

***“At the Expense of Its Own Soul”:
Bantu Education’s Threat of Closure to Inanda Seminary***

Scott Couper, Inanda Seminary

scandsv@intekom.co.za

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Introduction

Established in 1869, the Congregational American Board’s Inanda Seminary was the first, and is therefore the oldest, all female boarding high school in southern Africa.¹ In 1944, Inanda Seminary became the first school in South Africa to offer a matriculation course for black females.² Inanda Seminary is also the *only* historic Protestant mission school serving Blacks to survive apartheid and the implementation of the National Party’s Bantu Education in the mid-1950s.³ The latter claim to fame came as a result of tense negotiations and brinkmanship. For Inanda Seminary, the mid-1950s was a time of limbo, inducing great uncertainty and anxiety; its very existence was in peril. Unlike other faith traditions, such as the more hierarchical and financially endowed Roman Catholic Church, Congregationalists were less able to effectively mobilise the political and financial salvaging of private education.⁴ The highly democratised

¹ Hughes, Heather. “‘A Lighthouse for African Womanhood’: Inanda Seminary, 1869-1945”, found in *Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945*, ed. Cheryl Walker, (London: James Currey, 1990), 197.

Further qualifications, such as ‘private’ and ‘black’, can be added to the above claims to be the ‘first’ and ‘only’. One year later in 1870, the Anglican Church founded a similar effort for white girls at St. Mary’s in Richmond, near Pietermaritzburg. This school closed in 1883.

Vietzen, S. *A History of Education for European Girls in Natal 1837-1902* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1980), 94, 111-20.

The Rhenish Girls’ High School (originally ‘Institute’) in Stellenbosch opened in 1 May 1860. However, this school was not established for boarders. It was taken over by the government in 1901.

Found at: www.rhenish.co.za/history.htm, accessed 14 August 2010

What came to be known as Adams College, an institution similar to the Inanda Seminary for black males, was founded in 1853, decades before similar institutions for white males. The school was taken over by the government in December 1957.

The American Board’s Umzumbe School was established as a primary school for black females in 1873 and closed in 1919.

² Marks, Shula, ed. *Not Either an Experimental Doll: The Separate Worlds of Three South African Women* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1987), 9.

Throughout the text, I do not capitalise ‘black’ and ‘white’ when used as an adjective to describe a noun that follows (e.g., ‘black press’ or ‘white labour’). I capitalise “Blacks” and “Whites” when it is used as a proper noun that refers to a group of people (e.g., ‘legislation against Blacks’ or ‘a government dominated by Whites’).

‘Bantu’ is a term used by the apartheid government to classify what I refer to as ‘Black’. Though often perceived as derogatory, I have maintained the term within government references for contextual purposes. Therefore, the terms ‘Black’ and ‘Bantu’ should be read as synonymous.

³ Healy, Meghan. “‘Like a Family’: Global Models, Familial Bonds, and the Making of an American School for Zulu Girls”, *Safundi (Journal of South African and American Studies)*, July 2010, 11:3, 280.

⁴ Kearney, Paddy. *Guardian of the Light: Denis Hurley, Renewing the Church, Opposing Apartheid* (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2009), 70-9.

and predominately rural Congregational mission in Natal had a comparatively weak denominational polity with which to absorb the title wave that was the government's take-over of ecclesiastic schools. Just as the founding of Inanda Seminary "was nothing short of revolutionary", its survival is nothing short of miraculous.⁵ Throughout the succeeding decades until the new century, the school repeatedly found itself on the verge of closure. The following narrative chronicles the beginning of many potential ends of the school due to the National Party government's implementation of Bantu Education.



Inanda Seminary Campus

Segregation

In January 1954, the American Board for Foreign Missions (American Board) in South Africa was preparing itself for confrontation with the Nationalist Party implementation of apartheid and specifically, its enforcement of Bantu Education (Bantu Education Act of 1953, No. 47). According to Lavinia Scott (1907-1997), the principal of Inanda Seminary from 1937-1969, the American Board Mission in South Africa was resolute that its "highest loyalty was God and not to the state" and that "if controversial issues arise, [it] should persuasively and as firmly as possible make our positions clear to the powers that be".⁶ This position was in contrast to

The Roman Catholic Church, according to Kearney's research, managed 15 percent of the country's mission schools when the National Party came to power, 70.

⁵ Hughes, "A Light for African Womanhood", 198.

⁶ Inanda Seminary Archives (ISA), American Board Mission in South Africa, "Policy and Aims for Education of Africans", adopted 12 January 1954.

Lavinia Scott served the Inanda Seminary for thirty-three years before continuing to teach at the Federal Theological Seminary in Alice.

the American Board's long held conviction that it should remain as aloof as possible from political affairs.⁷ The American Board's past neutrality had engendered the government's support and succor for its schools. As one missionary commented in 1891, "Doubtless one reason why the government has endorsed the labours of missionaries is the fact that as much as possible they have abstained from entering the arena of politics, rigidly adhering to their own appropriate work".⁸

The American Board, its mission in South Africa and Inanda Seminary's aloofness toward political manifestations of white supremacy through racist legislation *prior to* the National Party's implementation of apartheid to some extent exposes it to accusations of being complicit or contentedly complying with increasing degrees of segregation in colonial Natal.⁹ Heather Hughes rightly acknowledges that "the structure of Natal colonial society decreed that from the very beginning the provision of education was fragmented along racial, class and gender lines..."¹⁰ A valid argument can be made that only when racist legislation directly impacted the work of the church, did the Mission and Seminary discover its defiantly prophetic voice. However, four qualifications have to be made for the American Board's and Lavinia Scott's belated indignant responses to apartheid legislation's effect on the school.

First, in the early decades of the twentieth century, most liberals viewed segregation as benign rather than discriminatory or oppressive. Today, one is understandably but naively viewed merely as a precursor to the other. However, such a view is anachronistic. During the colonial era, Inanda Seminary leaders understood a "doctrine of trusteeship" that imposed upon themselves the role of guardians, "to protect and nurture the 'backward natives'".¹¹ Yet, the American Board envisioned that inevitable equality would follow paternalism. A history of the American Board conveys this understanding.

[The missionary] recognizes that he must accept with new respect, not only the potential strength of the natives for whom he is working, but their actual readiness to share in responsibility. If he is to take his part henceforth as one among equals, it is none the less possible for him to rank first among equals by reason of his longer experience, his broader knowledge, and his deeper and more engrained love. And if he is willing to lose

ISA, "A Tribute to Dr Lavinia Scott", Inanda Seminary yearbook for 1999.

⁷ Strong, William. *The Story of the American Board: An Account of the First Hundred years of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions* (Boston: The Pilgrim Press, 1910), 142.

⁸ Tyler, Josiah. *Forty Years among the Zulus* (Cape Town: C Struik, 1971), 258.

⁹ I distinction must be made between the Boston based American Board and its Durban based mission in South Africa. Hence, I refer to the two as 'the American Board' and 'the Mission', respectively. The American Board constituted its missions as semi-autonomous communities. The American Board was the only missionary society to adopt that system.

Strong, *The Story of the American Board*, 158.

¹⁰ Hughes, "A Lighthouse for African Womanhood", 198.

¹¹ Maylam, Paul. *The Cult of Rhodes: Remembering and Imperialist in Africa* (Claremont: David Philip, 2005), 13.

*his life in giving room and leadership to the natives whom he trains, he is really finding a larger life.*¹²

In the Board's eyes, segregationist legislation did not necessarily have as its intention perpetual white supremacy. Rather segregation's purpose was to suppress what were considered to be *immediate or premature* black aspirations for social and political equality.¹³ In short, whereas the colonial and independent Natal governments possibly allowed for racial equality in the indefinite future, apartheid categorically stated, 'Never'.¹⁴

Second, segregation allowed for the social, educational and financial progression of Blacks, even if to a lesser extent than Whites. In contrast, the apartheid government facilitated the actual regression of black educational, social and political achievement to its lowest common denominator. Retrospectively, this difference may seem to be only a nuance. However, in the context of the time, and given the vision of the American Board Mission, the difference between the two was radical. One of the primary advocates of a liberal segregation within educational spheres was Charles Loram (1879-1940). Today, Loram is vilified for being the architect of Bantu Education before the National Party came to power. However, even by Albert Luthuli's (1897-1967) assessment, Loram's benevolent intentions and efforts, though paternalistic and condescending, were high-jacked and made to be malevolent by the Nationalist Party regime.¹⁵ As late as 1962, Luthuli, who served on Inanda Seminary's Advisory Board from 1936, found Loram to be "one of South Africa's greatest champions of public and private sanity and morality".¹⁶ As a friend of the school who contributed to its welfare, Loram had an influence on the Inanda Seminary from about 1915 as Chief Inspector of Native Education. Loram laid the cornerstone to Phelps Hall in 1919 and unveiled the school's first electrical plant in 1930. In 1920, the principal, Evelyn Clarke (1874-1939), commented how Loram was "much respected" and advised the introduction of industrial work in every class.¹⁷ Loram believed, as did John L. Dube (1871-1945), that 'industrial', or practical, education should be emphasised as opposed to academic instruction. However, the industrial emphasis need not be static. During the early 1930s when Inanda Seminary moved away from an industrial to a

¹² Strong, *The Story of the American Board*, 482.

