former Treasurer of the KZN Region of the UCCSA, mitigates the church's culpability by pointing out that though the church was in part "accountable" for the school's 1997 closure, the lack of substantive communication between the Council, the school and the church prevented justification for any "hands-on role" or direct intervention.<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, even if there was effective communication, the newly-born denomination, unlike its nineteenth-century missiological forebears (the London Mission Society and the American Board), had little experience or expertise in administrating schools. Be that as it may, the Council and the UCCSA did not possess the tools to transform the school into a dynamic, self-sufficient learning institution within a post-Bantu Education context that needed to react strategically to the highly tempestuous South African socio-political climate. In short, the Council and the UCCSA failed to equip the school to weather the shifting plate tectonics occurring in South African education.

In December 1997, Inanda Seminary's Governing Council that administered the school under the auspices of the UCCSA closed the school for the first time in its history. Yet, in January 1998, the school re-opened under "new management", as an independent school administered by a Board of Governors primarily composed of "Old Girls".

### **A new principal under a weak governing council**

The 1980s ended with school unrest and the June 1989 resignation of the well-intentioned but unsuited principal, Allan Campbell (principal, 1988–1989) due to debilitating stress. Inanda Seminary's Governing Council appointed Lucky Zulu acting principal for a second time; he had previously served in this role at the close of 1986 following Constance Koza's tenure (principal, 1988-1989).<sup>35</sup> Zulu completed the decade as acting principal while the Council desperately scoured the country for a qualified principal. The lack of leadership on the campus severely limited the viability of the school. From June 1989 when Campbell departed until March 1990, educational consultants Gillian Maskell & Associates drafted a detailed report in which it confessed that "in the 726 schools across the country in which we are involved, we have never encountered a situation such as the one which exists at Inanda".<sup>36</sup> The comment was double edged. It reflected the extreme dysfunction of the school as well as its almost supernatural ability to continue operating and produce surprisingly acceptable results.

As early as November 1986, Inanda Seminary's Governing Council recommended that the principal of the school be a Christian woman. As from

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34. ISA, Interview, Robin Thompson with Scott Couper at Inanda Seminary, 20 August 2013.

35. Lucky Zulu graduated from Inanda Seminary (1969–1970). She received the Lavinia Scott scholarship to attend the University of Zululand (1971–1974). See ISA, Staff File (hereafter SF), Nonhlanhla ("Lucky") Zulu, correspondence to the Governing Council chair from Zulu, 20 November 1981. From January 1975 to April 1981, Zulu served as an assistant teacher. From May 1982 to June 1990, Zulu served as deputy principal. See ISA, SF, Lucky Zulu, correspondence from the Seminary's principal Fanyana Mhlambo to "To Whom it May Concern", 6 June 1991.

36. ISA, BoGR, 1990, "Inanda Seminary Report: June 1989 to March 1990", by Gillian Maskell & Associates, p 7.

November 1986, the Council recommended that the next principal be a Zulu. Yet, hiring an academically qualified Christian Zulu woman who was willing and able to lead the school, remained an elusive goal.<sup>37</sup> After almost 35 years of Bantu Education, suitable candidates were few and far between. All potential candidates were inevitably products of Bantu Education and therefore products of the inferior race-based education offered at segregated state universities. Bantu Education failed to produce the strong leaders required by a school that historically provided an education and worldview superior to what the government deemed appropriate.

Gillian Maskell & Associates conducted a nationwide search for a new principal. After placing advertisements in six newspapers as well as contacting rectors of education colleges; personnel officers at universities; inspectors of education; principals of many schools; teachers' organisations; educational bodies; state education departments; Inanda Seminary alumnae and teachers across the country, Maskell could identify only five qualified applicants. A Governing Council sub-committee interviewed four applicants. One of the four, Debra Pelle, the Council eliminated, much to the regret of the consultant, because she had an eleven-year-old child out of wedlock.<sup>38</sup> "Old Girl" Esther Sangweni was overwhelmingly and unanimously selected and offered the post.<sup>39</sup> Yet, Sangweni refused the post in January 1990, unhappy with the package and conditions of employment, leaving the school without leadership.<sup>40</sup> The process began anew in February and March 1990 with advertisements being placed in the country's newspapers. Upon the second round of received applications, not one applicant had a graduate degree.<sup>41</sup> One of the Council members likely appealed to the

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37. A teacher or principal holding a masters degree or above in pedagogy and leadership experience, particularly within a boarding environment.
  38. This was a current issue at the school, because the Governing Council resolved to suspend a teacher, Nomaledi Mdingi, and request her to resign because she was pregnant out of wedlock. It was agreed that conditions of service be amended to include a restriction against single teachers falling pregnant. See ISA, BoGM, 1990, 23 March 1990, item 6.6, p 2. The Council later rescinded the decision to request Mdingi to resign. See ISA, Executive Finance Committee Minutes (hereafter ExCoFiM), 28 February 1990, "Pregnancy – Miss Mdingi", sub-items 1–2, pp 4–5. Mdingi voluntarily resigned in November 1990. See ISA, SF, Nomaledi Mdingi, correspondence from Mdingi to the principal, 9 November 1990.
  39. ISA, SF, Esther Sangweni, correspondence from Edward Gilfillan on behalf of the Inanda Seminary Governing Council to Sangweni, 22 November 1989. Esther Sangweni's educational biography is similar to Lucky Zulu's. Sangweni attended Inanda Seminary from 1965 to 1969. Like Lucky Zulu, Sangweni was awarded the Lavinia Scott Scholarship that enabled her to attend the University of Zululand (1970–1973). From 1974 until 1979, Sangweni worked at Inanda Seminary as a teacher of English and History. In 1989, she was also the chair of the Seminary's Old Girls' Association. See ISA, SF, Esther Sangweni, Curriculum Vitae: Mrs E.E.S. Sangweni (neè Cele), pp 1–2.
  40. Although she found the conditions of employment "impossible to take", Esther Sangweni may have had alternative reasons to turn down the post, because all of the conditions of employment were apparently met by the Governing Council. Sangweni wrote to the consultants complaining bitterly about the manner in which the members of the Council had conducted the interview. She objected strongly to the chair, Edward Gilfillan, commenting that she had "a short temper". Sangweni continued her correspondence with a litany of accusations and peremptory defences against another interviewer, Prof. Paulos Luthuli. See ISA, SF, Esther Sangweni, correspondence to Gillian Maskell & Associates from Sangweni, 8 September 1989; and ISA, Executive and Finance Committee Minutes (hereafter ExFiCoM), 19 January 1990, item 10.3, 22 January 1990, p 5.
  41. One applicant's letter of introduction greeted the consultant "in the name of our revolutionary leader, Jesus Christ". See ISA, BoGR, 1990, "Inanda Seminary Report", March 1990, by Gillian Maskell & Associates, p 3.

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government for assistance. KwaZulu's secretary of education, Joachim Ndlovu, then made a personal appeal to recently retired Fanyana Mhlambo to serve as Inanda Seminary's principal.<sup>42</sup> In July 1990, the Council appointed Mhlambo as acting principal of the school. By August 1990, he was appointed principal.

By forfeiting the criteria to be a woman, Inanda Seminary was able to circumvent the difficulty of hiring an academically qualified black principal with experience in a boarding school. Before the implementation of Bantu Education, Fanyana Mhlambo attended and graduated from Fort Hare with a Bachelor of Arts and University Education Diploma (1949 to 1952) and received his Bachelor of Education degree from Natal University.<sup>43</sup> Although the Seminary was his first appointment at a girls' boarding school, Mhlambo came with considerable experience. He was principal of Christ the King, a boarding school in Swaziland, from 1969 to 1974 and served as an inspector of schools in 1983 and circuit inspector in 1984 in South Africa. In 1990, the Seminary managed, just barely, to attract a competent and qualified black principal not produced by Bantu Education. Mhlambo stoically kept chaos at bay.

Gillian Maskell & Associates forwarded a recommendation to the Governing Council, of almost equal importance as the appointment of a principal, to appoint a business manager who could administer both the finances and Inanda Seminary's increasingly dilapidating physical plant. Similar to the search for a principal, it was next to impossible to hire a qualified and experienced business administrator willing and able to serve the school for the remuneration offered. To find a person competent with accounts, infrastructural maintenance and multi-cultural social skills, who lived in Inanda or would commute to it was not easy. One report, drafted after a UCBWM study tour from the United States of America visited the Seminary from 1 to 5 June 1983, attributed the then most recent financial crisis to the systemic educational and financial constraints posed on Blacks in South Africa due to apartheid and Bantu Education: "There has been difficulty securing an adequate person to fill this position [of registrar/bursar]. Available black persons do not have the training and experience".<sup>44</sup> In 1990, after nationwide advertising, only three, presumably white, candidates emerged.<sup>45</sup> After visiting the school, one realised the depth of the school's decay and withdrew immediately. The second was dismissed as he was found to be racist. By the end of March, 1990, the third, Sydney van Lier, was hired.<sup>46</sup>

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42. ISA, SF, Fanyana Mhlambo, interview with Scott Couper and Nompumelelo Hlophe, 2 February 2011. Fanyana Mhlambo knew Constance Koza and thought fondly enough of Lucky Zulu to consider her his daughter. Mhlambo's daughter, Nomsa Patricia, taught at Inanda Seminary during the 1970s. Nonetheless, Mhlambo considered his entry into the Seminary as "blindfolded".

43. ISA, SF, Fanyana Mhlambo, F.G. Mhlambo (curriculum vitae), undated.

44. ISA, United Church Board World Ministries, Box 1983, Report to the Board of Directors (UCBWM) from the Africa Study Tour, 1983, p 2. The report then conveyed relief that a white businessman (T.M. Edwards) and a white accountant (Leonard McNally) had restored the financial welfare of the school.

