

The Beginnings of Anglican Theological Education in South Africa, 1848–1963

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Various attempts at establishing Anglican theological education were made after the arrival in 1848 of Robert Gray, the first bishop of Cape Town, but it was not until 1876 that the first theological school opened in Bloemfontein. As late as 1883 half of the Anglican priests in South Africa had never attended a theological college. The system of theological education which developed afterwards became increasingly segregated. It also became more centralised, in a different manner for each race. A central theological college for white ordinands was established in Grahamstown in 1898 while seven diocesan theological colleges were opened for blacks during the same period. These were reduced to two in the 1930s, St Peter's College in Johannesburg and St Bede's in Umtata. The former became one of the constituent colleges of the Federal Theological Seminary in Alice, Eastern Cape, in 1963.

In 1963 the Federal Theological Seminary of Southern Africa, an ecumenical seminary jointly established by the Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational churches, opened in Alice, Eastern Cape. A thorn in the flesh of the apartheid regime, Fedsem, as the seminary was commonly called, trained theological students of all races, even whites at a later stage of its history, in an atmosphere of free discussion and social commitment unique at the time. St Peter's College, a theological school formerly based in Johannesburg, was one of its four constituent colleges.¹

JTSA = *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*; WCL = Archives of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa, William Cullen Library, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

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¹ For a history of the Federal Theological Seminary see Roger Cameron, 'Some political, ecumenical and theological aspects of the history of the Federal Theological Seminary 1963–1975', unpubl MA diss. Cape Town 1984; Philippe Denis, 'Fedsem ten years later: the

The foundation of Fedsem opened a new page in the history of Anglican theological education. The other Anglican students were trained at St Paul's College, Grahamstown, a seminary predominantly for whites, and St Bede's College, Umtata, an institution for black students.

This paper is devoted to the history of theological education in the Anglican Church of South Africa prior to the establishment of Fedsem, an under-researched subject despite several studies of good quality on the early history of Anglicanism in South Africa.² The *terminus a quo* of the study is the arrival of Bishop Robert Gray in the Cape Colony in 1848, which marked the formal beginning of the Anglican Church in South Africa.

It took decades and a long succession of trials and errors for a coherent system of formal theological education to be established in the Anglican Church of South Africa. After a short period of relative colour blindness, training for ministry became increasingly segregated with contrasted models of training for white and black ministers. The diocesan colleges for black ordinands were the last to be amalgamated. Until the apartheid regime compelled it to join forces with other Christian bodies, the Anglican Church envisaged black theological education in a narrowly denominational perspective.

By the end of the period under review 37 per cent of the clergy (316 out of a total of 861) was black. The proportion of indigenous people in the Anglican clergy had been rising steadily, though not as much as in the Methodist Church in which 55 per cent of all clergy were black.³ In the early sixties close to 100 young men trained for the priesthood in the Anglican Church: around thirty at St Peter's College, Rosettenville, thirty-five at St Bede's, Umtata, and a similar number at St Paul's College, Grahamstown.⁴

unwritten history of an ecumenical seminary', *JTSA* cxvii (2003), 68–79, and 'Unfinished business: the painful closure of the Federal Theological Seminary of Southern Africa', *Missionalia* xxxvii (2009), 5–19.

² On the Anglican Church of South Africa see Peter Hinchliff, *The Anglican Church in South Africa*, London 1963; John Suggit and Mandy Goedhals (eds), *Change and challenge: essays commemorating the 150th anniversary of the arrival of Robert Gray as first bishop of Cape Town (20th February 1848)*, Cape Town 1998; and Olga Muriel Suberg, *The Anglican tradition in South Africa: a historical overview*, Pretoria 1999. For an overview of the history of theological education in the Anglican Church of South Africa see Simon Gqubule, 'Theological education in the Church of the Province of South Africa (CPSA)', in Leonard Hulley, Louise Kretzschmar and Luke Pato (eds), *Archbishop Tutu: prophetic witness in South Africa*, Cape Town 1996, 211–21, and Njongonkulu Ndungane, 'Theological education in the last fifty years', in Suggit and Goedhals, *Change and challenge*, 107–13.

³ 1960 figures. See David Thomas, *Christ divided: liberalism, ecumenism and race in South Africa*, Pretoria 2002, 198. For an overview of the development of indigenous clergy in the first sixty years of the twentieth century in Africa see Bengt Sundkler, *The Christian ministry in Africa*, London 1960, 62–8, 76–87.

⁴ Bob Clarke, *Anglicans against apartheid, 1936–1996*, Pietermaritzburg 2008, 208.

First attempts at establishing theological colleges

As was the case in England,⁵ candidates for the ministry in the Church of the Province of Southern Africa were not all trained in theological institutions, at least until the first decades of the twentieth century. Robert Gray himself, while a graduate, did not attend a theological college. The first batch of Anglican missionaries studied the Bible and learned Greek on board the ship that brought them to South Africa in 1848.⁶ In later years it gradually became the practice to board prospective ordination candidates with senior and scholarly priests.⁷ This is the way in which the first black clergy were trained. Paul Masiza, ordained deacon for the diocese of St John's in 1871, and his brother Peter, ordained priest in 1877, did not receive any formal theological education.⁸ Mpengula Mbanda and William Ngcwensa also 'read' with Henry Callaway, the future bishop of St John's, at the Springvale mission in Natal, prior to their ordination to the diaconate in 1871. One was Callaway's translator and the other a young man entrusted to the care of the missionary after a stint in jail for a spate of murders committed under the influence of dagga.⁹ Ministerial training would take place in the local congregations where teachers, catechists and evangelists would receive supervision before being accepted for ordination, after a period of probation which could take several years.

