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## **The 'Ties that Bind': The Wider Church's Renegotiated Relationships with Inanda Seminary from 1998-2000**

**Reverend Dr Scott Everett Couper**

### **Abstract**

Since 1869, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions and its various missiological manifestations owned and managed arguably the most prestigious secondary school in southern Africa catering exclusively for black girls, Inanda Seminary. In December 1997, the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa decided to close the bankrupt Seminary. In January 1998, alumnae of the school re-opened the school under 'new management'. This article chronicles the various means by which the northern American and southern African churches negotiated new relationships with the increasingly independent girls' boarding school as it began to find its footing in a fast changing educational environment. A survey of the years 1998 to 2000 is crucial to understanding contentious subjects such as governance, finances, spirituality, land and leadership. The author makes allusions to the persistence of many of the same issues found on the agendas of the school and churches' meetings today. The ties that bound the church and school together had, and still remain, to be renegotiated.

### **Introduction**

During the 1860s, Lucy, wife of the Reverend Daniel Lindley, co-founder of the American Zulu Mission's Inanda mission station, prayed that a means might be made to establish a school for black African girls. The northern American Woman's Boards of Missions raised and designated funds to send their own missionary, Mary Kelly Edwards, through the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, to be Inanda Seminary's first principal in 1869. The school survived and, relatively speaking, thrived during the colonial and Union eras, in part due to state subsidies and a virtual monopoly on quality education for black girls. After apartheid's initiation in 1948 by the National Party and the promulgation of Bantu Education in 1953, the school began a slow decline from 1958 when all state funding was withdrawn and the government prohibited the Seminary from charging school fees as a private independent school.<sup>1</sup> With two of its three major sources of income unavailable, the school was heavily dependent on overseas funding from the American Board to survive. Matters became worse from 1967 when 'missiological decolonisation' and the founding of the United Congregational Church of Southern

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<sup>1</sup> Scott Couper, "Fearing for its Future: Bantu Education's Threat of Closure to Inanda Seminary," *Journal of Gender & Religion in Africa* 17, no.1 (2011), 74-95.

Africa (UCCSA) caused the American Board to begin to withdraw financial support and administrative control of the Seminary. The UCCSA, as a young multinational church, was unable to govern the school through the turbulent educational waters of the 1970s, '80s and '90s.<sup>2</sup> Institutional decay manifested itself financially, infrastructurally and administratively.<sup>3</sup> Ironically, it was the new democratic dispensation that disadvantaged the Seminary.<sup>4</sup> Because no Affirmative Action or Black Economic Empowerment legislation existed to level the education landscape for schools in the new South Africa, the Seminary lost its monopoly on quality education for black girls as the former Whites-only private and public schools attracted the black middle and high classes with their superior infrastructure and equipment after decades of preferential treatment.<sup>5</sup> The church, reeling from the financial liability that the school was becoming, threw in the ecclesiastic 'towel' and in 1997 announced the closure of the historic school.<sup>6</sup>

After negotiations both the church and alumnae of Inanda Seminary were relieved that the UCCSA permitted the school to re-open provided the alumnae of the school take full responsibility for its governance and management. On paper, the Seminary remained 'under the auspices of' ('endorsed by') the UCCSA, but the school soon was obliged to obtain a new identity as an independent Section 21 Company. A descendant of the American Board, Global Ministries (GM), had long since lost confidence and no longer budgeted for the school. The Seminary's first substantive tie to the wider church was the land on and infrastructure in which the school operated. The UCCSA and Wider Church Ministries (also a descendant of the American Board) held title to the campus while the school paid a nominal rental to the UCCSA as per a lease agreement. The Seminary's second substantive tie to the wider church was nostalgia (what one might refer to as 'history' or 'heritage'), embodied in the GM appointed missionary chaplain from 2000.

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<sup>2</sup> Scott Couper, "What Am I Fit for?': Negative Manifestations of Bantu Education at Inanda Seminary during the 1970s," *Prism* 25, no.1 (2011), 99-125.

<sup>3</sup> Scott Couper, "[...] it is Clear Something Is Wrong Here!': Inanda Seminary's Continued Survival during the 1980s," *Historia* 58, no.1 (2013), 74-105.

<sup>4</sup> Scott Couper, "They have opened our doors to black students at our expense': The Chronicle of Inanda Seminary during the 1990s," *Historia*, 59, no.1 (2014), 88-117.

<sup>5</sup> Meghan Healy-Clancy, *A World of Their Own: A History of South African Women's Education*. Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2013.

