PART 3

Encounters in Southern Africa

Jesuits and Protestants in South Africa, 1685–2015

Anthony Egan, S.J.

Introduction: Snapshots that Suggest a Pattern

The problem with writing history is that sometimes sources are absent; the history may be “hidden” and unrecorded; or it may not have happened. This is the problem I confront in writing this history of the Jesuit encounter with Protestants in South Africa. There are few sources available that fit the topic, or at least the sources are fragmentary: a text here, a letter in an unrelated archive, snippets of obituaries written without a project such as this in mind. This suggests that Jesuit ecumenism went unrecorded—a “hidden” history not so much the result of intention as oversight. It may be that it was either so commonplace as to be considered not worthy of record, or indeed that it did not actually happen much.

That this chapter exists is a sign that at some level Jesuit–Protestant encounter *did* occur. The historical retrieval I have done is more a collection of snapshots than a coherent documentary. And, like snapshots, what emerges is a succession of moments and individuals rather than something by which one can make generalizations, establish patterns of practice that suggest a collective process, let alone such a thing as an ecumenical policy.

But a historian must try to make coherence with what she or he has, even if what emerges is more overtly a “fiction” (in the sense of a constructed narrative) than might be desired by those who would prefer history to be an accurate record rooted in an interpretive framework.¹ Yet even a loose collection of snapshots from the past deserves some kind of interpretation: the very act of writing is inevitably interpretation. To add to this complexity, the author has himself been a participant-observer of at least the last twenty-six years

¹ For the debate over the adequacy of my claim, see: E.H. Carr, *What Is History?* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1961); Geoffrey R. Elton, *The Practice of History* (London: Fontana, 1969 [1967]); Arthur Marwick, *The Nature of History*, 3rd ed. (London: Macmillan, 1989); John Tosh, *The Pursuit of History*, 2nd ed. (London: Longmans, 1991); Keith Jenkins, *On What Is History? From Carr and Elton to Rorty and White* (London: Routledge, 1995).

in the history he records, reflecting on experience from within the events described.

My chapter thus rests on this premise: despite the limitation of evidence, a picture can emerge of Jesuit encounter with Protestants in South Africa. Although not a central task of Jesuits, we can see a slow if incidental developing encounter—from hostility to a modicum of cooperation—that mirrors both evolving ecumenical sensibilities within the Society (and within the author, truth be told) over the last three hundred-odd years and a shift in Catholic and Protestant regard for the mutual religious other.

Finally, it may even be said that the “format” of this chapter, and the tenuous conclusions that I make, reflect a challenge to Jesuits in South Africa to be more historically conscious, more disciplined in recording our history, more aware of our historical situatedness, even if it means added work in keeping hold of the historical record.

First Contact: Fr. Guy Tachard at the Cape, 1685

The first Jesuit encounter with Protestants in South Africa occurred literally en route to Siam in 1685.² A French diplomatic embassy to Siam, including a number of Jesuit scientists affiliated to France's Royal Academy,³ stopped in at the Cape of Good Hope for a few days to pick up supplies. The Cape had been colonized by the Dutch, specifically the Dutch East India Company, in 1652 as part of their policy—shared by other European mercantilist powers—of setting up refreshment stations along trade routes to the Far East.

The Jesuits, led by Guy Tachard (1651–1712), combined a rest from the rigors of the voyage (none were seafarers) with scientific research and observations of the Cape's flora and fauna. Their encounters as clergy with the otherwise courteous and welcoming Calvinist Dutch authorities highlight the tensions between Catholic and Protestant Europeans at a time when the Thirty Years'

2 For a historian covering roughly four hundred years, the geographical entity “South Africa” is problematic. Present-day South Africa only came into existence in 1910. From 1652 until 1910, South Africa was an expanding piece of southern Africa under first Dutch, then British and Boer rule that would ultimately include the present-day states of South Africa, Lesotho, Botswana, Swaziland, Zimbabwe, and Zambia.

3 See Guy Tachard, *A Relation of the Voyage to Siam: Performed by Six Jesuits Sent by the French King, to the Indies and China in the Year 1685* (Bangkok: White Orchid Press, 1981 [1688]), 43–80.

War (1618–48), the vicissitudes of the Huguenots in France,⁴ and the Dutch War of Independence (1568–1648)⁵ were recent memories.

These conflicts had led to a hardened and intolerant attitude to religion among the otherwise enlightened Dutch (as had happened among their Catholic rivals). The public expression of Catholicism at the Cape of Good Hope was prohibited. No Catholic churches were permitted; nor were Catholic priests allowed to stay at the Cape. This practice was to continue, apart from a brief interregnum in the early 1800s, until a few decades after the British occupation of the colony in 1806.⁶ Tachard would note this in his book with some sadness.

Setting forth from Brest, laden with the latest scientific equipment to perform astronomical and geographical research—a gift from King Louis XIV's (r.1643–1715) Royal Academy—the Jesuits and their diplomatic companions traveled the long and difficult route down the Atlantic, sighting the Cape on May 21, 1685, which was Ascension Day. They were relieved. As Tachard recounts:

After we had said our usual Prayers and sung Mass to thank God for the good success of our Voyage; we viewed the Land with our Glasses, and saw it distinctly, not being above three Leagues off. How Barbarous and Barren soever it seemed to be to us, it was nevertheless a delightful sight for Men who had seen no Land from the Canary Islands, which we sailed by the thirteenth of March.⁷

Their delight was temporarily dampened by the Cape weather: becalmed outside the harbor and then tossed by strong winds, they had to remain on their ship until the next morning. Following the usual protocols, the French ambassador and the Jesuits went to visit the governor of the Cape, Simon van der Stel (1639–1712), and the visiting Company commissary general, Hendrik Adriaan van Rhee de (1636–91). The latter Tachard described as

4 Louis XIV would revoke the Edict of Nantes (1598), tolerating them in France, a few months after Tachard and company visited the Cape.

5 Jonathan I. Israel, *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness, and Fall 1477–1806* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998); Geoffrey Parker, *The Dutch Revolt* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977); Pieter Geyl, *The Revolt of the Netherlands 1555–1609* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1966).

6 Catholic Emancipation in Britain came mainly with the 1829 Roman Catholic Relief Act. By 1832, the Catholic Church had established itself in southern Africa. The first bishop of this new vicariate, Patrick Raymond Griffiths, O.P. (an Irishman), served a territory covering what is today the Western, Northern, and Eastern Cape provinces.

7 Tachard, *Voyage*, 40–41.

a Man of Quality about fifty years of age, Handsome, Civil, Wise and Learned, and who thinks and speaks well on all Subjects; we were extremely [*sic*] surprised to meet with so much Politeness at the Cape of Good-hope [*sic*], and much more at the Civilities and many Testimonies of Friendship which we received at the first Interview.⁸

The Jesuits were delighted to find that they were allowed to spend some time at the Cape “taking in a little Air and Land.” In return for the hospitality, they volunteered in the days that followed to do some scientific research to the benefit of the Dutch, calculating the settlement’s longitude with their state of the art equipment—the first time it was ever accurately calculated.⁹ Tachard describes in detail how these measurements were calculated, displaying barely hidden delight in the use of the instruments they had brought with them from France. The Jesuits also spent nights studying the stars of the southern hemisphere. A small observatory was put at their disposal for that purpose.