In 1883, according to a report prepared for the provincial synod held in that year, 104 out of total of 218 clergy, that is, nearly one half, had been 'ordained without apparently any specified and certified literary or theological qualification'. Of the remainder, sixty-one were graduates, thirty-four were theological students, mainly at St Augustine's College, Canterbury, and nineteen had been under theological tutors for at least a year. These statistics essentially concerned English-born clergy. Only twenty-nine clergy were born in South Africa, of whom fifteen were said to be black.¹⁰ By the time that this report was compiled, nearly half of the white priests and

⁵ Owen Chadwick, *The founding of Cuddesdon*, Oxford 1954, 3.

⁶ Michael Nuttall, 'Theological training in historical perspective: a South African Anglican review', *JTSA* xvii (1977), 33–35.

⁷ Peter Hinchliff, 'The theology of graduation: an experiment in training colonial clergy', in C. W. Dugmore and Charles Duggan (eds), *Studies in church history*, i, London 1964, 254.

⁸ Livingstone Ngewu, 'A review of the history of St Bede's College: 1899–1992', *The College of the Transfiguration Journal: First Anniversary Issue* (Feb. 1994), 23. On Peter Masiza see Mandy Goedhals, 'Ungumpriste: a study of the life of Peter Masiza, first black priest in the Church of the Province of Southern Africa', *JTSA* lxxviii (1989), 17–28.

⁹ B. B. Burnett, *Anglicans in Natal*, Durban [1953], 97; Geoffrey Dixon Soni, 'Indigenous clergy at the Springvale Anglican mission from personal reminiscence', in Philippe Denis (ed.), *The making of an indigenous clergy in Southern Africa*, Pietermaritzburg 1995, 173–4.

¹⁰ 'Resolutions passed by the provincial synod of 1883', appendix D: 'Report on the supply and training of candidates for the holy orders', 90, WCL, BX 5700.6.A2 CHU.

deacons and probably just as many black clergy were exercising the ministry without any formal theological training.

Yet, from an early date, the Anglican bishops understood the need to have theological schools. In 1872, the year of his death, Robert Gray, the metropolitan bishop, told his sister that what the Church of the Province needed most was a theological college.¹¹ By then several attempts had been made at opening a theological school, but none had succeeded. Soon after his arrival in Cape Town in 1848, Bishop Gray set up a theological school in a wing of his residence, 'for the handful of ordinands which the bishop had collected together'.¹² His companion Hopkins Badnall became the theological tutor. It seems that this practice had started on board ship on the way to South Africa.¹³ How long it lasted is not known.

In 1853, within a few weeks of his arrival in Grahamstown, John Armstrong, the new bishop, issued an appeal for funds to found a college for boys. One of his goals was 'to furnish the means of training men for Holy Orders'.¹⁴ The school opened in 1855 under the name of St Andrew's College and in 1860 a 'Kafir Institute' – also called Mullins Institution after Robert Mullins, the priest who ran it from 1864 to 1907 – for black children opened in a wing of the college at the initiative of Henry Cotterill, the second bishop of Grahamstown.¹⁵ The theological school never developed, but several pupils from the Mullins Institution became priests.¹⁶

In 1856 John William Colenso, bishop of Natal, shared with Sir George Grey, the Cape governor, his intention to open a theological college together with a black school, a central college for Europeans, a hospital and an orphanage.¹⁷ His trial for heresy, however, forced him to shelve this project.¹⁸ The bishop's first theological student was William Ngidi, a young Zulu who had become his interpreter and confidant and was employed as a teacher in his mission school. There is evidence that Ngidi made some attempts at preaching in the Msinga area after having left Colenso in 1869.¹⁹

¹¹ Charles Norris Gray, *Life of Robert Gray, bishop of Cape Town and metropolitan of Africa*, London 1876, ii. 552.

¹² Hinchliff, *Anglican Church in South Africa*, 36.

¹³ Nuttall, 'Theological training in historical perspective', 35.

¹⁴ R. F. Currey, *St Andrew's College, Grahamstown*, Oxford 1955, 12.

¹⁵ On the Mullins Institute see Marguerite Poland, *The boy in you: a biography of St Andrew's College, 1855–200*, Simon's Town 2008, 49–57.

¹⁶ Simon Gqubule, 'An examination of the theological education of Africans in the Presbyterian, Methodist, Congregational, and Anglican Churches in South Africa from 1860–1960', unpubl. PhD diss. Rhodes 1978, 183–4; Poland, *The boy in you*, 57.

¹⁷ Cecil Lewis and G. E. Edwards, *Historical records of the Church of the Province of South Africa*, London 1934, 313.

¹⁸ Jeff Guy, *The heretic: a study of the life of John William Colenso*, Pietermaritzburg 1983.

¹⁹ Idem, 'Class, imperialism and literary criticism: William Ngidi, John Colenso and Matthew Arnold', *Journal of Southern African Studies* xxiii (1997), 240.

In 1866 Bishop Gray sent four young blacks, three from Zonnebloem College, a school established in 1858 by Sir George Grey for the education of the sons of African chiefs, and one from the 'Kafir Institute' in Grahamstown, to St Augustine's College, Canterbury, to further their education. Suffering from the European climate, all came back before the end of their studies. Two of them, Stephen Mnyakama and Josias Ntsiko, were later admitted to the diaconate.²⁰

Subsequently, at a synod held in 1869, the Anglican bishops resolved that 'a more complete English and Theological Education than is provided in the Mission Institutes of several Dioceses' should be given in Zonnebloem 'to candidates for Holy Orders and others'.²¹ They wanted to maintain as high a standard of education as was possible for orders in the Province.²² But no funds could be found and the plan did not materialise.²³