<sup>6</sup> Scott Couper, "Where Men Fail, Women Take Over': Inanda Seminary's Rescue by Its Own," *South African Historical Journal* 67, no.1 (2015), 1-33.

After 1998, Inanda Seminary land and invaluable sporadic financial assistance from the UCCSA KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) Regional Council maintained the ecclesiastical link between the school and the southern African church. GM's appointment of the Reverend Susan Valiquette as the Seminary's chaplain, from 1999 to the present, became the Seminary's primary link with the northern American church. The land and the chaplain became the 'ties that bind.'<sup>7</sup> Thus, the UCCSA, GM and the Seminary remained affiliated beyond historical associations despite the school's institutional secession from the wider church. Despite the 'ties that bind,' many issues arose concerning the land and the chaplain between 1998 and 2000 that caused questioning and discernment about the future relationship of the Seminary with the southern African and northern American churches. Tensions and uncertainties exist even today, rupturing perspectives and threatening to break the 'ties that bind.' A brief historical survey from 1998 to 2000 illuminates many ecclesiastic and missiological dynamics that, then and now, affect southern Africa's oldest and last remaining mission school for black female secondary boarding students.

## **Restoring Governance Integrity**

In December 1997, the UCCSA and the Inanda Seminary's Governing Council decided to close the historic but moribund school. Yet, in January 1998, ten alumnae, affectionately known as 'Old Girls,' only two of which were UCCSA members, re-opened the school under new-management, the Board of Governors (BoG).<sup>8</sup> The school required strong leadership to thwart permanent closure. As is often the case with transitions, a power vacuum ensued and various constituencies within the Seminary competed for power. Therefore, the contestations of 1998 at the Seminary primarily revolved around jurisdiction, or perhaps more accurately, 'authority.' The BoG spent much of its efforts establishing authority over the school against the protestations of the students, educators and the dominant teachers' union. In an effort to rid the school of the latter two, virtually all the educators were retrenched in 1999. Leon Benny, English and Afrikaans teacher at the Seminary since 1990, and later deputy

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<sup>7</sup> This phrase comes from the hymn entitled "Blessed Be the Tie that Binds" (Galatians 3:28; 6:2; Colossians 3:13-15) authored by an English Baptist minister, John Fawcett, in Yorkshire.

<sup>8</sup> Thelma Ngidi and Florence Madlala, as per Madlala's recollection on Saturday, 9 April 2016 at the KZN Regional Council Annual General Meeting in Groutville.

principal, recalled the exodus as a resignation “*in masse*.”<sup>9</sup> The Department of Education (Durban North Region) agreed to vacate their offices at the school on 15 December 1998.<sup>10</sup> The Department also decided to take all of its books from the Seminary reasoning that, if it was not a government school, then the school should not be supplied with the government’s books. Benny, remembered the day the trucks came to collect the books.

I remember the weekend, I was working overtime, Friday, Saturday and Sunday. I took all the books and was hiding the books in the library, because the government was coming for their own books [...]. And then Monday came with a big truck, collect all the books. Ooh, I never forget that day! I was actually crying, joh! [...] How would [the BoG] start the school without any books? How? My goodness.<sup>11</sup>

Included in the staff retrenchments was Zamo Mkhize, the acting principal who led Inanda Seminary the year the school closed (1997) and the year it re-opened (1998). In Mkhize’s place, Old Girl (1965-1969) and UCCSA member Gladness Zimu became principal in 1999. Zimu recalled when the BoG interviewed her:

[...] you know when they were interviewing me, they were very excited that I was one of the people that had applied [...] they appointed me because I know, I understand the way things go in the school. They wanted to revive the old things that happened in the school, so I was a suitable candidate. So, they employed me just like that! Yes. It was beautiful that I was ready to serve Inanda [Seminary] once more because it had given me a lot also to appreciate. It was a pleasure [for] me to go on and plant back what I had learned in the school.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Interview, Leon Benny, by Scott Couper at Inanda Seminary (IS), 6 December 2012, 5.

Debatable is whether the educators all resigned, were retrenched or fired. The answer is nebulous. Technically, the BoG forced the educators to sign one year contracts after which they had to re-apply for their positions. The unionised educators did not agree with this policy and hence they all resigned by default at the conclusion of their one year appointments by their collective refusal to re-apply.

<sup>10</sup> Inanda Seminary Archive (ISA) at the Lucy Lindley Interpretive Centre, Building and Development files, “Wednesday 17 February 1999,” 17 February 1999, 1.