¹³ Hunt Davis is more extreme in his description of segregationist education indicating that one premise on which it is founded is to entrench white control.

Hunt Davis, R. "Charles T. Loram and the American Model for African Education", found in *Apartheid and African Education*, ed. P. Kallaway (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1984), 113.

Hughes repeats this claim.

Hughes, "A Lighthouse for African Womanhood", 215.

¹⁴ Colonial Natal was granted 'responsible' government by the British metropole in 1893.

¹⁵ Albert Luthuli was the President of the African National Congress during the 1950s and 1960s and was the first African Nobel Peace Prize winner (1960).

¹⁶ Luthuli, Albert. *Let My People Go* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2006), 27.

¹⁷ Wood, Agnes. *Shine Where You Are: A Centenary History of Inanda Seminary 1869-1969* (Alice: Lovedale Press, 1972), 80.

more academic emphasis, Loram in a correspondence praised the school for its “adaptation of education to changing Native needs”.¹⁸ Given Loram’s policy views and Dube’s implementation of them at Ohlange Christian Industrial School, it is not surprising that Inanda Seminary’s leaders would also be sympathetic to liberal segregationism.

Third, not only did the colonial and responsible government allow the American Board’s relative progressive racial ethos to operate under the legislative radar screen, it even financially supported it. In 1870, a year after the school’s founding, the Secretary for Native Affairs for the colonial government was so impressed with the students’ arithmetic skills that he awarded the school an annual grant of £100.¹⁹ Gracious diplomacy and political noninterference proved beneficial to Inanda Seminary over the decades. Indeed the colonial and responsible governments of Natal provided most of the school’s revenue by paying teachers’ salaries and investing in the construction of its now historic infrastructure. Edwards Hall, Phelps Hall and Clarke Hall were either opened by government representatives and/or primarily funded through government grants.²⁰

Fourth and final, to a great extent the American Board and its constituent schools were completely dependent on the beneficence of the Natal governments and therefore did as little as possible to antagonise them. Educational grants could cease, land could be confiscated, scholarships withheld, visas denied and inspections of schools could be made to be nightmares. Excellent working relations therefore had to be maintained. The American Board had long fought off hostilities of colonial farmers, angry that the American Board acquired in 1846 large tracts of land called ‘reserves’, Inanda’s being 11,500 acres, for the purpose of its mission. Many of the reserves, notably Umvoti (Groutville), were excellent environments for commercial sugar cane cultivation. In addition, the American Board had during the Bambatha Rebellion in 1906, defended itself from accusations of encouraging ‘Ethiopianism’, the indigenisation and independence from western missions of African faith traditions that was believed by colonials to have dangerously spilled into the political realm.

For the above reasons, the American Board Mission and Inanda Seminary had cause to keep their pedagogical heads low during the Natal governments’ fostering of segregation, be it liberal or otherwise. The apartheid government’s intentions were observed to be a radical departure from mere paternalism and segregation. Apartheid represented subjugation and

¹⁸ Wood, *Shine Where You Are*, 91.

Loram suggested and sponsored a first of its kind inter-racial visit between to Inanda by Durban Girls’ College pupils in 1930. This suggests that at least by 1930, educational segregation did necessarily entail social restrictions. Wood, *Shine Where You Are*, 97.

¹⁹ Hughes, “A Lighthouse for African Womanhood”, 206.

²⁰ For example, the government granted £1,000 to Inanda Seminary to complete the construction of Phelps Hall. Wood, *Shine Where You Are*, 83.

enslavement for the Blacks and forfeiture to the government, or outright closure, of mission schools.

Apartheid

On 26 May 1948, Daniel Malan's (1874-1959) National Party defeated Jan Smuts' (1870-1950) United Party to win South Africa's general election on a platform of 'apartheid', or racial segregation. However, as discussed above, it must be acknowledged that apartheid was practiced and to a certain extent legislated in South Africa long before the National Party came to power. One historian who examined the roots of apartheid's ideological support and legislative substance in the Cape province stated that "Anyone familiar with the theory and practice of apartheid in South Africa will recognise that all the essential elements were but in place [in the early 1890s] fifty-four years before the Nationalist (Party) came to power."²¹ The same can be said for the province of Natal. However, the National Party's implementation of the apartheid platform would become more belligerent, comprehensive and draconian in comparison to previous manifestations of white supremacy.

From the outset of the 1948 victory, a secret society of Afrikaner men, the *Broederbond*, consolidated its members in government, business and finance. Many pieces of legislation that sought to consolidate Afrikaner dominance in society emanated soon after the National Party came to power.²² Over the next eight years, Malan and his successor, Johannes Strijdom (1893-1958), systematically mangled parliamentary governance and judicial procedures numerous times to eventually achieve their objective of denying Cape Coloureds their franchise. In 1950, the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act was passed and led to the 1951 Immorality Act prohibiting marriage and sex, respectively, across racial lines. In 1950 the Population Registration Act was passed to enable the categorisation of South African's heterogeneous population. The Group Areas Act of 1950 physically divided the country's people deciding where Whites, Blacks, Coloureds and Asians could be born, live, work and be buried. Inanda Seminary's status was unpredictable as the land on which it was situated could be classified as "a white spot in a black area or a black spot in a white area".²³ Either could be the case as an African reserve and a white farm were both adjacent to the school. Also in 1950, the Suppression of Communism Act outlawed the Communist Party (and all those who too fervently sought to change the organisation of the state could therefore be labeled Communists). The Act directly affected supporters of Inanda Seminary, its students' relatives and friends and black teachers. In 1952, the carrying of pass books and 'influx control' measures were introduced controlling the movement of Blacks. Also in 1952, non-violent

²¹ Thomas, Anthony. *Rhodes* (London: British Broadcasting Corporation Books, 1996), 271.

²² Ministry of Education, South Africa. *Every Step of the Way: The Journey to Freedom in South Africa* (Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council Press, 2004), 158-86.

²³ Wood, *Shine Where You Are*, 124.

resistance campaigns and strikes by black workers were made illegal. In 1953, the Public Safety Act allowing for states of emergency was passed. In 1953, the ultimate apartheid legislation negatively impacting the Inanda Seminary was the Bantu Education Act.

Despite all the above legislation being passed from 1948 to 1953, life at the Inanda Seminary remained for the most part unchanged. During its first term, the National Party did not disrupt education. The Natal Education Department's general assessment of Inanda Seminary following a 17-18 March 1952 visit was: "premises spotlessly clean, staff zealous, tone, discipline and general organisation excellent".²⁴ On a 28 August 1952 visit the Director of Education, Mr Booysen, commented "Spent delightful morning seeing everything that this Institution has to show. Strongly impressed by valuable work being done and by general atmosphere".²⁵ Until 1953, the Union's four provinces continued to administer education on behalf of the central government that ultimately funded education mostly provided by private state-aided mission schools.

Bantu Education Act

While the National Party enacted legislation to police people's beds, marriages, travel and politics, it did not neglect to scheme about education that also had to conform to apartheid, the grand white supremacy framework. In January 1949, the government appointed a commission to investigate and discern how the country's educational system could be made to be compliant and further the apartheid ideology. The Commission's terms of reference called for it to form the principles and aims of education for Blacks.

*...the formulation of the principals and aims of education for Natives as an independent race, in which their past and present, their inherent racial qualities, their distinctive characteristics and aptitude and their needs under ever-changing social conditions are taken into consideration.*²⁶

The portfolio seemed benign enough, but its motivations were not. To justify the motivations of the Nationalist Party, the predetermined outcome of the study had to find that Blacks had no place above certain forms of labour within a society dominated by Whites. For years the Commission collected evidence from many people, organisations and schools, including Inanda Seminary. The Commission, named after its chairperson, Werner Eiselen (1899-1977), deliberated for three years before reporting in 1951. It was the task of the Secretary of Native Affairs, Hendrik Verwoerd (1901-1966) to implement the new educational system.

²⁴ ISA, Log Book (June 1923-December 1957), Natal Education Department: Native School Report Form "A" by inspectors FM Hallows (Inspector of Schools), G Kolbe and FB Oscroft.

²⁵ ISA, Log Book (June 1923-December 1957), entry dated 26 August 1952.

²⁶ "The Aims of Bantu Education", *Bantu Education Journal*, Vol. II, No. 1, February 1956, 4.

On 02 September 1952, Verwoerd confided to a delegation of Roman Catholic bishops that he appreciated the mission school system. However, he indicated that according to the findings of the Eiselen Commission, mission education had to be replaced by a better organised system that emanated from the black community, linking education to the black culture and providing the people more responsibility for their own system and its own financing.²⁷ The premise of Bantu Education sounded benevolent, even logical. The Commission stated the aims of Bantu Education to be:

*From the viewpoint of the whole society the aim of Bantu education is the development of a modern progressive culture, with social institutions which will be in harmony with one another and with the evolving conditions of life to be met in South Africa, and with the schools which must serve as effective agents in this process of development. From the viewpoint of the individual the aims of Bantu education are the development of character and intellect, and the equipping of the child for his future work and surroundings. To harmonise the individual and social viewpoints as stated above, it is essential to consider the language of the pupils, their home conditions, their social and mental environment, their cultural traits and their future position and work in South Africa.*²⁸



The Commission viewed education holistically, that is, how a human child learns informally about its society (culture, heritage, tradition, worldview, etc...) in addition to how a child learns formally about specialised academic subjects. Mission education taught black children about society as if they were white, or western. What was learned at mission schools was at odds or

²⁷ Kearney, *Guardian of the Light*, 77.

