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# **Watchful Witnesses:**

A Study of the Crypt Memory and Witness Centre  
at St George's Cathedral and  
its *Bearing Witness* Exhibition Process

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This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment  
for the degree of Masters in Social Science in the  
Department of Social Anthropology University of Cape Town  
February 2011

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## ABSTRACT

### **Watchful Witnesses: A Study of the Crypt Memory and Witness Centre at St George's Cathedral and its *Bearing Witness* Exhibition Process**

The St. George's Cathedral Crypt Memory and Witness Centre, Cape Town, hosts exhibitions that echo the content of many post-apartheid South African museum exhibitions, commemorating moments of struggle against apartheid. The Crypt Centre's processes engage in discourse and practice of remembrance equally familiar to a post-apartheid landscape, notably the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). Museum spaces, however, are more often secular places that host exhibitions that frequently reflect narratives for nationalist interests. By contrast, the Crypt Centre is a *Christian*-based centre engaged in exhibition practice. Furthermore, although the discourse of remembrance was pervasive during the TRC from 1996 to 98, its weight and meaning differs fifteen years later. To what ends does a faith-based centre, engaged in familiar discourse and practice, apply museum modality?

This thesis examines four themes that surface through the Crypt Centre's activities towards its upcoming exhibition entitled *Bearing Witness*. The themes include the role of remembrance, bearing witness, the parameters of inclusions and exclusions, and the Crypt Centre's physical and symbolic significance. Multiple implications surface through the Crypt Centre's engagement with these themes, as surfaced through the *Bearing Witness* exhibition process.

The Crypt Centre's engagement with remembrance and exhibition modality legitimates the Cathedral in a contemporary context. This challenges the notion of a separation between public/secular and private/sacred domains and practices. The analysis reveals how the Crypt Centre's exhibition content, modality and engagement with remembrance and bearing witness is steeped in aspects of the practices and the socio-political history of the Cathedral. Using these normative practices and the socialisation role of museum modality, the Crypt Centre constructs inescapable analogies between past and contemporary concerns, such as inclusions of people and housing conditions. The Crypt Centre, located on the Cape Town civic spine and in the crypt of the Cathedral, is tactically positioned to function as a "capillary sphere" for deliberative activity in a context of uncertain citizenship. As a capillary sphere, the Crypt Centre offers a modality of contemporary citizenship, which it imagines as relevant within and beyond South Africa, characterised by inclusivity and watchful witness.

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Acknowledgments:

Thanks and gratitude to all those who have been involved in this research process. Many contributed towards it. Thanks to all those involved in the work of the Crypt Centre who have generously given their time and allowed me to pursue my research amidst their work. Particular thanks to Lynette Maart. Thanks to Carolyn Hamilton for her guidance, apt insights and helpful articulations. Thanks to those who gave input during Archive and Public Culture writing workshops and to the staff of the Department of Social Anthropology at the University of Cape Town for their long-term input into my academics. Thanks to my precious family and friends for their encouragement and support.

Financial support for this work was provided by funding from National Research Foundation and the Ford Foundation.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction

#### The “Cathedral Squatters” of 1982<sup>1</sup>

At dusk on 9<sup>th</sup> March 1982, fifty-seven<sup>2</sup> people arrived at the steps of St George's Cathedral, Cape Town. They explained to Dean Ted King that they had come to the Cathedral to fast and pray to draw attention to their plight. Classified as Africans<sup>3</sup> under the apartheid regime, they were not allowed to reside within Cape Town due to racialised segregation. For an extended period of time, they had been living illegally with others in the Nyanga Bush area, struggling against frequent demolitions of their make-do dwellings.<sup>4</sup> Dean King supported their fast, particularly as it coincided with the Cathedral's time of prayer and fasting before Easter. However, he did not initially understand that the fasters intended to fast until an agreement with the state was reached. A Quaker peace activist involved in organising the fast recalls that the idea was initially met with some resistance by some Cathedral wardens (Roberts 2009: 19). However, after discussion, the fasters were granted permission to stay.

Opera singer Sarita Stern, a Cathedral parishioner since the 1980s, was the Caring Officer of the Cathedral's crypt ministry at the time of their arrival. She took charge of caring for the visitors (S. Stern, personal communication, 6 July 2010). In the days that followed, Stern and other parishioners busied themselves with ensuring that the fourteen children who accompanied the fasting men and women were provided with food. Donations of supplies for the children streamed in. Medics responded to the event by doing daily check-ups. Local and international journalists came to interview, to take photographs and to take footage of what they termed “The Cathedral

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1 These descriptions are based on newspaper articles in *The Cape Town Argus* and *Cape Times* from March and April 1982.

2 Newspaper accounts record different numbers of people who fasted (55 to 58). Some people began the fast but did not stay for the whole duration. For sake of consistency, I refer to 57.

3 Throughout this thesis, any references to racial categories are reflective of articulations made by people and sources with whom I interacted. I refer to the terms to stay true to their expressions, not to allocate people within these categories myself.

4 Josette Cole, one of the facilitators of the *Bearing Witness* research process, explained that the fast was one of multiple strategies taken by the Nyanga Bush's “illegal” residents. She attributed the organisation of this strategy to Rommel Roberts (Cole 2010 personal communications). In an article of 31<sup>st</sup> March 1982 in *The Argus*, Rommel Roberts denies organising the fast. In his autobiographical account, he describes the involvement of Sue Conjwa and other community leaders in catalysing the event (Roberts 2009: 19).

Squatters.” Members of the Black Sash took statements from the fasters. Parliamentarian Helen Suzman visited them. Brian Bishop, a Catholic anti-apartheid activist, slept in another portion of the Cathedral for the duration of the fast.

Unwanted visitors entered the Cathedral too. Food was left in an attempt to tempt them to eat. Stink bombs were thrown. Verbal threats were made against them. Yet, the fifty-seven kept to their purpose: praying, singing, fasting and sleeping. Some went to hospital with bodies suffering from the lack of food. One was told by hospital staff that she would die if she did not eat. Another suffered a miscarriage, only to return to the fast.

Some of the group's leaders began negotiations with Piet Koornhof, Minister of Cooperation and Development, while the group continued in prayer and fasting. After twenty-four days, on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 1982, the fast ended. Koornhof granted the group temporary residence within Cape Town while their individual cases were reviewed, promising that they would be treated with compassion. The fifty-seven were relocated to Holy Cross Church in Nyanga where they fell under the care of Father Mfenyana. Many more family members joined them at Holy Cross Church, some residing in the limited supply of tents that were provided, while others stayed in the church hall. Koornhof's promise of three weeks for further negotiation was not kept: the group stayed at Holy Cross Church for 90 days. Although they gained immunity as temporary residents in Cape Town through the fast, the struggle of living against the apartheid regime continued.

### **Surfacing the Point of Inquiry**

In 2010, twenty-eight years after the fast, the Cathedral's Crypt Memory and Witness Centre (hereafter referred to as the Crypt Centre), a social justice ministry of the Anglican Cathedral Church of St George the Martyr (hereafter referred to as the Cathedral) in Cape Town, South Africa, began to gather material about the 1982 fast for an exhibition it plans to open in March 2011. Entitled *Bearing Witness*, the exhibition intends to contextualise and depict the experience of some of the fasters from 1982 and to use their plight as an entry point to consider “the ways the legacy of Crossroads<sup>5</sup> still haunts us in the form of our current housing crisis and racial spatial development

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<sup>5</sup> Initially, the Crypt Centre thought that the 1982 fast was part of the Crossroads forced removal struggles. This assumption was reflected in literature generated by the Crypt Centre that proposed an exhibit entitled “Bearing Witness - Crossroad Squatter Taking Sanctuary at St George's Cathedral in 1982” (Research Proposal 2010: 1).

patterns within the city” (Research Proposal 2010:4). The exhibition is an outworking of part of the Crypt Centre's vision, captured on the cover of its Concept Proposal and Development/Business Plan: “Interpreting our Heritage, Witnessing in our Present, Visioning our Future” (Concept Proposal 2008:1).