When the provincial synod met for the first time in 1870, not one of the clergy present was locally born. Only a few priests ordained in South Africa, all of European origin, were at work in parishes. In 1876 the provincial synod recommended the establishment of a theological college in each diocese and the formation of a faculty in the Province to examine candidates in theology.²⁴ The same year the bishop of Bloemfontein, Allan Becher Webb, established a theological school, the first of its kind in South Africa, in the seat of this diocese. Before his arrival in South Africa, Webb had been vice-principal of Cuddesdon College, the diocesan seminary founded by Samuel Wilberforce in Oxford.²⁵ Cecil Lewis and G. E. Edwards hint at the fact that the new institution was destined for the entire South African Province.²⁶ This does not seem to have happened even though the idea of a central theological college might have been attractive to under-resourced dioceses. In effect, the new theological school, St Cyprian's, trained candidates only from the Bloemfontein diocese. What is perhaps more significant is that it was open to white and black candidates. There was no lack of funds this time thanks to a

²⁰ Janet Hodgson, 'A history of Zonnebloem College, 1858 to 1870: a study of Church and Society', unpubl. MA diss. Cape Town 1975, 523–9. Stephen Mnyakama was ordained deacon by Nathaniel Merriman, bishop of Grahamstown, in 1874. He worked for ten years at Fort Beaufort before committing suicide in 1885. See Mandy Goedhals, 'Nathaniel James Merriman, archdeacon and bishop, 1849–1882: a study in church life and government', unpubl. PhD diss. Rhodes 1982, 460. Jonas Ntsiko was ordained deacon in 1873, after which he seemed to have disappeared from church records. See Poland, *The boy in you*, 57.

²¹ *Minutes of proceedings of the synod of bishops of the Province of Capetown ... January 1869*, no XVIII, 14, quoted in Hodgson, 'A history of Zonnebloem College', 610.

²² *Ibid.* See Goedhals, 'Merriman', 342.

²³ Hodgson, 'A history of Zonnebloem', 615.

²⁴ *The constitutions and canons of the Church of the Province of South Africa as revised, amended, and confirmed by the provincial synod, held at Cape Town, A.D. 1876*, Cape Town 1876, 76–80. See Goedhals, 'Merriman', 343.

²⁵ Hinchliff, 'Theology of graduation', 255.

²⁶ Lewis and Edwards, *Historical records*, 421.

grant from the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (SPCK). In August 1876 William Thomas Gaul, the principal, reported the arrival of five students ‘all earnest, loyal, soldierly. We hope to get some of the best and bravest of our colonial boys in time. How glorious it would be if we could make another “Iona” adapted to modern requirements to evangelize the tribes of the north’.²⁷

In a pastoral letter published shortly after the provincial synod, the Anglican bishops called on the wealthier members of the community to support financially the candidates for the ministry:

A fair proportion of the youth of the land must be offered to the Lord for the honourable service of Christ in the Ministry of His Church, if God’s blessing is to be continued to our labours in other vocations of life. We are aware that the difficulties of expense in the lengthening training required of candidates for the ministry, and the uncertainty of the income of our Clergy, are obstacles that not unjustly have weight and influence with parents. But measures are being taken in various Dioceses of the Province for providing adequate theological training at much less cost than hitherto. And we venture to hope that this provision will be further supplemented by the foundation of Theological Scholarships at the charge of the wealthier members of the community. If their own children are not given to the sacred calling, will such men not aid in the training of others who may become leaders in the army of Christ.²⁸

By the end of 1879 nine clergy trained at St Cyprian’s were at work in the diocese of Bloemfontein. All were white. But the experiment was short-lived. The college was closed in 1883 when Bishop Webb left the diocese. One of the reasons given was that it was too isolated to serve the whole Province.²⁹

By then the idea of a central theological college was gaining support. The authors of a report on the supply and training of candidates for holy orders that was presented to the provincial synod in 1883 came out clearly in support of it:

The attempt which has been made in several dioceses to establish Diocesan Theological Colleges, or other similar machinery, has, we think, been proven to be unsatisfactory. Such efforts are both too expensive and too feeble for the purpose. The maintenance of a competent staff of Tutors is beyond the power of any single diocese, and the small and fluctuating number of candidates therein, as well as the

²⁷ Ibid. On St Cyprian’s College and the training of black clergy in the Anglican diocese of Bloemfontein see also Abraham Mojalefe Lieta, ‘Colenso and the emergence of an indigenous black clergy in South Africa’, in Jonathan Draper (ed.), *The eye of the storm: John William Colenso and the crisis of biblical inspiration*, Pietermaritzburg 2003, 242–54.

²⁸ Pastoral letter addressed by the bishops of the Province of South Africa to the clergy and faithful laity of the Church, Cape Town 1876, 5, WCL, AB 1956.

²⁹ Lewis and Edward, *Historical records*, 421.

difficulty of insisting on residence for a sufficient time, make such attempts difficult to succeed.³⁰

An important shift had, however, taken place. In the minds of its proponents, the central college was to be for white ordinands only. The multi-racial approach, which had been widely accepted so far, gave way to a racially-based approach to priestly training. In 1891 Grahamstown, where Allan Becher Webb, the bishop of Bloemfontein, had been elected in the meantime, was chosen as the site of the future central college.³¹ When St Paul's College was finally established in 1902, all its students were white, a situation which lasted until the mid-1970s.³² Some candidates for the ministry continued to be trained in England, as in the early days of the colony. Others went to Grahamstown.

In 1898, in an effort to raise academic standards in theological education, the provincial synod instituted the South African Faculty of Divinity, an examining body awarding diplomas in theology and providing a form of graduation ceremony. A similar board had been established in England the year before. The South African Faculty of Divinity consisted of the archbishop, the bishops and all other doctors and bachelors in the Province. Candidates for holy orders, as well as deacons and priests, were eligible for an examination for the diploma of 'Student in Divinity', which entitled them to wear a special hood. The theological colleges established in South Africa in the following years used the South African Faculty of Divinity as a qualifying authority.³³

When St Paul's College opened in 1902, John Espin, the warden, had in charge one student, W. Farre, who became rector of Khomga. In 1906 there were six students and the college was full. After an extension of the building the number of ordinands continued to increase. By the time the college celebrated its thirtieth anniversary in 1932, 108 students had been admitted and 82 of them had proceeded to ordination. In the early years the rules of St Paul's were based on those in use in English colleges. Six services were said every day and times of silence were observed.³⁴

St Paul's was only for Anglicans. In 1947 the Anglican Church had not joined the Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian Churches in the

³⁰ *Resolutions passed by the provincial synod of 1883* [Cape Town 1883], appendix D: 'Report on the supply and training of candidates for the holy orders', at p. 87.