<sup>11</sup> Interview, Leon Benny, by Scott Couper at IS, 6 December 2012, 8.

<sup>12</sup> Interview, Gladness Zimu, by Scott Couper at IS, 25 November 2013, 4.

Zimu's successful candidacy for principal for the 1999 school year likely benefited from her Old Girl status. In addition, Zimu's membership in the UCCSA made her application especially attractive because her presence would in part help hold the ecclesiastic 'ties that binds.'

## **Restoring Financial Integrity**

The challenges of 1999 revolved around finances and land, not authoritative governance. In order for the BoG to 'retrench' unionised teachers, they had to forfeit the subsidy Inanda Seminary arranged with the government in the mid-1990s to finance teachers' salaries. How could the school afford an entire complement of new teachers and pay them exclusively from school fees (totalling ZAR 1 833 600)? In addition to costs envisioned for future teachers' salaries, the Seminary also had to pay for formerly employed staff. Legal fees and 'unfair dismissal' settlements of Zamo Mkhize (principal) and Eunice Hlongwa (matron) cost the school dearly.<sup>13</sup> Other liabilities included past unpaid school fees, for which the Seminary hired a debt recovery company without strong results. For Florence Madlala, the treasurer since 1998, the task turned overwhelming as the financial situation deteriorated. Enrolment was down by mid-February 1999. Only 221 students, of which at least 26 were day scholars, attended the Seminary, whereas it was projected at the time that 300 boarders were needed to be financially solvent. The reasons for the decreased enrolment were numerous: the negative publicity the school received, confusion over the status of the school, increased school fees (ZAR 7,640 per year) and the phasing out of day scholars.<sup>14</sup> Gladness Zimu confided to the media:

We are short of 75 per cent of our budget this year, and now there is no money even to pay the May salaries of our staff. If we do not get the money by Tuesday, it will be doomsday for us.<sup>15</sup>

In February 1999, Allan Wentzel as the UCCSA denominational representative on the BoG raised issue of a lease, with the UCCSA being the lessor and Inanda Seminary as the lessee.<sup>16</sup> Subsequent meetings of the BoG were held in June and October 1999. The Seminary and the UCCSA understood

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<sup>13</sup> ISA, BoGM, 1999, "Minutes of the Meeting between the BoG, School's Fundraiser, Hoffman and Goba," 19 February 1999, 2.

<sup>14</sup> ISA, BoGM, "Minutes of the Meeting of the Section 21 Company," 27 February 1999, item 1.1, 1.

<sup>15</sup> Krissy Bissetty, "Inanda Seminary Fighting for Survival: Respected KwaZulu-Natal Girls School in Financial Straits," *Daily News*, 25 May 1999.

<sup>16</sup> ISA, BoGM, "Minutes of the Meeting of the Section 21 Company," 27 February 1999, item 7, 2.

they were two different legal entities. Both parties recognised that “the business of running the school” was the responsibility of the BoG’s Section 21 Company and the obligations incumbent upon land and property ownership remained with the church.<sup>17</sup> At this early stage of the Seminary’s resuscitation, the UCCSA “remained grateful and interested in the goings on at the school.”<sup>18</sup> The church’s primary relationship with the school was as a benevolent landowner. The church proved to be especially benevolent in April 1999 when the former chairperson of the Governing Council, the Reverend Bekisipho Dlodla, successfully proposed to the KZN Regional Council, UCCSA Administrative Committee that the school’s ZAR 120 000 debt to the church be forgiven.<sup>19</sup>

As Inanda Seminary became more independent, successful and thus nationally prominent for being a beacon of hope within the country’s failing national education system, the church desired to become more than just the landowner. Though the relationship between the school and the church was “cordial,” the BoG’s communication with the church was not always smooth despite both having representatives on each other’s boards.<sup>20</sup> For example, the church was not informed of Nelson Mandela’s visit in August 1999 and thus not made aware of the envisioned renovation of buildings on church owned land.<sup>21</sup> By 2009, the desire for the church to further involve itself in the school raised issues between both partners as to the exact meaning and implications of the Seminary ‘being under the auspices of the UCCSA’ or the school even being a ‘UCCSA school.’

Though the UCCSA relinquished, through the Governing Council, its operational responsibility for Inanda Seminary more than a year previous, the wider church still remained an obstacle to the school’s recovery. For example, Florence Madlala pleaded with the Reverends Drs Daniel Hoffman and Bonganjalo Goba to intervene with the UCCSA that held funds in abeyance indefinitely sent by GM [often made by private contributors] to the Seminary. Hoffman served as the Africa secretary for GM and Goba was the vice-chancellor of ML Sultan Technikon. Madlala further lamented that though the

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<sup>17</sup> ISA, BoGM, “Minutes of the Meeting of the Section 21 Company,” 7 October 1999, item 5.1, 3.