²⁸ "The Aims of Bantu Education", *Bantu Education Journal*, Vol. II, No. 1, February 1956, 9.

even contradicted at home. Therefore, education at home must be compatible, provided alongside and/or contribute to what is learned at home thus making education as a whole more 'efficient'. Bantu Education therefore encouraged the use of the vernacular, partnering with community institutions (e.g. traditional leadership²⁹) and homogeneous indigenous faculties.

*Schools must be linked as closely as possible with existing Bantu social institutions, and a friendly though not necessarily uncritical attitude maintained between the schools and these institutions; the mother tongue should be used as the medium of instruction for at least the duration of the primary school...Bantu personnel should be used to the maximum to make the schools as Bantu in spirit as well as to provide employment.*³⁰

In order to facilitate the grafting of formal education to cultural/tradition/society, arts and crafts and manual labour were emphasised in the curriculum. Teachers who taught arts and crafts well were praised by the government as they "not only have done a great service to the children but also to the development of Bantu culture in South Africa".³¹ Pupils' manual labour, especially agriculture and landscaping, not only prepared them for their (sole) role in South African society, it decreased operating costs of the government to maintain schools. Perhaps most importantly, manual labour within the curriculum fostered an education that would be appropriate for the domestic confinement of Blacks on reserves, that is, in rural areas, away from white urban industrial centres (except when engaged in migrant labour).³²

²⁹ "Bantu Education: Who's Who, Theodor M. Ramokgopa III, A Great Chief", *Bantu Education Journal*, Vol. II, No. 2, March 1956, 40-1.

Phatudi, EM, "Bantu Education Who's Who, The Late Chief Phatudi Mmutle Mphahlele: Father of Bantu School Boards", *Bantu Education Journal*, Vol. II, No. 3, April 1956, 92-4.

The above article is a quintessential example of how the *Bantu Education Journal* lauded traditional leadership as the source and executioner of the apartheid government's ideological goals. For example, "It was only thirty years later that the Union Government adopted a system of control similar to that initiated by the late Chief Mphahlele", "the hospital was maintained solely by the tribe", "He preached the dignity of labour".

³⁰ "The Aims of Bantu Education", *Bantu Education Journal*, Vol. II, No. 1, February 1956, 10-1, notes g, h and i.

Morêna MJ Madiba was highlighted as a proponent of indigenous language being used as the medium of instruction. "Morêna Madiba, being very strong protagonist of mother-tongue instruction, contended that if the mother-tongue must be the medium of instruction in the primary school, then the teachers of those schools must also be trained in the mother-tongue.

"Bantu Education Who's Who: Morêna Madiba, A Bantu Educationalist", *Bantu Educational Journal*, Vol. II, No. 4, May 1956, 128-9.

³¹ Grossert, JW. "The Growing African Art Tradition", *Bantu Teachers' Journal, Final Issue*, Vol. XXXV, No. 2, January 1956, 107.

³² "Cherish Your Soil and Assure Your Future", *Bantu Education Journal*, Vol. II, No. 2, March 1956, i.

"Your Commission feels that the special steps should be taken in the Reserves to facilitate and encourage the evolution of a progressive, modern and self-respecting Bantu order of life. Cosmopolitan areas in industrial centres where peoples of many languages and customs are herded together provide particularly difficult conditions for the orderly and progressive development of the Bantu cultures", 37, note 770.

*A productive school garden and attractive school grounds are assets, but they fulfill their real purpose educationally only when all the principles of good husbandry are practiced and taught.*³³

The Commission's found that that schools for Blacks catered for a relatively small percentage of black children despite the fact between 1925 and 1955, the number of Black pupils multiplied five-fold.³⁴ By the 1940s, only 25% of Black children of school-going age actually went to school.³⁵ Therefore, the Commission rightly found that a deficit of schools existed.

*...bearing in mind the great social need for education it is imperative that the not unlimited funds available for Bantu education should be administered with the maximum efficiency. So long as the Bantu are able to attend schools it must be of major importance to spread available moneys as far as is consistent with efficiency.*³⁶

Educational institutions available to Blacks had to be increased dramatically and this presumably could only be done by the state. In and of itself, this finding is benign, even sound. However, if the finding that a shortage of schools provided too little education to too little of the black population, then a partnership with the mission schools (an 'in addition to' rather than an 'instead of') would be more logical. Such had been the case with the provinces when a "fairly happy and productive partnership" existed.³⁷

The Commission determined that the student drop-out rate was high and standards of achievement among Blacks were generally low. Rather than a lack of finances, the Commission reasoned that schools, most of which were private and religious based, taught inefficiently. The Commission found that in addition to being administered by four different provinces, the mission schools possessed 'European' methods, languages and expectations that were incongruous with a developing African people. Some schools were American, some German, some Norwegian, some Catholic some Protestant. The Commission found that education for Blacks should be compatibly engineered for Blacks. The Commission understood that the mission societies designed education for the needs of their mission societies, to be their

³³ Pilditch, RG. "The Garden at Caluza School", *Bantu Teachers' Journal, Final Issue*, Vol. XXXV, No. 2, January 1956, 133-4.

³⁴ Between 1925 and 1955, the number of Black students enrolled in schools increased from 209,049 to 1,007,000. "The Growth of the Number of Pupils in Bantu School", *Bantu Education Journal*, Vol. II, No. 5, June 1956, 172-3.

³⁵ Krige, Sue. "Education: Background to the Struggle", found in *Soweto: 16 June 1976, Personal Accounts of the Uprising*, eds. Brink, Isabé, Gandhi Malungane, Steve Lebelo, Dumisani Ntshangase and Sue Krige, (Cape Town: Kwela Books, 2008), 179.

³⁶ "The Aims of Bantu Education", *Bantu Education Journal*, Vol. II, No. 1, February 1956, 10, note f.

³⁷ Kearney, *Guardian of the Light*, 71.

teachers, their nurses, their ministers of religion and not for the black people or African society as a whole.

The Commission recognised that the provinces and mission schools were not in other ways involved in black socio-economic development. The Native economic Commission reported:

*The inevitable effect of the underdevelopment of the Reserves is that the orientation of most advanced Natives has been towards Europeans. Instead of finding in his own area a fruitful field for using their energies and their knowledge to uplift their own people, they have been forced out from among them and become 'exiles' elsewhere. To develop the Natives, and the Reserves; to make the dead hand of tribalism into a progressive force; to set the natives mass in motion on the upward path of civilisation, and to enable them to shoulder the burden of their own advancement – such must be, the main approach to the solution of the Native problem in its economic aspect.*³⁸

This finding, at least for the American Board, is dubious. The American Board had always encouraged entrepreneurial trade, commercial agriculture and medical advancements in its communities, churches, schools and its hospital (McCord Zulu Hospital). While the Commission could plausibly argue that the missions did not develop black society as a whole, the missions did develop communities and those communities were rapidly changing society. Therein lays the disingenuousness of the government. The development plan in which education for Blacks had to be situated was the apartheid plan.

Closely linked to the fact that there were not enough schools, the Commission believed that within the mission context, 'higher' education often took preference to and the expense of primary education. At least in Natal, virtually all secondary schools available to Africans were operated by churches.³⁹ It was found that education therefore catered for an emerging bourgeoisie rather than for the wider indigenous society from which the educated elite then separated itself.⁴⁰ As a result, primary, rather than secondary or tertiary, education would be prioritised by the government. The majority base of the society would be educated rather than an urbanised Christian elite. A great many more primary day schools could be constructed and operated than secondary boarding schools. A greater educational need could be met while more efficiently utilising resources. However, the government's actual worry was not a bifurcated African society caused by an educated elite imposing itself over an undereducated majority. The government's prime concerns were two-fold: the danger posed by mission

³⁸ "The Aims of Bantu Education", *Bantu Education Journal*, Vol. II, No. 1, February 1956, 7-8.

³⁹ Hughes, "A Lighthouse for African Womanhood", 199.

⁴⁰ A narrative of this dynamic can be found in the classic text *The Wrath of the Ancestors* by AC Jordan. Jordan, AC. *The Wrath of the Ancestors* (Johannesburg: AD Donker, 2004).

schools training of political elites who would challenge the white supremacist government and insufficient education of the masses to be able to understand commands and perform basic forms of manual labour.