³¹ Lewis and Edwards, *Historical records*, 204. See also Suberg, *Anglican tradition*, 66–8.

³² Personal communication with Jonathan Draper, 31 Dec. 2008. According to Gqubule, Archbishop Joost de Blank sent two African students to St Paul's in 1961–2: 'An examination', 200. On St Paul's College see Lewis and Edwards, *Historical records*, 204–7, and Christopher James Chichele Hewitt, 'A history of St Paul's College', *The College of the Transfiguration Journal* (Feb. 1994), 38–46.

³³ Lewis and Edwards, *Historical records*, 204; Hinchliff, 'Theology of graduation', 257.

³⁴ Hewitt, 'History of St Paul's College', 39–40.

establishment of Livingstone House, an inter-denominational residence for ministerial students in Grahamstown. However, the four Churches had jointly entered into an agreement with Rhodes University, in 1946, to establish a chair of divinity. This theological education scheme was reserved for white students.³⁵

St Paul's College's white-only character caused uneasiness in some sectors of the clergy. At a diocesan synod held in Johannesburg in 1941 Bernard Sigamoney, an Indian priest, moved that all restrictions on the admission of non-European students to St Paul's be removed, but his motion was defeated.³⁶ Whilst bishop of Grahamstown in the early 1960s, Robert Selby Taylor took steps to desegregate theological education in his diocese,³⁷ but it was not until 1976 that the first black student was admitted to St Paul's. From then on the number of Coloured and African students gradually increased.³⁸

The training of black clergy in the Church of the Province

For black and coloured ordinands the only option at the time was the diocesan college. One of them was St Peter's College, Rosettenville, which relocated to Alice in 1963 to become a constituent college of Fedsem. In 1927 South Africa counted seven theological colleges for blacks.³⁹ This number was subsequently reduced to two: one for the north and one for the south.

The pioneer in theological education for black clergy was Henry Callaway, who paved the way for the foundation of St Bede's College in Umtata. Introduced to Bishop Colenso's first African agents on his arrival from England in 1854, he trained several young men for ordination to the diaconate while stationed in Springdale after his ordination. In 1876 he was consecrated bishop of St John's, Kaffraria, a new diocese between the Kei River and Natal formed from the division of the diocese of Grahamstown. One of Callaway's first moves was to take students to board with him and by October 1878 the number of black boys had grown to fourteen. The following year he established St John's Theological College in Umtata, 'for the purpose of training young natives and colonists and lay teachers'. The new school was primarily a teachers' training college but there

³⁵ Leslie Hewson, *They seek a city: Methodism in Grahamstown*, Grahamstown 1981, quoted in Neville Richardson, "Ministerial training and theological education in the Methodist Church of Southern Africa: the road ahead", *Missionalia* xxxv (2007), 138. See also Clarke, *Anglicans against apartheid*, 29.

³⁶ Peter Lee, *Compromise and courage: Anglicans in Johannesburg, 1864-1999*, Pietermaritzburg 2005, 134.

³⁷ Clarke, *Anglicans against apartheid*, 230.

³⁸ Hewitt, 'History of St Paul's College', 44.

³⁹ James Dexter Taylor, *Christianity and the natives of South Africa: a year-book of South African missions*, Lovedale [1927], 203.

was a separate department for young men who were prepared for ordination.⁴⁰ In his charge to the diocesan synod of 1879, Callaway intimated that he wanted to use his remaining power

to rais[e] a native ministry and for this purpose to establish such an institution at this place as shall ensure for the whole Kaffraria a more educated class of society, and an efficient Christian ministry, so that when we have passed from our labours, we may leave behind us a body of good and [loyal] men, and well-trained servants of Christ, our one Master, to take up our work and carry it on to the glory of God.⁴¹

In 1898 Bransby Key, Callaway's successor as bishop of the St John's diocese, decided to establish a theological college distinct from the teacher training college. The theological students moved into the vacated Augusta School in 1899 and the centre became known as St Bede's. The rationale for the opening of St Bede's was the need to prepare black people for an eventual takeover of the ecclesiastical machinery. 'The Native Church', Key was reported as saying, '[should] stand entirely alone' and all white clergy should withdraw entirely.⁴²

In 1911 nine African priests and fourteen deacons, most of them trained at St Bede's, were serving in the diocese of St John's.⁴³ Another student was James Matta Dwane, a former Methodist minister who had negotiated the admission of his breakaway Ethiopian movement as a separate order in the Anglican Church. He was ordained to the priesthood by the bishop of St John's on 29 January 1911.⁴⁴

Another major initiative in theological education for black people was the opening of St Peter's Theological College in Doornfontein, Johannesburg, in 1903. The history of St Peter's is tied up with that of the Community of the Resurrection (CR), an Anglican religious community for men founded in England in 1892. In the years preceding the South African War, Edwin Farmer, the director of 'native' missions in the diocese of Pretoria, had opened a theological school, St Cuthbert's College, where about a dozen men were trained 'in habits of prayer, and study, and work'.⁴⁵ On his arrival in Pretoria in 1894, he had found '60 Native men working hard for the

⁴⁰ M. S. Bentham, *Henry Callaway M.D., D.D. first bishop for Kaffraria: his life – history and work*, London 1896, 318, 321, quoted in Ngewu, 'A review', 21.