<sup>18</sup> ISA, BoGM, “Minutes of the Meeting of the Section 21 Company,” 7 October 1999, item 5.1, 3.

<sup>19</sup> ISA, Fundraising Committee (FC), “Meeting of the Fundraising Committee,” 21 April 1999, Miscellaneous Reports, 1.

The ZAR 120 000 was an early 1999 advance from the KZN Regional Council, UCCSA.

<sup>20</sup> Interview, Zamakhosi Mpanza, Gugu Khumalo, Peggy Nkosi-Msimango, Florence Madlala, by Scott Couper at IS, 2 March 2013, 8.

<sup>21</sup> ISA, BoGM, “Minutes of the Meeting of the Section 21 Company,” 7 October 1999, items 1.6 and 1.9, 1-2.

UCCSA treasurer “had promised to reimburse the BoG for paying off accounts from previous years, it took them a long time to honour their promise.”<sup>22</sup> Hoffman decided that henceforth GM would send funds directly to the Seminary and not through the UCCSA. “He decided that it has become necessary that he deal with Inanda Seminary direct[ly] from now on.”<sup>23</sup> This practice deviated from GM policy that held that all relations, especially financial, had to be with and through the official, formal, ‘partner authority.’ As a school under the auspices of the UCCSA, Hoffman’s promise to deal directly with the Seminary demonstrated an early break between the UCCSA and the Seminary.<sup>24</sup> Though the intention was for GM to financially relate directly with the school in the future, there was little if anything GM could do to assist the school in 1999. Hoffman apologetically explained to the BoG:

Inanda [Seminary] is no longer budgeted by Global Ministries. Our budgets are established about two years in advance of the actual budget year [...]. Several years ago [while Inanda Seminary was administered by the UCCSA and the former Governing Council] Inanda was removed after years of attempting to secure good financial reports and in light of what we thought was going to be Inanda’s separation from the UCCSA. Fortunately, Inanda is very much alive under the excellent and honest direction of the [O]ld [G]irls committee.<sup>25</sup>

Herein, Hoffman indicated that a break had been made between GM and Inanda Seminary during the later years when the school was administered under the auspices of the UCCSA. Hoffman also made references that either the church and/or the previous Governing Council was less than competent. Now that the school was independent and under new leadership, GM could resume financial support of the school in the coming years (actually, 2001). The BoG utilised this information to convince its bank to provide for an overdraft facility. The chairperson of the BoG from 1998 to 2007, Esther Sangweni, wrote:

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<sup>22</sup> ISA, BoGM, “Minutes of Meeting between the BoG, School’s Fundraiser, Hoffman and Goba,” 19 February 1999, 2.

<sup>23</sup> ISA, BoGM, “Minutes of Meeting between the BoG, School’s Fundraiser, Hoffman and Goba,” 19 February 1999, 2.

<sup>24</sup> This policy would be continued by Daniel Hoffman’s successors, the Reverends Sandra Gourdet and Marco Cable. This break in policy, though justifiable and needed, later caused confusion in 2014 when GM unilaterally rescinded the missionary chaplain’s appointment a half year into her fourth term through the UCCSA, without consulting Inanda Seminary.

<sup>25</sup> ISA, Correspondences, 1999, incoming, correspondence from Daniel Hoffman to Florence Madlala, 24 March 1999.

Global Ministries, the church body that has always funded the school, withdrew their regular financial support because they were not satisfied with the way past management [UCCSA/Governing Council] of the school handled its financial affairs [...]. Since we have taken over the management of the school, representatives of the church in America have visited the school twice. They have inspected our work, our management, our vision and our bookkeeping. They were satisfied with what they found. Therefore they have made an undertaking to include us in their next budget.<sup>26</sup>

The BoG explained to Daniel Hoffman and Bonganjalo Goba other measures it had taken to maintain fiscal responsibility. For example, in 1999 the BoG procured a former Afrikaans teacher, Mildred Chamane, to be the school's fundraiser and public relations officer.<sup>27</sup> The BoG required the parents to pay fees quarterly (no fees, no class). The BoG stopped gratuity payments to retired employees. Security, cleaning and garden services were hired. Inanda Seminary decided not to renew the outsourced food service provider's contract and the school's nurse and BoG member, Sister Gloria Sosibo, catered 'in-house'. Despite all the difficulties, the BoG declared proudly to Goba and Hoffman that in 1999, they began the year on a clean financial slate.