Exhibition practice is familiar in the contemporary South African landscape. Be it an exhibition on apartheid and its legacy at the Apartheid museum, on the process and impact of forced removals at community museums like the District Six museum, or demonstrating the experiences of political prisoners at the Robben Island museum, many post-apartheid museums commemorate the endurance and triumph of overcoming through the apartheid struggle. The Crypt Centre’s processes, such as story-telling sessions and individual interviews, engage in discourse and practice of remembrance and commemoration equally familiar to a post-apartheid landscape, notably the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).

Museum spaces, however, are more often secular places that host exhibitions that frequently reflect narratives for nationalist interests. By contrast, the Crypt Centre is a *Christian*-based centre engaged in exhibition practice. Furthermore, although the discourse of remembrance was pervasive during the TRC from 1996 to 98, its weight and meaning differs fifteen years later. To what ends does a faith-based centre, engaged in familiar discourse and practice, apply museum modality in a post- New South Africa context?<sup>6</sup>

This thesis examines four themes that surface through the Crypt Centre's activities towards its upcoming exhibition entitled *Bearing Witness*. The themes include the role of remembrance, bearing witness, the negotiating of inclusions and exclusions, and the Crypt Centre’s physical and symbolic position. These themes are explored as they surface in relation to the *Bearing Witness* exhibition process, and at times, in relation to the Crypt Centre's general practices. The exploration of the themes was guided by two queries: Why is the Crypt Centre, a faith-based social justice ministry, involved in hosting exhibitions and with what effects? Who constitutes the “our” in the Crypt Centre's plan to interpret heritage, witness the present and envision the future? Multiple

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However, as research began, it became clear that the 1982 fast preceded the Crossroads battle, although the struggles shared the underlying issue of influx control in apartheid South Africa. (Josette Cole plans to write a more in-depth synthesis of the complexities surrounding the forced removal struggles.)

<sup>6</sup> See Hamilton, C., Harris, V. and S Hatang (2010) for the context of the phrase post-new South Africa.

implications surface through the Crypt Centre's engagement with these themes.

I argue that the Crypt Centre's engagement with remembrance and exhibition modality legitimates the Cathedral in a contemporary context. This challenges the notion of a separation between public/secular and private/sacred domains and practices. The analysis reveals how the Crypt Centre's exhibition content, modality and engagement with bearing witness and remembrance is steeped in aspects of the practices and the socio-political history of the Cathedral. Using these normative practices and the socialisation role of museum modality, the Crypt Centre constructs inescapable analogies between past and contemporary concerns such as the issue of inclusion and exclusion of people in the city and housing conditions. The Crypt Centre, located on the Cape Town civic spine and in the crypt of the Cathedral, is tactically positioned to function as a “capillary sphere” for deliberative activity in a context of uncertain citizenship. As a capillary sphere, the Crypt Centre seeks to present a modality of contemporary citizenship characterised by intentional inclusivity and watchful witness. This modality, presented as if to engage in multiple publics (to be detailed in the chapters that follow), is modeled as if it has relevance beyond South Africa. That is, although emergent within the South African context, the modality is presented as if assumed to be relevant beyond its borders. However, the imagined publics may include more than those whom the Crypt Centre will reach in practice.

### **Contextualising my Presence and Methods of Research**

As is conventional to anthropological inquiry, my presence in relation to the research needs to be contextualised. I hesitate to say that my presence *in the field* needs to be contextualised, given the way in which this inquiry troubled normative notions of the field. In *Anthropological Locations* (1997) Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson define “the field” as a site, method and location and interrogate some of the historical, political and conceptual forces at play in its construction. A normative field is other than home and can be entered and exited (Gupta & Ferguson 1997: x).

Fiona Ross (2001) and Valentine Daniel (1996) describe their engagement with a research method of traveling ethnography, during which they followed and traced stories of interlocutors. Following stories dislocates the field from being site-based, bounded and static. Similarly, my research experience was not located at one site. It was not bounded, nor was it physically far or very “other” from the area which I have called home for the last five years. During research I travelled

from the Cathedral in the city centre to places including Hout Bay, Khayelitsha, Philipi, Old Crossroads, the UCT campus and to my laptop in Rosebank, following and encountering people and activities associated with the Crypt Centre's research process. Thus, the focal point of this study was not a place other than home. Instead, it focused on processes which drew together and excluded people across multiple places.

Normative notions assume that doing fieldwork involves “leaving commitments and responsibilities for the sake of 'untethered research interests'” involving deep immersion with participants in a place defined by “maximum cultural difference” (Gupta & Ferguson 1997:18). While doing fieldwork the anthropologist is expected to carefully negotiate a line between being recognised as an anthropologist and being confused as someone who has gone native. “Nativeness” is frequently assumed to be defined as sharing a similar background, such as a nationality, language or place of origin with subjects encountered during research, as well as sharing common values, ideas and assumptions with them.

Kirin Nayaran (1993) and Lanita Jacobs-Huey (2002) grapple with the concept of “nativeness” by reflecting on their experiences of pursuing anthropology in their own society. Nayaran explores the ambiguity and consequences of static distinctions between native and non-native identification, surfacing and challenging some of the normative assumptions of each (Nayaran 1993:671). She argues that people have multiplex subjectivities, contingent on the multiple communities to which they simultaneously belong. These shift constantly, creating affinities and distances during fieldwork (Nayaran 1993: 674- 676). Lanita Jacobs-Huey (2002) speaks of “gradations of endogeny” in fieldwork where endogeny is related to having authentic knowledge, originality and being native (Jacobs-Huey 2002: 792).

My research process required the negotiation of gradations of endogeny. As a Masters student in Social Anthropology, much of my exposure to research has been located in the university setting, as opposed to in the context of a faith-based centre working towards an exhibition. I began research with having had previous exposure to the broader Anglican Church. My family and I attended a local Anglican church during my childhood and, while my family and I lived in the United States, we attended a local Episcopalian church (the American equivalent to an Anglican church). This meant that I entered the Cathedral with a degree of familiarity. However, the broader Anglican Church is not a homogenous, static entity by any means. Thus, alongside the familiarity,

elements of the Cathedral's functioning were new to me. What was particularly different was that, whereas previously I had attended an Anglican church as a child who participated in congregational services, my engagement with the Cathedral involved attending committee meetings and activities outside of church services. All of these were new to me.

Although I am not a member of the Cathedral, I align myself with the basic belief that underpins the Christian faith, which also informs the Cathedral and its ministries. At heart, this is the belief that Christ, as God incarnate, is a historical figure who died and rose again after three days, conquering the power of death and sin through his death and resurrection.

Undoubtedly this shared belief shaped my research in ways for which I can account, and in ways in which I may be unawares. I am able to note the following. There were some practices in the services I attended with which I was familiar, such as prayer, partaking in communion and the liturgy used to shape the order of the service. Yet, even with these familiar aspects, an immediate difference was that the Cathedral conducted services with greater formality than that which I had previously experienced.