According to the Commission's findings, education should be centralized and, in the government's view, less chaotic. Responsibility for education would be removed from the provinces and the increasingly diverse and numerous local mission societies. Education would be designed for local applicability in segregated communities. Three types of schools could exist: government, community (local authorities, magistrates and chiefs under the control of the government) and private state-aided schools (whose subsidies would be quickly phased out). Education would be controlled by the central government's Division of Bantu Education that operated within the Department of Native Affairs. A culling was to take place. In 1953, there were 5,000 state-aided mission schools. By June 1955, 551 state-mission schools existed, over half of them (286) in Natal.⁴¹ By 1965, there were only 509 out of a total 7,222 schools in South Africa.⁴²

The American Board and its mission's institutional memories may have also raised alarm bells regarding the implementation of Bantu Education. One hundred years ago, the American Board to its detriment carried out at least three of Bantu Education's directives. Following a seven month deputation visit to India, the American Board's Secretary, Rufus Anderson and AC Thompson of the Prudential Committee presented in 1855 a report to the Board that drastically revised how mission work was conducted. The report recommended a "narrower educational policy", one that directed that educational initiatives should be drastically scaled back to exclusively benefit far fewer native mission workers.⁴³ Mission education was drastically curtailed to catechetical or theological training. A second recommendation directed that teaching should be done in the vernacular. A third recommendation was that mission instrumentalities such as churches, presses and schools be indigenised to provide increased "native agency".⁴⁴ The American Board's own history records the 1856 decision as "wrong" as events showed "and the Board was at length compelled to return".⁴⁵ The diminishing of higher education "was inevitably depressing", "unwise" and "intolerable".⁴⁶ For example, in the Ceylon mission, higher schools of the mission similar to Inanda Seminary suffered loss in numbers and influence, the village, or community schools, sixty in number, were flourishing with over 2,000 pupils in them.⁴⁷

⁴¹ "Statistics: Bantu Schools: June 1955", *Bantu Education Journal*, Vol. II, No. 7, September 1956, 251.

⁴² Kearney, *Guardian of the Light*, 79.

⁴³ Strong, *The Story of the American Board*, 167.

⁴⁴ Strong, *The Story of the American Board*, 171.

⁴⁵ Strong, *The Story of the American Board*, 167.

⁴⁶ Strong, *The Story of the American Board*, 171 and 319.

⁴⁷ Strong, *The Story of the American Board*, 179.

A Culling Begins



Representing the government, Hendrik Verwoerd, sent a correspondence on 02 August 1953 to the American Board's Adams College and other mission institutions indicating that the government would take over institutions that trained black teachers.⁴⁸ Another correspondence dated the same was sent to Inanda Seminary and all other state-aided mission primary and secondary schools. In effect, the latter correspondence conveyed the following possibilities for the Inanda Seminary:

1. apply to continue to be a private school with no state subsidy (for teacher's salaries);
2. apply to continue to be a private school with a 25% reduction in the subsidy (in April 1955, the government conveyed that subsidies would decrease in 25% increments until they would cease in January 1958);
3. forfeit by sale the school and hostels to the government;
4. forfeit by sale the school to the government while maintaining control of the hostels;
5. outright closure of the school and its conversion by the mission for an alternative usage.

Wait and See

According to the Native Affairs Department Circular Minute No. 252/302 of 02 August 1954, the school's government subsidy would be reduced to 75% of the teachers' salaries.⁴⁹ In a 17 December 1954 correspondence to the Minister of Native Affairs, the acting principal of

⁴⁸ Wood, *Shine Where You Are*, 125.

⁴⁹ ISA, correspondence to the Minister of Native Affairs from Lavinia Scott, 17 December 1954.

Inanda Seminary, Agnes Wood (1896-1998), stated that the school “plans to continue under its present Mission control *as long as it is able to do so...*” (my emphasis).⁵⁰ One could see, however, that the subsidy reduction was only the beginning of what was to come in the next few years. The pressure to close had begun.

On 1 April 1955, the following entry was made in Inanda Seminary’s Log Book :

*The school came officially under the Native Affairs Department, Division of Bantu Education, with a 75% subsidy of teachers’ salaries. Each staff member signed a new contract with the school, which included a clause that the salary would be subsidised by the school to make it equal to what she would obtain on the official salary scale according to her qualifications.*⁵¹

In 1955, Inanda Seminary’s Annual Report conveyed to those concerned of “the government’s new requirements, forms, conditions of service for teachers and so on”.⁵² The government repeatedly sent representatives to the school for official visits, casing the site so as to most effectively determine its strengths and weakness, hoping to minimise the former and maximise the latter. It seemed as if the school was walking on egg shells. The new directives caused much trial and tribulation as staff, both black and white, felt the constant strain and stress “due to uncertainty as to what blows might fall and what changes might come up next”.⁵³ In 1955, the government seemed to show its hand and foretold what was to occur. From 01 April to 31 December 1956, the government’s subsidy to the school would be further reduced to 50% of the teachers’ salaries. By 01 January 1957 to 31 December 1957, the government’s subsidy would be further reduced to 25% of the teachers’ salaries. By 01 January 1958, all subsidies would be removed. It seemed clear that if the government would not terminate the school legislatively; it would instead allow it a reasonably quick financial asphyxiation. In addition to cutting subsidies, the government forbade the school from raising school fees. However, the American Board countered each reduction by increasing its donation to Inanda Seminary by US\$ 4,000.00 in 1955 and by another US\$ 2,500.00 in 1956.⁵⁴ Special gifts from Congregational churches and individuals also increased (according to Lavinia Scott, more was

⁵⁰ ISA, correspondence from the Principal of Inanda Seminary to the Minister of Native Affairs, 17 December 1954. Agnes Wood was the principal at the time while Lavinia Scott was on furlough in the United States of America from May 1954-July 1956).

Wood served the school from 1929 to 1965. She developed the Industrial Course at the Inanda Seminary. Wood was also active in Sunday school formation, gardening and supervised infrastructural development.

ISA, “A Tribute to Agnes Wood”, 1999 Yearbook of Inanda Seminary.

⁵¹ ISA, Log Book (June 1923-December 1957), entry dated 01 April 1956.

⁵² ISA, Report of Inanda Seminary, by Lavinia Scott, July 1956, 1.

⁵³ ISA, Report of Inanda Seminary, by Lavinia Scott, July 1956, 1.

⁵⁴ ISA, Report of Inanda Seminary, by Lavinia Scott, July 1956, 1.

donated in the last six months than in the entire previous twenty years since she came to Inanda Seminary).⁵⁵ At the end of her report, Scott looked forward and wrote:

*And what can we say now? Is it worthwhile to carry on, when most institutions have been handed over to the government, in whole or in part? We believe that distinctly Christian education is important now as it ever was. We believe that the Christian impact is bound to be lessened in those schools that surrender a large part of their control to the government. We believe there will inevitably be a lowering of standards for some years to come, and that it is important that even a few schools stand against the current and maintain the highest possible standards of scholarship, discipline and Christian character.*⁵⁶

During 1956 there seemed to be a silence; information from the government was not as forthcoming. Understanding that the Minister of Native Affairs was not in favour of allowing private schools, there was nonetheless a provision in the Bantu Education Act that recognised their existence. Having limited information but anticipating an avenue for continued existence, the American Board resolved by July 1956 that in April 1957 the school would apply for a permit that would allow it to operate without government aid as a private school with the permission of the Minister of Native Affairs.⁵⁷

Other strategies for survival were discerned. If subsidies were cut and school fees (tuition) could not be raised, perhaps the balance of funds not received through overseas donations could be recovered by increasing the boarding (food and accommodation) fees. Creative accounting could enable one to “distribute everything possible as board – on [the] books”.⁵⁸ However, the government seemed also to have jurisdiction, and thus a veto, over boarding fees. Besides, the fee increases for boarding would be a hardship to parents. Only a small increase would likely be accepted. In 1956, fees were £24 at Inanda Seminary and £28 at Adams College. The government accepted Adams College’s proposal to increase fees to £30. However, £30 seemed to Lavinia Scott to be an impossible hike for parents to shoulder.⁵⁹ Income generating projects were also considered, but ruled out due to excessive capital start-up costs. The only other option for increased revenue was increased donations from the domestic church, for example, Bantu Congregational Church or its women’s fellowship (*Isililo*). However, due to the primarily rural environment of its members and the general poor socio-

⁵⁵ ISA, Report of Inanda Seminary, Lavinia Scott, July 1956, 2.

⁵⁶ ISA, Report of Inanda Seminary, Lavinia Scott, July 1956, 4.

⁵⁷ ISA, handwritten transcription of 07 July 1956 meeting attended by (Mr Mzoneli, Mr Ndaba, Rev. Khuzwayo, Rev. John Reuling).

⁵⁸ ISA, handwritten transcription of 07 July 1956 meeting attended by (Mr Mzoneli, Mr Ndaba, Rev. Khuzwayo, Rev. John Reuling).

⁵⁹ ISA, handwritten transcription of 07 July 1956 meeting attended by (Mr. Mzoneli, Mr. Ndaba, Rev. Khuzyayo, Rev. John Reuling).

economic state of most Blacks in South Africa, such funds could only be of small, though meaningful, assistance.