They were also taken to see the Company garden, which Tachard notes as “one of the loveliest and most curious Gardens that ever I saw, in a Country that looks to be one of the most dismal and barren Places in the World.”¹⁰ Overall, they were impressed by the fact that what had started so small had grown so rapidly: “[The Dutch] have at present a great Town and a Fort with five Bas-tions which commands all the Road. The air is very good, the Soil excellent, and Corn grows there as well as in Europe; they have planted Vines which yield a most delicate Wine.”¹¹

While the Jesuits did their research, the French crew went hunting, returning with a cornucopia of wild game. Ever the explorer-scientist, Tachard recounts stories told second hand of hunting and of the marvelous wild beasts to be found inland. He also wrote of the people he encountered at the Cape: Dutch colonists and “Natives.” Of the latter, he dwells on the Khoikhoi peoples, which he names by the common colonial parlance of Hottentots. His view of them is typical of the era, seeing them as “being perswaded [*sic*] that there is no other life after this, labour[ing] as little and tak[ing] as much ease as they can in this World,”¹² and who in turn viewed the Dutch work ethic as self-imposed slavery

8 Ibid., 48–49.

9 Ibid., 49, 50. Significantly, Tachard’s calculations were so accurate that they have become the standard measurement to this day.

10 Ibid., 51.

11 Ibid., 64.

12 Ibid., 69. Here, Tachard is quite simply wrong. The Khoikhoi and San peoples had—and have—a complex religious system that incorporates a number of gods, good and evil, as

and their living in houses and forts as cowardly. Culturally, Tachard viewed the Khoikhoi as living a “wretched” life, though he notes:

Barbarity has not so totally effaced all the Tracts of Humanity in those People, but that there remains still some footsteps of Virtue: they are trusty, and the Dutch allow them free access into their houses without any fear of being Robbed by them [...]. They are beneficent and helpful, and keep nothing wholly for themselves.¹³

Tachard the colonial ethnographer is more complimentary about the Griquas and Namaquas, who lived farther inland, though once again his tendency is to emphasize the “exotic” and their difference from the European colonists. While recognizing that they were “neither Cruel nor Wild, and want neither Docility nor Wit,” he suggests that their greatest misfortune was that they “have no Knowledg [*sic*] of the true God, and that nobody endeavours to instruct them.”¹⁴

While once again a view that places Tachard firmly within the category of a man/missionary of his age, this comment hints at his unease about a worrying aspect of the behavior of their Dutch hosts: their attitude to religion. Though the Company had diligently provided ministers to serve the colonists, and had initially organized the Reformed church even without clergy as part of a political committee at the Cape, at the time of Tachard's visit this had not extended to evangelization outside the community. The occasional Khoikhoi or slave had converted and been received into the church, but the missionary era was a thing of the future. Tachard, with limited knowledge of these contexts, would have seen this lack of evangelization as a sign of indifference—and, for Catholics, a great opportunity closed to them by the anti-Catholic laws in force at the Cape.

well as the transmigration of souls. See, for example, David Lewis-Williams and David Pearce, *San Spirituality: Roots, Expression and Social Consequences* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2004).

13 Tachard, *Voyage*, 71.

14 *Ibid.*, 78, 79. In the decades and centuries that would follow, this lack of evangelization would be rectified, with results that would be the subject of deep political debate. Critics of the process would say that this would destroy the structures of indigenous communities; defenders would argue that “Westernizing” African peoples would build the foundations of liberation movements; and pious people would argue that it would save their souls. Whatever the case, by the return of the Jesuits in the 1870s, most parts of British-controlled South Africa at least had been thoroughly penetrated by Protestant missions of one form or another.

The greatest source of tension for these first Jesuits in South Africa was the absolute prohibition on being allowed to minister at the Cape of Good Hope, where they discovered that many of the Company's employees were in fact Catholics. Tachard recalls:

No sooner had we got possession of our little Observatory, but the Catholicks [*sic*] [...] who are pretty numerous, had notice of it and were thereat exceedingly rejoiced [*sic*]. In the Mornings and Evenings they came privately to us. There were some of all Countries, and of all Conditions, Free, Slaves, French, Germans, Portuguese, Spaniards, Flemings and Italians. They who could no otherwise express themselves; because we understood not their Language, fell upon their Knees and kissed our hands. They pulled Chaplets and Medals out of their Bosoms to show that they were Catholicks, they wept and smote their Breasts. That Language of the Heart much more touching than words, wrought great Compassion in us, and obliged us to embrace those poor People, whom Christian Charity made us look upon as our Brethren.¹⁵

The Jesuits were, however, all too aware of the delicacy of the situation. They were guests of the Dutch and under Dutch law while on land. The administration of any sacrament was prohibited. Tachard and his companions could celebrate the sacraments on board ship since that was French territory—but locals were forbidden to join them there. To break the law would not only jeopardize their research and possibly court arrest or deportation; it would have been tantamount to causing a diplomatic incident. The Jesuits, it seems, abided by the laws of their hosts, while quietly exhorting their fellow Catholics to remain true to their faith as best they could.

When Tachard and his confrères sailed from the Cape a few days after landing, the Jesuit presence in what is now South Africa ended for almost two centuries. Jesuits on the way to Asia no doubt stopped off for supplies in the decades that followed, but their engagement with southern African society under Dutch and later British rule came to an end. The “anti-ecumenism” of the era made interaction between Jesuits and Protestants impossible.

Missionaries and Schoolteachers (1870s–1960s)

Almost two hundred years passed before the Jesuits established an actual base in South Africa. In that interregnum, the Society was suppressed and

¹⁵ Tachard, *Voyage*, 61.

re-established; the new Society was a more cautious creature than it had been, more explicitly Roman in its orientation.¹⁶ During the 1870s, it was experiencing state hostility throughout Europe, not least in united Italy itself, where the General Curia was temporarily moved to Fiesole, when the idea of a southern African mission was proposed.

In the interim, Catholicism was belatedly being established in southern Africa.¹⁷ Prohibitions on Catholic religious practice started to ease in the early nineteenth century with the British occupation of the Cape in 1806. Ongoing restrictions continued until Catholic Emancipation in Britain in the late 1820s and early 1830s became a reality. By 1837, a vicariate of Southern Africa was established in the Cape Colony under its first vicar apostolic, Bishop Patrick Raymond Griffith, O.P. (1798–1862). Since the territory was vast, the vicariate was split into two parts, an eastern and western vicariate. Missionaries, mainly Oblates of Mary Immaculate (O.M.I.), started moving into the hinterland of Natal, the Basutoland protectorate (Lesotho) and the Boer republics of the Transvaal and Orange Free State. They faced considerable obstacles: anti-Catholicism in the republics and everywhere they found long-established Protestant missions.

In the 1870s, James David Ricards (1828–93), the bishop of the eastern vicariate, based in Grahamstown and later Port Elizabeth, approached the Society with a request: to create a Jesuit school, an expansion of a small school already established, in the nearby town of Grahamstown—which already had Anglican and Methodist schools. He saw this as an essential service to the significant numbers of Catholic “sons of colonists” in the area, and as part of a belated effort to exercise Catholic influence in southern Africa.

Ricards gained the ear—and the enthusiasm—of Englishman Alfred Weld, S.J. (1823–90) one of Superior General Peter Jan Beckx’s (1795–1887, in office 1853–87) assistants. Weld not only embraced the idea of running a diocesan boys’ school in Grahamstown; he also saw it as an opportunity to create a new southern African Jesuit mission. The geographical territory of the Zambesi Mission, as it was called, encompassed the whole of southern Africa, including the future states of South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi, and even western parts of Mozambique not under Portuguese control. Beckx endorsed Ricards’s proposal for a school in May 1875 and also agreed to send two Dutch priests to Graaff-Reinet.¹⁸ With these two projects in mind, the first Jesuits arrived in South Africa in late 1875, taking ownership

16 This section draws heavily on Judy Ann Ryan, “An Examination of the Achievement of the Jesuit Order in South Africa, 1879–1934” (MA thesis, Rhodes University, 1990).

17 See William E. Brown, *The Catholic Church in South Africa: From Its Origins to the Present Day*, ed. Michael Derrick (London: Burns & Oates, 1960).