Fortuitously, a colleague of mine who is not Christian was engaged in research at an Anglican church in a nearby suburb at the same time during which I was engaged in research at the Cathedral. We met on multiple occasions and discussed our research. Her descriptions of what she experienced as new and unknown aspects in her engagement within an Anglican context gave me points of reference from which to consider how another, who is less familiar than I was with an Anglican context, might experience things. I took note of moments where I felt I could offer her explanations, as that indicated to me points of convergence in my beliefs and the broader Anglican church. However, much of these pertained to the reasons behind activities associated with services as opposed to activities pertaining to social justice ministries.

It is important to note that the main focus of my research was the Crypt Centre, a social justice ministry that is an extension of the Cathedral. This is not the equivalent of a service. Never had I encountered a centre based at a Cathedral that was involved in museum exhibition practice, nor did I begin research with an understanding of how a Christian-informed context might lead to envisioning such a centre. Thus, although I began research familiar with some Christian practices, the majority of the focus of my research was unfamiliar to me.

Furthermore, it is worth returning to the fact that my familiarity with an Anglican church

context was not the only thing with which I was familiar during my research process. Much of the fieldwork took place within a 25 minute circumference from my daily living space, and as I have previously mentioned, it included places which I inhabit regularly, such as the Cape Town CBD and the UCT campus. The absence of “maximum cultural difference” in my research led me to grapple with, critique, and reformulate my understanding of how “the field” in “fieldwork” is construed, a point to which I return shortly.

Far from this gradation of endogeny being detrimental, it enabled two things. It helped to facilitate the establishment of trust amongst the people from the Cathedral with whom I engaged. Furthermore, it enabled me to perceive nuances and insights into particularities as to the vision and activities pertaining to the Crypt Centre, for I brought points of comparison of other social justice ministries from other church contexts.

Although there may be concern that this degree of familiarity may have placed me in a position where I felt inhibited to mention things for fear of betraying trust, as I reflect on my research I am not aware of any particular instance of constraint. The people associated with the Cathedral with whom I worked were aware that I was not part of the Cathedral and were supportive of my pursuing my research to the ends to which I saw fit.

Those with whom I interacted during the research process were from multiple and varied backgrounds in relation to mine. They included clergymen, committee members, researchers, research participants and Cathedral parishioners and others who were not part of the Cathedral. Some were from South Africa, others from overseas; English was the first language of some and isiXhosa the primary language of others. Some identified themselves as Christian, others did not account for their spiritual standing. Amongst them were at least one Muslim and one sangoma. Some had first-hand knowledge of being discriminated against under apartheid or of taking active measures to oppose it. Other participants, like me, were not old enough to have first-hand memory of the regime. While the intensity of many relationships peaked between June and September 2010, I continue to maintain contact with some of the people as I write this thesis.

To gain understanding of the Crypt Centre's activities, I examined multiple objects of study including the Cathedral, the Crypt Centre and archival documents associated with them, as well as the Crypt Centre's research process. I attended Sunday morning and evening services at the Cathedral as well as some during the week. I attended Crypt Centre committee meetings, meetings

associated with the *Bearing Witness* exhibition process and other activities instigated by the Crypt Centre, such as a fundraising event. I helped to organise some of the Crypt Centre's archival material, located research participants and helped the Crypt Centre to organise multiple story-telling days with the *Bearing Witness* research participants (hereafter referred to as participants). I interviewed people involved in envisioning the Crypt Centre, some of the Crypt Centre's Educational Officers who ran the Crypt Centre space on a daily basis, as well as individuals who were involved in the 1982 fast. The focus of my interviews was to gain insight as to people's involvement with the Cathedral and the work of the Crypt Centre in 2010.

The *Bearing Witness* exhibition is the second exhibition hosted by the Crypt Centre. The first (which is detailed more in Chapter 5 and 6) was hosted temporarily at the back of the Cathedral before being moved to the permanent space in the crypt. The Crypt Centre was officially opened during my time of research in May 2010. Thus, much of my research coincided with the pioneering stage of establishing the Crypt Centre. This phase was characterised by experimenting and “finding one's feet.” This undoubtedly shaped my research experience. Furthermore, my research period terminated prior to the completion of the *Bearing Witness* research process. Consequently, some elements of the Crypt Centre's research process remain incomplete as I write this thesis.

Given the varied locations, activities and gradations of edogeny, based on the physical proximity to my daily living space and some experiential familiarity which I negotiated during research and have described here, the question of what constituted “the field” increasingly seemed to be less about a physical site and more about a particular way of orienting myself in relation to people and objects that I encountered. Rather than the field being something I entered into, it was more a matter of recognising its presence around me. Thus, to speak of “the field” as an “it” became difficult. “It” was not a locality distinct from me, but was construed at the intersection of sets of relations shaped by the Crypt Centre's activities, which I navigated and maintained. Conceptually, emotionally and physically, the construal constantly shifted, and shifts, in immediacy and distance in my mind and physical environment. At no point can I exit the field in the physical sense, although its closeness and distance varied, and varies, in my thoughts.

Rather than defining the field and fieldwork as grounded in a physical location, site, or as a methodological practice, fieldwork emerged as a perceptual mode of being; it became more a matter of *thinking* anthropologically as opposed to going somewhere to *do* anthropology. In practice, this

meant frequently asking myself “why, how, who, when, where” in regards to sets of relationships shaped by the Crypt Centre, including and between its associated activities and people.

Furthermore, in the footprints of Horace Miner (1956), the process involved de-familiarising the familiar. It meant being present to moments as well as being reflective about them and reflexive during them, paying heightened attention to practices and listening closely to discourses in my surroundings.<sup>7</sup> All this had the potential to inform my research process, and the basis for the argument to follow.

### **Thesis Structure**

The Crypt Centre’s Concept Proposal articulates the Crypt Centre’s aim to focus on three themes: (i) the Cathedral in relation to the City; (ii) Witness and Protest and (iii) the relationship between Church and State (Concept Proposal 2008: 7). In order to examine the Crypt Centre’s approach towards remembrance, bearing witness, the negotiations of inclusions and exclusions, and its tactical position, this thesis moves in parts. It examines the Cathedral and Crypt Centre in relation to remembrance, witness, the city and the state, as surfaced in the context of the *Bearing Witness* research process. Throughout these examinations, I indicate the ways in which the normative practices that inform the Crypt Centre provide a counterpoint to the notion of there being a separation between public and private, secular and sacred domains.

Given the centrality of the exhibition process and the discourse of bearing witness in the Crypt Centre’s vision and activities, Chapter Two provides a theoretical overview of the role of exhibitions and a brief reflection on the concept of bearing witness. This provides the reader with a point of departure from which to examine the chapters that follow.

Chapter Three considers how the Crypt Centre engages with remembrance and exhibition modality by focusing on activities pertaining to the *Bearing Witness* research process. By attending mainly to conversation and activities that took place within story-telling sessions, this chapter begins to explore the complexity of who is included or excluded in the “our” to which the Crypt Centre refers in its proposal.

Further understanding of the constitution of the “our” is gained in Chapter Four, where the

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<sup>7</sup> Unless otherwise stated, quotations are reconstructed based on detailed fieldnotes.

relationship between the Cathedral and South Africa's socio-political history is considered. The chapter reveals how the vision of the Crypt Centre retrospectively draws upon the Cathedral's past to inform its contemporary remembrance practices.

Chapter Five continues to demonstrate the significance of the location of the Crypt Centre, both physically and symbolically. It reveals how, by tactically using museum modality, the Crypt Centre works towards providing contemporary civic legitimacy for the Cathedral.

Chapter Six extends the examination of the Crypt Centre's significance by examining the multiple registers of bearing witness present in the space. This examination demonstrates how the registers align with and deviate from expectations of bearing witness in democratic spaces.