Though 1956 brought a reprieve in government directives and visits, the American Board leaders expected the worst. In a Saturday morning 07 July 1956 meeting, John Reuling (1906-1990), the American Board's Africa regional secretary from 1946 to 1962, understood the stakes and advocated a strategy that made a "loud noise softly – to run fast softly" in order not "to endanger life and schools".⁶⁰ Realised was that the government had the power to close schools and to deport missionaries. Adams College, fifty kilometers south was on the verge of being closed.⁶¹ American Board members understood the government to be offering an ultimatum: "If you do not accept our programme, any requests from you will be put on one side until you do".⁶² Indigenous ministers and lay leaders of the American Board argued that mission stations, schools, pastors, the Bantu Cane Growers' Association should be conscientised about the dangerous situation. The Pastor's Conference already had fired off a letter to the government urging that Adams College and Inanda Seminary should not be closed as they are "giving fine Christian Education to our young people".⁶³

On Monday, 09 July 1956 the practical implications of the government's new policies were discussed. Regarding day schools, Lavinia Scott recorded what one time Adams College principal, Karl Brueckner (1882-1965), reported: that there was much...

*...confusion and uncertainty, no one seems to have authority. Some teachers had not been paid for months. [The] government is supposed to be maintaining [undecipherable], but has done nothing [for] nearly one and a half years. Many schools have been supplied with no chalk or other equipment, and only a very small amount [and the] cheapest sewing materials. Rents owing to us by government are [undecipherable] £800 in arrears now.*⁶⁴

Regarding night schools, Brueckner continued to report on night schools, while Scott silently interjected on paper:

⁶⁰ ISA, handwritten transcription of 07 July 1956 meeting attended by (Mr Mzoneli, Mr Ndaba, Rev. Khuzwayo, Rev. John Reuling).

⁶¹ In December 1956, Adams College was closed.

⁶² ISA, handwritten transcription of 07 July 1956 meeting attended by (Mr Mzoneli, Mr Ndaba, Rev. Khuzwayo, Rev. John Reuling).

⁶³ ISA, handwritten transcription of 07 July 1956 meeting attended by (Mr Mzoneli, Mr Ndaba, Rev. Khuzwayo, Rev. John Reuling).

⁶⁴ ISA, handwritten transcription of 09 July 1956 meeting.

Brueckner's sentiments can somewhat be verified by even the government. The Department of Bantu Education acknowledged that there had been problems and delays saying it "is very concerned about the matter and every effort is being made to improve the position".

"Salary Payment to Teachers", *Bantu Education Journal*, Vol. II, No. 6, August 1956, 217-20.

*[The] government refuses to continue to pay a subsidy which has made night school possible. Only Africans legally employed and registered in an area may attend. [The] government hopes to transfer most night schools away from European areas to native locations. [The] government says night schools must change fees to cover teachers' salaries. (Impossible!) [The fees would increase from c. 5/- to c. 30/- a year per pupil. (Yet [the] government says missions may not change fees in their schools!) [There is a danger that upper standards will be crowded out by larger numbers of children in first four years (double session). [The] government doesn't want them to learn too much.*⁶⁵

Regarding language, principals were instructed by the Department of Bantu Education to conduct official correspondence with Inspectors and other education officials in the vernacular, not in English.⁶⁶

A 12 July 1956 correspondence from Francois de Villiers (1900-1980), Under-Secretary for Native Affairs Department and Director of Bantu Education, to the Secretary of Adams College officially denied permission for Adams College to become a private school thus dooming it to the clutches of a grossly inferior Bantu Education.⁶⁷ The school would be closed on 31 December 1956. By 20 July 1956, Reuling wrote to members of the American Board Mission Council and the Adams College Council requesting them to attend a meeting at the American Board Assembly rooms in Beatrice Street, Durban that would strategise for the Executive Committee's upcoming negotiations on 01 August with the government's

⁶⁵ ISA, handwritten transcription of 09 July 1956 meeting.

⁶⁶ ISA, handwritten transcription of 09 July 1956 meeting.

The use of the vernacular was also required for School Board Secretaries.

"Correspondence with Bantu persons must as a rule be carried on in the mother tongue of the person concerned". "Proposed Standing Instructions to School Board Secretaries: Administrative Procedure", *Bantu Education Journal*, Vol. II, No. 3, April 1956, 102.

⁶⁷ Correspondence to the Secretary of Adams College from FJ de Villiers, Secretary for Native Affairs, 12 July 1956 found in:

University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), The Alan Paton Centre & Struggle Archives (APC&SA):

AP 370.968 GRA, "The Liquidation of Adams College" by George Grant, for private circulation, n.d., 45.

Before de Villiers accepted his government post, Adams College invited him to be the College's Principal (14).

De Villiers was born in 1900 in the Cape Province, Barkly West district. He matriculated in Grahamstown and attended Yale University in the USA earning a BA and a BDiv. In 1925, he married another South African, Carolina Coetzee in Brooklyn, New York City.

"Mnr. FJ de Villiers", *Bantu Educational Journal*, Vol. II, No. 4, May 1956, 126-7.

At one time, FJ de Villiers was a teacher and colleague of Chief Albert Luthuli at Adams College. Luthuli greatly respected de Villiers and credited him, "more than any other person" with providing a window of understanding, even sympathy, for the Afrikaner. At Adams, de Villiers seemed closer to the African staff than the white staff, expressed liberal views and, according to Luthuli, was a "modernist" (read: liberal). After obtaining a Bachelor of Divinity at Yale University, the Dutch Reformed Church denied de Villiers into the ministry due to his liberal views. At one time, Adams College requested him to become principal of Adams College.

Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 25-6.

Department of Education represented by Francois de Villiers and Samuel Dent (1897-?), Regional Director of Bantu Education.⁶⁸ The negotiations would centre on the “turning over to the government by lease all or a portion of the property of Adams College for the use of a government school”.⁶⁹

Lavinia Scott concluded her July 1956 report with the following remarks:

The outlook is dark – but no darker than when Mrs Edwards prayed, “Lord, take my right hand”.⁷⁰ And the challenge is perhaps similar to that which she faced when she took her tooth-brush and night-dress to Pietermaritzburg and offered to go to jail rather than surrender a certain student to a cruel heathen father...We go forward in faith – faith that God has a purpose for each of us, for our work, for the African people, and that if the continuance of Inanda Seminary is in the plan of God, we need not fear for its future.⁷¹

Meeting with Government Officials

In accordance with John Reuling’s subsequent 20 July 1956 invitation to Samuel Dent and Francois de Villiers to meet, two meetings were held. The first meeting on 01 August was held at and concerned Adams College.⁷² The second concerning Inanda Seminary was held the following day, on 02 August.⁷³ The meetings between American Board representatives and de Villiers and Dent are telling. So telling that the conversation within requires an in-depth, blow by blow, account. A ‘fly on the wall perspective’, if you will.

At Adams

At Adams, John Reuling launched into a speech that must have been disconcerting to all present. Reuling spoke under no uncertain terms explaining that the closure of Adams College is a “shock to the American Board”. The long delay in Adams’ application for private status led the American Board to expect that conditions were being considered. Reuling scolded the government’s representatives, telling them that the buildings and all there within were given

⁶⁸ Eiselen, WWM. “Mnr. S.R. Dent, Streekdirekteur, Bantoe-onderwys, Natal”, *Bantu Education Journal*, Vol. II, No. 9, November 1956, 356-7.

⁶⁹ ISA, Correspondence from John Reuling to Lavinia Scott, IM Grant, D Rubenstein, A Hopewell, D Fannin, DC McDonald, C Woods, B Nomvete, D Myeza, AF Christofersen, S Kaetzel, WR Booth, G Grant, O Williams, M Webb, 20 July 1956.

ISA, Correspondence from John Reuling to SR Dent, 20 July 1956.

⁷⁰ MK Edwards served as the first principal of Inanda Seminary, arriving in 1868. She remained at the school, save for one furlough to the United States, until she died at the school in 1927 at the age of 98 years. She is buried behind the school in the Inanda Cemetery.

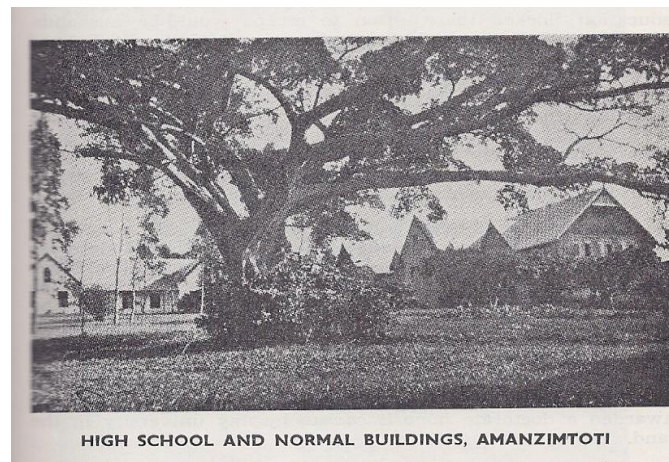
⁷¹ ISA, Report of Inanda Seminary, Lavinia Scott, July 1956, 4.

⁷² ISA, handwritten transcription of meeting held at Adams College on 01 August 1956.