⁴¹ Bentham, *Henry Callaway*, quoted in Ngewu, 'A review', 21–2.

⁴² Alan G. S. Gibson, *Eight years in Kaffraria, 1882–1890*, London 1890, 160, quoted in Ngewu, 'A review', 23.

⁴³ Gqubule, 'An examination', 190.

⁴⁴ Idem, 'Preface', to Sigqibo Dwane, *Issues in the South African theological debate: essays and addresses in honour of the late James Matta Dwane*, Johannesburg 1989, 2.

⁴⁵ Osmund Victor, *The thin black line*, Brighton [1914?], 7–8, quoted in Gqubule, 'An examination', 192. A copy of this rare 32-page pamphlet is kept at WCL, BX 5185 VIC.

Church'.⁴⁶ With proper training, he reported, the young men he was preparing for the ministry would shine in the mission field:

These men were very capable missionaries, even though they were uninstructed and laymen. There can be no doubt that the very best missionary must be the properly trained native, and the end of our work must be a native ministry ... But to ordain natives without their being properly trained would be fatal to the spiritual life of the Church.⁴⁷

In response to Farmer's appeal, the bishop of Pretoria, Henry Bousfield, invited the CR to run a theological college at St Cuthbert's. But war broke out and the project was postponed. It was revived in April 1903 with the establishment of St Peter's College in Doornfontein under the direction of three CR Fathers, who had arrived from England that January. The first student was Matthew Mntande. Later in the year he was joined by Titus Malape, Stephen Masupye, Michael Mpumlwana and Apollos Monare, all of whom had begun their training as catechists at St Cuthbert's College, Pretoria.⁴⁸

The first African priest to be trained by the CR was ordained in 1910. The following year St Peter's moved to larger premises in Rosettenville, south of Johannesburg. By 1920 there were thirty-two black clergy in the diocese of Pretoria, of whom fifteen were priests. The CR had also trained 150 catechists and in 1920 half the students were also trained for that ministry. They continued to be trained at St Peter's until 1937 when separate provision was made for them, as educational standards in the college had been raised. By then 188 catechists and 75 ordinands had been trained at St Peter's.⁴⁹

In the diocese of Natal a theological school 'for native catechists and clergy', St Alban's College, opened in Pietermaritzburg in 1898 under the direction of a priest by the name of W. A. Goodwin. Twelve students had already enrolled by the end of the second year. In 1905 it relocated to Riverdale near Escourt. St Alban's had the particularity of also providing practical education in areas such as agriculture, fencing and building. In 1919 the dioceses of Natal and Zululand decided to join forces and three students from Zululand arrived at Estcourt. St Alban's remained active until 1933

⁴⁶ Edwards and Lewis, *Historical records*, 591. See also Aelred Stubbs, 'Your life as a prize of war' (1983), 1, WCL, 2414, A7.

⁴⁷ Victor, *The thin black line*, 7–8, quoted in Gqubule, 'An examination', 192. Farmer's statement is discussed in Doris Thompson, *Priest and pioneer: a memoir of Father Osmund Victor, C.R. of South Africa*, London 1958, 8.

⁴⁸ Gqubule, 'An examination', 192–3.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* 193. On St Peter's College see also Eric Goodall, *Forty years on*, Johannesburg [1941]; Aelred Stubbs, 'St Peter's College: a brief account of its 80 years', 6 pages, typescript, WCL, AB 2414, A7; Alan Wilkinson, *The Community of the Resurrection: a centenary history*, London 1992, 211–14, 315–18; and Lee, *Compromise and courage*, 86.

when the students moved to Isandlwana near Dundee, where a theological school had, in the meantime, been opened by the bishop of Zululand.⁵⁰

In the diocese of Grahamstown, a theological tutor, John Espin, was appointed in 1875 to conduct periodical examinations in theology for catechists and teachers and to ensure that they had an accurate acquaintance with the Bible and the Book of Common Prayer. It was on the results of these examinations that candidates were recommended for ordination. In 1881 Espin could report that nine ordinands, six whites and three blacks, were studying under his direction. The bishop, Nathaniel James Merriman, had obtained funding to enable the black ordinands to leave their stations and to live for a time at the Mullins Institution.⁵¹ Later on, a school for the training of clergy and catechists opened at St Matthew's College in Keiskammahok in 1904 as part of a teacher training school founded in 1895. Under the direction of F. D. Binyon, St Matthew's College became the 'centre of Bantu education for the diocese'.⁵² One of the theological students trained at St Matthew's was James Calata, who later became the Cape president and secretary-general of the African National Congress. After several years of teaching, he was made a deacon in the Anglican Church in 1921, was ordained priest in 1926 and, after a brief stint in Port Elizabeth, spent the rest of his life as parish priest in Cradock.⁵³ In 1927, when James Dexter Taylor made reference to it his *Year-Book of Christian Mission*, the theological school still had students, although in smaller numbers.⁵⁴ It closed in August 1935 and its two remaining students were transferred to St Bede's.⁵⁵

In the diocese of Zululand the first candidates were trained by Charles Johnson at St Augustine's, Nqutu, in the 1880s. Three of them were ordained deacon in 1892.⁵⁶ The same year a theological college for the training of catechists and evangelists opened in Isandlwana alongside a teacher training college. It closed in 1918 after having moved to KwaMagwaza near Melmoth.⁵⁷ It reopened in Isandlwana in 1923 for a further three years. In 1933 it opened again, this time as a joint theological school, St Vincent's College, for the dioceses of Natal and Zululand, thanks to a bequest left by an Anglican layman. The training of theological students

⁵⁰ Burnett, *Anglicans in Natal*, 149–50. Founded in 1882, St Alban's had operated as a school for African boys which closed in 1895 before transforming into a theological college.