The inquiry is concluded in Chapter Seven. After a brief review of the contents of the preceding chapters, it turns to consider the implications of the Crypt Centre's positioning and practices of remembrance, bearing witness and parameters of inclusion and exclusion in relation to uncertainties about citizenship. It reflects on how, although the imagined areas of address may include more than what is reached in practice, the Crypt Centre presents a modality of citizenship emergent in South Africa that is assumed to be relevant to multiple publics, within and beyond South Africa. The modality presented by the Crypt Centre is constituted by intentional inclusivity and watchful witness.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Literature Review

*This chapter has three parts. It presents a theoretical framework of the role of exhibitions, providing a point of departure from which to consider the activities of a faith-based centre engaged in exhibiting. It briefly examines some of the debates surrounding the concept of witnessing, given its prominence as a theme in the Crypt Centre. The chapter considers some of the implications of the role of exhibitions and the concept of bearing witness in relation to questions of citizenship and deliberative activity in a democratic context. This seeks to orient the reader for the argument that ensues in forthcoming chapters.*

#### **Exhibiting and the Divides**

Frequently, an exhibition is hosted in a museum, which the International Council of Museums (ICOM) defines as a “non-profit making, permanent institution in the service of society and of its development, and open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits, for purposes of study, education and enjoyment, material evidence of people and their environment” (ICOM 2010:np). Tony Bennett (1995) explores the formation of the modern museum, with the aim of providing a “politically focused genealogy for the modern public museum” (Bennett 1995: 5). Bennett distinguishes between public museums and other cultural institutions such as world fairs, which were also present in the nineteenth century. Although these institutions shared the intention to show and tell, as well as a concern to regulate conduct of the visitors and the performativity of particular spaces, Bennett argues that a double differentiation distinguished nineteenth century museums from these institutions. Pre-modern museums, like curio cases and exhibition fairs, were characterised by chaos and “irrational” disorder that sought to surprise and provoke, displaying rare wonders. The modern museum emerged in opposition to these displays, characterised as rational, scientific spaces marked by classification and typicality (Bennett 1995: 1, 2, 6). What emerges from both the ICOM's definition and Bennett's examination is the sociality of museum exhibition spaces. This is demonstrated by the fact that museums are “for the service of society.” They host exhibitions with the expectation that people will attend them.

Bennett identifies how attitudes that informed exhibitions changed over time, attributing them to shifts in governing principles in relation to museums. He describes late eighteenth century

and early nineteenth century states as using the family as a model to govern, where public museum exhibitions were a means to target subordinate social classes with the intention to improve and transform their behaviour (Bennett 1995: 18, 19). By the mid to late nineteenth century public museums intended to civilise the whole population. By applying a Foucauldian analysis, Bennett argues that the emergence of modern public museums was linked to the formation of liberal governments. They provided a means of exercising new forms of power by inscribing self-regulation capacities. They fulfilled a socialisation role.

Ivan Karp (1992) also discusses the sociality of museum exhibition spaces. Putting aside the bounded and largely homogenous references to culture, identity, social and community used by Karp, what surfaces through his argument is that museums are places that define “who people are and how they should act” as well as being places to challenge these definitions (Karp 1992: 4). Karp refers to Antonio Gramsci's distinction between political and civil society. By contrast to political society using coercion and control, Gramsci argues that civil society “creates hegemony through the production of cultural and moral systems that legitimate the existing social order” (Karp 1992: 4). Karp argues that by the 1990s, civil society was expressed in museums, which acted as places that produced and contested hegemony (Karp 1992: 4).

Underlying Karp's and Bennett's descriptions is a separation between public and private domains, and an implicit distinction between secularised and sacred spaces. This type of dichotomy harks back to the Enlightenment era and continues to influence contemporary ways of organising ideas. In “Science as Vocation” Max Weber (1946) explored the role and relevance of science within the academic realm of early twentieth century Germany. He argues that the advent of science resulted in a social context characterised by the absence of religious belief, based on the presumption that it is possible to explain all things according to scientific principles. The effect of this reductionism is demystification and social disenchantment (Weber 1946: 7). Weber argues that “precisely the ultimate and most sublime values have retreated from public life either into the transcendental realm of mystic life or into the brotherliness of direct and personal human relations” (Weber 1946:18).

Through his argument, Weber set up a distinction between public and private practices and between secular and sacred spaces. Weber attributes “the ultimate and most sublime values” (e.g. faith-based beliefs) to the private domain, inadvertently secularising public expressions of sociality. Karp's and Bennett's focus on the socialisation role of museum exhibition spaces reinforces the dichotomies, depicted in Table 1.0.

Table 1.0 Public-Private Divides

Public	Private
Secular Museums/exhibitions Citizenry	Sacred Personal beliefs Enchantment/myth Sublime beliefs The transcendent

Although Karp's and Bennett's discussions of museum exhibition spaces demonstrate the pertinence of the modality in shaping sociality, neither consider the possibility of a faith-based centre engaged in public museum exhibition modality. In part, this thesis examines what has been excluded from the focus of their lens: to what end does the Crypt Centre, as a social justice ministry of the Cathedral, draw upon museum exhibition modality?

### **Bearing Witness**

Of particular salience to the Crypt Centre is the theme of witnessing: the vision of the Crypt Centre speaks of witnessing, a main theme is Witness and Protest, the forthcoming exhibition is entitled *Bearing Witness*. Although I will return to the theme of bearing witness in more detail in forthcoming chapters, below is a brief overview of some points of deliberations that surround the idea of witness.

The Collins English Dictionary (1986) defines "to bear witness" as "to give written or oral testimony; to be evidence or proof of", where a witness is "a person or thing giving or serving as evidence" (CED 1986: 1743). Aldeida Assman (2006) describes different types of witnessing. She asserts that in dramatic performances, witnessing refers to things done "in the name of those no longer able to speak for themselves" (Assman 2006: 286). Juridical witnessing, or *testis*, involves giving account on behalf of another. In this context, the witness is expected to recount what s/he remembers about an event. This judicial context is referred to also in the Christian scriptures: the Bible warns one to not bear false witness against one's neighbour (Exodus 20:16; Matthew 19:18). Assman draws a connection between religious contexts and bearing witness in the exceptional case of martyrdom, arguing that martyrs who exalt their faith till death rely on others to bear witness to their suffering and to code the story of their faith to be told to future generations (Assman 2006: 268).

Like Assman, in *Remnants of Auschwitz: the Witness and the Archive* (2002) Giorgio Agamben highlights the link between witness and martyrdom, noting that the word “martyr” derives from the Greek *martus*, meaning “one who bears witness” (Agamben 2002:26). Whereas Agamben acknowledges that martyrdom is a means of bearing witness, or of giving meaning to one's faith, it is not the focus of his examination. Agamben grapples with the question of what makes an authentic witness. By examining the position occupied by World War Two holocaust survivors, he asks who and how survivors can authentically bear witness to the holocaust. How does one convey what is assumed to be unspeakable, and how does one authentically bear witness to the experience of death, when surviving implies that one did not experience death oneself?

In addition to the questions raised by Agamben, bearing witness has particular salience in a post-apartheid South African context. Some aspects pertaining to the South African context will be examined more thoroughly in Chapter Three. This section intended to alert the reader to an aspect of bearing witness which persists amidst deliberations in many contexts: its relationship with remembrance. Agamben articulates: “The concept of 'witnessing' and 'martyrdom' can be linked in two ways. The first concerns the Greek term itself, derived as it is from the verb meaning 'to remember'” (Agamben 2002:24). Practices of remembrance are interlinked with bearing witness. The interlinking of the two will be a key aspect of the examination in the chapters following.