18 Ryan, “Achievement,” 54.

of the school—St. Aidan's College¹⁹—in January 1876. The Zambesi Mission in southern Africa was established in 1877 and entrusted to the Society's English province in 1879.

Two streams thus developed in South Africa—education and missionary work. Although the idea was to center it in Grahamstown and St. Aidan's, it soon became apparent—after a number of Jesuits died during their travels northward owing to a lack of familiarity with the climate—that a new center for the mission work was needed: a center that would be a base for expansion (beyond the parishes in Graaff-Reinet and Grahamstown) and a place of formation for young Jesuits joining the Zambesi Mission. At Graaff-Reinet, a novitiate was briefly established in 1887. A number of novices from England and the Netherlands left—one Dutch novice literally leaping over the wall and finding refuge with the local Dutch Reformed minister, who took him in.²⁰ According to Jesuit tradition, the ex-novice later became a Reformed clergyman.

The Jesuits then acquired Dunbrody in 1882. Situated on the Sundays River, inland from Port Elizabeth, this former monastery of Trappist monks who had moved to Natal to found the Mariannhill monastery near Durban²¹ became a Jesuit mission station as well as formation center where scholastics would study philosophy, theology, African languages, and complete their tertianship after ordination.²² Though the center had forty Jesuits (including twenty-two scholastics) by 1887, persistent droughts and poor conditions led to its closure in 1890. The mission station itself would struggle on under similar adversities until its closure in 1934.

From the outset, the Jesuits' primarily focused on the north. Battling severe conditions to which these Europeans were unaccustomed, they persisted in sending men into southern Africa. Small missions and temporary presences in what is now the Northern Cape and Botswana were established and then closed. Their greatest achievement was establishing a permanent mission in what is now Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, which spread across present-day Zimbabwe with the British annexation of the territory. Here, the Jesuits found an unusual ally: empire-builder Cecil John Rhodes (1853–1902), who gave them tracts of land around Salisbury, present-day Harare. As the Zambesi Mission morphed

19 Frank L. Coleman, *St Aidan's College* (Grahamstown: Rhodes Institute for Social and Economic Research, 1980).

20 Ryan, "Achievement," 66.

21 They would there become missionaries to the Zulu community, and would be formed into the Congregation of Missionaries of Mariannhill (CMM).

22 J. O'Neil, S.J., "Dunbrody Mission after Twenty Years," *Zambesi Mission Record* (October 1903): 298–305, here 298.

into a mission of the English (later British) province, the Jesuit focus was on Southern Rhodesia. South Africa in effect became a small adjunct of Britain's Salisbury mission. By the 1960s, the South African Jesuit footprint was small—St. Aidan's College (which would close in 1973) and a handful of Jesuits in diverse ministries in Cape Town and Johannesburg.

What, then, of Jesuit relations with Protestants in South Africa during this period (1870s to about 1960)? There is a dearth of material on the subject, but a series of glancing references in the *Zambesi Mission Record*, the journal of the Mission published in London, suggest an atmosphere of mistrust and at times outright hostility on both sides, occasionally punctuated by warmer expressions of mutual respect. Significantly, these attitudes depended on what part of the South African mission we examine.

If we look at the situation in St. Aidan's, we see an ambivalent but largely cordial relationship. The school existed in Grahamstown, what one Jesuit observer called "practically an English Cathedral-City, having its Anglican Bishop, its Public Schools, and schools or colleges of different denominations, Catholic, Anglican, Wesleyan, all corresponding to flourishing Secondary Schools in England."²³

As such, St. Aidan's was an integral part of the colonial culture of Grahamstown. It admitted non-Catholic boys, not least because that guaranteed much-needed state subsidies, and it also interacted with its Anglican and Methodist counterparts, particularly in sporting events where it had an excellent reputation for boxing. Colonial officials (almost always Protestant) visited the school for prize-giving ceremonies and other civil occasions. During the Boer War (1899–1902) and the World Wars, the school's alumni served with British and later South African forces against Boers and Germans alike. In short, the atmosphere was one of politeness to non-Catholics, but with no apparent expressions of active ecumenism.

On the "missions"—Dunbrody, Keilands, and others—the mood was different. One Jesuit, Charles Bick (1861–1939), saw Keilands for example as "hemmed in on all sides by Protestant missions [...] [who have] anticipated us by forty years." He added: "So this is our task—to rescue these poor blacks from heresy; a task which is arduous and likely to last long, and of which God alone knows what will be the outcome."²⁴

23 Herman Walmesley, S.J., "Some First Impressions of South Africa," *Zambesi Mission Record* (January 1900): 225–28, here 227.

24 Charles Bick, S.J., "The Missions of Kaffraria," *Zambesi Mission Record* (May 1898): 27–34, here 27.

Bick's views on his black flock, patronizing and racist by modern standards, are intimately connected to his anti-Protestant outlook, which included open contempt for the "facile apostolate of the Wesleyans":²⁵

The *Ama Roma* (the Romans), as we are called, were so different to the foreign preachers they had been wont to see [...]. Imbued with Protestantism, disgusted with the multitude of sects that swarm in their country, the Kaffirs²⁶ naturally thought at first that our arrival would have no other result than to increase the number of religious bodies [in the area] [...]. On the other hand, filled with hatred for the white men who have despoiled them of their patrimony, they seemed little disposed to listen to us.²⁷

As latecomers to the mission field, something they clearly resented, the Jesuits did indeed struggle to gain and maintain converts, a concern expressed in letters and reports throughout the period until the 1930s. However, their observations on African culture (empirically fascinating though often read through a Eurocentric vision verging on racist)²⁸ suggest that they did not see this earlier Protestant influence as a primary obstacle to evangelization.

The anti-Protestant outlook is mirrored throughout the period in successive editorials in the *Zambesi Mission Record* decrying the lack of Catholic support for the missions. Noting the British victory after the Boer War (which the Jesuits had welcomed, possibly as the lesser of two evils compared with the virulent anti-Catholicism of the Afrikaners), one editorial warned of an advance of Anglicanism and "general awakening of the Protestant Sects" in South Africa, pointing out how the "Protestant Church in England" took mission seriously and funded it generously. It argued: "Surely it is not for Catholics to view all these efforts with folded arms—to stand by with indifference while the fields are acquired, the seed sown and the harvest reaped by others!"²⁹ Another warned: "The missionary spirit is strong among English Protestants, and unless

25 Ibid., 29.

26 This racist term, originating in the Arabic term *kufr* ("unbeliever"; i.e., non-Muslim), was common parlance in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, even among more liberal missionaries. It illustrates how what was once seen as a morally neutral descriptor can change its significance. Historical accuracy demands its—however reluctant—inclusion in this text.

27 Bick, "Kaffraria," 28.

28 Once again, one can only say they were men of their times, many of them also only amateur anthropologists.

29 "Editorial," *Zambesi Mission Record* (October 1903): 283–85, here 284.

we can establish new stations they are sure ere long to take possession of the land, to the exclusion of the Catholic priest.”³⁰

Perhaps the most dramatic and grandiose statement of this view came from Richard Sykes, S.J. (1854–1920):

Whatever may be said for or against the Imperialistic idea as it affects a kingdom which is merely of this world, there is at all events one realm in which Imperialism well befits, and one people who ought to be Imperialistic—the realm of Christ upon earth and the people who constitute the kingdom, the members of the Catholic Church.³¹

Cumulatively, these statements give us an impression of the general Jesuit attitude of the time. In an age before the great ecumenical opening facilitated by the Second Vatican Council (1962–65), these views need to be seen in context: Jesuits, like most Catholics, believed that the Catholic Church was the one true faith, the sole absolute guarantor of salvation. Add to this the generalized anti-Catholic atmosphere in South Africa at the time, and the long memory of Catholic persecution and discrimination in Britain during the period from the Reformation until at least the mid-nineteenth century (including persecution of Jesuits), and the Jesuit reaction to Protestants becomes understandable.