⁵¹ Goedhals, 'Merriman', 346. See also Lewis and Edwards, *Historical records*, 297.

⁵² Lewis and Edwards, *Historical records*, 284.

⁵³ Mandy Goedhals, 'African nationalism and indigenous Christianity: a study in the life of James Calata (1895–1983)', *Journal of Religion in Africa* xxxiii (2003), 64.

⁵⁴ Taylor, *Christianity and the natives of South Africa*, 406–7.

⁵⁵ Gqubule, 'An examination', 185.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* 681.

⁵⁷ Not far from there, in KwaNzimela, a theological college was established for the ordinands of the diocese of Zululand in 1984. It was closed in 1988. Interview with Jonathan Draper, Pietermaritzburg, 11 Apr. 2008.

for the diocese of Zululand was transferred to St Peter's, Rosettenville, in 1938.⁵⁸

In the diocese of Bloemfontein, the Society of the Sacred Mission (SSM) ran a course for catechists and deacons at Modderpoort from 1915 to 1924. Six deacons were ordained in 1921. 'We built a village of huts', a priest from St Augustine's Priory, Modderpoort, reported, 'and their wives and young children lived therein, so that the students might be saved from the temptations and difficulties of separation.'⁵⁹

Lastly in the diocese of Cape Town, St Austin's Clergy School, a college for the training of 'non-European clergy', presumably coloured ordinands,⁶⁰ and a college for catechists and teachers were established at Zonnebloem College in the 1920s. Both were short-lived.⁶¹

A central theological college for black ordinands

The idea of a central theological college for black ordinands – along the line of St Paul's College, Grahamstown – was floated for the first time at the Third Provincial Missionary Conference in 1906. Prior to the conference a questionnaire had been circulated among missionaries about the state of the Anglican mission. They were asked, among other things, whether they wanted the theological colleges for 'natives' to be diocesan, combined for two or three dioceses or centralised at the level of the Province. The responses showed that minds were not ready for a central theological college. Only twelve respondents out of a total of thirty-four preferred that option; the others asked for separate colleges.⁶² Twelve years later, at a conference on the 'training for the native ministry' held in January 1918 in Modderpoort the opinion still was that 'the time [had] not yet come for the establishment of one central Theological College for the training of native candidates for Holy Orders in [the] Province'. Rather, it was found 'advantageous that a

⁵⁸ Lewis and Edwards, *Historical records*, 703; Gqubule, 'An examination', 181–2. See also bishop of Zululand to bishop of Johannesburg, 8 Feb. 1937, WCL, AB 2414, 15.1.

⁵⁹ F. Firkins, 'Modderpoort', *Basutoland News*, 12 July 1932, 7. See also 'Suggested memorandum on S.S.M. in South Africa for the Great Chapter of the society (1962)', WCL, AB 1309, L2.

⁶⁰ From 1920 Zonnebloem was reorganised as a teacher training college for coloured people: Les and Donna Switzer, *The black press in South Africa and Lesotho: a descriptive bibliographic guide to African, Coloured and Indian newspapers, newsletters and magazines, 1836–1976*, Boston 1976, 235.

⁶¹ *Directory of the Church of the Province of South Africa 1925*, Cape Town 1925, 18; *Directory of the Church of the Province of South Africa 1928*, Cape Town, 1928, 56. In 1958 a non-racial theological college for the training of ordinands, Bishop Gray's College, opened in one of the buildings of the archbishop's residence at Bishops court, Cape Town. It closed when Fedsem opened in 1963: Gqubule, 'An examination', 183.

⁶² *Report of the Provincial Missionary Conference, 1906*, n.p. n.d., 5: copy at WCL.

Theological College should be in proximity to a Normal School or Teachers' Training College, provided that the Head of the Theological College be supreme in his own department'.⁶³

It was not until the 1930s that a consensus emerged on the suitability of a central theological college for black candidates. As Osmund Victor, a member of the Community of the Resurrection, pointed out, such a college was 'in the interests alike of efficiency and of economy of money and man power'.⁶⁴ In November 1933, following a recommendation of the Provincial Missionary Conference held in Port Elizabeth a few months before,⁶⁵ the episcopal synod approved the 'principle of Regional Theological Colleges for African ordination candidates'. It welcomed the 'spontaneous fulfilment of this principle by the dioceses of Pretoria, Kimberley and Kuruman, and Johannesburg, and by the dioceses of Natal and Zululand' – St Peter's College, Rosettenville, for the former and St Vincent's, Isandlwana, for the latter – and expressed 'the hope that as opportunity offers such Regional Colleges will take the place of local Colleges'.⁶⁶

By 1934, according to the minutes of a meeting of the heads of theological institutions, only four theological colleges were left in South Africa – St Bede's, Umtata; St Peter's, Rosettenville; St Matthew's, Keiskammahock; and St Vincent's, Isandlwana – and one in Zimbabwe – St Augustine's, Penhalonga, a theological college of the Community of the Resurrection. St Augustine's, Modderpoort, had been 'in suspense for some years'.⁶⁷ St Matthew's closed in 1935 and St Vincent's in 1938. The same year the Provincial Missionary Conference recommended to the episcopal synod that St Peter's, Rosettenville, should be recognised as a 'Provincial College for Native Ordinands', while noting that 'this motion should not preclude the development of St Bede's, Umtata as a Theological College for Native Ordinands'.⁶⁸ Subsequently the episcopal synod formally recognised St Peter's College as a provincial college, while recognising the right of any diocese – in effect the diocese of St John's with St Bede's – to maintain an existing theological college.⁶⁹ In practice, after 1938 two theological colleges in the Province were operating as provincial centres of ministerial training: St Peter's for the north and St Bede's for the south.

⁶³ *Official report of the seventh provincial missionary conference of the Church of the Province of South Africa holden at Bloemfontein: from September 28th to October 4th, 1918*, Grahamstown 1918, 27.