## **Citizenship**

I began this research aware of the need for a theoretical background that focused on the role of exhibitions and bearing witness, given that they were overtly presented as themes at the beginning of the research. However, as we shall see, the research and my analysis of the material began to reveal a project of actively building citizenship within the Crypt Centre's activities. This led me to explore aspects of literature on citizenship. The following examines the interrelation between exhibition modality, bearing witness, public deliberation and citizenship. This provides a framework in which to consider their convergence in the Crypt Centre.

Citizenship is a slippery concept, polyvalent at times and contradictory at others. It is linked to ideas of civility, civil society, autochthony and democracy (Jean and Jean Comaroff 1999; Bettina van Lieres and Steven Robins 2008; Robins, Cornwall and van Lieres 2008; Thomas Hansen and Finn Stepputat 2006). “Citizenship”, as defined in the Collins English Dictionary (1986), denotes “the condition or status of a citizen, with its rights and duties,” where a citizen is defined as “a native registered or naturalised member of a state, nation, or other political community; an

inhabitant of a city or town; a native or inhabitant of any place” (CED 1986: 290). The assumed stable nature of a relationship between an individual and another entity with rights, duties and responsibilities assigned to each party in the relationship, can be deceiving.

At times citizenship is considered to be multiple: civic, ethnic and cultural (Nyamnjoh 2010: 1-6). The idea of it being a relationship between a subject and state becomes increasingly complex – or ambiguous – in a context with a heightened awareness of globalisation. As national boundaries are perceived to be increasingly blurred and as concern rises that the state is weakening, some argue that the significance of identifying state-based citizenship decreases. Others argue that it increases the obsession with state-based inclusion (Begoña Arextaga 2003; Ceuppens and Geschiere 2005). Despite all of its ambiguities, a persistent theme that accompanies the concept of citizenship is that it grapples with the attempt to define forms, modalities and boundaries of inclusion and exclusion. Whether it is belonging to specific piece of land, a state or a cultural identity, the notion of citizenship grapples with the attribution of rights and responsibilities to those deemed as included.

### **Contemporary Deliberations**

The Crypt Centre's Research Proposal (2010) for the *Bearing Witness* project raises questions about citizenship on a national level. It argues that fundamentally the fast of 1982 was an issue about how to manage influx control, “and more profoundly, about the right to live, work and move freely” (Research Proposal 2010: 2). The argument is developed by acknowledging that influx control is a contemporary global concern. Recognising the changes in demographic make-up globally, the proposal asks “What, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, does it mean to be French? German? British?” before drawing parallels between European states and the South African context. Arguing that “South Africa stands as one of the rare countries that grapples both with an exodus of citizens and an in pouring of immigrants” it reflects, “Perhaps we must also ask ourselves: what does it mean to be South African?” (Research proposal 2010:3). Although the Research Proposal is not clear as to who constitutes the “we” behind the question, the question alerts the reader to the Crypt Centre’s grappling with citizenship in a democratic context. In addition, by posing these questions it is as if the Crypt Centre begins to position itself as a place for public deliberation. This positioning raises the question as to whom the Crypt Centre imagines engaging in deliberative activity. The query is of particular interest in the context of a Cathedral, where inclusion and exclusion as members is contingent on adhering to shared beliefs. However, as the following chapters explore, the Crypt Centre imagines itself as engaging beyond the reach of solely Cathedral members to include

multiple publics in intentional, broad and inclusive engagement. The implications of how the Crypt Centre grapples with citizenship, as well as the limits of its imagined publics as a faith-based institution positioning itself as a place for public deliberation will be explored in the chapters that follow. The following locates this exploration in a theoretical and academic context.

In “Uncertain Citizenship and Public Deliberation in post-apartheid South Africa” Carolyn Hamilton (2009) recognises a disorientation of contemporary citizenship in South Africa, which resonates with what the Crypt Centre expresses in its proposal. Hamilton wrestles with some of the possibilities, limits and constraints of the idea(l) of the public sphere within the post-apartheid South African context. She describes this context as one grappling with the complexity of understanding that, while public engagement and an accountable government are foundational values in the South African constitution, there exist “enormous social inequality and significant cultural diversity” that may inhibit the implementation of these values (2009: 357).

Hamilton examines the perception that sites of public deliberation, or places of active dialogue and critique, are restrictive and corralled, even with the presence of counter and subaltern public spheres (2009: 365). She describes the emergence of other forms of deliberation, or capillaries of public spaces, outside of the formally recognised sphere. These include literature, film, articles and aesthetics (2009: 366). Hamilton acknowledges the need for citizens to engage in active deliberation while noting the uncertainty as to who constitutes an authentic citizen in contemporary South Africa.

Similarly to Hamilton, in “Arriving Home? South Africa Beyond Transition and Reconciliation” (2010a) and in his thought-piece “Suspect Reconciliation!” (2010b) written for the 2010 Nelson Mandela lecture, Njabulo Ndebele reflects on contemporary South Africa, the state of its citizenry, and more implicitly, the need for public deliberation. In a country “still in the process of being created” he describes the contemporary context as one in which there is a weighing up of the “costs of uncritical solidarities of the last 16 years” (2010b: 3). He speaks of resilience factors which he is concerned could unintentionally result in South Africa being in a permanent state of transition, given the factors’ resistance to change (2010a: 59). What emerges in Ndebele’s descriptions is the need for reflection and the offering of some imaginings of what a democratic South Africa could work towards.

Ndebele argues for greater reflectivity in a democratic state that is not only capable of meeting basic needs but also facilitates citizen emancipation (2010a: 57, 58). Like Hamilton, he imagines citizenship in post-1994 South Africa to be characterised by rigorous questioning in a

context where doors for dialogue and reflection are kept open (2010b: 3,4). In particular, he describes citizens of South Africa as newly enfranchised, opposed to previously being viewed and treated as objects during apartheid. He argues for the need for South Africans to avoid “the risk of being permanent second-class citizens subordinate to their own dreams” (2010a: 75). Democracy, as Ndebele imagines within this post-reconciliation South Africa, is characterised by individuals with public conscience engaged in a public space that move beyond the “postures of a politics habituated by struggle” (2010a: 75).

Hamilton's and Ndebele's pieces relate to the Crypt Centre's proposal in two ways. They grapple with what it means to be a citizen of South Africa on a level of practice. Hamilton and Ndebele consider a number of expectations of citizenship in the democratic South African context. They recognise that South Africans need to reorient themselves from being objects engaging in “politics habituated by struggle” towards being subjects that reckon with and shape the reality of current circumstances in South Africa as enfranchised citizens. They imagine citizens as conscientious, politically engaged people. Furthermore, both Hamilton and Ndebele are advocates for spaces of public deliberation characterised by dialogue, reflection and critique, in a democracy.

Stephanie Burkhalter et al. (2002) critique the fact that although the concept of public deliberation is frequently utilised, it lacks a consistently used definition (2002: 399). In their review of its varied uses, they distill the following as common elements associated with the concept of public deliberation: public deliberation involves carefully weighing relevant information after adequate discussion and consideration has been given to varied perspectives. It involves the understanding of different interests and experiences, bearing witness and personal testimony. It acknowledges that a range of solutions are to be incorporated, and that solutions ought to fall within a broadly shared criteria (2002: 402-403). Burkhalter et al. note that the contents of the deliberation can either be focused on policy, collective action, or a cultural or moral conflict, where a policy solution may not be needed or appropriate (2002: 401,405).