45. ISA, BoGR, 1990, "Inanda Seminary Report", March 1990, by Gillian Maskell & Associates, p 4.

46. ISA, SF, Sydney van Lier, correspondence (letter of appointment) from the Governing Council's chair, Edward Gilfillan, to Van Lier, 20 March 1990, pp 1–2.

## Exposed fraud

Sydney van Lier cannot be credited with a resolution of the school's deteriorating financial status. Nonetheless, he assisted the school by beginning what became a decade-long battle to recoup unpaid school fees from parents and sponsors. The failure of students to pay their school fees and the school's inability to hold fee payers to account greatly troubled Inanda Seminary during the 1990s. The Seminary incurring bad debt was not exclusive to the 1990s; it pre-existed. For example, total student debt from 1986 to 1989 totalled a staggering R133 446 and in 1989 the school had to write off R69 197 of it.<sup>47</sup> During the 1990s, bad debt further crippled the school and it turned away many students arriving in January 1990. The school met the 475 student vacancy with those on the waiting list. In one report to the Governing Council in mid-1990, Van Lier reported 260 bad debtors, more than half the student population, owed an astounding R200 000.<sup>48</sup> This amount exceeded the entire annual grant given by the UCBWM (R186 000) or the amount expected from the KwaZulu Government (R192 450).<sup>49</sup> Approximately 70 students owed between R1 000 and R5 500 each.<sup>50</sup> Van Lier justifiably advocated draconian measures to collect the debt owed to the school. In August 1990, correspondence was posted to parents who were in arrears, warning them to pay.<sup>51</sup> After the 1990 "At Home", the 70 students were to be sent home suspended so as to encourage others to pay.<sup>52</sup> The Council also recommended that the list of debtors be handed to a firm of attorneys.<sup>53</sup> Interest on debt would be charged on outstanding amounts.<sup>54</sup> Furthermore, matriculation students would not be permitted to take their examinations if their fees were not up to date.<sup>55</sup> In time, a service provider was contracted to reclaim bad debt on behalf of the school.<sup>56</sup> The students' arrears caused the Seminary to fall into debt. By the end of 1990, the school owed creditors R139 000.<sup>57</sup> The problem of unpaid fees increased as the decade progressed. In 1994, R266 810 was owed, becoming worse toward the end of the decade as "day scholars" from the surrounding area increasingly defaulted on the payment of their fees.<sup>58</sup>

Sydney van Lier assisted by revealing corruption in the school. In mid-1990, he discovered that Lucky Zulu, the former deputy principal and then acting

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47. ISA, Financial Committee Minutes (hereafter FCM), 1990, Schedule of Expenses for the Year ended December 31 1989, undated. See ISA, ExFiCoM, 20 September 1991, item H, p 3.
  48. ISA, FCM, 1990, Finance Committee Meeting, Report by Business Manager/Bursar to Committee Members of Financial Matters Relating to the Seminary for the Current Year, 22 October 1990, p 1. The actual figure was likely R189 152 which represents fees in arrears from 1987–1989. See ISA, Finance Committee Report (hereafter FCR), 1990, Income for the Six Months Ended 30 June 1990, undated.
  49. ISA, FCM, 1990, Estimated Budget 1990, 22 October 1990.
  50. ISA, BoGM, 1990, Governing Council Meeting, 5 October 1990, p 1.
  51. ISA, Principal's Report (hereafter PR) to Governing Council (hereafter GC), Fanyana Mhlambo, 5 October 1990, item 3, p 1.
  52. The "At Home" is a prize-giving event for the students and a homecoming reunion for alumnae. See ISA, PR, GC, Fanyana Mhlambo, 5 October, 1990, item 3, p 1.
  53. ISA, BoGM, 1990, 5 October 1990, p 1.
  54. ISA, BoGM, 1990, 16 August 1990, item 9, sub-item f, p 3.
  55. ISA, BoGM, 1990, 16 August 1990, item 9, sub-item f, p 3.
  56. ISA, BoGM, 16 August 1990, item Finance Bursar's Report, sub-item b, Debtors, p 2.
  57. ISA, ExFiCoM, 20 September 1990, item I, p 4.
  58. ISA, BoGM, Special Meeting, 28 June 1994, p 1.

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principal, embezzled school funds. By November 1990, Van Lier had amassed enough evidence to convict Lucky Zulu of theft from Inanda Seminary. The Reverend Bekizipho Dlodla, then chair of the Governing Council until the school closed in December 1997, requested Dr Oscar Dhlomo to chair a commission of inquiry related to allegations of theft.<sup>59</sup> Seven parents signed sworn affidavits claiming that after giving Zulu cash for school fees, they had never received receipts and they had nonetheless subsequently been found to be in default of their accounts.<sup>60</sup> At least ten parents reported theft of R7 345. In her affidavit, Zulu confessed the following:

I wish to confirm that during the period of 1989 and 1990 I took certain monies for school fees from parents of students. These monies have been converted to my own use and have not been paid into the Seminary account, thus causing a lot of embarrassment to my employers ...<sup>61</sup>

Zulu resigned on 30 November 1990 and vacated the campus on 15 December 1990 without being paid for December. On appeal from Dlodla for humanitarian reasons, the school retroactively paid Zulu R2 562 in April 1991 for half the month of December 1990.<sup>62</sup> This money was paid to Zulu despite the fact that the school entered into litigation with Zulu, and as late as December 1993, Zulu still had not paid the school back for monies owed and which had to be written off.<sup>63</sup>

Soon after Sydney van Lier organised Lucky Zulu's ignominious dismissal, he effectively resigned his position (but not before drawing a bonus thirteenth cheque for himself) and the Governing Council terminated his employment in January 1991.<sup>64</sup> Van Lier's cantankerous personality combined with the need for tightening-up school policies did not allow him to enjoy harmonious relationships with most of the staff. In addition, the principal Fanyana Mhlambo recalled that Van Lier "did not know the staff" and "did not know how to do the job".<sup>65</sup> The archive confirms Mhlambo's recollections.<sup>66</sup> From April to December 1990, "no accounting procedures had been followed and the books of account had not been trial-balanced".<sup>67</sup> Leonard McNally who previously served as bursar from 1982 until 1989, accepted an interim appointment and greatly assisted in disentangling the 1990 finances.<sup>68</sup> In May 1991, Sean Ellis-Cole was appointed bursar and he

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59. ISA, BoGM, 1990, correspondence from Bekizipho Dlodla to Dr Oscar Dhlomo, 15 November 1990.
  60. ISA, BoGM, Commission of Enquiry, Chaired by [O]R. Dhlomo, 22 November 1990. Following a spell as acting-chair in the place of his predecessor Edward Gilfillan, Bekizipho Dlodla was appointed chair on 16 August 1990.
  61. ISA, BoGM, 1990, Affidavit, 19 November 1990.
  62. ISA, SF, Lucky Zulu, Correspondence from Fanyana Mhlambo to Zulu, 6 June 1991.
  63. ISA, SF, Lucky Zulu, "Durban Magistrate's Court Record 41/1989/91", Correspondence from Sean Ellis-Cole to Zulu, 10 December 1993.
  64. ISA, SF, Sydney van Lier, Correspondence from Van Lier to the Governing Council chair, 25 January 1991.
  65. ISA, SF, Interview, Fanyana Mhlambo with Scott Couper and Nompumelelo Hlophe at Inanda Seminary, 2 February 2011, p 6.
  66. ISA, BoGM, 31 January 1991, items 2 and 4.2. pp 1–2.
  67. ISA, BoGM, 2 May 1991, item 3, sub-item c, p 2.
  68. ISA, ExFinCoM, 20 September 1991, item A, p 1.

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then investigated Van Lier for fraud.<sup>69</sup> Ellis-Cole discovered that Van Lier developed an elaborate scheme to deceive the school into unknowingly paying invoices to him totalling R6 256 under fictitious circumstances in order to recover funds he felt were owed to him by the Seminary following his departure.<sup>70</sup> Finances in disarray, Ellis-Cole paid the invoices in good faith only to later discover Van Lier's malevolent plot. Furthermore, Van Lier provided extensive information to the media about the school – information that reflected very poorly on the institution.<sup>71</sup> The media published the letter, leading to a public relations fiasco for the school.<sup>72</sup>

An additional case of fraud involved Anilkumar Jankeerparsad, an Afrikaans teacher, who falsified documents attesting to his teaching qualifications and for three and a half years received more than he was entitled to earn. The discovery of Jankeerparsad's fraud occurred in the midst of a very caustic dispute with former Inanda Seminary teachers. On 24 and 25 November 1990, at least three "dissident teachers" were disruptive to the operation of the school while it was in session, when they held an unauthorised party on campus hosted by one of them.<sup>73</sup> As a result of this indiscretion, all three were fired.<sup>74</sup> Racial tensions surfaced as Fanyana Mhlambo reported in 1992 that they thereafter instituted a "programme of insulting and harassing the Indian members of our staff especially Mr Jankeerparsad".<sup>75</sup> In 1992 an item of correspondence from the dismissed teachers read:

You coolies were prepared to resign if the Governing Council did not fire the African staff who spoke for their rights. But now, you coolies sit back and watch the African staff suffer just like your Indian brothers in parliament, who sit and watch while our comrades die for justice. It will soon be your turn to die ... All, the coolies and the Hewers at Inanda are frauds and fakes, that's why you are not teaching at your own