⁷³ ISA, handwritten transcription of meeting held at Inanda Seminary on 02 August 1956.

for a Christian school. Disillusionment and embarrassment was felt by all. Furthermore, Reuling pontificated, private citizens would be deprived of a chance of contributing to the educational upliftment of Africans. A long list of concerns, regarding the name of the college, finances, sale or lease, library, equipment, the theological school and a public statement were presented.⁷⁴

Albert Luthuli's criticism that the churches did "almost nothing" in reaction to the government's withdrawal of support for Christian mission institutions misleads.⁷⁵ According to Alan Paton, Adams College "resisted to the end" and exhausted every procedural possibility to save the school from "the evil doctrine that has corrupted so many Christians in a Christian country".⁷⁶ From George (Jack) Grant's (1907-1978) narration of the closing, one learns that the College mobilised and "received the blessing and backing of important and responsible Church organisations in the country and overseas" – financial included.⁷⁷ The Action Committee of the Christian Council of South Africa (CCSA) became involved by meeting personally with the Minister of Native Affairs who promptly and emphatically dashed any hopes of Adams becoming a private school as "virtually NO NEW Private Schools would be permitted" (The emphasis was that of the Minister of Native Affairs as reported by the Christian Council of South Africa to Adams College.).⁷⁸



⁷⁴ This study does not describe the intricacies of the Adams College take over – instead it describes the tense moment when the Inanda Seminary was suspended in uncertainty following Adams College closure. For a detailed chronicle of Adams College demise, refer to George Grant's account and appraisal. Nonetheless, a short summary of the efforts to which Adams College resorted to keep the school open under the auspices of the American Board should be told.

UKZN, APC&SA: AP 370.968 GRA, "The Liquidation of Adams College" by George Grant, for private circulation, n.d.

⁷⁵ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 131.

⁷⁶ UKZN, APC&SA, AP 370.968 GRA, "The Liquidation of Adams College", 6.

⁷⁷ UKZN, APC&SA, AP 370.968 GRA, "The Liquidation of Adams College", 43.

⁷⁸ UKZN, APC&SA, AP 370.968 GRA, "The Liquidation of Adams College", 44.

Following the early August meeting regarding the closing of Adams College, the secretary, Julia Hosken, announced the fifty-fifth meeting of the Council of Governors to be held at the American Board Mission Board room Beatrice Street, Durban.⁷⁹ The meeting discussed four resolutions: the negative decision of the Minister of Native Affairs to allow Adams College to register as a private school, the “inevitable” closing of the school on 31 December 1956, notification that the American Board mission will likely sell all movable and immovable assets to the government and that the Council be authorised to fulfill its constitutional obligations in closing the school and the trusteeship of its assets.⁸⁰

At Inanda

The meeting at Inanda Seminary was a continuation of the previous day’s meeting at Adams College with the exception of a change of institutional focus. De Villiers explained that the only schools (besides Adams) that have been refused private status are new ones started in opposition to the Bantu Education Act. De Villiers went on to explain that the refusal of new schools was in large part because some of them employed, even as principals, teachers who had been names under the Suppression of Communism Act. The question was asked, “What about Adams?” De Villiers disclosed that Mr and Mrs Grant (the Principal of Adams College and his wife) were very active in criticising the Bantu Education Act. De Villiers however conceded that Grant’s statements of opposition had declined recently. Grant, and others of the American Board obviously realised, as per the earlier cited 07 July 1956 meeting, that the difference between closing a school and keeping a school open for the benefit of its black students was whether one kept one’s mouth shut. Lavinia Scott incisively pointed out that the Grants did not utilise the school as a center of opposition, but rather spoke in their personal capacity. De Villiers retorted, “Well, there is such a thing as being too liberal”. John Reuling bravely interjected that such a comment from de Villiers sounded like “thought control”. Reuling inquired if any criticism of the government is ruled out or considered subversive. De Villiers then reminded those gathered that they were dealing with African people, who are largely primitive. De Villiers emphasised that one must be careful what African people were taught.

De Villiers made great efforts to celebrate the practical benefits of Inanda Seminary falling under the government’s ownership. For one, he explained, there would be no financial worries. De Villiers articulated that the Mission could maintain control of the hostels and therefore the free time of the students, afterhours and on weekends. The staff would be kept on. The government would allow just as much religious education as is currently offered. The government made no provisions for a chaplain, which had always been part of the leadership at

⁷⁹ ISA, Correspondence from JV Hosken to members of the Adams College Council of Governors, 21 August 1956.

⁸⁰ ISA, Draft Resolution to be Submitted to an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Members of Adams College Incorporated, n.d.

Inanda Seminary. However, a £3 per capita grant would finance the employment of a chaplain. The question was asked of de Villiers, "Who admits students, carries on correspondence, collects fees, etc...?" The response was, "the Mission", to which Scott cheekily blurted out, "All the dirty work!" Possibly in exasperation to his outburst, de Villiers asked what it was that they feared? Incredibly, he stated that with government ownership, there would be no real change. Scott tactically yielded to his point, but eruditely pointed out that there was no guarantee for the future.

As the conversation continued, Francois de Villiers, in a weak moment of transparency interjected that there is only one thing that might annoy the Mission: The school probably would not be able to hold interracial social affairs. To which his colleague, Samuel Dent, questioned, "But that surely would not be made a regulation!"⁸¹ De Villiers, his senior, confided "Yes, it may". It was in line with government policy that interracial social affairs may not occur.

Further Discussion

Following the news that the government would close Adams College, questions swirled over the fate of its sibling school, Inanda Seminary. When and to whom shall Inanda Seminary apply for permission to be classified as a private school without government subsidy? Now? Does Inanda have a better prospect than Adams? When would a response from the government likely to be forthcoming? Has any school been given permission to constitute itself as a private school? Perhaps most exasperating, Lavinia Scott exclaimed, "What is the government's objection to private schools?" The prospect of Inanda Seminary's reclassification led its leaders to question what was happening to other schools such as St. Chad's and St. Hilda's. The change of the school's status would not be confined to education. People's residencies would be affected with a government takeover. What would be the status of the glebe? Questions fell like an avalanche. If granted private school status, would the government have the right to inspect the school? Would the government have jurisdiction over the hiring of staff? Would the government prescribe syllabi and salaries? Regarding the staff, or students

⁸¹ Samuel Railton Dent's background explains his sympathetic demeanor towards Inanda Seminary during its negotiations with the government. Dent's parents were Methodist missionaries in Zululand. Upon Dent's retirement, WWM Eiselen paid tribute to him writing, "He showed during his study years that he was destined for more responsible work and that he based his whole career on a serious Christian foundation. He was not only the Chairman of the Christian Student Union for three years, he was also chairman of the Student Representative Council". As a lay preacher and educationalist, Dent's vocational emphasis focused on black education. He served as the leader of the Natal Pathfinders Movement, principal of the Nuttall Bantu Vocational College in Edendale, chairperson of the Bantu Education Exam Committee of the Department of Native Affairs (Division of Bantu Education) and Inspector of Bantu Schools following the retirement of Mr D McK Malcolm. Dent had two brothers who were also influential educationalists. Eiselen, WWM. "Mnr. S.R. Dent, Streekdirekteur, Bantoe-Onderwys, Natal", *Bantu Education Journal*, Vol. II, No. 9, November 1956, 357.

for that matter, could they transfer to a government or community school at a later stage? If the government owned the school, what is the status of foreign nationals and how would they be paid? Could the school accept students from other provinces? If primary schools were transferred from the missions to 'Bantu' community schools and the students as a result were less academically prepared, from what pool would private secondary schools such as Inanda obtain qualified students? The variables seemed dizzying. "What if we all become government servants?"⁸²

Prior to a 21 September meeting with SR Dent accompanied by his colleague RF Hawksley (School Circuit Inspector), Inanda Seminary leaders speculated about what to ask and what he was likely to ask? Curiously, Samuel Dent, the Natal Native Affairs representative seemed far more sympathetic and helpful than his colleague from the national government, Francois de Villiers. During his visit to the school, Dent warned of a great danger that Inanda Seminary's application to be a private school would be turned down as Adams was, thus forcing the school to closed by a government take-over. Dent sympathised that "it would be tragic" if Inanda Seminary ceased to exist or turned into a government secondary day school. To one suggestion by [HJ] van Zyl, Inspector of Bantu Education, to RJ Hawksley that Inanda Seminary re-invent itself to provide higher primary classes seemed "madness" to Dent. Dent seemed genuinely endeared to the school's missiological purpose. Dent, perhaps in opposition to national preferences, argued for a middle ground: don't sell out to the government – don't try to be independent, but rather become a government school while retaining the missiological means to fulfill its vision. Dent understood the control of the boarding institution, rather than education, as the primary means by which the mission could accomplish its missiological influence, even quantifying it to be 90% of its influence. Dent further tried to sell the idea that present staff could continue to be employed, though an American was unlikely to be appointed principal.⁸³ The government would have no objection to her being an "assistant teacher", on a "temporary basis" as European (that is white South African) teachers are very scarce.⁸⁴

Lavinia Scott felt comfortable enough with Dent to ask, "But why, if the government does not intend to change things, does it insist on complete control?" Dent responded

⁸² ISA, scraps of paper (five), n.d.