This should be further qualified. Most Jesuits in South Africa, from at least the 1890s, were British by birth or descent. They were also, as white people, colonists together with other colonists, sharing all the colonial assumptions (however liberal some might have been) of their non-Catholic peers. The St. Aidan's experience illustrates this. So too did Jesuit attitudes to colonial figures like Rhodes who, though not Catholic nor even particularly religious, actually admired Jesuits and proved to be a major benefactor to the Society's southern African mission. This is expressed in a glowing obituary of Rhodes in 1902. Calling him “a great man [...] to a large proportion of people in South Africa he was a kind of idol or uncrowned king,”³² the writer claimed he had a great reverence for the Catholic Church, Catholic missionaries in general, and the Society in particular: “The Jesuit Fathers treasure, and will long treasure, the memory of Cecil John Rhodes—for his kindness and generosity, his large-heartedness to them, his sympathy for their work and their aims. He was

30 “Editorial,” *Zambesi Mission Record* (April 1906): 43–45, here 44.

31 Richard Sykes, S.J., “A Plea for Imperialism,” *Zambesi Mission Record* (April 1909): 534–37, here 534.

32 “The Late Cecil John Rhodes,” *Zambesi Mission Record* (July 1902): 95–97, here 95.

their friend, staunch and true [...].”³³ Ever pragmatic, the Jesuits in South Africa were willing to embrace some Protestants, albeit those sympathetic to the Society, benefactors of the mission, and of fairly agnostic hue.

Radical Encounters: Fr. George Edmondstone and the University Christian Movement

The 1960s was the decade in which ecumenism, particularly the ecumenical struggle against apartheid,³⁴ gained momentum in South Africa. The Second Vatican Council largely opened up official dialogue between Catholics and Protestants in the country, though the practice was fairly restrained apart from the work of two bishops who had been prominent at the council: Archbishop Denis Hurley, O.M.I. (1915–2004) (of Durban) and Bishop Gerard van Velsen, O.P. (1910–96) (of Kroonstad in the Orange Free State province). The Southern African Catholic Bishops’ Conference (SACBC) entered into dialogue with individual Protestant churches and with the Christian Council of South Africa, soon renamed the South African Council of Churches (SACC).³⁵ Hurley would later form Diakonia, a Durban-based ecumenical group committed to the struggle against apartheid. He was also close to the mainly Protestant Christian Institute,³⁶ formed by a dissident Dutch Reformed minister Beyers Naudé (1915–2004). The other vanguard of Catholic ecumenism in the 1960s was the Dominicans, who had close relations with the most radical ecumenical group of the era, the University Christian Movement (UCM), through their involvement in the National Catholic Federation of Students (NCFS) as chaplains.

The emergence and active participation of Catholics within the UCM was largely the result of the initiative of NCFS national chaplain, diocesan priest,

33 Ibid., 97.

34 Documented in John W. de Gruchy, *The Church Struggle in South Africa* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1979); Daryl M. Balia, *Christian Reaction to Apartheid: Ecumenism in South Africa 1960–1987* (Braamfontein: Skotaville Publishers, 1989); Peter Walshe, *Church versus State in South Africa: The Case of the Christian Institute* (London: Hurst, 1983); Walshe, *Prophetic Christianity and the Liberation Movement in South Africa* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1995).

35 For an overview, see Bonaventure Hinwood, “Ecumenism,” in *The Catholic Church in Contemporary Southern Africa*, ed. Joy Brain and Philippe Denis (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1999), 349–85.

36 Walshe, *Church versus State*; Peter Walshe, “Mission in a Repressive Society: The Christian Institute of Southern Africa,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 5, no. 4 (October 1981): 146–52.

and former secretary general of the SACBC Colin B. Collins (b.1931). Collins, together with Basil Moore (a Methodist theologian based at Rhodes University), set up UCM with clear purposes: radical ecumenism and radical student politics. Close to the secular National Union of South African Students (NUSAS), UCM became a hotbed for new ideas: Black Theology (imported from the United States and adapted to the South African context), modern secular Protestant theology, Freirean pedagogies from Latin America, and experimental agape liturgies that included contemporary music, dance, the use of film and psychological encounter groups. It was out of a UCM conference that black students led by Steve Biko (1946–77) developed the philosophy of Black Consciousness and decided to break from NUSAS and form the South African Students' Organization (SASO).³⁷

With its core centered in Grahamstown and Rhodes University, it might have been expected that Jesuits would have been drawn to UCM. This was largely not the case. By the mid-1960s, there were about thirteen Jesuits in Grahamstown, almost all of them based at St. Aidan's College, the majority Englishmen wary of ecumenism beyond the "tea and sandwiches" ecumenism that had marked the Society's approach in the city since the turn of the century—and not all that politically aware either. It is a myth that the Catholic Church in South Africa was a consistent, let alone radical, opponent of apartheid. The church's unease with political involvement (and with ecumenism) was rooted both in a (largely true) sense that they were "outsiders" in a hostile Calvinist country and in the domination of the institution until the 1970s of an economically powerful racist white lay minority and cautious foreign-born bishops backed by an uneasy Vatican diplomatic presence.³⁸ Progressives like Hurley (a South African) and van Velsen (Dutch), the Dominicans and individuals like Collins, fought an ongoing and slow, but eventually successful, battle to change the church's non-confrontational approach. With one major exception, during this early era the Jesuits erred on the side of caution.

37 William John Houston, "A Critical Evaluation of the University Christian Movement as an Ecumenical Mission to Students 1967–1972" (mth thesis, University of South Africa [UNISA], 1997); Ian MacQueen, "Students, Apartheid and the Ecumenical Movement in South Africa 1960–1975," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 39, no. 2 (2013): 447–63; Clare Elizabeth Ann McKay, "A History of the National Union of South African Students, 1956–1970" (D.Litt. et Phil dissertation, UNISA, 2015), 424–27; Anthony Egan, *The Politics of a South African Catholic Student Movement* (Cape Town: University of Cape Town Centre for African Studies, 1991), 34–47.

38 Garth Abraham, *The Catholic Church and Apartheid: The Response of the Catholic Church in South Africa to the First Decade of National Party Rule, 1948–1957* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1989).

The exception was George Robert Edmondstone (1916–86),³⁹ a South African Jesuit who quit teaching at St. Aidan's College to lecture in the Mathematics Department at Rhodes University in 1959. Ed or Eddie, as he was known in university and church circles, knew Moore and the other Protestant professors on the Divinity Faculty. He got on well with Collins, who by the time of UCM was seen as a maverick in Catholic circles.⁴⁰ Edmondstone was well liked, and though he was primarily a mathematician, he was a voracious reader of theology throughout the 1960s until his death in Grahamstown in 1986. He strongly supported Vatican II, developed a strong opposition to apartheid in the 1960s, sympathized with the student movement including UCM, and was committed to ecumenism.