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69. ISA, SF, Sean Ellis-Cole, Correspondence from Ellis-Cole to the principal, 15 February 1991. Previous to accepting the position at Inanda Seminary, Sean Ellis-Cole served as the business manager at St Charles College.
  70. Inanda Seminary instituted legal action to recover the funds totalling R14 889 "stolen" (R6 256 cheque; R4 400 dual October 1990 salary cheque; R4 033 13th cheque; and R200 overpayment of October 1990 salary). See ISA, BoGM, 13 December 1991, item 9, sub-item c, p 7; and ISA, ExFiCoM, 20 September 1991, item c, p 2.
  71. Sydney van Lier claimed, among other things, that Lucky Zulu stole more than R7 000. Audited figures show that up to R10 000 was stolen each year and bad student debts totalled as much as R100 000. The allegations are substantiated by the archival record. See also P. Naidoo, "Top School is Said to be a 'Den of Iniquity'", publication unknown, circa February 1991.
  72. *Tribune* Reporter, "Headmaster of Inanda Seminary Denies 'Den of Iniquity' Claims", *Sunday Tribune*, circa February 1991. See ISA, BoGM, 31 January 1991, item 5, sub-item iii, p 3.
  73. ISA, PR, to the At Home Meeting, 10 October 1992, p 2.
  74. That Fanyana Mhlambo "fired" the teachers is not entirely accurate. All three teachers served the school on a temporary contractual basis. Zibusiso Sokhela (maths), Richard Mthembu (science and maths) and Reginald Ngwenya (science) received similar letters reporting that their temporary employment contracts expired on 30 November 1990 and were subsequently dismissed. Nonetheless, Mhlambo invited Ngwenya to re-apply provided he pledged to conduct no more misdemeanours. See ISA, SF, Reginald Ngwenya, correspondence to Ngwenya from Fanyana Mhlambo, 30 November 1990.
  75. ISA, PR to the At Home Meeting, 10 October 1992, p 3.

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school. Note well, we are not making threats. Watch yourselves on the weekends, we will get you one at a time. We will necklace you.<sup>76</sup>

Throughout the course of September 1991, staff who were dismissed in 1990 wrote to Fanyana Mhlambo many times and threatened to make public Anilkumar Jankeerparsad's "fraud" and the school's protection of him.<sup>77</sup> The correspondence reminded the principal not to "forget the death threat, or else..."<sup>78</sup> In an October 1992 report, Mhlambo defended Jankeerparsad's work ethic and integrity. The disgruntled teachers referenced Lucky Zulu (who hired Jankeerparsad and Inanda Seminary "Old Girl" Linda Zama, who was directly in charge of Jankeerparsad at Phambili) as both knowing that he submitted fraudulent documents that he had certified by the police via a relative. Subsequent correspondence from a dismissed staff member read:

This is our final letter and if no action is taken ... the consequences are unthinkable. Innocent people might be injured or loose (sic) their lives (it could be you). We will stop at nothing to bring justice to our cause. We have run out of patience, we will start "at home". So, I suggest you do yourselves a favour and stop protecting a coolie. Do something or face the music (guns and knives).<sup>79</sup>

An official letter from the University of Durban-Westville responded to Inanda Seminary's inquiry regarding Anilkumar Jankeerparsad's qualifications. The university indicated that Jankeerparsad did not earn the qualifications he cited to the Seminary and therefore had likely forged the certificate of his Bachelor of Arts degree in Pedagogy.<sup>80</sup> Fanyana Mhlambo terminated Jankeerparsad's employment in a letter dated 27 November 1992. Failed efforts to recoup the money fraudulently taken by Jankeerparsad, Lucky Zulu and Sydney van Lier concluded in November 1993 when the Governing Council decided to abandon further legal action due to a shortage of funds.

An additional financial liability on the school was staff loans, seemingly approved at will. Rentals for staff tenants living on campus were undervalued.<sup>81</sup> Staff routinely took "gratuities", that is, money in lieu of long leave.<sup>82</sup> Inanda Seminary paid thirteenth checks as retirement gifts, substituting for pensions to

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76. ISA, SF, Anilkumar Jankeerparsad, correspondence to "All the Coolies (Frauds) at Inanda" from "Fired Teacher", undated.

77. ISA, SF, Anilkumar Jankeerparsad, correspondence form "Fired Staff" to the principal, 9 September 1991.

78. Anilkumar Jankeerparsad began his employment at Inanda Seminary in July 1989 after serving at Phambili High School from January 1989 until June 1989. Disgruntled staff who had been retrenched in early 1990 indicated they had proof that Jankeerparsad was fired from Phambili for not being qualified for the position. However, Fatima Meer, who had appointed him as a teacher at Phambili, wrote a very favourable letter of recommendation to Inanda Seminary on Jankeerparsad's behalf, based on his work at Phambili. See ISA, SF, Anilkumar Jankeerparsad, correspondence from Fatima Meer to "To Whom it May Concern", 28 July 1989.

79. ISA, SF, Anilkumar Jankeerparsad, correspondence from "Fired Teacher of Inanda Seminary" to the principal, undated.

80. ISA, SF, Anilkumar Jankeerparsad, correspondence from S. Sookdew (chief records officer) to the principal, 24 September 1992.

81. ISA, Financial Records, Box I, Correspondence, memorandum from Sean Ellis-Cole to Fanyana Mhlambo, 10 July 1991, section D, p 4.

82. For example, Abbey Naidoo in January 1990 and Joseph Magwaza in August 1990.

elderly staff members rather than pre-paid employee/employer schemes.<sup>83</sup> Also referred to as a “gratuity” and depleting the school’s operational expenses were monthly payments made to retired staff in lieu of pensions. At the close of 1993, the Seminary paid R27 000 in gratuities and the Governing Council pleaded for a method to freeze them.<sup>84</sup> All of the above expenditures combined to evaporate the school’s finances with no present or future benefit to the school. Attorneys’ fees escalated expenditures. For example, the school paid legal fees to defend itself from industrial court action that Gift Gwala and seven other grounds workers brought against the Seminary.<sup>85</sup>

In 1991, numerous burglaries took place on the campus. One occurred in April 1991, two staff members were offered compensation for items stolen from their cottage from the principal’s discretionary fund.<sup>86</sup> Late in 1991, another staff cottage was broken into while its occupants slept. Thieves stole a television, kitchen items and groceries.<sup>87</sup> More cut fencing and break-ins occurred in April 1992.<sup>88</sup> Again, in November 1993, intruders cut through the fence, entered the campus, and further shook the school’s confidence.<sup>89</sup> This time, the trespassers entered a dormitory. A student leapt off the balcony seeking to escape and broke her leg. The break-ins continued in 1994, again with an intruder entering a dormitory. In March 1994, Fanyana Mhlambo reported: “On the whole, the girls are afraid. They have been like that since the November 1993 incident when one girl fractured her leg ... incidentally, the girl ... is still using crutches.”<sup>90</sup> Inanda Seminary’s borders were porous, security proved ineffective and its students were at risk. The break-ins shattered the sense of solace the Seminary had offered its students in past decades.

Despite the fact that Inanda Seminary had many difficulties in the early years of the decade, they did not seem to have an effect on enrolment. In 1991, 1 500 students were interviewed for only 100 places.<sup>91</sup> The primary reason for this was that the Seminary still had a monopoly on quality education for black girls (at

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83. For example, Florence Tshabalala and Florence Mqwabu (thirteenth cheques); Margaret Nduna (R300 p/m); Agnes Cele (R200 p/m); Doris Dlungwana (R200 p/m); G. Phewa (R122 p/m); T. Mbili (R122 p/m); Tshabalala (R500 p/m); Mqwabu (R500 p/m). This amounted to approximately R2 000 p/m (an amount for which there were only funds for sixteen months in 1990). Joseph Magwaza was issued a “full and final” retirement gratuity of R10 000 in 1992 despite being asked to serve the school again later in the decade. See ISA, BoGM, 13 December 1991, item 9, sub-item f, p 7. In 1994, all the above receiving monthly gratuities were given one final lump sum of R2 000. See ISA, BoGM, 18 March 1994, item iv, p 1.
84. ISA, BoGM, 26 November 1993, Business, item 1, p 2.
85. The others were: J. Duma; F. Blose; D. Cox; T. Gwala; M. Sibisi; B. Mthethwa; and P. Mthethwa. The court ruled that they were improperly retrenched. During 1992, the school re-employed them. In 1993, the school again, this time “properly”, retrenched them with an additional financial settlement for each. See ISA, BoGM, 5 March 1993, item 4, p 2.
86. ISA, PR, GC, Untitled report, item 1, circa 2 May 1991, p 1. See also ISA, PR, GC, 13 December 1991, item 6, p 3.
87. ISA, PR, GC, 13 December 1991, item 6, p 4.
88. ISA, PR, GC, 22 May 1992, item 9, p 4.
89. ISA, BoGM, 26 November 1993, item 7, p 3.
90. ISA, PR, GC, 18 March 1994, item 5, p 2.
91. ISA, PR, GC, 05 October 1990, item 8, p 2.

least as a boarding establishment).<sup>92</sup> Though Dr A.H. Lethbridge, a member of the Governing Council, expressed disappointment with the school's 1989 matriculation results, the Seminary continued to provide a good education to young black girls. In 1988, there was a 100 per cent pass rate and a 92 per cent Bachelors rate. In 1989, the results deteriorated to a 97 per cent pass rate and an 88 per cent Bachelors rate. The situation further declined to a 95 per cent pass rate and 69 per cent Bachelors rate in 1990.<sup>93</sup>

The 1990 report to the Governing Council from the educational consultant indicated that there were no extramural activities taking place regularly at the school except for the choir; Student Christian Association; and Abbey Naidoo's speech competitions. The consultant charged that this dearth of extramural activities was "iniquitous" and that in order to motivate for the continuance of Inanda Seminary's UCBWM grant, a better utilisation of the school's facilities was required.<sup>94</sup> With Fanyana Mhlambo's arrival, extramural activities increased substantively in 1991 and 1992.