Although similarly grappling with notions related to public deliberation, neither Hamilton nor Ndebele refer to faith-based centres as examples of being a part of the public sphere or as being a capillary space engaged in deliberation. It can seem counterintuitive to consider the Crypt Centre, as an extension of the Cathedral, as engaging in public deliberation if one considers Weber's assumed distinction between public and private spaces. Nevertheless, this research seeks to consider in what ways the Crypt Centre, through its vision, the questions it poses, exhibition content, and the activities in which it participates, positions itself to engage in what Burkhalter et. al, Hamilton and

Ndebele describe as characteristic of deliberative activity.

### **Memory and Witnessing Citizenry**

Peg Birmingham (2008), writing from the philosophy department of DePaul University in Chicago with a background in political thought, ethics and feminist theory, offers an additional expectation of democratic spaces and citizenship to those described by Hamilton and Ndebele (DePaul 2008: np). Birmingham considers Claude Lefort's description of a democratic space as a "contested space of power, knowledge and law" in comparison with totalitarianism, which claims truth and embodies the law (2008: 198-99). Birmingham engages closely with Hannah Arendt's argument that in contrast to totalitarianism, which is based on a lie ("lying the truth"), democratic public space needs factual truth (2008: 199). Building on her engagement with Arendt's explorations, Birmingham argues that the factual truth that emerges through testimony of witness is fundamental to democracy (2008: 211). The practice of bearing witness, she argues, gives voice to the unheard in public spaces, recalls evidence of events and breaks the passive spectatorship of viewers (2008: 210-215). This makes bearing witness, as a way to give meaning, a fundamental task of democracy.

Like Hamilton and Ndebele, Birmingham imagines democracy to be constituted by active participants in spaces of public deliberation. If Birmingham's argument stands, then one would expect that an exhibition entitled *Bearing Witness* would exemplify contemporary democratic engagement. However, Birmingham's implicitly secularist perspective leaves no room to consider the role of a faith-based centre engaged in this task. Furthermore, by arguing that bearing witness is a fundamentally democratic task, she does not consider whether it can be practiced in other contexts. The present research considers multiple registers of bearing witness and remembrance that surface in the context of the Crypt Centre's activities which trouble both of these omissions.

Interlinked to bearing witness, as previously mentioned, is remembrance of the past. Valentine Daniel (1996) considers the pertinence of remembrance in forming, and informing, citizenship. He argues that there are two orientations that one can have towards the past: either that the past offers a way of seeing or a way of being. Modern historic discourses present a way to see the world through an epistemology focused on "what really happened." Frequently, this type of epistemology informs nationalistic discourses, reflecting the founding of a state and inadvertently, the belonging and extent of inclusion of its citizens. By contrast, mythic pasts – which Daniel refers to as heritage – are constituted by contemporaneous past actualities, grounded in an ontological way

of knowing or being (Daniel 1996: 42-50). Ontological orientations can be drawn from systems of belief, like Hinduism for example. They are not necessarily linked to historic nationalistic epistemologies.

By hosting exhibitions, the Crypt Centre depicts “what really happened”. Rather than this intentionally informing hegemonic national discourse, the exhibitions are hosted as part of a faith-based social justice ministry, which is informed by Christianity's ontological orientation. This research explores the relationship between the two distinctions Daniel describes in relation to multiple registers of remembrance and questions of citizenship that surface in the Crypt Centre.

### **Exhibiting Citizenship**

Zine Magubane's (2004) work provides a helpful illustration of the relationship between exhibitions and establishing citizenship. She examines the role and impact of exhibitions on British citizenry. By exploring the relationship between ethnographic exhibitions of colonised subjects and perceptions of paupers within colonial England, Magubane demonstrates the conceptual conflation at play. Exhibits that represented colonised subjects, like the Khoisan, as savage nomads, provided a “familiar grammar and vocabulary” which was then inscribed upon the urban poor of England (Magubane 2004:48). In particular, she traces how the association between nomadism and low productivity, which were assumed characteristics of the Khoisan, became citations to reference when representing British vagrants (Magubane 2004: 49). Magubane draws out the political salience of these (misrepresented) conflations, describing how the ethnographic exhibits precipitated a cognitive shift in English public life with lived effects, such as influencing domestic social debates surrounding The New Poor Laws of 1834 (Magubane 2004: 47, 52). Although not focused on the concept of bearing witness, her example provides a means by which to consider what analogies may be drawn in the Crypt Centre's exhibition practices, and with what possible effects.

### **Conclusion**

Bennett and Karp argue that museum exhibition spaces play a socialisation role. Magubane demonstrates how exhibitions can shape citizenry by setting up analogies based on familiar grammars and vocabularies. Underlying their assertions is a distinction between what constitutes public, secular and private, sacred domains. As a faith-based centre tactically engaged in museum activities, the Crypt Centre unsettles this separation. The details of the ways in which this happens

are explored in the chapters to follow.

The concept of bearing witness, interlinked with remembrance, has judicial and religious connotations. Birmingham and Daniel describe the significance of bearing witness and remembrance in informing citizenship. Queries about citizenship and its relation to deliberative activity are articulated in the Crypt Centre's Research Proposal, as well as in Hamilton's and Ndebele's contemplations about citizenship in South Africa. The following chapters explore how the Crypt Centre grapples with multiple registers of bearing witness, remembrance and the parameters of inclusions and exclusions. This provides a means by which to consider how it seeks to present a modality of citizenship which, although not accessible to all, it assumes relevant within and beyond South Africa.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Resonance of Whose Remembrance?

*The Bearing Witness exhibition is one of many activities in which the Crypt Centre is engaged. This chapter focuses on two themes after briefly describing some of the activities pertaining to the Bearing Witness exhibition process. It attends to registers of remembrance that are at work in the process, demonstrating the convergence of a familiar discourse of remembrance in the post-apartheid landscape with a grammar that troubles a separation between public, secular and private, sacred domains. By dwelling on shifting identifications of inclusion and exclusion that are constantly negotiated in the research process, the chapter begins to explore the constitution of the “our” to which the Crypt Centre refers, revealing the expectant breadth of its inclusion. This is further examined in Chapter Four.*

#### An Overview

Between March and November 2010, the *Bearing Witness* research process included multiple activities that involved some Cathedral parishioners as well as many other people. In brief, the process began with some Crypt Committee members<sup>8</sup> and international and South African students searching newspapers and other archived material to construct a skeletal understanding of the broader context of the 1982 fast. Students interviewed some clergymen and other people linked to the Cathedral who recalled or were involved in the fast in different ways. After establishing the whereabouts of about 15<sup>9</sup> of the fasters, three taped and videoed story-telling days were held with them. Two were held at the Cathedral, the third at Holy Cross Church in Nyanga. These story-telling days were followed by individual life history interviews with the fasters.

As of November 2010, the videos from the story-telling days and interviews were to be transcribed and translated. A cohesive narrative account that synthesized all the gathered material was to be drafted prior to holding a fourth story-telling day in early 2011. Researchers sought to secure photographs and BBC footage from the 1982 fast. These will be displayed in the 2011

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8 The Crypt committee consists of thirteen volunteers. One is not a member of the Cathedral, although she attends another Anglican church in Cape Town. The two key Committee members involved in the *Bearing Witness* project are Lynette Maart and Fr. Terry Lester. During some story-telling sessions, Desire Martin, a third Committee member, helped facilitate the photography.