Unlike the official Catholic chaplain to Rhodes at the time, Edmondstone was less worried about the experimental liturgies—include agape meals that at times seemed to blur into ecumenical Eucharists—and more sympathetic with UCM's radical politics. In letters exchanged with Collins, Ed noted—with disapproval—that an individual within the University Catholic Society had been trying to force them to break all ties with UCM.⁴¹

Though Edmondstone was hardly active in UCM, he represented a small bloc of progressive Catholic clergy who supported the organization until its demise in 1973. Evidently, he succeeded in keeping Rhodes Catholic Society within UCM: at an NCFS National Council meeting in July 1968, it was reported that the society's "differences" with UCM had been successfully resolved.⁴²

Edmondstone "survived" the dissolution of UCM, the demise of St. Aidan's, and the departure of his confrères from Grahamstown in the early 1970s. He stayed on at Rhodes, even past his retirement from the university, living in a house that belonged to his mother, working as a parish priest in Grahamstown parishes, and deeply involved in setting up welfare projects in the city. Years after his death, members of Rhodes University Divinity Faculty still remembered him with great affection, not least for his encouragement of Protestant

39 "Obituary: Fr George Edmondstone," *Letters & Notices* [internal journal of the British Jesuit province] 88, no. 392 (Easter 1987): 299–302.

40 He left the priesthood and the church, moved to Canada where he completed a PhD in education, and settled as a lecturer in Australia.

41 University of the Witwatersrand, University Christian Movement Papers (AD1126): H5. Fr. "Rob" Edmondstone, S.J., to Fr. C.B. Collins, May 22, 1968; M2: "Rob" to Collins, April 20, 1968.

42 University of the Witwatersrand, University Christian Movement Papers (AD1126) J4: *NCFS: Minutes of Council Meetings: July 1968*, 18–19.

scholars to take an interest in post-conciliar Catholic theologians and in Catholic spirituality.⁴³

Struggle Ecumenism in the 1980s

Though the ecumenical struggle against apartheid emerged in the late 1960s and 1970s, Jesuit involvement tended to be quite muted.⁴⁴ Until the late 1970s, the Jesuits in South Africa were managed from Rhodesia, which was itself going through a war of liberation in which the Society frequently found itself on opposite sides. When the vice province, later province, of Zimbabwe was created in 1979, the handful of South African Jesuits found themselves once again a mission of the British province. By the mid- to late 1980s, it would become a dependent region of the British province, a situation that continued until 2016 when its affiliation reverted to the (new) Zimbabwe–Mozambique province. The focus of South African Jesuits during the 1980s rested in parishes in Johannesburg and Cape Town, university chaplaincies, and increasingly Catholic seminaries.

The new contexts combined a focus on intra-Catholic works with a public engagement that was more overtly ecumenical. The ecumenism tended to focus on political issues. With the active engagement of Catholic students in ecumenical protest—most notably for its mainly white constituents in anti-conscription movements—chaplains found themselves almost by default in these activities. Jesuit chaplains often found themselves caught in the middle—between campus protesters (including many from the Catholic student movement) and riot police. One Jesuit, David Rowan (b.1952), was even hit by a rubber bullet on Wits campus on one occasion.⁴⁵ Parishes like Holy Trinity in Braamfontein, Johannesburg, literally on the edge of the main campus of the University of the Witwatersrand, and Kolbe House—the chaplaincy to the University of Cape Town—became places where student groups (religious and non-religious) would meet and where students would sometimes hide when chased by riot police during demonstrations.

During the great protest marches near the end of the 1980s, as the regime was slowly collapsing, Jesuit chaplains joined their students in great marches.

43 Author's conversations with Divinity School professors, particularly Felicity Edwards, c. 1990 and 1996.

44 Much of this narrative is based on the author's experience. I got to know the Society as a student at the University of Cape Town in 1985 and joined the Jesuits as a novice in 1990.

45 Conversations with David Rowan, S.J., on various occasions.

Usually, these were ecumenical affairs: Catholics and Anglicans tended to stick together, sometimes accompanied by Methodists and Jews and students of no fixed religious abode. UCT chaplain Graham Pugin (b.1957) was tear-gassed a few times with them, and sprayed with purple dye once. Pugin was also closely involved in supporting Christian youth contemplating refusing to serve as conscripts in the South African Defense Force, having himself been a conscientious objector during the 1970s.

Outside the student movement, Jesuits were involved in the ecumenical struggle in other ways. During the late 1980s, the community in Belgravia, Johannesburg, hid SACC leader and Pentecostal pastor Frank Chikane (b.1951), whom the security police wanted to detain without trial. Jesuit school teacher David Dryden (b.1941) also smuggled Chikane into South Africa from Botswana after Chikane had attended an ecumenical meeting outside the country.⁴⁶ Dryden cannot recall the exact date of this event, but in his autobiography Chikane notes that he had been in Europe in March–April 1986 and in Europe, Canada, and North America between September 1986 and March 1987, where he had addressed the second general assembly of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT).⁴⁷

In Orlando West, Soweto, Xolile Keteyi (1952–94) quietly supported and encouraged youth activists in his parish, creating spaces for youth to meet and organize, as part of a wider renewal of his parish youth.⁴⁸ One or two of these youth who would later join the Society would comment that Keteyi made no distinction between Catholics and non-Catholics—they were Christian youth involved in the struggle.⁴⁹ Though he kept a low political profile, Keteyi was also part of the ecumenical group that developed and wrote the 1985 Kairos Document.⁵⁰ He was its only Jesuit signatory, though many others shared its sentiment, wholly or in part. This was a landmark ecumenical statement from the religious grassroots that called for religious resistance to apartheid. Keteyi's vision was strongly ecumenical by default: his primary concern was for a Christianity fully inculturated into the African context. His sole book, published posthumously, barely refers to the Catholic Church as such, except to

46 Conversations with David Dryden, S.J., Johannesburg, most recently September 26, 2016.

47 Frank Chikane, *No Life of My Own: An Autobiography* (London: Catholic Institute for International Relations, 1988), 111.

48 "Obituary: Fr Xolile Keteyi," *Letters & Notices* 92 (Christmas 1994): 151–63, here 159.

49 Comments of Rampe Hlobo, S.J., on various occasions. Similar remarks were made to me by former Jesuit Jeff Xaba.

50 *Challenge to the Church: The Kairos Document* (Braamfontein: Institute for Contextual Theology, 1985).

commend existing efforts to inculturate and to stress a notion of Catholicity as unity in diversity rather than a Euro-centric ecclesiology.⁵¹

The oldest Jesuit “activist” during this period was Gerard Lorriman (1915–2011), based in Cape Town.⁵² A veteran of the Second World War, and a surgeon who was widowed in his fifties before joining the Society, Lorriman came to South Africa to work as a hospital chaplain. He also worked as Catholic chaplain to Robben Island prison, where he presided over ecumenical Bible study groups that included luminaries like Nelson Mandela (1918–2013) and Tokyo Sexwale (b.1953). Having been banned from the island when the state guessed he was ferrying messages from prisoners to their lawyers, Lorriman worked in the townships of the Cape Flats—a task in the mid-1980s that included presiding over many political funerals of activists killed during protests. These were always ecumenical and interfaith affairs that were as much political rallies—some of them barely hidden occasions for the banned African National Congress to, literally, unfurl their colors. Many pastors found these events—which frequently ended in confrontations with army or riot police, teargas and bullets—terrifying and avoided them. Lorriman did not, burying folk of every religious persuasion and none. On one occasion, he faced down two armored police vehicles, striding out in front of them and forcing them to back off. The photograph of this event went around the world, becoming an iconic image of the times.

Similarly, in the early 1990s, in Elandskop, a semi-rural parish near Pietermaritzburg, Natal, Father Tim Smith (b.1952) found himself caught in a war between pro-ANC and pro-Inkatha factions.⁵³ These conflicts and the responses to them spanned religious boundaries—Inkatha and ANC supporters were members of his parish, which was split down the middle. (The same was true for all Christian churches in the area.) When Smith became one of a group of ecumenical clergy and laity documenting and reporting atrocities in the

51 Xolile Keteyi, *Inculturation as a Strategy for Liberation* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1998).

52 This is based on numerous conversations with Lorriman over a number of years. See also: Gerard Lorriman, “Report from the Western Cape,” *Letters & Notices* (Summer 1994): 16–26; “Obituary: Fr Gerard Lorriman,” *Letters & Notices* (Autumn 2011): 367–77.