In January 1991, the UCCSA and the UCBWM appointed the Reverend Linda Noonan as chaplain.<sup>95</sup> Before arriving at Inanda Seminary in May 1992, Noonan exhibited a strong "ministry of presence" at the Federated Theological Seminary (FedSem) in Imbali, near Pietermaritzburg. At the time, FedSem was caught in the cross-fire between the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) and the African National Congress (ANC)/ United Democratic Front (UDF).<sup>96</sup> Through her accompaniment of FedSem's staff and students, she demonstrated great solidarity and resolve.<sup>97</sup> She proved to be a good match with the Seminary and she served as its chaplain until 1995 following her July 1994 marriage to Zolwani Ngwane in the Lavinia Scott Chapel.<sup>98</sup> Though dysfunctional, the Seminary was not in the midst of a war-zone like FedSem. Principal Fanyana Mhlambo felt at the time that Noonan's much appreciated presence "helped fill a rift between the school and the church in America".<sup>99</sup>

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92. Meghan Healy-Clancy rightly pointed out in a draft version of a previous paper I authored, that this dynamic occurred in the 1980s with the advent of legislation which opened former white schools to students of colour. I differ only in that I suspect that at this time the flight from the school only included Inanda Seminary's most elite students. I posit that the dynamic did not substantively occur with the bulk of the Seminary's students until 1991 when the evidence shows that the enrolment figures actually began to decline. Couper, "...it is clear something is wrong here", p 75. See footnote 7.
  93. The 1991 results: 94 per cent pass rate and 75 per cent Bachelors rate. The 1992 pass rate was 96 per cent and 79 per cent Bachelors rate. In 1993 and 1994 the respective pass rates were both 100 per cent. See ISA, Matriculation Results, 1991–1994, compiled by Nompumelelo Hlophe.
  94. See ISA, BoGR, 1990, "Inanda Seminary Report", March 1990, by Gillian Maskell & Associates, p 8.
  95. Linda Noonan returned to the USA after her appointment to the Federated Theological Seminary came to an end. The UCBWM re-appointed her to Inanda Seminary in March 1992. See ISA, BoGM, 6 March 1992, item 4, sub-item v, p 2.
  96. P. Denis and G. Duncan, *The Native School that Caused All the Trouble: A History of the Federal Theological Seminary of Southern Africa* (Cluster Publications, Dorpspruit, 2011), pp 250–252.
  97. L. Noonan, "War in Edendale", *Agape: Newsletter of the Federal Theological Seminary of Southern Africa*, 2, 2, August 1990, p 1.
  98. J. Gowens, "Linda Finds her Missionary Match", newspaper source unknown, circa July 1994.
  99. ISA, PR, GC, 22 May 1992, item 5, p 2.

### Campus unrest

After Bonganjalo Goba warned the school in 1989 and 1991 that the North American church's financial commitment would decrease, the Governing Council reasoned that a subsidy from another source was needed. School fees would have to be increased or the school might need to be transferred to the auspices of the KwaZulu government.<sup>100</sup> The lack of finances caused considerable stress at the school. The fees were raised during the early 1990s, but not without consequences. Students and staff fomented the same unrest occurring outside in the townships and throughout South Africa. The increased school fees catalysed a student boycott on 30 and 31 July 1992.<sup>101</sup> The students targeted the new bursar, Sean Ellis-Cole, during the protest and forced him off campus. Another boycott of classes by students occurred on 11 and 12 May 1993. This student protest was not caused by fee increases, but rather by a perceived insult from a secretarial school teacher, Ann Hewer. After refusing to withdraw her comments to the student body, the students "toyed-toyed". Much of the students' anger reflected on the principal and deputy principal; students wrote placards and posted them on the walls: "Away with Mhlambo"; "Away with Mkhize"; and "Miss Mkhize you are demoted".<sup>102</sup> After the students formed an unruly mob, the chair, Bekizipho Dladla, closed the school for two weeks. After a five hour "arduous and heated meeting", all the students were accepted back into school while Abbey Naidoo and Ann Hewer, who had apparently incited the students, were not permitted to return.<sup>103</sup>

On 5 October 1993, Edwards Hall (1888), arguably the most treasured structure on campus, burnt down.<sup>104</sup> The fire allegedly began in matron Avis Makhanya's room when a television "exploded".<sup>105</sup> Though there were no casualties, 56 students lost all their belongings from the upstairs dormitory and the school lost its classroom furniture on the ground floor. In 1993, Fanyana Mhlambo recalled that he had recommended the renovation of Edwards Hall in 1990 but the request was deemed unnecessary by the bursar and chair of the Finance Committee.<sup>106</sup> Mhlambo then argued for the renovation of Lucy Lindley Hall so that it did not meet with the same fate as Edwards Hall. Edwards Hall's destruction was a painful confirmation and reminder of the school's deterioration. In November 1993, the insurance company committed to pay in compensation R425 000.<sup>107</sup> Only R263 050 was reimbursed and placed in the school's current account.<sup>108</sup> The KZN Region of the UCCSA indicated in November 1994 that it would contribute a

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100. ISA, ExFiCoM, 19 January 1990, item 10.1.3, sub-item iii, pp 4–5.

101. ISA, PR, ExFiCoM, 24 September 1992, item 1, p 1.

102. ISA, PR, 28th Annual General Meeting of the KZN Region UCCSA, 18 June 1994, p 2.

103. ISA, PR, 28th Annual General Meeting of the KZN Region UCCSA, 18 June 1994, p 2.

104. I. Lekota, "School Begs for Help after Blaze: Pupils Lose All their Belongings", *Daily News*, 5 October 1993.

105. S. Ntshakala, "Fire Destroys Famous Girls' Boarding Establishment", *Natal Mercury*, 5 October 1993; A. Luthuli, "Zisale buze isitshudeni kusha isikole", *Ilanga*, 7–9 October 1993.

106. ISA, BoGM, 26 November 1993, item 3, p 1.

107. ISA, BoGM, 31 January 1991, item 5, sub-item i, p 3; and ISA, BoGM, 2 May 1991, item 3, sub-item D, p 3.

108. ISA, CF, Ron Burgess (KZN Region of the UCCSA Regional Secretary) to Fanyana Mhlambo, 29 April 1994. R425 000 was the lowest of three bids to restore Edwards Hall, which was only 62 per cent of the total amount estimated to re-build. See ISA, BoGM, 17 June 1994, item 1, p 1 and 18 March 1994, Business, sub-item v, p 3.

further R250 000 towards the reconstruction of Edwards Hall.<sup>109</sup> Not until 2009 did the school's new leadership restore Edwards Hall to its beautiful original.

Surprisingly, not all was doom and gloom in the early 1990s. One of the very few construction projects during the 1990s was the 1991 donation from Masonite Africa of two classrooms to be utilised as geography and history specialist rooms. They were also initially to be used as a career guidance resource centre sponsored by the Urban Foundation through the "Old Girls" and a computer room.<sup>110</sup> The production specialists from Ezibuild assembled the classrooms. An amount of R500 was also donated by Mondi Paper Company toward the erection of the classrooms.<sup>111</sup>

### The end of a monopoly

The middle of the decade posed terrific funding problems for the principal Fanyana Mhlambo. Inanda Seminary had long since received a grant from the provincial KwaZulu Department of Education, secured by an earlier principal, Constance Koza in 1984.<sup>112</sup> Yet, this grant was insufficient.<sup>113</sup> The grant from KwaZulu was also contentious, at least from the perspective of the UCBWM, which had ANC/UDF sympathies. In a 1991 Governing Council meeting, Oscar Dhlomo represented the provincial government and argued that a grant from KwaZulu should not be seen as supporting apartheid because the funding came from "our" taxes.<sup>114</sup> Dhlomo also articulated a view previously advocated by Mhlambo in mid-1991 that the school should be "open", that is "open to all races", so that public funding would be facilitated.<sup>115</sup> The consensus of the Council was that the Seminary should not fall under the ambit of KwaZulu (and by implication the

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109. ISA, CF, Ron Burgess to Fanyana Mhlambo, 29 April 1994. This R250 000 is presumably the same R250 000 which was forwarded to Inanda Seminary that emanated from the R2 800 000 land sale to the municipality through Innova. Correspondence dated 10 July 1994 (but only posted on 1 October 1994) indicated that an organisation in the USA sent US\$20 000 for the reconstruction of Edwards Hall. A note reading "not sent" unfortunately does not refer to the correspondence or the money. See ISA, CF, 1994, correspondence to Fanyana Mhlambo from Mrs Eva (Fred E.) Christian, 10 July 1994.

110. ISA, PR, GC, 27 September 1991, p 3.

111. ISA, 1991, Inanda Seminary Yearbook, *Ezakwamahedwards*, p 47.

112. Couper, "...it is clear something is wrong here!", p 96.

113. In 1992, Inanda Seminary received R192 500 per annum based on the number of students in attendance as compared with the UCBWM/UCCSA that gave R140 000 per annum. In a 1991 Governing Council meeting, Oscar Dhlomo indicated that the KwaZulu legislature had agreed that "all" teachers' salaries would be paid by the KwaZulu government. See ISA, BoGM, 2 May 1991, item 3, sub-item J, p 4. However, during a 1992 visit by Gideon Shandu and Fanyana Mhlambo, the KwaZulu Minister of Education indicated that there was no such provision for the payment of teachers' salaries at Inanda Seminary or any other similar private school. The Governing Council deemed the information Dhlomo gave to be "privileged", and thus confidential, not to be repeated to other schools. See ISA, BoGM, 13 December 1991, item 4, sub-item E, p 2. The Governing Council later determined that Oscar Dhlomo's information was incorrect. The Council, through communication with a Catholic school confirmed they received funds to pay teachers' salaries. See ISA, BoGM, 6 March 1992, item 4, sub-item iv, p 2. In August 1992, the Governing Council agreed to switch from the KwaZulu Education Department to the (National) Education Department because its funding was better there and its exams were more secure. ISA, BoGM, 28 August 1992, item 3, sub-item i, p 2.