⁸³ Though it was mentioned by Dent that a Mr Rindahl was Principal and Head of hostels at a school in Eshowe. More likely would be a scenario similar to that which occurred at Pholela High School, a mission school founded in 1896 by the (United Free) Church of Scotland in Bulwer, Natal. The Rev. B. Jones, the Principal of Pholela who served the school since 1933, was demoted in 1955 to "Superintendent of the Hostels" which remained under control of the church while the school fell under the control of Bantu Education by the Union Department of Native Affairs.

Jones, B. "Educational Institutions: Pholela High School", *Bantu Teachers' Journal, Final Issue*, Vol. XXXV, No. 2, January 1956, 83-91.

⁸⁴ ISA, transcription of meeting with Mr SR Dent, 21 September 1956.

honestly, “I don’t know. It is very stubborn”.⁸⁵ Behind de Villiers’ back it seems, Dent returned to the question of interracial teas: So long as the government issued no specific prohibition in writing, Inanda Seminary could continue to have interracial teas – or certainly teas at staff meetings. “Certainly you could find ways of getting together”. In a conciliatory manner, Dent assured Scott that other missions were quite happy about the cooperative arrangements with the government. Dent advised Scott on practicalities such as what exactly to include in the application: syllabi, sketch plan of the school that indicate the location, dimensions and the physical makeup of buildings and out-buildings and a sketch plan of the schools immediate environment showing the distances to the nearest state, community, state-aided and/or farm schools.

From the meeting’s transcription, it is not known whether Lavinia Scott or Samuel Dent made the following conclusion: “The government evidently does not consider that the American Board Mission is entirely free from being politically disturbing”.⁸⁶ The apartheid government’s suspicions would not be novel. For decades, particularly during the turn of the century after the Bambatha Rebellion, the Natal colonial government suspected the American Board as a political threat to prudent governance. The Congregational church strove to encourage a democratic form of church polity and thus train indigenous ministers to oversee local churches. Such practice was antithetical to a white supremacist ideology. The government frowned upon such developments, desiring that all missions for the indigenous population be led by a ‘European’ (White).

Application

Following Francois de Villiers visit in August 1956 and Samuel Dent’s visit and advice in September, applications to be considered private unaided schools dated 19 September and 30 September were submitted for the “Inanda Seminary” and the “Inanda Seminary Industrial School”, respectively.⁸⁷ The only substantive difference between the two being the number of students catered for by each school, three hundred for Inanda Seminary and seventy for the Industrial School. Accompanying the application were diagrams and descriptions of all buildings, a map of the school grounds and separate syllabi for the high school (Inanda Seminary) and the industrial department (Inanda Seminary Industrial School). For the high school, Standard VII (according to the old Natal Native Education Department), a Junior Certificate (according to the University Junior Certificate) and Matriculation (according to the

⁸⁵ ISA, transcription of meeting with Mr SR Dent, 21 September 1956.

⁸⁶ ISA, transcription of meeting with Mr SR Dent, 21 September 1956.

⁸⁷ ISA, typed document entitled “Application for Registration of a Proposed School other than a Farm, Mine or Factory School for Bantu Pupils or Persons”, 19 September 1956.

ISA, Completed “Application for Registration of a Proposed School other than a Farm, Mine or Factory School for Bantu Pupils or Persons” form, 30 September 1956.

Joint Matriculation Board) syllabi were submitted. For the industrial department, first and second year syllabi according to the official Technical School prescriptions of the Natal Educational Department were submitted. Lavinia Scott attached a letter of motivation to application in which she articulated...

*her belief that there was a place for a school of the type of Inanda Seminary, where good academic and practical training could be given in a Christian atmosphere, and where character development and Christian experience, service and witness could be given central place.*⁸⁸

The application was recommended and forwarded by the two Natal representatives, Samuel Dent and RF Hawksley. Since the application's submittal in September until January 1957, no word had been received from Pretoria, though it was known that Hawksley had been pushed by Pretoria for certain details. Plans had to be made and steps had to be taken in the event that Pretoria's much delayed response would be protracted. The unfortunate delay and seemingly intentional botching of Adams application by the government haunted those at Inanda Seminary. Agreed was that the school would request official confirmation of Pretoria's receipt of the applications and that monthly inquiries through the District Inspector as to the application's status would be requested.

In the meantime, options had to be discerned. According to an informal document drafted by Lavinia Scott on 8 January 1957, the school envisioned a number of scenarios.

1. The school is granted status as a private school and thus allowed to continue. Thereafter, the Woman's Board would provide a grant of US\$ 5,000.00.
2. The school allows itself to be taken over by the government, whilst the American Board Mission retains responsibility for the hostels. Scott viewed there to be dangers and insecurities with this scenario, but also opportunity.
3. Sell out.
4. Close the school, thus retaining the property and utilising it for other purposes such as a conference centre or a theology school transferred from Adams.⁸⁹

In July 1957, Lavinia Scott wrote in her report to the American Board Mission how important it was to see that the benefits of the Inanda Seminary to the work of the church be preserved. In addition to advocacy directed toward the government, Lavinia also had to convince some in the Mission. Inanda Seminary had always been a burden on the Mission's finances, its closure might be a welcome relief to some as resources for raw ministry could be unleashed. In fact, for the school to survive, its income from the American Board and the

⁸⁸ Wood, *Shine Where You Are*, 128.

⁸⁹ ISA, notes by Lavinia Scott, 1 January 1957.

Mission had to triple from £3,000 to £9,000 to make up the government's previous £6,000 contribution.⁹⁰ Scott understood that the school strengthened the churches, enriched the home life of its members, inspired and trained its leaders, cemented the bonds of friendship and understanding between races and preserved the faith and hope in the hearts of the African people. In short, she affirmed that the school was an extension of the kingdom of God on earth.⁹¹

Approval

The school operated throughout 1957 not knowing if it would be able to open in January 1958. Finally, a correspondence (Ref. 24/302/1769/1) from the Regional Director of Bantu Education in Pietermaritzburg dated 23 November 1957 was received stating that the Inanda Seminary could exist as a private unaided school.⁹² In the last entry of the Log Book, Lavinia Scott wrote:

*The end of the school year of 1957 marks the end of Inanda's many years of existence as a Government-Aided Mission School. Under the Bantu Education Act, there is no longer any provision for such a school; and permission has been requested, and granted, for the Seminary to continue after December 31st as a private school with no financial aid from the Government. We wish to record our gratitude for the help – both financial and advisory from the Government of Natal, and later from the Union Government. The record is one of cordial cooperation of the American Board Mission, the Staff of the School, and the Inspectors of the Education Departments, in the service of the African people; and we believe that the results achieved have richly justified the system of missionary schools aided by the Government. It is with regret that we see this period of Inanda's life come to a close, through we look forward to the future with hope.*⁹³

Yes, there was hope. However, the hope was tinged by fear. In January 1958, Lavinia Scott still speculated that the government coveted the school property. Given the financial precariousness of the school, the decision to remain a private unaided school had to always be reassessed. In January 1958, Scott still questioned whether the government would buy if the school agreed to sell, though the overall hope would be to keep the property. It would be better for the church to maintain ownership of the campus and convert it to a conference

⁹⁰ Wood, *Shine Where You Are*, 130.

⁹¹ Wood, *Shine Where You Are*, 130.

⁹² ISA, correspondence to the Director of Bantu Education (Pretoria) from Lavinia Scott, 10 December 1957.

⁹³ ISA, Lavinia Scott, Log Book (June 1923-December 1957), 10 December 1957.

There was a scare included in the Regional Director's correspondence giving approval for the school to remain private. The date the subsidy would conclude would be 10 October 1957 and not 31 December 1957. This incorrect date was later corrected in a later letter to Lavinia Scott (No. 24/302/1769/1).

centre. The school had to be diplomatic. A fear existed that if the school was too cheeky by questioning and resisting the conditions set upon it, the government might be tempted to expropriate the school. On the other hand, Scott thought the government would think twice before closing the school outright. After all, perhaps the government allowed the school to remain private as proof of its benevolence and open mindedness towards private schools.⁹⁴ More than likely however, the school was allowed to survive because in the midst of black and white patriarchal societies, females were not viewed to be future political threats. Also, Inanda Seminary was not targeted to the degree that Adams was because it did not formally train teachers.