53 This was the so-called “Seven-Day War.” See Matthew Kentridge, *An Unofficial War: Inside the Conflict in Pietermaritzburg* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1990). Inkatha emerged as a domestic liberation movement in what is now KwaZulu Natal in the 1970s. Originally close to the African National Congress, by the mid-1980s it was the sworn enemy of the ANC and its internal allies, culminating in violent conflict between it and anc-aligned organizations.

area,⁵⁴ he was targeted for assassination. He discovered his status while filling up petrol at a garage: one of the attendants told a colleague that Tim had a price on his head. Tim understood Zulu, the language they spoke. When he reported this to his regional superior in Johannesburg, he was quickly moved to Johannesburg. His Jesuit replacement, Chris Chatteris (b.1950), carried on Smith's work, however.

This kind of low-level "struggle ecumenism" was practiced by many of the Jesuits until the democratic elections of 1994. Fragmented and ad hoc in nature, there was no formal Jesuit "plan" by which it was carried out, no specific organization under whose auspices the Jesuits worked. The politically charged context of the time meant that, for the Jesuits, as for many Catholics engaged in the anti-apartheid struggle, the situation determined the ecumenism. There were no overt dialogues with Protestants over points of theology, apart from the ways in which the contextual theology of struggle might be implemented. But what this did ultimately achieve was the building of personal relationships across confessional and religious divides. Having marched with a particular Methodist pastor, debated theology with a progressive Dutch Reformed *dominee*, advised and received advice from a particular Anglican priest or bishop, it was increasingly difficult to see them in purely oppositional terms. While Vatican II may have opened up the idea of dialogue, for many Jesuits the struggle era caused us to start reconfiguring our notion of "church."

Spiritual Crossovers: Vuselela, the Jesuit Institute, and the Spread of Ignatian Spirituality in Post-apartheid South Africa⁵⁵

In the wake of the 1994 democratic transition in South Africa, church engagement in public life—and in ecumenical political activity—declined. The reasons for the former were threefold: first, many of the older religious activists retired or died; second, a number of younger activists left their work in the church for politics; third, the churches as a whole seemed to breathe a sigh of relief and withdrew from the public square, arguing that now the aberration of apartheid was over they could get back to the "real" business of saving souls.

54 Tim Smith, *They Are Killing Our Children* (Pietermaritzburg: Pietermaritzburg Agency for Christian Social Awareness, 1990).

55 The author was a direct participant in many of these events. In this section, I draw on numerous conversations with its other participants: Annemarie Paulin-Campbell, Frances Correia, Puleleng Matsaneng, Graham Pugin, S.J., Russell Pollitt, S.J., David Smolira, S.J., Raymond Perrier, Peter Knox, S.J., and James Fitzsimons, S.J.

The once strong SACC also went into decline, ironically just as the Catholic Church shifted from being an observer to full member in the body.

Having enjoyed a growth period in vocations in the late 1980s, the Society of Jesus had its own crisis: over a period of roughly two years (1992–94) it lost four of its younger members—a newly ordained priest, two deacons, and a brother. While the works it had done in seminaries, parishes, and chaplaincies in the 1980s mainly continued—apart from its withdrawal from Elandskop and a Johannesburg parish—ecumenism remained low key and ad hoc: Jesuit seminary professors like Nicholas King (b.1947) and Ed Dougherty (b.1941) worked individually with Protestant counterparts at the university in Pietermaritzburg and the neighboring “cluster” of seminaries; university chaplains always found among their charges a handful of non-Catholics (usually Anglicans, sometimes Methodists and Lutherans) who for whatever reason found themselves more at home in the Catholic chaplaincy than in Protestant counterparts.⁵⁶ It would be out of the chaplaincies—in particular, a group of students supported by Jesuits working at the University of the Witwatersrand—that a new project would emerge that would carry Jesuit presence through Ignatian spirituality to a wider Protestant community than ever before.

As South Africa entered the Mandela era—the era of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), and Mandela’s broader efforts to reconcile a still-divided country—interest in spirituality grew. Among former activists, some exhausted by the struggle, the sense arose of the need for more personal, inner work. Reconciliation, too, played a part in this. The TRC, led by Archbishop Desmond Tutu (b.1931), has often been criticized for being too close to a spiritual revival than a commission to investigate the crimes of the apartheid era. True as this may be, the nature of the exercise—story-telling and the (all too few) attempts to reconcile victim and victimizer—lent itself to the practice of prayerful reflection. An ecumenical group from Britain, called the Llysfasi Group, led by British Jesuit writer and spiritual director Gerard W. Hughes (1924–2014), came to South Africa a number of times to give the Llysfasi Workshops. These were ecumenical projects that engaged mainly with Catholics, Anglicans, Methodists, and Lutherans. A few Jesuit scholastics participated in them, but their impact was felt mainly among Protestants. Though

⁵⁶ During this period, many mainline Protestant churches cut back on their university chaplaincies. Non-denominational evangelical and Pentecostal movements on campus (like His People, Students Christian Association) absorbed many of them, but some—particularly those that had a more “high” ecclesiology or were uneasy with the ambivalent political legacy these evangelical groups brought with them from the apartheid era—felt more at home with the Catholics.

this Protestant Ignatian network grew, many of its members had very limited knowledge of its Catholic and Jesuit roots.⁵⁷

Over the new year of 1996, a small group of Catholic laywomen—students and former students of the University of the Witwatersrand—gathered for a discernment retreat ending on the feast of the Epiphany. Some had been contemplating the religious life; others were looking to find a way of life that would combine service to God with contributing to social reconciliation. Under guidance of Jesuit university chaplains, notably Rowan and Pugin, they had made, were making, or would subsequently make, the nineteenth annotation of the Spiritual Exercises. They became the core of an informal “Epiphany Group” that would form a lay-run, Jesuit-guided and supported center for Ignatian spirituality.

Annemarie Paulin-Campbell (b.1971) (a psychologist) and Frances Correia (néé Dormehl) (b.1974) (a student of comparative literature) subsequently pursued further studies in spirituality—the former completing both a master’s degree in Christian spirituality at Heythrop College, University of London, and the three-month program in the Spiritual Exercises at St. Beuno’s, Wales; the latter making the Exercises and completing an internship with the Grail Movement in Britain. On their return, they started Vuselela, later called the Center for Ignatian Spirituality (CIS), in Johannesburg. Funded by the Society, a number of Jesuits also assisted the center in its work—initially giving parish-based weeks of guided prayer. They were soon joined by another laywoman, Puleng Matsaneng (b.1969)—a member of the Jesuit parish in Orlando West, Soweto. From the outset, too, a number of Jesuits assisted them where they could with these exercises.

Initially, the work they did gained greatest traction among Protestant congregations. It seemed that, as they observed, their work resonated most with Methodists, Baptists, and Anglicans, who seemed less nonplussed by a ministry done by laypeople and women than most Catholics.⁵⁸ What *did* spook some Protestants, particularly clergy, however, was the underlying Catholicity of some dimensions of the Exercises.

To allay such fears, some sophisticated theology was needed. Jesuits helped out here, and became key members of the center as it expanded from giving retreats of various kinds to training people in spiritual accompaniment and (having first made the Exercises) giving the Exercises. A retired Jesuit priest, James Fitzsimons (1919–2015), himself a long-standing spiritual director of

57 Annemarie Paulin-Campbell, “A Lay Foundation, a Shared Enterprise,” *Review of Ignatian Spirituality* 104 (2003): 38.

58 Ibid., 38–39; interview with Frances Correia, Johannesburg, June 3, 2016.

note,⁵⁹ became a crucial part of this process. He developed and taught a theology of the Spiritual Exercises that kept the Exercises faithful to their sources while being, as he put it, “mildly ecumenical.”⁶⁰ It may have been “mildly ecumenical” to him, but that it was completely in keeping with mainstream Catholic understandings of the Exercises allayed many fears and uncertainties among non-Catholic participants.