114. ISA, BoGM, 28 May 1991, p 3.

115. ISA, BoGM, 28 May 1991, p 2.

Inkatha Freedom Party); nor become “open”; nor become co-educational (serving both boys and girls).<sup>116</sup>

In her book entitled *A World of Their Own: A History of South African Women's Education*, Meghan Healy-Clancy correctly documents that Inanda Seminary's “brain drain” to former Whites-only schools began in the mid to late-1980s. While the quality of entering students likely deteriorated from the 1980s, it was only in the 1990s that the quality and the quantity of students deteriorated. As early as 1991, Fanyana Mhlambo informed the Governing Council that “the enrolment has gone down because of the rise in fees and the opening of former white schools to black students”.<sup>117</sup> In 1992, Mhlambo reported that “the calibre of new students was raised and ... weak students had gotten into the school because numbers of applicants had dwindled. Almost all those who applied in 1991 were taken”.<sup>118</sup> The decline from 1992 (478 students) to 1993 (427 students) caused an estimated financial shortfall of R172 000.<sup>119</sup> In 1993, Mhlambo again accepted all students who applied. In 1993, Mhlambo confided to the Council, “I have begun to have doubts about the future of the school. The appearance of multiracial schools has disturbed our enrolment”.<sup>120</sup> Mhlambo reasoned that school fees had to come down because the Seminary could no longer be considered a monopoly and not at all competitive with similar private multi-racial schools. Mhlambo suggested that the Seminary forfeit its private school status and become a government Model C school, thus alleviating the school's budget by not paying the teachers' salaries.

A catastrophic decline in enrolment occurred in 1994. Mhlambo sought relief from the provincial KwaZulu government and the national government. In 1993, the Seminary appealed to KwaZulu to pay teachers' salaries to no avail. In June 1994, Mhlambo articulated the plight of the school to the National Department of Education in Pretoria and appealed for state-aided status which would provide salaries for the teaching staff.

With the relaxation of restrictions which debarred Blacks from attending white government schools, and the movement of black families from the townships to live in the white suburbs, our enrolment tumbled to a record low of 315 this year. We really find that the school can no longer continue to function without state intervention.<sup>121</sup>

Mhlambo perceived that the leadership of the school faced a choice: change the school forever or face its closure. In a 1994 report to the wider church, Mhlambo further explained:

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116. Dumisani Zondi, former principal of the Seminary during the 1970s, had supported making Inanda Seminary “open” to all races and being co-educational.

117. ISA, BoGM, 31 January 1991, item 9, pp 4–5.

118. ISA, BoGM, 28 August 1992, General, item i, p 4.

119. ISA, BoGM, 5 March 1993, item 5, sub-item iii, p 5.

120. ISA, PR, GC, 5 March 1993, item 4, p 2.

121. ISA, CF, 1994, Fanyana Mhlambo to the Minister of Education, Sibusiso Bhengu, Department of National Education, Pretoria, 24 June 1994. By the end of 1994, enrolment at the Inanda Seminary dropped even further to only 301 students. See ISA, PR, GC, 14 October 1994, item 6, p 2.

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The school does not have sufficient funds to procure the basic necessities, let alone set aside money for capital expenditure. This problem has become acute now on account of the emergence of multiracial schools. These are government schools for white pupils that now accept Blacks. Their fees range from R500 to R2 000 per annum. They have all the facilities and are well staffed. Besides, some of the black middle class have moved to white suburbs. Thus it is easy for their children to travel from home to school on a daily basis because they are living in a safe environment. The multiracial schools understand the high fees R5 640 (actual) R6 960 (still envisaged) per annum have left us with very few students. Yet all expenses have to be met especially the salaries of the unprofessional and domestic staff, as well as the catering part for the students because they are all boarders. Every month-end is a taxing period.<sup>122</sup>

Fanyana Mhlambo was not naïve to parents' concerns that teachers would be "controlled" by the South African Democratic Teachers' Union or that students would be even more prone to strikes and boycotts.<sup>123</sup> Nonetheless, Mhlambo argued that by making Inanda Seminary state-aided, its dilapidated buildings would be renovated and new classrooms would be constructed. The state of the school's infrastructure continued to disintegrate and the Governing Council seemed unable or unwilling to respond to Mhlambo's monthly pleas for renovations.<sup>124</sup>

Sean Ellis-Cole's tenure as bursar reversed the financial meltdown caused after Sydney van Lier's departure, but the relative stability only lasted until 1994. In the early months of 1994, the Governing Council members complained that they received no written reports from the bursar; that they were in the dark; and that they could not see their way forward.<sup>125</sup> By March 1994, the school went into overdraft as it could not pay its debtors.<sup>126</sup>

When examining Inanda Seminary under the auspices of the Congregational church, the issue of land must be interrogated. In April 1994, Inanda Seminary appealed to the KZN Region of the UCCSA for financial assistance, requesting R800 000 and lamenting that "the opening of multiracial schools has dealt us a heavy blow ... They have opened their doors to black children at our expense".<sup>127</sup> The KZN Region forwarded the request to the UCCSA, though earlier in the year the Region earned R2 800 000 from the sale of Inanda glebe land to Innova Group.<sup>128</sup> The UCCSA, through its General Secretary, the Reverend Sam Arends, responded that it had no money and that perhaps the school should ask "the friends of Inanda Seminary in America for some help".<sup>129</sup> The request was not isolated; the school repeatedly requested assistance from the

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122. ISA, PR to the Executive Committee of the UCCSA, September 1994, p 2.

123. ISA, PR, GC, 14 October 1994, item 3, p 1.

124. Each month, the principal essentially repeated the same refrain: "The buildings are really old and need extensive renovation in the near future". See ISA, PR, circa mid-1995, p 1.

125. ISA, BoGM, 18 March 1994, item v, p 2 and 17 June 1994, items 1 and 3, p 1

126. ISA, BoGM, 18 March 1994, item v, p 2.

127. ISA, CF, Correspondence from Fanyana Mhlambo to Armstrong Makhanya (KZN Region of the UCCSA chair), 30 April 1994.

128. ISA, BoGM, 17 June 1994, item 1, p 1. R250 000 (8.9 per cent) of the R2.8 million was given to Inanda Seminary. The Governing Council mandated that the chair "get the money plus interest so that the latter could be used for school purposes". See ISA, BoGM, 18 March 1994, General, item a, p 3.

129. ISA, BoGM, 17 June 1994, item 1, p 1.

church and the church responded that it “had no money”.<sup>130</sup> Allan Wentzel, a representative of the UCCSA and a current member of the Board of Governors explained in an interview that Arends’ claim of ecclesiastic poverty was likely accurate given the fact that the KZN Region, and not the UCCSA, received the proceeds derived from glebe land sales.<sup>131</sup>

The Governing Council questioned the KZN Region for selling Inanda glebe land and not forwarding a higher percentage of funds to the school in its time of need. For example, in September 1995 some members of the Council wished to know: “What happened to Mary Edwards’ farm?”<sup>132</sup> The farm was included in the 1994 glebe land sale by the KZN Region. Yet, the land was not purchased by the American Board (nor the AZM nor UCBWM) nor by the UCCSA (nor the BCC), but by Mary Edwards, the school’s first principal.<sup>133</sup> Edwards intended the land to be used for Inanda Seminary’s benefit, not the KZN Region or the UCCSA’s. Three factors mitigated the Region’s actions. First, Robin Thompson, who served as treasurer of the KZN Region at the time, explained that the church’s sale of the glebe land was inevitable given that the land was “vacant” and thus subject to expropriation by the state; second, Edwards’ farm was only a part of the glebe land sold, and thus represented only a portion of the R2.8 million glebe land sale; third, it was his fiduciary responsibility to protect the investments of the church and therefore forwarding funds to a failing institution would have constituted negligence on his part.<sup>134</sup>

By the end of June 1994, students owed R266 810 and the school owed creditors R105 136. Therefore, the bursar withdrew R100 000 from the call account to defray expenses.<sup>135</sup> By August 1994, the fees debt was reduced to R157 480; however the overall bad debt figure reached R396 480.<sup>136</sup> The KwaZulu government delayed the school’s grant for three terms (R53 000 each), causing a

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130. ISA, FCM, 21 September 1995, item ii, p 1.

131. ISA, Interview, Allan Wentzel by Scott Couper at Inanda Seminary, 17 August 2013. Robin Thompson explained that the KZN Region of the UCCSA tithed 10 per cent each (R280 000) to the UCCSA, the local Inanda Congregational Church and Inanda Seminary. Furthermore, 70 per cent (R1 960 000) would be retained by the KZN Region. See ISA, interview, Robin Thompson with Scott Couper at Inanda Seminary, 20 August 2013.

132. ISA, BoGM, 21 September 1995, item 7, p 3.

133. “Year by year, Mrs Edwards had enlarged the land being cultivated. She likewise bought, in her own name, two pieces of land when the big Piesang River Farm was up for sale about 1897. These made one large block to the east side of the glebe. She was afraid that if the land was bought by a European planter, sugar cane and the barracks for Indian workers would be very close to the school. Also, she was planting gardens just on the east edge of the glebe and the two streams following through the land were a potential source of water. The land was bought from the Land Colonisation Company – 50 acres at £2 per acre and 37 acres at £2-5-0. In 1902, she transferred the 87 acres to the American Board *for the use of the school...*” (my emphasis). See Wood, *Shine Where you Are*, 1972, pp 55–56.