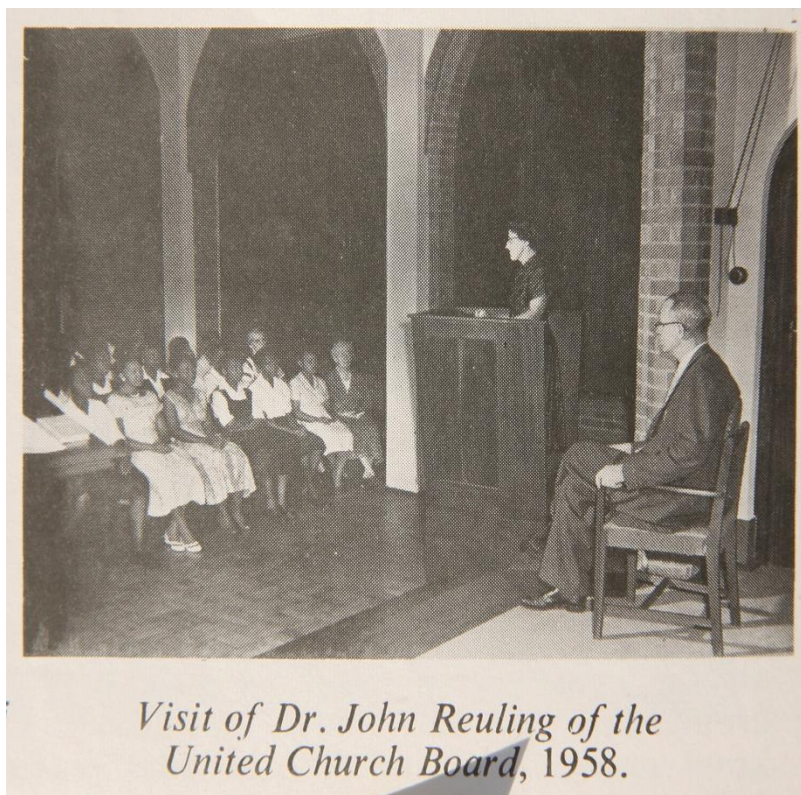
By June 1958, the Industrial School also received permission to exist as a private institution with the same conditions placed on it as the secondary school. It was later determined that in the future the schools no longer needed to be registered separately.

Though a private school, Inanda Seminary still remained under the thumb of the apartheid government and its new education system. Above all, the most difficult problem to surmount was that of financially affording to run the schools without government subsidy. No doubt, by removing the subsidy and not allowing the school to charge tuition, the government hoped that the school would collapse in just a few years. In a personal correspondence to the United States, Agnes Wood wrote:

As we are not allowed to raise fees to help cover our expenses, and as the African people could not possibly pay any realistic fees, we must look to churches in America. Do you feel that a school like ours, with Christian ideals, should be kept going in spite of the heavy cost? The government controlled schools should, and probably will, give a good general education. What can we give that is more than they will do? I asked one of our African teachers the answer to that question and she said, "It is the extra things." It was hard for her to explain but she gave as examples, the extra care and thoughtfulness for teachers and girls, the encouragement of Christian organisations, and, I add from another source, the fellowship of good will and comparative lack of fear in the relationships between races and language groups represented here".⁹⁵

⁹⁴ ISA, Lavinia Scott, "Questions Regarding Inanda Seminary", 09 January 1957.

⁹⁵ Wood, *Shine Where You Are*, 129-30.



Though the government granted the school private status, numerous restrictions engendered great anxieties and difficulties for the school. Harsh conditions prohibited the use of English as a medium of religious instruction, the charging of tuition and the expansion or development of the school's infrastructure. Restrictions inferred that students with private school qualifications would not be recognised if they wished to work in public schools and that teachers' experience in private institutions might not be recognised if they wished to transfer to the public sector. Ethnic restrictions cast in doubt who the school could admit.⁹⁶ All of the above made planning for 1958 distressing to say the least.

The government required that *isiZulu* be the medium of instruction for religion.⁹⁷ One assistant teacher from Durban advocated the government's position when he wrote:

It is therefore necessary that subjects such as Health and Scripture should be a part of the child's daily life, not just subjects learnt at school. If these subjects are taught in the vernacular they are more likely to be linked with the home and the tribe than if they are

⁹⁶ ISA, correspondence to the Director of Bantu Education (Pretoria) from Lavinia Scott, 10 December 1957.

⁹⁷ ISA, correspondences to the Director of Bantu Education (Pretoria) from Lavinia Scott, 10 December 1957.

ISA, correspondence to the Regional Director of Bantu Education (Pietermaritzburg) from Sam Kaetzel, Secretary for the American Board Mission, 24 March 1958.

*taught in a foreign language. In the latter case they might be reckoned as things for Europeans, but not very important for the African people.*⁹⁸

Inanda Seminary would have difficulty complying with the requirement to teach in the vernacular. Many of the American Board's appointment to the Seminary were short-term. Most short-term and long term appointees were expected to learn conversational *isiZulu* or be fluent, respectively. However, few would be able to learn *isiZulu* well enough to teach it at a Junior Certificate or Matriculation level. Lavinia Scott's many correspondences urgently requested clarification on these matters. They seemed to be ignored until the Mission Council requested the Secretary of the Mission to write to the government. Sam Kaetzel's 24 March correspondence to the Regional Director was finally answered 06 May 1958 by FJ de Villiers himself.⁹⁹ De Villiers tersely and unsympathetically ended the matter by writing "the requirements concerning the medium of instruction are the same as for Government or Community schools – neither more nor less rigid". The condition remained unchanged.

Concerning the prohibition of tuition fees, de Villiers stated "I have to inform you that it is likely to be a permanent condition since it is the Government's policy not to charge any tuition fees". On the restriction against infrastructural development, for example, with hostels, de Villiers stated, "The ruling about the hostels should be accepted as it stands".

Lavinia Scott and the Mission Council worried about a restriction that implied that "trainees" from private schools would not have their qualifications recognised by government schools. De Villiers stated that this was a misunderstanding. The condition was intended for training schools, such as those that were at Adams. The matter did not apply to Inanda and fell away.

Lavinia Scott and the Mission were particularly concerned about the government's refusal to assure private teachers that their experience and service at Inanda Seminary will be recognised if they so chose to transfer to the public sphere. This refusal rightfully dismayed Scott, for qualifications, conditions, salary, curriculum, even school inspections all remained the same. Pietermaritzburg responded that no assurance would be given and "each application for recognition of service will be considered on its own merits".¹⁰⁰ De Villiers later stated that the matter would be further discussed. However, "in the meantime it should be assumed that

⁹⁸ Ngubane, Edward. "Vernacular as Medium of Instruction", *Bantu Teachers' Journal, Final Issue*, Vol. XXXV, No. 2, January 1956, 105-6.

⁹⁹ ISA, correspondence from FJ de Villiers to Sam Kaetzel, 05 June 1958.

¹⁰⁰ ISA, correspondence to the Regional Director of Bantu Education (Pietermaritzburg) from Lavinia Scott, 11 February 1958.

ISA, correspondence to Lavinia Scott from the Regional Director of Bantu Education, 17 February 1958.

experience in private schools will not count". Scott had good reason to be very concerned. Not only could the quality of students be diminished by Bantu Education, so could the quality of teachers. This restriction attempted to scare teachers out of private education, into the public sector. With no guarantee, the years of service at the Inanda Seminary may simply not be relevant on their curriculum vitae. In short, the government was trying to 'pinch' the teachers from the mission schools, thus undermining them and causing them to consider closing down. In March 1955, the Federal Council of African Teachers' Association requested the government to assist mission school teachers with their 'plight'. The Association indicated that mission schools that remained independent could not pay their teachers' sufficiently. Because teachers could not be "blame[d] for the decision of their Churches", "every facility" should be made to enable them to escape the mission schools for the public sector. Therefore, "the Churches would then have to depend for their supply teachers upon those fresh from College who voluntarily enter into the new contract".¹⁰¹

In May 1958, with many of the questions answered and conditions swallowed, Lavinia Scott submitted an update to be included in the Mission newsletter. In short, she said the Seminary was open for business.¹⁰² In an annual report dated January 1959, Scott commented:

*How lasting this [Government] approval may be, we have no way of knowing; but at least we feel, in light of developments at other schools, that our decision to carry on without government aid was a wise and right one.*¹⁰³

By this time, girls entering Inanda Seminary were exposed to Bantu Education for six years. Due to the government's emphasis on the vernacular, the quality of students coming out of other secondary schools was declining. Hence Scott could affirm the decision not to close. Lavinia continued her report.

*It has given us the opportunity to maintain the standards and ideals that we believe in, and the distinctively Christian character of the school, much better than we could have done with any other choice that was open to use...*¹⁰⁴

However, though Inanda Seminary could attempt to control what came out of the Seminary, it was almost powerless to control what came in as the American Board primary schools had long

¹⁰¹ "Bantu Teachers in Mission Schools, Mainly Roman Catholic Schools", *Bantu Education Journal*, Vol. II, No. 1, February 1956, 18.

See also Kearney, *Guardian of the Light*, 79.

¹⁰² ISA, Newsletter article submittal to Sam Kaetzel, 17 May 1958.

¹⁰³ Wood, *Shine Where You Are*, 130.

¹⁰⁴ Wood, *Shine Where You Are*, 130.

since become government or community schools. In the end, Bantu Education diminished the capacity of what came in so what came out still remained a lesser quality.

Despite the restrictions placed on the school and the negative ramifications of Bantu Education the purpose of the school remained as follows: a continuing of Christian concern for African youth, freedom in the choice of staff, natural and friendly relations between the races, training in Christian service and leadership among the students, more opportunities to develop African women of strong character, moral courage, enlightened Christian faith and personal dedication to the Kingdom of God.¹⁰⁵ By 01 March 1959, on the school's ninetieth anniversary, Inanda Seminary was the only private Protestant mission high school for African girls in South Africa.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ Wood, *Shine Where You Are*, 130.

¹⁰⁶ Wood, *Shine Where You Are*, 130-1.

ISA, correspondence from SP Woodfield, Principal of Diocesan Secondary School, to Lavinia Scott, 21 December 1957.

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