Framed by a theology of grace that echoed (perhaps even anticipated)⁶¹ the 1999 Joint Catholic–Lutheran Declaration on Justification by Faith, Fitzsimons drew heavily on Gilles Cusson’s biblical theology of the Exercises,⁶² on theologians like Karl Rahner (1904–84), on the classical contemporary commentators on the Exercises, and on his years of experience as a spiritual director. Through his contribution, the team were able to present a theology of the Exercises true to its origins but sufficiently adaptable to engage with Protestant sensibilities. Thus, exercises like “Rules for Thinking with the Church” could be read in both a Catholic–papalist and a more Protestant way.

Fitzsimons even had a way of adapting the Marian dimensions of the Exercises to allay Protestant fears of “Mariolatry.” Noting that Ignatius had found this in Ludolph of Saxony’s (c.1295–1378) *Life of Christ* (which many say was possibly *the* source he used at Manresa), he interprets the (non-scriptural) resurrection appearance of Jesus to Mary thus:

He comes to his Mother as the one who has been closest to him, of course [from a Catholic perspective], but in coming to her, he is coming as its Saviour to all the Creation which she represents, to each of us who, like her, share in that glory, that life in the Spirit for which we were made

59 A measure of this work is that, by the end of his life (2014), having retired from teaching in the spirituality training programs and past ninety years old, he was still seeing a number of individuals for spiritual direction.

60 James Fitzsimons, S.J., “Notes for a Theology of the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius” [unpublished manuscript still used in various forms by the Jesuit Institute South Africa, n.d.], 3.

61 I am vague in this regard because Fitzsimons’s text is not dated. He does not refer to the Joint Declaration, nor to Hans Küng, whose thought was seminal (though for political reasons uncredited) to the declaration. Neither Annemarie Paulin-Campbell nor Frances Correia, when I asked them, could specify a date when Fitz joined them in the training program—though they sensed it was the late 1990s, suggesting anticipation rather than echoing.

62 Gilles Cusson, S.J., *Biblical Theology and the Spiritual Exercises* (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1988), cf. Cusson, *The Spiritual Exercises Made in Everyday Life: A Method and a Biblical Interpretation* (Anand: Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, 1992).

[a nod to all, but especially to Protestants and Pentecostals]. This contemplation, then, is not a mere act of filial piety on the part of Ignatius, but is to be the model in which we see the perfection and wholeness of all the ways in which the Christ of Easter comes to his own [...].⁶³

By the early 2000s, the work of CIS (as it was now called) had grown exponentially. Puleng Matsaneng developed a new form of Ignatian spirituality directed at discussion groups in township parishes, where the individually guided retreat model seemed not to work. This has been seen as a major innovation in the worldwide ministry of the Exercises.⁶⁴ Though a thoroughly lay-led operation, a number of Jesuits were directly involved in it. It would become the core of a new regional project that would draw Vuselela/CIS firmly into the life and work of Jesuits in South Africa, the Jesuit Institute.

Since the 1970s, the Society of Jesus in South Africa had no institutions of its own. The Society worked in parishes, chaplaincies, and schools (the latter being part of the Marist Brothers institutions). It also worked in both major seminaries, St. John Vianney (Pretoria) and St. Joseph's (Cedara, near Pietermaritzburg), with the understanding that they were there temporarily, particularly in Pretoria where the Society had an understanding with the SACBC that it would withdraw once adequate diocesan formators could be trained and deployed there. At the turn of the millennium, two Jesuits—Gerard Walmsley (b.1951) and Anthony Egan (b.1966)—taught at St. Augustine's College, a small Catholic university in Johannesburg. All these educational institutions were places of ecumenical encounter. But the pressure from Rome was for South Africa to develop its own distinctive Jesuit institution.

Given that Jesuits were few in South Africa (about twenty-five), there was no chance of developing a Jesuit retreat house, Jesuit social institute, or Jesuit university. In light of this, and no doubt noting the success of Vuselela, the then regional superior Mike Lewis (b.1949)—in consultation with the region—instituted the Jesuit Institute South Africa (JISA) in early 2007. Incorporating Vuselela and its team, and led initially by former British provincial David Smolira (b.1955), JISA *combined* a non-residential spirituality program (Vuselela) with academic teaching (Egan left St. Augustine's permanent staff, remaining a sessional lecturer there; Peter Knox [b.1962] joined the team from his work in seminaries) and a kind of social apostolate ministry.

From the onset, JISA's work took on both an intra-ecclesial and ecumenical nature. Its focus was on dialogue with the Catholic and other churches, with

63 Fitzsimons, "Theology," 112.

64 Annemarie Paulin-Campbell and Puleng Matsaneng, "Evolving Approaches to Spiritual Direction in South Africa," *The Way* (July 2013): 7–22.

other faiths, and with a broader dialogue with South African society. This was uneven, from the start. While the Spirituality Team continued to make considerable inroads into other churches, under Smolira and his successor Raymond Perrier (b.1966) (a former British province Jesuit scholastic and advertising executive) JISA gained considerable influence within the South African Catholic Church. This influence continues under the current director, Russell Pollitt (b.1975). As the institute built up its engagement with wider society, often serving as a critical voice at a time when much church engagement with the state was fairly muted (or limited to such areas as abortion and gay marriage), JISA started to gain an international reputation. Because JISA responded quickly to crises in South African politics, faster than the SACBC in many cases, it attracted the attention of international Catholic media, including Vatican Radio, for comment. Simultaneously, Pollitt and his colleagues built up ties with the secular media—with the online Daily Maverick newspaper, with the independent E-TV news channel, and with a number of radio stations. JISA became the first place for comment on religious matters—like the beatification of Benedict Daswa (1946–90), the election of Pope Francis (r.2013–)—with these sources.

With still-greater direct Jesuit involvement, the Spirituality Team grew the Exercises in South Africa further, making inroads into the Protestant community. The ecumenical dimension of the work deepened: it was not (and is not) uncommon for an eight-day retreat to be led by a combination of Jesuit and lay JISA staff, combined with Protestant directors trained by JISA. Often, too, the retreat would occur in a Methodist or Anglican retreat center. There remain some retreats that are all-Catholic affairs, and some that are completely run by Protestants. JISA's regular directory of retreats reflects this diversification of the Exercises in South Africa.

Protestants have taken to the Exercises in South Africa dramatically, perhaps more so than South African Catholics, many of whom still operate out of a traditional devotional spirituality. The director of spiritual formation for one denomination is a fully trained Ignatian director connected to JISA's extended network of associates. She takes each graduating class of her seminarians through an eight-day retreat before they are ordained.

Spiritual direction and the Exercises have also transformed Jesuit encounters with Protestants. Through knowing the Society through the Exercises, as opposed to the internet-based network of grand conspiracy theories, Protestants have drawn on Jesuits to advise them on ad hoc bases on a number of occasions. And numerous Jesuits direct a swathe of Protestant clergy and laity—including numerous Anglicans and Methodists, a few Baptists, a number of Dutch Reformed clergy and laity, and even a few Pentecostals.

It goes both ways, however. A retired Anglican bishop (who comes from the church's evangelical wing) is a spiritual director to a Jesuit.

The ministry of Ignatian spiritual direction, pioneered by the mainly laywomen—accompanied and supported by the Society in South Africa—of the CIS, now part of JISA, has transformed Jesuit relations with Protestants in South Africa. From the isolation of the Catholic *laager* of the nineteenth century,⁶⁵ through mainly individual efforts at dialogue in the twentieth, Jesuits—particularly those at JISA—are engaged in practical ecumenism. Ironically, none of this was ever planned. No regional superior with his consultants ever developed a policy, ever wrote a plan for ecumenism.