More financial cuts were required in the coming years. To achieve academic and fiscal efficiency, many 'streams' and/or courses would have to be shed enabling the school to be less 'bloated.' In 2000, Inanda Seminary supported an unwieldy curriculum.<sup>28</sup> The school offered two streams, science and commercial. The school offered French and German (in addition to English, *isiZulu* and Afrikaans). The Seminary also offered technical drawing and information technology (computer studies). In addition, students could take music and drama. Alongside the secondary school, a secretarial college begun in the 1970s as a partial consequence of apartheid pedagogy, and now obsolete in the new millennium, continued in operation with eleven students in 2000 and five in 2001.<sup>29</sup> For a school that struggled financially to pay its teachers, the wide spectrum of classes and excess staff could not be sustained.

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<sup>26</sup> ISA, Correspondences, 1999, outgoing, correspondence from Esther Sangweni to The Manager (Standard Bank), 24 June 1999, 1.

<sup>27</sup> ISA, BoGM, "Meeting of the BoG," 7 February 1999, 1.

<sup>28</sup> Mabotle Mtshali, "Acting Principal's Report (2000): 'A Peaceful and Happy Place,'" *Ezakwamahedwards*, 2000-2001, 5.

<sup>29</sup> ISA, BoGM, "Meeting of the Board of Governors," 2 February 2001, 2.

French, German, music, drama, technical drawing and the secretarial school would be excised from the curriculum in years to come.<sup>30</sup> The school needed to change focus and specialise in maths and sciences, as black women were rarely encouraged to master these desperately needed subjects and pursue technical vocations. A shortage skilled professionals existed in South Africa and Inanda Seminary sought to fill the void with under-represented black women.

By December 1999, after a year of applying for overdrafts and loans and carrying out desperate fundraising appeals, a monthly salary instalment totalling ZAR 105 000 had to be paid. The sum was gathered together from various donors and cheques were cashed piecemeal: ZAR 18 000 from GM, ZAR 20 000 from Standard Bank Foundation, ZAR 10 000 from the KZN Regional Council, UCCSA and ZAR 12 000 from Old Girl and BoG vice-chairperson Bongikile Dlomo's own bank account.<sup>31</sup> The financial year concluded just above insolvency.

### **Restoring Spiritual Integrity**

Bonganjalo Goba and Daniel Hoffman's February 1999 meeting closed with Hoffman's proposal to appoint a chaplain to Inanda Seminary, perhaps a means by which to offer indirect financial assistance in the short-term. Hoffman initially made this proposal in January 1999 following the BoG's 1998 request to GM for a chaplain.<sup>32</sup> Hoffman emphasised that the proposed chaplain, the Reverend Susan Valiquette, was "well tested" and expecting her first child. The BoG agreed to draft a job description for the chaplain urgently. GM has since appointed Valiquette as chaplain to the Seminary for four tenures, from 1999 to 2017. In 1999, the BoG felt the presence of a chaplain was desperately needed. Long ago, the school began to lose its Congregational identity as only a very small percentage of educators and students were UCCSA members (other denominations exceeded the Congregational presence). Local Congregational ministers, such as the Reverends Bekisipho Dlodla of Beatrice Street church and Gideon Shandu of the Inanda church, had visited for special events and guest preached at times, but

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<sup>30</sup> ISA, BoGM, "Inanda Seminary Board of Governors Meeting," 15 January 2001, items 1.1, 2.

<sup>31</sup> Interview, Leon Benny, by Scott Couper at IS, 6 December 2012, 2.

<sup>32</sup> ISA, BoG Correspondences (BoGC), 1999, Daniel Hoffman to Thelma Ngidi, 15 January 1999. Inanda Seminary's BoG and not the UCCSA requested from GM the appointment of a chaplain. That the appointment is fulfilled on behalf of the Seminary at the request of the Seminary has always made the UCCSA's involvement in the appointment as a partner authority awkward and confusing.

their *ad hoc* presence was insufficient for the needs of the school.<sup>33</sup> Issues of 'religious fanaticism' (in the form of exaggerated and hyper-spiritual worship), 'lesbianism' and 'Satanism', real or imagined, periodically appear in the school's reports and disrupted campus life. Leon Benny, the deputy principal at the time, recalled:

The students would predict there's evil spirits there. "There's evil spirits now in the school." So, so [the students] would not sleep at night. The following morning, nothing [happened] at school because of the evil, the evil spirits at the school. All pumped into the children's minds [...].<sup>34</sup>

The BoG generally felt that "the UCC[SA] ha[d] neglected the spiritual life of the school and as a result foreign influence entered to fill the vacuum."<sup>35</sup> BoG member and school counsellor, Glenrose Nzimande, left her position in mid-1999. The new chaplain was expected to facilitate the school's return to orthodox and traditional worship. Religious education was also needed; Inanda Seminary's leadership felt the new chaplain would be able to educate and counsel. Valiquette acted as a spiritual keel for the school, providing a link to the past and to the school's bright future. Despite being expected six months earlier, Valiquette did not arrive until January 2000 due to delays in processing her family's visas.

At the beginning of 2000, the BoG relieved Gladness Zimu, though benevolent and well-loved, as principal after only one year. Thus, Inanda Seminary's principal would no longer be a member of the UCCSA. Zimu's benevolent demeanour allowed her departure as principal to be cordial, gracious and smooth. The BoG selected an Afrikaans teacher at the school for only one year, Mabotle Mtshali, as acting principal.

While the new acting principal settled into her new position, the new chaplain, Susan Valiquette arrived at her family's new home on 13 January 2000. GM and the UCCSA originally envisioned that the Valiquette family would live 'in town' as her husband, the Reverend Scott Couper, also had a missionary appointment. However, the BoG stressed to the partner church how crucial it was that the chaplain live

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<sup>33</sup> ISA, Principal's Reports (PR), 1999, "The Principal's Report to be Presented for the UCCSA AGM," by Gladness Zimu, 23 April 1999, 3.

<sup>34</sup> Interview, Leon Benny, by Scott Couper at IS, 6 December 2012, 8.

<sup>35</sup> ISA, BoGM, "Meeting of the Board of Governors," 3 October 1999, item 4, 3.

on Inanda Seminary's campus. Though the BoG expected the family to arrive the next day, the minutes of 12 January BoG meeting note that "the chaplain's cottage still to be re-inspected and prepared."<sup>36</sup> The cottage in which the couple with an eight-month old son was to live was dirty, dilapidated and previously abandoned due to numerous break-ins. After recovering from the initial shock, the family realised that much of the campus was in a similar condition and it would be a long-term and fulfilling project to see all restored. By 30 January 2000, Valiquette reported to the BoG her initial happiness at the school in the role of chaplain.<sup>37</sup> Valiquette wrote:

Through the guidance class, the members explored their abilities and talents to discover the career in which they are best suited [...]. We also examined such topics as sexuality, and AIDS [...] relationships and dating, alcohol, study habits, rape and other relevant issues.<sup>38</sup>

She had already conducted services on Sundays and chapel on weekdays; she also taught guidance for standards six through ten. Valiquette raised the question about whether the Student Christian Movement should continue, given the disconcerting spiritual emotionalism that it brought to the school. The BoG permitted it as long as it did not disrupt the school.

Though starting positively, Susan Valiquette initially struggled in her position as chaplain; Valiquette recalled that at one time it was made clear to her that "the BoG," not the staff, requested the presence of a chaplain.<sup>39</sup> Some of the staff felt that Valiquette's obligation to maintain confidentiality with students undermined their authority. While the BoG understood and trusted Valiquette, the new chaplain struggled with some staff whose approach to issues such as sexuality (too often confused with 'lesbianism') and the occult were very different to hers. Cross-cultural challenges faced by Valiquette concerned taboos over the discussion of sex and physical abuse of students by parents, even on campus and in her presence, when hearing of their daughter's infractions. Sensitive disclosure of 'secrets,' either to medical professionals or psychologists, often related to the then raging pandemic of HIV and AIDS and sexual abuse within students' homes, proved especially challenging. Many issues

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<sup>36</sup> ISA, BoGM, "Minutes of Meeting of BoG Held at Inanda Seminary," 12 January 2000, item 5.3, 3.

<sup>37</sup> ISA, BoGM, "Minutes of Section 21 Company," 3 March 2000, item 1, 1.

<sup>38</sup> Susan Valiquette, "Chaplain/Guidance Counsellor's Report: Our Year of Change, Growth and Renewal," *Ezakwamahedwards*, 2000-2001, 11.

<sup>39</sup> Interview, Susan Valiquette by Scott Couper at IS, 25 February 2015.

could not be disclosed for fear of them becoming immediately public amongst Inanda Seminary staff and the students' families. To avoid conflict, Valiquette took students off campus for medical and psychological appointments.