⁶⁴ Osmund Victor, *With one accord in South Africa: an interim statement circulated, by permission, before the provincial missionary conference 1933*, Johannesburg, Community of the Resurrection [1933]: copy at WCL.

⁶⁵ *1934 conference of the heads of theological colleges*, n.p. n.d., 3: copy at WCL.

⁶⁶ Minutes of episcopal synods, vol. 5 (1928–43), 151–3, WCL, AB 1956.

⁶⁷ *1934 conference*, 1. On St Augustine's, Penlahonga, see Wilkinson, *Community of the Resurrection*, 241–6. The CR Fathers left Penlahonga in 1983 (p. 329).

⁶⁸ *Provincial missionary conference, Bloemfontein, 1938*, n.p. n.d., 22: copy at WCL.

⁶⁹ Appendix to minutes of St Peter's College Council, 16 Aug. 1938, WCL, AB 2414, A2.1.

St Peter's, the bigger of the two, drew students from the dioceses of Pretoria, Johannesburg, Kimberley, Zululand, Lebombo and Southern Rhodesia with the later addition of Bloemfontein.⁷⁰ 'It was the finest Theological College in the Province', Alban Winter, of the Community of the Resurrection, wrote in 1962, 'and students from St Paul's, the corresponding College for Europeans, must, I think, have envied us a little, at least until they received their latest additions. We had accommodation for 36 students living generally two in a room in a two-storey block which occupied the larger length of an extensive quadrangle, laid out in three levels.'⁷¹ Alphaeus Zulu, first black Anglican bishop in South Africa (1961), and Desmond Tutu, first black secretary-general of the South African Council of Churches (1978) and first black archbishop of Cape Town (1986), were among the Anglican priests trained at St Peter's.⁷²

While maintaining good educational standards, the college had a distinctly monastic atmosphere, as noted by Alan Wilkinson, the historian of the Community of the Resurrection:

Students were expected to attend Prime at 6.55 am, Mass, mid-day meditation, Evensong and Compline. No smoking was permitted before 10.30 a.m. Only English was spoken in the mornings. Basic education in reading, writing, arithmetic and drill preceded what sounds to have been a highly academic ordination syllabus: Bible, early church history, Prayer Book, pastoral theology, the Constitution and Canons of the Church of the Province, doctrine, the three creeds and Thirty-Nine Articles. Some services were conducted by the students in their own languages. On Sundays students shared in the evangelistic work in the mine compounds. They paid for part of their keep by housework, printing and work in the bookshop.⁷³

Apart from St Peter's, St Bede's was the only theological college for black ordinands in South Africa after 1937. In 1955 it became a 'diocesan college with some provincial recognition', as Bishop Schuster put it in an interview.⁷⁴

According to Livingstone Ngewu, Bishop Key's vision of a seminary geared towards the creation of an indigenous leadership was lost right from the beginning of the twentieth century. With the episcopate of Joseph Watkin Williams (1901–22) came a 'significant paradigm shift' in the training of black clergy in the diocese of St John's. For Williams and his successors, the role of St Bede's was mainly to supply assistants to the white priests. The college was not meant to prepare black priests for leadership positions in the diocese.⁷⁵ When Norman Goodall and Eric Nielsen came to survey the state of theological education in South Africa on behalf of the International Missionary Council in 1953, they found that the general academic standard

⁷⁰ Goodall, *Forty years on*, 22.

⁷¹ Alban Winter, *Till darkness fell*, n. p. [1962], 69.

⁷² Wilkinson, *Community of the Resurrection*, 211–12.

⁷³ *Ibid.* 211.

⁷⁴ Ngewu, 'A review', 26.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.* 23.

was 'very low' at St Bede's and that too much emphasis was placed on 'devotional training and pastoralia'.⁷⁶

The situation started to change in 1955 with the appointment of Michael Carmichael as principal. For the new head of St Bede's the college's mission was to prepare black priests to take over the administration of the CPSA. While most students did not possess a matriculation certificate, a good number ended up doing further studies. Under his leadership the first black tutors, Sydwell Thelejane, Matthew Makhaye and Ephraim Mosothoane, joined the staff of the college.⁷⁷ It was only in 1955, however, that the status of St Bede's as a 'diocesan college with some provincial recognition', as spelled out by Bishop Schuster, was officially approved by the bishops.⁷⁸

In 1960 St Bede's was briefly considered as a site for the Federal Theological Seminary. It was not chosen because, presumably on account of St Bede's diocesan status, the new Anglican college would have only been affiliated to and not integrated into the seminary.⁷⁹ In 1975 St Bede's accommodated Fedsem after it had been expropriated by the apartheid government from its premises in Alice, but the seminary was compelled to leave Umtata a few months later because of difficulties with the Transkei government.⁸⁰ St Bede's itself closed in 1992 as a result of the decision, taken the previous year by the Provincial Standing Committee, to amalgamate it with St Paul's into a new institution called the College of the Transfiguration and based in Grahamstown.⁸¹

The impact of apartheid on theological education

Meanwhile, the closure of the teacher training college and of the high school at Modderpoort in 1955 as a result of the application of the Bantu Education policy resulted in a further development in Anglican theological education. In 1957 the SSM, which had been running the Modderpoort mission since 1902, opened a pre-admission centre for black candidates for the ministry, the Test School, at the request of the Anglican bishops, in empty school

⁷⁶ Norman Goodall and Eric Nielsen, *Survey of the training for the ministry in the younger Church today*, London 1954, 15. See Gqubule, 'An examination', 191.

⁷⁷ Ngewu, 'A review', 26.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ William Booth, 'How we came together', in Aelred Stubbs (ed.), *The planting of the Federal Theological Seminary of Southern Africa*, Lovedale 1973, 3.