134. ISA, Interview, Robin Thompson with Scott Couper at Inanda Seminary, 20 August 2013. By selling the land, the church would have a substantive say in how the land was allocated. By selling the land, all the glebe residents received free titled plots and were thus no longer rendered tenants. At a minimum, at least the surrounding area would be residential and not the future location of a “waste dump or sewage treatment plant” which could be the case if expropriated. Inanda Seminary should not have been entitled to the R2 800 000, because only a small portion of the glebe land constituted Edwards’ Farm.

135. ISA, BoGM, 28 June 1994, Special Meeting, p 1.

136. ISA, BoGM, 12 August 1994, Minutes and Matters Arising, item i, p 1.

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shortfall of R159 000.<sup>137</sup> The Governing Council noted with concern that the UCCSA grant of R132 000 forwarded from UCBWM had not yet been received.<sup>138</sup> The Council resorted to appealing to the United States' consulate in Durban for funds. The staff were not to get increases in June and some needed to be laid off.<sup>139</sup> Ellis-Cole left the employ of the Seminary in August 1994 due to illness.<sup>140</sup> Chaplain Linda Noonan's departure in October 1994 following the expiration of her appointment, further depleted the spirits of the school. Only the bookkeeper, Parasuramen Permal, stood in the breach. It was difficult to believe the situation could get worse, but it did.

### Almost closed

The financial situation in 1995 remained desperate. In April 1995, Inanda Seminary requested Standard Bank to give it an overdraft of R80 000.<sup>141</sup> It was clear that the request for overdraft could not be made again. Principal Fanyana Mhlambo wrote in May 1995 to Dr Vincent Zulu, "... we have come to the end of the road as we are unable to pay our staff".<sup>142</sup> Mhlambo's May 1995 request was that the Department of National Education pay the teachers' salaries from 1 April 1995. Mhlambo bluntly stated that historically,

the school was supported by the middle classes; but they have since moved to stay in the white suburbs. The suburbs have well-staffed and equipped schools. As a result our school has dropped in numbers ... We really need help.<sup>143</sup>

Relief came. From 1 July 1995, the national government began to pay the teachers' salaries.<sup>144</sup> The bail out came just in time. On 1 August 1995, eighteen teachers signed a petition addressed to the principal stating, "We the undersigned teachers have resolved NOT to attend classes until we have been paid in FULL for the month of July 1995" (teachers' emphasis). The school was a hair's breadth away from closing. The government payment of salaries provided the added benefit of affording regular increments and housing allowances for teachers. Nonetheless, the provision to become a state-aided school profoundly altered the ethos of the Seminary. With the new dispensation, teachers' loyalties leaned toward the state, or the union, and not toward the principal, the Governing Council and the school's Christian ethos.

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137. ISA, BoGM, 12 August 1994, Business, item ii, p 2.

138. ISA, BoGM, 12 August 1994, Business, item iii, p 2.

139. ISA, BoGM, 28 June 1994, Special Meeting, p 2.

140. ISA, SF, Sean Ellis-Cole, correspondence to the Governing Council's chair, 25 July 1994. It was later reported to a "shocked" Governing Council that Ellis-Cole somehow, without authorisation, increased his own salary and unilaterally allotted himself a travelling allowance despite working from his home in town since the 1992 strike that forced him to flee the campus. That the Finance Committee and the Council were "shocked" at his remuneration demonstrates the very loose nature of the Council's governance (or the complete lack thereof). See ISA, BoGM, 14 October 1994, Business, p 2; and ISA, FCM, 14 October 1994, item iv, p 1.

141. ISA, CF, 1995, correspondence from FanyanaMhlambo to Dr Vincent Zulu, 5 May 1995.

142. ISA, CF, 1995, correspondence from FanyanaMhlambo to Dr Vincent Zulu, 5 May 1995.

143. ISA, CF, 1995, correspondence from FanyanaMhlambo to Dr Vincent Zulu, 5 May 1995.

144. ISA, PR, GC, 14 October 1994, item 4, p 2. The process was delayed in June 1995 when Ulundi reported it had not received Inanda Seminary's required forms and letters of recommendation. See ISA, PR, GC, 15 June 1995, item 3, p 1.

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Fanyana Mhlambo was desperate to save the school, and he utilised every available means while the Governing Council seemingly evaporated. The implications for the future of Inanda Seminary becoming a state-aided school were serious. Day scholars would have to be admitted from the surrounding area. This would lower the calibre of students accepted and it would make the Seminary porous, effectively a public school. The very qualities that enabled the Seminary to be as effective as it was despite its institutional dysfunction (private, Christian based and boarding) had now evaporated.

Some, including this author, have blamed Fanyana Mhlambo for turning the school from a private to a public school. That blame is unjustified. The Governing Council, according to the archival evidence, seems to have absolved itself of its responsibility to avoid the school's insolvency. Mhlambo was unable to pay the school's teachers, and without teachers, the school would close. The Financial Committee minutes and the Council minutes are threadbare. Records indicate that the Council only met four times (February, June, September and December 1995) despite the school nearly closing in the mid-year. The archive reveals no discussion from the Council about the short or long term effects of falling under the government's suzerainty. The consequence of the school accepting day scholars represented a fundamental change in the school's then 126-year history.

Despite the financial relief enabled by the national government's payment of teacher salaries from July 1995, Inanda Seminary's financial status immediately became precarious again. When parents learnt that the government had begun to pay the teachers' salaries, an unexpected consequence came to the fore: they became extremely reluctant to pay school fees at all. Fanyana Mhlambo lamented: "We laboured under the impression that we would be able to manage [with teachers' salaries being paid by the government]. But we have been proved wrong."<sup>145</sup> Despite having teachers' salaries paid, the Seminary still fell rapidly toward insolvency due in part to unpaid school fees. The new democratic government elected in 1994 forbade schools from expelling or prohibiting students from taking their exams if they had not paid their fees.<sup>146</sup> This meant that the only means the school had of persuading parents to pay their children's school fees was removed and fees were increasingly not paid.<sup>147</sup> In 1995, paying the R172 000 in arrears to the catering company was completely dependent, on a month-to-month basis, on delinquent school fees being paid.<sup>148</sup>

In August 1995, Fanyana Mhlambo, rather than the Governing Council, was still grasping at straws to keep the doors of Inanda Seminary open by applying for the subsidisation of administrative and boarding staff.<sup>149</sup> Mhlambo reported that

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145. ISA, CF, Correspondence from Fanyana Mhlambo to the Secretary of the Department of Education and Culture, 9 August 1995.

146. ISA, BoGM, 1 December 1995, item iii, p 2. Conceivably, there would be no reason why the school would be unable to exclude students from "boarding" if their fees were not paid, thus obtaining the same objective of expelling students should those students not live a commutable distance from the school.

147. "The underlying fact is that some parents do not like to pay school fees". See ISA, PR, GC, 2 August 1996, item 1, p 1.

148. ISA, BoGM, 1 December 1995, item ii, p 1.

149. The requested subsidisation would include cleaners, groundsmen, security, administrative and boarding staff.

the “administrative” staff looked at the benefits accrued by the teaching staff since falling under the auspices of the government and also called for an improved status.<sup>150</sup> While Mhlambo thought he was saving the school, his remedies only delayed its demise. Mhlambo reasoned that taking over of non-teaching staff at the school “will enable the management of the school to lower the fees considerably for the benefit of all”.<sup>151</sup> However, a further reduction of school fees opened the gate even further to day scholars, and even fewer parents paid substantive school fees to maintain a level of academic achievement that differentiated the Seminary from any other local public school.

### The beginning of the end

The year 1996 was quiet, but deceptively so. Enrolment rose to 420 due to the allowance of 80 day scholars into the school. Inanda Seminary earned a 100 per cent pass rate for 1995, thus maintaining its reputation of providing quality education. Staff turnover was negligible and two volunteer teachers from Denmark joined the faculty. While the Seminary was quiet, education in KwaZulu-Natal was in crisis. Though some limited renovations were done, Fanyana Mhlambo continued to lament the steady deterioration of the school’s physical plant.<sup>152</sup> The payment of school fees remained very poor and the school limped financially. While teachers were satisfied with their state salaries, the office staff, matrons, nursing sister and maintenance staff now felt under-remunerated and thus jealous. In his report to the Governing Council, Mhlambo continued to harp on the fact that the prospects for the school were bleak if the Council did not make drastic strategic changes that would enable the school to survive in the rapidly changing education environment.<sup>153</sup>

With the new semi-public dispensation, from 1996 the government forced Inanda Seminary to open its doors to day scholars as the dormitories became full.<sup>154</sup> The advent of day scholars further weakened the ethos of the school, destroying the comparative oasis that the institution had been since its founding. Opening the school to day scholars invited all manner of discipline problems with little or no financial benefit. With day scholars, alcohol, drugs, pregnancies, violence and disorder infiltrated the school. Day scholars paid inadequate tuition fees and the fees payable were eventually raised for day scholars. The new

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150. The advantages of working for the government were a secure salary pattern, better benefits and a housing subsidy.
  151. ISA, CF, Correspondence from Fanyana Mhlambo to the Secretary of the National Department of Education and Culture, 9 August 1995.
  152. ISA, PR, GC, 10 December 1996, p 1.
  153. “...it became clear that most of the middle class parents had moved out of the townships to settle in the suburbs. The suburbs have well-built schools which are suitably staffed and administered. For such people Inanda Seminary is no longer an attraction. So most of their children now attend the local schools as day scholars. We are therefore left with the daughters of the lower middle class people who still stay in the townships and reserves”. See ISA, PR, 20 August 1996, item vi, p 2.
  154. Fanyana Mhlambo wrote to the Department of National Education: “We are aware of the fact that to be state-aided means we have to open our doors to all children especially of the area. We are prepared to do that ... So that we shall have two sets of students – the hostel dwellers and the day scholars”. See ISA, CF, Fanyana Mhlambo to Sibusiso Bhengu, 24 June 1994, p 2.