9 The whereabouts of thirty-seven out of fifty-seven fasters was established. Of these, thirteen were deceased, and fifteen were invited to participate. (Some reside in the Eastern Cape and, given limited resources and time, their exact whereabouts were not established.) Although attendance was high, the number of participants varied on story-telling days. Some of the participants invited others by their own initiative, while others were unable to attend.

exhibition. A discussion with theologians and academics about the concept of bearing witness is planned for early 2011. The intention is that this will help inform the structure of the final exhibition, embedding it in a theoretical framework of bearing witness.<sup>10</sup> A longer-term goal is to host a traveling exhibition of the Bearing Witness material.

### **Story-telling Days: Who are We?**

Attending to particular comments and observations made by clergymen and research participants during two of three<sup>11</sup> story-telling days begins to surface the significance and discourse of remembrance and the shifting parameters of inclusion and exclusion at play in the *Bearing Witness* research process.

The tables in the hall of the Cathedral where the story-telling sessions were held formed a big rectangle. As participants entered, they seated themselves around it, forming a U. Facing the participants in a row that completed the U sat Father Terry Lester, the story-telling facilitators Lynette Maart and Josette Cole, Sindiswa Nunu (who helped to translate) and another Masters student from UCT. I paused momentarily before choosing where to sit. I was not a story-telling participant. Neither was I a representative of the Cathedral or Crypt Centre. I sat myself in the corner of the rectangle, between the Crypt Centre representatives and the participants.

Fr Lester, the sub-dean of the Cathedral and Chair of the Crypt Centre, stood and welcomed participants at the first story-telling day. He read from Isaiah 61 in the Bible, which Christians interpret to be speaking prophetically of Jesus' coming to bring good news to the poor, to bind up the brokenhearted and to proclaim liberty to the captives. Fr Lester spoke of the day as being a time to give back "to what others have taken. That's the hope for today. We are in a different place today but for some, the pain is still there. There is a story to tell – of faith, of our belief that God will restore fortunes, because He sees the plight. He's brought us from a place of chaos to peace. You believed that God will bring you through and He has. The Crypt Cathedral is about having a place

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<sup>10</sup> Although the 1982 fast is the main focus of the Bearing Witness exhibit, simultaneously the Crypt Centre has been involved in facilitating the exhibition of another research project on St John's Waterkant, a church that was deconsecrated in 1970 and later sold (see St John 2010: np). The Crypt Centre is exploring the synergy between the St John's Waterkant exhibit and the exhibit of the 1982 fast to see whether it can be a part of the Bearing Witness theme.

<sup>11</sup> I limit my focus to two of the three days for practical reasons. The third story-telling day, based at Holy Cross Church in Nyanga, lacked some of the facilities and resources available at the Cathedral. In addition, one of the facilitators was ill and one person was trying to be both a photographer and video man. The result was that I spent most of my time preparing food, photographing and helping where I was needed. It meant that I had less opportunity to be attentive to some of the other dynamics which would have provided a point of comparison with the previous two days.

that shows that faith works, that God works. He doesn't sleep.” Fr Lester encouraged research participants to “tell the story of a God who works. It's good to know the stories of Tata Mandela and Tata Tutu but it's also good to hear about ordinary people, ordinary faith, to encourage others. Some may have regrets of not being where we want to be. This story tells us where we want to go too.”

After his welcome, Maart gave background information about the Crypt Centre. She and Cole spent time explaining the purpose of the *Bearing Witness* project. Participants were given Consent Forms, which they were asked to sign. Written in English, these were translated verbally into isiXhosa. While this and other administrative issues were being addressed, one of the participants asked for throat lozenges. He explained that as elderly men and women their throats often troubled them. Soon bowls with mint lozenges were provided.

The story-telling sessions were structured with two tea breaks and a lunch break, during which participants were served food in Cafe St George, located in part of the Cathedral's crypt. When the hosts realised that one participant was diabetic, accommodations were made. After the first tea at the first story-telling day, participants were invited to walk around the Cathedral and indicate where and what events they recalled in places around and inside the Cathedral. One participant, Dorothy Malibeni, reenacted how she fainted from fatigue near the steps leading to the toilets in the crypt which they were allowed to use. Another participant pointed to the area where they found a piece of fish, put there by an antagonist wanting to tempt them to break their fast. Another woman showed us how they received communion at worship services that were held during the fast.

Although Fr Lester left partway through to attend to other duties, he returned at the end of the day. Sensitive to the fact that feelings could have been stirred with the mentioning of names and events from the past, he encouraged participants to “Be gentle with yourself” and to “Calm down in your hearts.” At the end of the first session, Fr Lester invited us to stand and join hands before leading us in collective prayer.

Bishop Anthony opened the second session by reading from the Bible before praying. Following this, the two story-telling facilitators, Cole and Maart, clarified some of the information that participants had shared at the first story-telling day. One of the questions pertained to a song which the participants found particularly inspiring at the time of the fast. After the participants sang the song and explained its significance, Bishop Anthony described the ability of songs to lift one's spirits. He interjected: “We sing in all circumstances. It's a gift God has given to black people. We

sing when we're happy, sing when we're very sad, sing to speed up work, and sing to slow down work. Song is what keeps us going.” Kate Ncisana, one of the research participants who sat close to me, added that it is African to express oneself with song.

Fr Mfenyana, who had taken care of the fifty-seven fasters and their families at Holy Cross Church in Nyanga, came partway through the second story-telling day with his wife. Now retired, they attend the Cathedral as parishioners. Fr Mfenyana had been invited to attend and help translate during the second story-telling day. The couple's arrival was met with waves and salutations. Ncisana leaned over towards me to say, “This is our Father.” Soon after his arrival, Fr Mfenyana commented that “This is a chance to tell those in authority how things happen. It is part of the healing process.”

Part of the second story-telling day was devoted to recalling the bodily experience of the fast. Whereas previously only a handful of research participants would answer questions, every participant shared about their bodily experience. Fr Mfenyana moved around the room, standing next to participants as they described their experiences in isiXhosa. First he listened, head cocked to one side, before translating their descriptions into English – often speaking in the first-person. Some of the participants stood too, as they described their experiences.

One participant spoke of reaching such physical fatigue that she could no longer lift her child to feed her. Another mentioned her fear of dying. A third commented on the significance of song in lifting their spirits, another of her adamant refusal to eat when she woke up in a hospital, despite the doctor telling her that her life was in danger. As participants recalled their experiences, we – the research facilitators and others that were present – listened closely to their accounts of suffering and strength. I was moved deeply by their accounts. Near the end of the day, I thanked the participants for sharing. As I left the room, one of the participants came up to me and said gently, “You mustn't worry about us.” At the end of the day, we stood and held hands while Fr Mfenyana prayed in English.

### **Healing Remembrance**

Multiple discourses and practices of remembrances were present in the duration of the story-telling sessions. One that is familiar to the South African context was the role of remembrance towards healing, encapsulated by Fr Mfenyana's comment that “This is a chance to tell those in authority how things happen. It is part of the healing process.” This expectation is supported by psychoanalytical discourse, which describes the significance of narrating remembrance particularly

in the context of trauma. Traumatic events, described as extraordinary in their ability to overwhelm, are characterised by being timeless and by disrupting the normal narrative of life. In *Trauma and Recovery*, Judith Herman (1997) describes how trauma is deeply imprinted as memory traces in vivid sensations and images, lacking verbal narration (Herman 1997:33-39). These memories can be relived with the same intensity as the original moment of trauma. Thus unwarranted remembrance can occur for people who have experienced trauma.