While Susan Valiquette often felt isolated on campus during her first year at work, she had a sympathetic ear with the BoG; they were bi-cultural and cosmopolitan; they gave the new chaplain their trust and affirmation to carry-on as the ethics of her vocation and conscience dictated.<sup>40</sup> As Old Girls, they knew a fusion of western and African culture at the Seminary made it one of the longest and best-enduring experiments in southern Africa.

The 1999 matriculation results were disappointing (for Inanda Seminary) and thus demonstrated that the school's viability remained in question two years into its reconstitution. The BoG attributed the low marks to a poor quality "crop of students" and a lack of discipline at the school. The students achieved only a 79.6 per cent pass rate and a 35.4 per cent university exemption rate (also endorsement or bachelor's rate).<sup>41</sup> Since 1975, only three times had the Seminary performed worse (1981, 1983 and 1997).<sup>42</sup> The 2000 matriculation rate dropped even further to a 72.5 per cent matriculation rate, a 37.5 per cent university exemption rate and only four subject distinctions, low numbers not seen again to the present.<sup>43</sup> Though Zimu and Mtshali tried their best, they were unable to drag a struggling school back to life. The lesson learned over the two years was that substantive investment had to be made in competent leadership, more so than bricks and mortar; if the 'head' lacked direction, so would the entire school body.

## **Losing Territorial Integrity**

In addition to the amputation of unionised teachers in 1999, Inanda Seminary's land was to some extent compromised to remain solvent. Whereas the ridding of unionised teachers proved helpful to the school's survival, the amputation of the Seminary's land in 1999 had little short-term benefit and caused

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<sup>40</sup> ISA, BoGM, "Meeting with Mrs Erica Joubert in Library," 20 September 2000, item 2, 1.

<sup>41</sup> No author cited, "Zinconyiwe Izikole Ezenze Kahle eNanda," *Metro Yethu*, Issue 8, March 2000, 2.

<sup>42</sup> ISA, Reference, Inanda Seminary Matriculation Pass Rate Spreadsheet.

<sup>43</sup> Gabrielle Wills and Ashling McCarthy, "School Effectiveness at Inanda Seminary: A Case Study of Best Practice," unpublished document, 12 January 2012, 20.

much long-term damage. New educators can be re-hired; land once lost can never be recovered and the Seminary is today forever physically compromised.

In early 1999, the KZN Regional Council, UCCSA and Inanda Seminary BoG agreed to sell a half hectare site to the local government in order to construct a community clinic for approximately ZAR 48 000 (the actual selling price was ZAR 68 000 – a bargain - which the UCCSA much later gifted to Inanda Seminary during the principal Judy Tate's tenure). Construction took place from August 2000 to August 2001.<sup>44</sup> The clinic failed to substantively benefit the school as intended. The land sale for the community's benefit proved to have negative consequences because without consulting the school, a second large structure was inserted into the site allocated, thus crowding the school for uses not agreed to and upsetting the water table.<sup>45</sup> In 2002, an access road leading to the clinic and community structure bifurcated the Seminary's land (Lot 698) and spoiled the grandeur of the iconic 'Avenue' leading to its gates.<sup>46</sup> Also in 1999, the wider church sold the cemetery to the local municipality. The sale of this land was positive as the grave yard contributed nothing to the school. In addition, the local municipal government would be obligated to maintain it when neither the wider church nor the school could. Yet, the municipality failed to adequately monitor and protect the land; burials occurred within a demarcated 'no-man's land' and even on the Seminary's property.

In part because the wider church as the landowner never invested in fencing the property, in August 2000 Lot 698, the undeveloped property on the perimeter of Inanda Seminary proper (Lot 699), experienced a coordinated land invasion.<sup>47</sup> The squatters arrived from the Crown Hotel in Greenwood Park after disembarking from buses.<sup>48</sup> The media reported:

When *Sunday Times* visited the school this week, shots were heard and police were seen firing teargas, arresting a squatter and breaking down squatters' shacks and tents [...]. The school's

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<sup>44</sup> Esther Sangweni, "Progress Report," *Ezakwamahedwards*, 2000-2001, 9.

<sup>45</sup> For example, the local community radio station, Inanda FM, is located in this unauthorised structure.

<sup>46</sup> These developments compounded other lamented intrusions by the state, sadly authorised by the church (UCCSA), such as servitudes for high-tension electrical lines, culverts and sewer lines and the establishment of a township immediately surrounding the school in the 1980s.