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UCBWM appointed chaplain, the Reverend Clela Anderson, wrote about the day scholars when she confided that they “do not study as much as they really should do. It also seems that when I ask them to read a chapter of their novel, only a small percentage really do so”.<sup>155</sup>

In April 1996, “Old Girl” Lindiwe Zondi was introduced as the school’s new bookkeeper.<sup>156</sup> Her staff file provides evidence that suggests that she was not qualified or competent.<sup>157</sup> The difficulty she had in the position beginning in mid-March 1996 was foreshadowed by her immediate request to borrow R1 500 from the school. She then borrowed another R1 500 at the end of May and another R2 500 in October 1996.<sup>158</sup> More surprising, all the loans were approved. In December 1996, the Governing Council complained that she had to be coached in order to submit “scanty” financial statements.<sup>159</sup> When the Council met, Zondi routinely absented herself. Tellingly, the acting principal’s report to the Council in February 1997 states: “By the end of the year, it is essential to know the cost of running Inanda Seminary.”<sup>160</sup> This minute indicates that the acting principal, the treasurer and the Council administered the school in ignorance.<sup>161</sup> The “blind were leading the blind”; and it’s easy to steal from the blind.

The school still struggled with bad student debt in the middle of the decade. In April 1996, the debtors figure stood at R140 860 but by August 1996 it had escalated to an astounding R420 000.<sup>162</sup> Minutes record the same measures repeatedly being suggested (write letters to parents; students not being allowed to take examinations; and students not being permitted back to school).

In August 1996, the Governing Council’s original twelve members had dwindled to only five and the Old Girls’ Association seemed to have lost its zeal.<sup>163</sup> Early in 1996, Jeremy Sabine and Hixonia Nyasulu resigned from the Council. New members were introduced in December 1996: Mrs Naidoo, Timothy Maluleka, Mr D.L. Zama, John Mason and the Reverends Clela Anderson, Ian

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155. ISA, SF, C. Anderson, *News from Inanda Seminary*, May 1996. The UCBWM appointed Clela Anderson to Inanda Seminary as chaplain from September 1995.

156. ISA, BoGM, 19 April 1996, item 1, p 1.

157. Lindiwe Zondi graduated from Inanda Seminary in 1980. She attended the University of the North for a Bachelors of Commerce, but she did not graduate. She later enrolled for a one-year diploma course in computer study. Therefore, the Governing Council’s accusation that Zondi was not qualified for the position was accurate. See ISA, SF, Blossom Lindiwe Zondi, *Curriculum Vitae*, 11 July 1995, pp 2–3.

158. ISA, SF, Correspondence from Lindiwe Zondi to the principal, dated 29 March, 28 May and 2 October 1996.

159. ISA, BoGM, 10 December 1996, item i, p 2.

160. ISA, BoGM, 28 February 1997, Principal’s Report, p 2.

161. Zamo Mkhize first served Inanda Seminary as a teacher from July 1989. From 18 January 1993 to 31 December 1993, she served as “acting deputy principal”. From Fanyana Mhlambo’s resignation in December 1996, Mkhize served as acting principal. Like Lucky Zulu, Esther Sangweni and Lindiwe Zondi, Mkhize came to the school as a graduate of the University of Zululand (Bachelors of Arts 1992; and a Secondary Teachers Diploma in 1993). See ISA, SF, Correspondence from Zamo Mkhize to the principal; and from Fanyana Mhlambo to the bursar, 31 January 1995 and 15 February 1993 respectively. See also ISA, SF, Zamo Mkhize, *University of Zululand academic transcripts*, 28 January 1998.

162. ISA, BoGM, 19 April 1996, item 1, p 1; and ISA, BoGM, 2 August 1996, item 3, p 1.

163. ISA, BoGM, 2 August 1996, items 8–9, p 2.

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Booth and Robin Thompson.<sup>164</sup> Discernment about whether to remain a private school or a public school was scheduled to take place in January 1997. Despite just being introduced as new board members, Maluleka, Zama, Thompson and Anderson were asked to serve on a sub-committee to investigate the future of the school.<sup>165</sup>

By August 1996, Fanyana Mhlambo, aged 72 and tired, requested the Governing Council to release him at the end of 1996.<sup>166</sup> This was not unforeseen because his wife died earlier that year and he had been hospitalised in April 1996.<sup>167</sup> The stabilising influence of Mhlambo came to an end. Both he and the measures he took to save the school, such as acquiring state funding for teachers, were exhausted.

Because none of Inanda Seminary's heads of department desired the responsibility and as the deputy principal was unqualified, the Governing Council resolved to seek an acting principal from the outside.<sup>168</sup> The Council failed to do so. The Council did little or no succession planning following Fanyana Mhlambo's announcement of his impending departure. Because teachers' salaries had been paid by the state since 1995, the Council seemed to absolve itself of the responsibility for finding a suitable principal. The task was left to the state (based in Ulundi), which by December 1996 had done nothing. Mhlambo reported a bleak scene in his last report:

There are five people who come into reckoning [for the position of principal]: deputy principal and the four Heads of Department. Two are Indian males and have no desire to act [in this capacity]. The coloured man feels the task will be cumbersome. The deputy principal and the fourth HOD are females and they drink. Further, they are inexperienced. I wish to request the Governing Council to allow an acting principal from outside the school.<sup>169</sup>

No principal or acting principal was hired from the outside. No action was taken and the deputy principal by default became the acting principal in January 1997. When the Governing Council appointed Zamo Mkhize as acting principal, the chaplain Clela Anderson, wrote: "May she be a strong person to handle the issues here!"<sup>170</sup> Yet again, the Council's desire to appoint a "qualified woman to serve as interim principal" proved elusive.<sup>171</sup> Mkhize was unequal to the task despite "giving it her best try".<sup>172</sup> In an interview before his death in 2013, Fanyana Mhlambo confided that Mkhize had no experience as a principal and that "she was

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164. ISA, BoGM, 19 April 1996, item viii, p 2. Jeremy Sabine hailed from St Mary's girls school in Kloof and began serving on the Governing Council from mid-1990. See ISA, BoGM 10 December 1996, p 1. John Mason previously served on the Governing Council in the early 1990s, but resigned in early 1992.

165. Robin Thompson previously served on the Governing Council in the early 1990s, but resigned in early 1992.

166. ISA, BoGM, 2 August 1996, item 10, p 2.

167. ISA, BoGM, 19 April 1996, item vi, p 1.

168. ISA, BoGM, 10 December 1996, item iv, p 3.

169. ISA, PR, GC, 10 December 1996, p 2.

170. ISA, SF, C. Anderson, *News from Inanda* I, January 1997.

171. ISA, SF, C. Anderson, *News from Inanda*, January 1997.

172. ISA, SF, C. Anderson, *News from Inanda*, circa March 1997.

not prepared for it".<sup>173</sup> In one newspaper article, a reporter wrote that Mkhize feared that "the public would get the impression that an African school is not able to make it in the new South Africa. Perhaps she feels responsible".<sup>174</sup> But, she was not. Mkhize and the students were all educational products of Bantu Education. When the founding church withdrew, the African church did not pick up the mantle and did not adequately support Mkhize's leadership of a dying school.

Global Ministries also tired of Inanda Seminary's institutional rot. The Reverend Daniel Hoffman, Africa executive for Global Ministries withheld finances designated for the school because he claimed he did not receive a report nor an audited financial statement.<sup>175</sup> The minutes of financial committee meetings, compiled by Lindiwe Zondi, were also so thin as to almost be rendered useless by this study. "Audit Management Report for the Year Ended 31 March 1997" finds the following: "The standard of accounting records do not appear to be adequate and the internal controls do not appear to be operating as intended".<sup>176</sup> Financial statistics for 1996 and 1997 are too incomplete to enable this study to track funding trends throughout the decade. One handwritten document dated 23 April 1997 stated: "Finance situation is absurd" and "We cannot even draw up a budget statement because it would all be lies."<sup>177</sup> In February 1997, the Governing Council resolved to issue Lindiwe Zondi a third warning in order to comply with labour relations laws before firing her.

In January 1995, Inanda Seminary hired Thenjiwe Nkosi as an administration clerk. She confessed in 1998 to stealing funds in 1997. In a signed affidavit and statement, Nkosi acknowledged that she "...deliberately failed to receipt application fees and used them instead, for my own purposes".<sup>178</sup> In an additional statement that she submitted to the Governing Council's Management Committee in January 1998, Nkosi confessed that "...the lady who was in this position before me had the same problem [people coming to me and asking for money and insisting that I give them]..."<sup>179</sup> The context of the confession is that staff members would come to the school office and demand loans, receive them from the administration clerk and did not repay ...

...these monies back because they felt it was school money. This was discussed by staff members. Telling others that if they need the money they just go to her and she gave them the money and they never bothered to repay the money.<sup>180</sup>

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173. ISA, SF, Interview, Fanyana Mhlambo with Scott Couper and Nompumelelo Hlophe, 2 February 2011, p 5.
  174. ISA, "Famous School Struggles in New SA", *The Mercury*, circa 1997.
  175. ISA, BoGM, 10 December 1996, item iii, p 2.
  176. ISA, Annual Financial Statements (hereafter AFS), 1997, "Audit Management Report for the Year Ended 31 March 1997", by Nkonki Sizwe Ntshaluba, 10 June 1997, p 1.
  177. ISA, BoGR, Handwritten document, no author stated, 23 April 1997.
  178. ISA, SF, Thenjiwe Nkosi, affidavit and report entitled "Application Fees Not Received", 1 April 1998 and 27 January 1998, respectively.
  179. ISA, SF, Thenjiwe Nkosi, correspondence from Nkosi to the Inanda Seminary Management Committee, "Statement in Connection with Funds", 27 January 1998, p 2. In response to the question whether "in the previous administration, she was specifically authorised to collect money", Nkosi replied that "...'anyone' could collect this money and indeed many within the administration did". See ISA, BoGM, Meeting between Management and Ms Hlengwa and Mrs Thenjiwe Nkosi, item 2, 19 January 1998, p 2.
  180. ISA, SF, Correspondence from Thenjiwe Nkosi to the Inanda Seminary Management Committee, "Statement in Connection with Funds", 27 January 1998, p 2.