Conclusion: Developing a General Theory of Ecumenical Encounters in South Africa

The central thesis I would propose is this: Spirituality is ecumenical. Justice is ecumenical. The truth of these maxims is borne out by the developments we have seen in the Society of Jesus in South Africa since the 1870s. Where dogma intrudes, there is often deadlock—though, in the case of Jesuits, since they have never had a strong tradition of theological scholarship in South Africa, this had not been an obstacle.

A subsidiary thesis I would add is: History—sacred and secular, if one still wants to distinguish them—has intruded on what Jesuits could do. Centuries of anti-Catholic public discourse in the country, from active proscription to cool indifference, has made ecumenical dialogue for the church and the Jesuits difficult. Similarly, Catholic hostility to Protestants—an obsession with the Reformation, particularly among British Jesuits who largely seeded the Society in modern South Africa—has also contributed. The ambivalent messages about ecumenism and its limits coming from the Second Vatican Council and its subsequent cautious interpretation coming from Rome and applied by the SACBC made ecumenism outside of non-sacramental and non-dogmatic matters difficult. The overall move of the church in South Africa has been from open hostility through polite indifference to polite conversation and limited cooperation on justice matters.⁶⁶ In matters of spirituality, the SACBC has also remained muted; only Ignatian spirituality promoted by individual Jesuits and by JISA has had a real impact.

A second subsidiary thesis I propose is: Given the limitations of numbers in the region, the influence of the British province's general caution regarding

65 From the Dutch/Afrikaans: a circle of wagons drawn together for defense at night (or in battle) during the nineteenth-century South African "Great Trek" (c. 1835–40).

66 See, once again, Hinwood, "Ecumenism," 349–85.

ecumenism, and the nature of the works done by the Society in South Africa, meaningful ecumenical encounter with Protestants was both limited and work-driven. Those Jesuits who worked in parishes, seminaries, and chaplaincies were within a Catholic milieu. What engagement they may have had—in ministers' fraternals, in ecumenical chaplains meetings at universities, in working with academic colleagues from Protestant theology faculties—were incidental to their work focus, add-ons to already busy schedules. There was little time for depth, even if such depth had been actively encouraged by the Society or the SACBC.

My final thesis returns to the caveat I issued at the beginning. For much of this subject we simply cannot know the details. The data is not there. It is not to be found in the official documents of the Society in South Africa, nor in the records (such as they are) of individual Jesuits and Jesuit works. Though the snapshots exist, they cannot give us more than a blurry picture. To use another visual analogy, this aspect of Jesuit history in South Africa is like an old film, all copies of which have been lost. Only a grainy collection of still photos remain.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

- Society of Jesus in South Africa: Regional Archives (Johannesburg).
 Zambesi Mission Record, 1898–1934 [missionary magazine of the then “English province” of the Society of Jesus, focusing on the missions of southern Africa].
 Letters & Notices 1895– [internal magazine of the British province of the Society of Jesus].
University of the Witwatersrand (Johannesburg): Historical Papers Collections.
 University Christian Movement Papers (AD1126).

Published Sources (Books and Articles)

- Abraham, Garth. *The Catholic Church and Apartheid: The Response of the Catholic Church in South Africa to the First Decade of National Party Rule, 1948–1957*. Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1989.
 Balia, Daryl M. *Christian Reaction to Apartheid: Ecumenism in South Africa 1960–1987*. Braamfontein: Skotaville Publishers, 1989.
 Brown, William E. *The Catholic Church in South Africa: From Its Origins to the Present Day*. Edited by Michael Derrick. London: Burns & Oates, 1960.
 Carr, E.H. *What Is History?* Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1961.
 Chikane, Frank. *No Life of My Own: An Autobiography*. London: Catholic Institute for International Relations, 1988.

- Cusson, Gilles S.J. *Biblical Theology and the Spiritual Exercises*. St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1988.
- Cusson, Gilles S.J. *The Spiritual Exercises Made in Everyday Life: A Method and a Biblical Interpretation*. Anand: Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, 1992.
- Egan, Anthony. *The Politics of a South African Catholic Student Movement*. Cape Town: University of Cape Town Centre for African Studies, 1991.
- Elton, Geoffrey R. *The Practice of History*. London: Fontana, 1969 [1967].
- Frank L. Coleman, *St Aidan's College*. Grahamstown: Rhodes Institute for Social and Economic Research, 1980.
- Geyl, Pieter. *The Revolt of the Netherlands 1555–1609*. New York: Barnes & Noble, 1966.
- Gruchy, John W. de. *The Church Struggle in South Africa*. Cape Town: David Philip, 1979.
- Hinwood, Bonaventure. "Ecumenism." In *The Catholic Church in Contemporary Southern Africa*, edited by Joy Brain and Philippe Denis, 349–85. Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1999.
- Houston, William John. "A Critical Evaluation of the University Christian Movement as an Ecumenical Mission to Students 1967–1972." MTh thesis, University of South Africa (UNISA), 1997.
- Israel, Jonathan I. *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness, and Fall 1477–1806*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998.
- Jenkins, Keith. *On What Is History? From Carr and Elton to Rorty and White*. London: Routledge, 1995.
- Kentridge, Matthew. *An Unofficial War: Inside the Conflict in Pietermaritzburg*. Cape Town: David Philip, 1990.
- Keteyi, Xolile. *Inculturation as a Strategy for Liberation*. Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1998.
- Lewis-Williams, David, and David Pearce. *San Spirituality: Roots, Expression and Social Consequences*. Walnut Creek, CA, and Cape Town: AltaMira Press and Double Storey, 2004.
- Lorrinan, Gerard. "Report from the Western Cape." *Letters & Notices* (Summer 1994): 16–26.
- MacQueen, Ian. "Students, Apartheid and the Ecumenical Movement in South Africa 1960–1975." *Journal of Southern African Studies* 39, no. 2 (2013): 447–63.
- Marwick, Arthur. *The Nature of History*. 3rd ed. London: Macmillan, 1989.
- McKay, Clare Elizabeth Ann. "A History of the National Union of South African Students, 1956–1970." D.Litt. et Phil dissertation, UNISA 2015.
- Parker, Geoffrey. *The Dutch Revolt*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977.
- Paulin-Campbell, Annemarie, and Puleng Matsaneng. "Evolving Approaches to Spiritual Direction in South Africa." *The Way* (July 2013): 7–22.
- Paulin-Campbell, Annemarie. "A Lay Foundation, a Shared Enterprise." *Review of Ignatian Spirituality* 104 (2003): 38.

- Ryan, Judy Ann. "An Examination of the Achievement of the Jesuit Order in South Africa, 1879–1934." MA thesis, Rhodes University, 1990.
- Smith, Tim. *They Are Killing Our Children*. Pietermaritzburg: Pietermaritzburg Agency for Christian Social Awareness, 1990.
- Tachard, Guy. *A Relation of the Voyage to Siam: Performed by Six Jesuits Sent by the French King, to the Indies and China in the Year 1685*. Bangkok: White Orchid Press, 1981 [1688].
- Tosh, John. *The Pursuit of History*. 2nd ed. London: Longmans, 1991.
- Walshe, Peter. *Church versus State in South Africa: The Case of the Christian Institute*. London: Hurst, 1983.
- Walshe, Peter. "Mission in a Repressive Society: The Christian Institute of Southern Africa." *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 5, no. 4 (October 1981): 146–52.
- Walshe, Peter. *Prophetic Christianity and the Liberation Movement in South Africa*. Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1995.