<sup>47</sup> Bongani Mthembu, "Abemijondolo Abamugqizi Qukala Umasipala," *Isolezwe*, 13 August 2000.

<sup>48</sup> Thully Mkhathshwa, "Squatters Invade Seminary Land," *Edwards' Beat*, October 2002, 4-5.

registrar, the Reverend Ian Booth, said he was concerned about the mushrooming of shacks around the school [...]. The land that the squatters have invaded belongs to the [UCCSA]. The Rev Robin Thompson said they had held a meeting to try to work out a response to the squatter invasion.<sup>49</sup>

The drama lasted approximately three weeks with security and police repeatedly breaking down shacks only to have the squatters rebuild. By the end of the month, calm was restored.

A recurring motif can be seen since the 1980s: Inanda Seminary's land was left vulnerable by the wider church to invasion and land claims, sold off or essentially lost through informal 'permission to occupy' agreements - to the extent that today the school's property is heavily balkanised and surrounded on its immediate borders by high density township. As early as 2001, the chairperson of the BoG requested the UCCSA to "consider fencing the land outside the school to demarcate it clearly."<sup>50</sup> The requests were unsuccessful. In 2009, again Lot 698 was invaded and built-on until an interdict could be obtained and the sheriff could intervene. Since 2009, the Seminary requested the church numerous times to draft and sign sub-leases between the KZN Regional Council, UCCSA and those who informally (and arguably illegally) built private residences on Lot 698 to prevent them from increasing their sites and thus further encroaching on Seminary land. To date, these requests have been unsuccessful. In 2013, after many more requests from the Seminary, the church allocated ZAR 175 000 to assist in the erection of a fence that in 2015 is estimated to cost ZAR 1.6 million. As late as 2015, the descendants of the Reverends James and John Dube have accused the wider church and the Seminary of stealing the land from their ancestors and have claimed half of Lot 698 and threatened court intervention (Land Claims Act) to ensure the *perceived* un-fenced, vacant and unowned land is owned by their family. The wider church has for decades failed to protect the Seminary's land thus resulting in hundreds of thousands of dollars of the Seminary's resources needing to be spent to legally and physically protect the land. In short, the wider church has failed to protect the territorial integrity of its own land and has thus failed in its responsibilities as a landowner, its sole responsibility since deciding to close the school

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<sup>49</sup> Mawande Jubasi, "Schoolgirls Caught-Up in Land Battle," *Sunday Times*, (day and month unknown) 2000.

<sup>50</sup> ISA, BoGM, "Meeting of the Board of Governors," 2 February 2001, 3.  
ISA, BoGR, "General Progress Report," Esther Sangweni, 8 June 2001, 1.

in December 1997. The wider church has over decades derived income from selling Seminary land, replenished its investment funds and insufficiently re-invested those funds into the infrastructure within and the fencing around the remaining property.

## **Conclusion**

From 1998, a year after Inanda Seminary closed, to 2000, Inanda Seminary negotiated with the wider churches in southern Africa and northern America a new institutional terrain. Though the ties that bound the churches and the Seminary were tenuous, they were nonetheless resilient because they were renegotiated. The tie that binds the northern American church (GM) to the Seminary is its missionary chaplain. The tie that binds the southern African church to the Seminary is, first and foremost, the land. Due to its institutional incapacity and lack of funds, the UCCSA through its KZN Regional Council has failed for decades to protect and maintain the school's territorial integrity. Understandably, key donors have indicated that they will no longer invest in the school's facilities if the Seminary does not own the land on which they are found. Recently, the UCCSA KZN Regional Council decided to sell the land to the Seminary so that the school, as the property owner, can better raise funds, encourage investment and remain pedagogically competitive.<sup>51</sup> Due to its institutional evaporation and lack of funds, the northern American church unilaterally recalled the missionary chaplain in 2014, one year into her fourth term, only later rescinding the decision after many appeals from the UCCSA and the Seminary. Currently, GM has committed itself to *no longer* appoint a missionary chaplain to the Seminary from 2017. If land no longer ties the southern African church to the Seminary and the missionary chaplain no longer ties the northern American church to the Seminary, what will be the new negotiated 'ties that bind' the school to the wider church?

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<sup>51</sup> The USA partner church (Wider Church Ministries and Global Ministries) is opposed the southern African church's sale of the property to the Section 21 company should the property still be used for the purpose intended by, first, the American Board and, second, by the UCCSA and hence feels that it must be 'gifted' to the Section 21 Company (Inanda Seminary).

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