In short, evidence suggests that the Seminary was a kleptocracy until at least January 1998 when the new Board of Governors discovered the above fraud and fired Nkosi.<sup>181</sup>

## Conclusion

During the 1990s, Inanda Seminary suffered from long-term damage caused often indirectly by the apartheid government's implementation of Bantu Education. The long term and pervasive nature of Bantu Education created a dysfunctional dynamic that makes it difficult to discern whether the source of the school's institutional rot was primarily internal or external. No doubt, it was both. Each exacerbated the other.

First, in 1957, though allowing Inanda Seminary to operate as a private school, Bantu Education legislation initially forbade the school from accepting school fees and withdrew its state subsidy, thus financially asphyxiating the school over the long term. This financial asphyxiation placed the Seminary in a chronic state of struggle and perpetual disadvantage in comparison with other private and Model C schools catering for Whites.

Second, Bantu Education diminished over time the calibre of students and black faculty members entering the school. Students from state and community "Bantu" primary schools were increasingly underprepared for the rigorous education offered at Inanda Seminary to the extent that bridging programmes were implemented during the 1980s and '90s.<sup>182</sup> Bantu Education did not adequately prepare students or teachers for a high quality English-medium secondary education to the extent that the American Board mission schools did. Bantustan universities failed to produce experienced and academically qualified black female leadership to lead the Seminary.

Third, when petty apartheid laws prohibiting Blacks from acquiring quality education fell away in the mid and late 1980s, the best and brightest of the Seminary's fee payers left for greener pastures in the 1990s. The equivalent of Black Economic Empowerment did not exist for the Seminary. The Seminary was at a disadvantage compared to other privileged suburban private and Model C schools. It was unable to recover from this, especially when completely surrounded by townships growing around the school due to the wider church's land sales.

Because of inadequate investment in infrastructure, finances and staff, Inanda Seminary's esteem deteriorated. As the staff increasingly became secular and the state provided the salaries, accountability to the school and its students decreased. Weak or inappropriate principals hired weak and inappropriate teachers. Collective solidarity with one another declined and selfish motivations

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181. ISA, SF, Correspondence from the Board of Governors to Thenjiwe Nkosi Nkosi, 3 April 1998.

182. Constance Koza and Fanyana Mhlambo initiated programmes to improve incoming students' ability in English to assist them to cope with Inanda Seminary's high standard of education.

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engendered chronic criminal behaviour. Parents' and students' respect for the school eroded to such an extent that parents disregarded the school's pleas to pay school fees.

Though Bantu Education proved destructive, the leadership and staff of Inanda Seminary did not minimise the damage caused by apartheid to the extent that they could have. The Governing Council failed to enable the school to transition from a foreign supported mission school to a domestically supported school while the UCBWM "decolonised" its operations and budgets in Africa. Rarely did the Council examine the larger educational world and how it was changing rapidly in a post-apartheid South Africa. Though receiving repeated warnings, the Council failed to re-strategise and alter its educational paradigm to market the school for a changing constituency.

Complicit, rather than culpable, characterises the church's degree of responsibility. The UCCSA and the KZN Region failed to support Inanda Seminary to the extent that the American Board and the UCBWM did. Despite the KZN Region receiving funds generated from the sale of glebe land, and thus in part Seminary land, those funds were not invested in the school. The UCCSA pleaded poverty. Arguably, the KZN Region deposited too much money into the wider church's coffers and not enough was re-invested into the Seminary's continued survival. Sufficient financial resources were not channelled into the maintenance and improvement of the school's physical plant, financial expertise and, perhaps most importantly, leadership embodied in a principal.

Somewhat absolving the church is the fact that it was the Governing Council's responsibility to administer the school directly, not the church. Furthermore, the church did not receive enough informative communication either from the school or the Council. Communication was very poor despite the fact that the church was represented on the Council. The principal reported to the church only twice annually.<sup>183</sup> Furthermore, for the church to invest funds in the financial "black hole" that the Inanda Seminary became would have been irresponsible. Once the demise of the school was made apparent to the church, Robin Thompson realised that "... it was absolutely apparent if the school was to continue operating, the liabilities would have simply increased ... because of my fiduciary responsibility ... I recommended that the school should be closed ... from a financial point of view".<sup>184</sup>

Ultimately, the Governing Council and its chair were responsible for Inanda Seminary becoming a kleptocracy, thus precluding the church's substantive investment in the school. The church never requested the Council's chair to resign, although throughout the decade it was evident that he did not have the skills to pilot the school through rocky and uncharted waters. Allan Wentzel, a member of the former Council and the present Board of Governors, recalled that the chair had a "particular aura about him ... he was doing everything ... but very

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183. The school, through the principal, reported to the KZN Region's Annual General Meeting and to the UCCSA's General Assembly. The same limited communication occurs to the present. Missionaries served a tenuous communications link, as they do now.

184. ISA, interview, Robin Thompson with Scott Couper at Inanda Seminary, 20 August 2013.

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much on an individual basis rather than a more corporate basis ... but the church doesn't generally have the courage [to hold its own to account]".<sup>185</sup>

Not until 1998 did new leadership emerge after the wider church relinquished control of Inanda Seminary.<sup>186</sup> Not until 2001 was investment placed into the Seminary's crumbling infrastructure. Not until 2002 was investment placed in proper financial personnel and technology. Not until 2003 did the school acquire a high quality, experienced and academically qualified principal with a sound strategic vision and a high-energy work ethic. With creative and dynamic board leadership and adequate investment in infrastructure, financial controls and a principal, the school would once again thrive in the new millennium.

### Abstract

During the 1990s, institutional rot festered because Inanda Seminary failed to adapt to the changing nature of education in the post-apartheid era. The decline's source can be traced to the negative ramifications of apartheid's Bantu Education, first implemented during the 1950s. Over the decades, Bantu Education fostered a widening investment disparity between private and state schools designated only for Whites and the Seminary. As the strictures of Bantu Education relaxed during the 1980s, the Seminary's most academically and financially capable students sought education at the historically advantaged, now multiracial, schools. In the new political environment of the 1990s, the Seminary could not compete with more privileged schools and it therefore lost its market niche of providing quality education for black girls. The disparity caused by apartheid combined with educational "freedom" resulted in a "brain drain" from the Seminary. The school hemorrhaged. As damaging as Bantu Education was, the Seminary and its leadership were its own worst enemies. The school became a nest of conflicting constituencies and a kleptocracy. A frugal church and an uncreative Governing Council were together guilty of culpable inertia. This article chronicles the demise of the Seminary from 1990 to 1996, before its closure in 1997.

**Key Words:** Inanda Seminary; Bantu Education; American Board; apartheid; Fanyana Mhlambo; Zamo Mkhize; United Congregational Church of Southern Africa.

### Opsomming

#### **"Hulle het hul deure oopgemaak vir swart kinders tot ons nadeel": Die kroniek van die Inanda Seminarie tydens die 1990s**

Gedurende die 1990's, het die sweer van institusionele verrotting versprei soos die Seminarie gesukkel het om aan te pas by die veranderende natuur van opvoeding tydens die post-apartheid era. Die oorsprong van die verrotting was die toenemende komplikasies van Apartheid se Bantoe-onderwys. Laasgenoemde

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185. ISA, interview, Allan Wentzel with Scott Couper at Inanda Seminary, 16 August 2013.

186. The new Board of Governors, often referred to as the 'Power of Ten', was composed primarily of 'Old Girls': Nora Moerane, Thelma Ngidi, Florence Madlala, Doris Gogela, Glenrose Nzimande, Junerose Mazibuko, Sibongile Sangweni, Zamakhosi Mpanza, Bongelike Dlomo and Gloria Sosibo.

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was gedurende die 1950's geïmplementeer. Groot gapings is tussen staat asook privaatskole (slegs vir blankes) en die Seminarie oor die dekades geskep en aangemoedig deur Bantoe-onderwys. Soos die strukture van Bantoe-onderwys verslap het gedurende die 1980's, het die Seminarie meeste van haar finansieël en akademies bekwame student verloor. Hierdie leerders is na voorheen bevoordeelde, huidig multi-kulturele, skole. In die nuwe politieke klimaat van die 1990's, kon Inanda Seminarie nie meeding met die bevoorregte skole nie en verloor dus haar eksklusiwiteit as voorsiener van kwaliteit opvoeding vir swart meisies. Ongelykheid wat deur Apartheid veroorsaak is, gekombineer met die feit dat leerders self kon kies by watter skool hul onderrig wou word, het veroorsaak dat die Seminarie van al haar top leerlinge gestroop is. Tesame met Bantoe-onderwys, was die skool se ondergang deels veroorsaak deur die leierskap van die skool se finansiële wanbestuur. Die beheerliggaam het ontaard in 'n nes van konflik en selfverryking. Die spaarsamige kerk en 'n beheerliggaam sonder kreatiwiteit was gesamentlik skuldig aan besluitloosheid en passiwiteit. Hierdie artikel vertel die historiese gebeure van die ondergang van Inanda Seminarie gedurende 1990 tot 1996, voordat die skool se hekke gesluit is in 1997.

**Sleutelwoorde:** Inanda Seminarie; Bantoe Onderwys; Amerikaanse Raad; apartheid; Fanyana Mhlambo; Zamo Mkhize; United Congregational Church van Suidelike-Afrika.