⁸⁰ On this episode see, among other sources, the narrative compiled by Theodore Simpson CR under the title 'The exodus and the agony', 18 Dec. 1975, WCL, AB 2414, B5.2.

⁸¹ See the resolution of the Provincial Standing Committee in September 1991, in Winston Njongokulu Ndungane, 'The story of the amalgamation of St Paul's and St Bede's Colleges and the formation of the College of the Transfiguration', *The College of the Transfiguration Journal* (Feb. 1994), 4.

buildings. The new institution was controversial from the start. The black students found the screening process to which they were submitted discriminatory and as a result there were ‘enormous frictions’ between them and the staff.⁸² The author of a report to the general chapter of the SSM in 1962 admitted that the Test School had raised criticism but he stressed its importance for the future of ministry in the Church:

The Test School has been run by the SSM on behalf of the bishops of the Province since 1957. In 1959 the course was increased from one year to two. There is no external examination, and the running of the school, the subjects taught, etc have all been left to the warden with what assistance he could get. He has tried to break down the African idea of education as learning a lot of information and to get the men to think. Whatever criticism of the School may be valid, everyone agrees that it is an important work for the future welfare of the Church.⁸³

In 1960 the Anglican model of theological education for black candidates for the ministry had to be re-envisioned for reasons entirely external to the Church. After forty years of peaceful existence, St Peter’s College had become, because of the skin colour of its students, a problem to the apartheid government. As Aelred Stubbs CR described in an anniversary speech, it was a ‘black spot’ in a white area and therefore had to go:

Space forbids to dwell on the last twenty years of the College’s life at Rosettenville, but with the continued spread of white suburbia, with the harsher enforcement of racial segregation from 1948 entailing the removal of the vast mass of the African population of Johannesburg to the South Western Townships (Soweto), and above all with the closure of St. Peter’s School in the mid-1950s, the College came more and more to resemble ‘a lodge in a cucumber field’ (the ‘cucumbers’ being our not very friendly white neighbours). In the eyes of ‘authority’ the College had become a ‘black spot’, useless to protest that we had been here long before the white suburbs encroached on Rosettenville. Under the Urban Areas Act it was necessary for every black person to have a permit to reside for more than 72 hours.⁸⁴

In June 1960 Stubbs, who by then was the principal of the college, received a letter from the Ministry of Bantu Affairs and Development instructing the municipal authority not to give permits for any new student after 1 January 1961.⁸⁵ It was in this context that the CPSA negotiated the inclusion of St Peter’s in the Federal Theological Seminary. St Peter’s College moved out of Rosettenville at the end of 1962 to reopen at Alice in early 1963.⁸⁶

⁸² Jonathan Draper interview, Pietermaritzburg, 27 Aug. 2007.

⁸³ ‘Suggested memorandum on S.S.M. in South Africa: for the great chapter of the society (1962)’, WCL, AB 2409, L2. In November 1963 St Augustine’s Test School relocated to St Luke’s Mission, Newlands: minutes of seminary council, 13 Feb. 1964, Howard Pym Africana Library, University of Fort Hare, Fedsem, box 1. ⁸⁴ Stubbs, ‘Your life’, 2–3.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.* 3.

⁸⁶ *Idem*, ‘St Peter’s College’, 3.

The South African government's segregationist policies were crucial in the Anglican Church's decision to cooperate with the Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregationalist Churches in the field of theological education. Yet factors internal to the Church also contributed. In the early 1950s the International Missionary Council (IMC) – which was later to merge with the World Council of Churches – commissioned a survey of the training of the ministry in Africa. Its authors, Norman Goodall and Eric Nielsen, noted with concern that despite occasional contacts between the heads of theological institutions, among Anglicans in particular, most South Africa theological colleges lived in isolation:

We were surprised to discover how slight is the contact between the theological colleges of the different areas and churches. Some college principals, even, were unaware of the existence of certain other colleges. Few theological teachers have ever met their colleagues in other institutions; rarely does there seem to have been a thorough and widely representative discussion of common problems, methods of work, literature resources and needs.⁸⁷

Independently from the political developments in South Africa, the time had come for a new initiative in the field of ecumenical theological education. At the turn of the 1960s Lesslie Newbigin, the IMC secretary, D. G. S. Mtinkulu, the secretary of the All Africa Church Conference, and Milton Martin, the acting secretary of the Christian Council of South Africa, played an active role in the negotiations that led to the creation of Fedsem. Without their mediation a common ground between the four Churches might never have been found.⁸⁸

The end of institutional segregation

The foundation, in 1963, of the Federal Theological Seminary of Southern Africa with St Peter's College as one of its constituents signalled the beginning of a new era in Anglican theological education. Victims of the apartheid government which had brutally closed down their institutions of learning, the Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational Churches joined forces and formed an inter-denominational seminary. Five years later, they established the Church Unity Commission (CUC) with a view to uniting the Churches within a common organic structure.⁸⁹

That the Anglican Church was part of this remarkable ecumenical venture is very significant. Yet theological education continued to be segregated.

⁸⁷ Goodall and Nielsen, *Survey*, 55, quoted in Booth, 'How we came together', 1.

⁸⁸ Cameron, 'Some political, ecumenical and theological aspects', 12–13.

⁸⁹ John de Gruchy, 'Church unity and democratic transition: perspectives on ecclesiology and ethics in South Africa', *Ecumenical Review* xlix (1997), 356–65.

Until the end of apartheid, the majority of white ordinands were educated at St Paul's while nearly all black candidates were trained at St Peter's and St Bede's. It was only in 1993, the year of Fedsem's closure,⁹⁰ that a truly multi-racial institution opened in Grahamstown under the name of College of the Transfiguration. By then, for a variety of reasons, some of them financial, the CUC churches had decided to revert to the denominational model of theological education. Ministerial training was no longer segregated, but the dream of an ecumenical seminary had been abandoned.

⁹⁰ Denis, 'Unfinished business'.