Psychoanalytical theory posits that to overcome the trauma, there is a need to narrate the contents of the remembrance. This understanding, which reflects Fr Mfenyana's notion that narration is part of the healing process, is reiterated by Chris van de Merwe and Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela (2007). Describing life as a narrative, they argue that trauma results in a loss of meaning as it disrupts one's life narrative (van de Merwe and Gobodo-Madikizela 2007: 1-7; see also Langer 1994; Robson 2001). To recount the trauma is a means through which one begins to reconstruct coherence and meaning. Similarly, Susan Brison (2000) argues that traumatic memories are passively endured and that narrating them is a means through which to begin to master the trauma as it shifts one from being the object of someone else's speech to regaining one's voice and own subjectivity (Brison 2000:39, 46, 47).

Alongside remembering the past towards individual healing is the value of collective recollection and narration (see Liem 2007; Alexander 2004; Smelser 2004). The 1996 South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), which held public hearings of apartheid abuses, worked within a psychoanalytical framework by using a discourse that promoted telling the truth as a means of healing, reconciliation and national unity. The TRC received criticism for using the psychoanalytical model to psychologise a nation, for causing re-traumatisation and for not delivering what was promised by the discourse it used (see Minow 1998: 329; see also Ross 2002). Nevertheless, the TRC and institutions that follow the process of remembrance towards healing, like that which is facilitated by the Khulumani Support Centre<sup>12</sup> and the 2010 *Human Rights Media Centre's* "Breaking the Silence: Aluta Continua" body mapping and story-telling exhibition, remain familiar features of the democratic South African landscape.

At the end of the first story-telling day, some participants acknowledged the sense of relief brought by the process of collectively sharing their story, which can be interpreted as at least

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<sup>12</sup> Khulumani Support Group is an organisation that was formed in 1995 in response to the need to support victims of apartheid (Khulumani Support Group 2010:np). Khulumani seeks to foster active citizenship amongst its 54 000 members (Khulumani Support Group 2011:np).

momentarily moving them towards healing and resolution. The value of narrating one's life story was made particularly visible during one participant's individual interviews. Maart spent two afternoons recording the life-story of one woman. The interview revealed compounded layers of trauma and loss that the woman had endured prior to the fast in 1982. It was after sharing her story during the individual interview that she had the courage to disclose details of it at the third story-telling session, reflective of her being in the process of gaining control over the trauma (see Greenwood (2010) for more detail).

### **Re-figuring Remembrance**

Not only did speaking and remembrance provide a means toward healing, but there was also a symbolic expression of healing in the activities of the story-telling days. By contrast to 1982, participants were freely allowed to enter the city for the story-telling sessions. Whereas previously participants entered the Cathedral and chose not to eat, now they could eat freely – and were catered for sensitively. Whereas during the 1982 fast the churchwardens had specific conditions that confined the fasters to a certain portion of the Cathedral, now participants were invited to move around the place as they wished in an effort to spark memories of the past. Whereas Malibeni had fainted from fatigue in 1982, her reenactment in 2010 was accompanied by her infectious laughter.

Alongside the familiar discourse and symbolic practices of the role of remembrance towards healing were other registers. Fr Mfenyana's comment of it being an opportunity to tell the truth spoke of a judicial element of remembrance, alluding to the role of remembrance in bearing witness. To this, Fr Lester added that remembering was a way to give back and a means to provide direction. These roles of remembrance resonate with other commemorative museums. For example, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Kigali Memorial Centre for the Rwandan Genocide and the South African Apartheid Museum,<sup>13</sup> are spaces enshrouded in the injunction to remember – or rather – to never forget.

Multiple reasons are provided as to the importance of not forgetting: remembrance honours those who fought, died, or were harmed through an event; remembrance allows one to learn from previous mistakes; remembrance provides direction for the future, as encapsulated in the words of the Johannesburg-based Apartheid Museum's website slogan: “A history forgotten is a future lost” (Apartheid Museum 2010:np). The comments made by Fr Lester and Fr Mfenyana resonate with

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<sup>13</sup> (See <http://www.ushmm.org>; <http://www.kigalimemorialcentre.org/old/index.htm>; <http://www.apartheidmuseum.org>)

these familiar grammars as to the role of remembrance known within commemorative exhibition spaces in the South African context, as well as further afield.

Converging with these registers was one less familiar to the exhibition modality. Fr Lester spoke of remembering the past as a means of providing examples of faith in action. The aliveness of remembrance has salience in the Christian context in which the Crypt Centre operates. Michael A. Signer (2001) argues that in Christianity and Judaism, communal remembrance through ritual reaffirms the faith-based community's identity in the present “by calling to mind images and words from the past” (Signer 2001: ix). Similarly, in the *Ethics of Memory* (2002), Margalit Avishai describes the normativity of the practice of remembrance in Christianity. He speaks of ritual remembrances as revivification, which brings the “dead to life in essence but not in form” (Avishai 2002: 66). Avishai describes the centrality of revivification as a sacrament that forms the basis of Christian community: the Christian community is hinged on remembering the significance of the sacrifice of Jesus' death on the cross (Avishai 2002: 66-72).

While Avishai confidently draws the association with remembrance and Jesus' sacrifice, Paul Bradshaw (2001) reflects on the linguistic and theological debates that circulate as to whether it is a matter of remembering his sacrifice or additional aspects of Jesus' life, such as his birth and ascension, or whether it is not impossible to remember one aspect without remembering others (Bradshaw 2001: 76, 77). Furthermore, he examines the debates as to whether it is a matter of God remembering Jesus or members of the Church remembering God, or a mutual remembrance in an act of worship (Bradshaw 2001: 73).

While these debates are not central to the topic at hand, of interest is Bradshaw's reflection on what happens during an act of remembrance. Some argue that an act of remembrance in Christianity is a memorial of a past event. Lawrence Hoffman's (2001) argues that “remember” is better translated from the Hebrew as “to point out.” Thus remembrance is an act of pointing out the fulfillment of the kingdom of God. Others, as Avishai suggests, understand the performance of remembrance to have sacramental significance to “effect some sort of change in the very moment of liturgical celebration” (Hoffman 2001: 41; Bradshaw 2001:79).

Although these debates focus specifically on the remembrance of Jesus Christ, my reference to them intends to distill the integral significance and relevance of remembrance within a Christian context, and by extension, informs the Crypt Centre's understanding and practice of remembrance. Fr Lester opened the first session by recalling the ministry of Jesus, as prophesied in Isaiah. The story-telling days were framed by prayer, which implicitly engages in remembering the relationship

in Christianity between humankind and God. Alongside remembrance being expected to be educational, to help towards healing and as a means of providing direction, in the Crypt Centre it is also a means to witness to the significance of faith in God. This remembrance has transformative power that forms part of the ontological practice of the Crypt Centre.

This examination has surfaced the convergence of multiple understandings of the work of remembrance that informs the research process. In addition to resonating with a familiar discourse of remembrance towards healing and towards not forgetting, the presence of remembrance as a faith-based practice was present. The multiple registers of remembrance results in a convergence of an epistemological past (what happened in 1982) with an ontological orientation that troubles the division Daniel (1996) articulated between secularised epistemology and faith-informed ontology. In addition, it challenges the distinction between secularised exhibition modalities and faith-based practices.

### **We, Who are Many, are One**

The second part of this chapter examines multiple and shifting forms of inclusions that demonstrate the negotiation and varied levels of identification present in conjunction with the principle of inclusivity in the *Bearing Witness* research process. In his welcome, Fr Lester mentioned, “*We* are in a different place,” “*Our* belief in God,” “He’s brought *us* from a place of chaos to peace,” “Some may have regrets of not being where *we* want to be. This story tells *us* where *we* want to go too” [italics mine]. What surfaces from his references is a question as to who constitutes the “we” and “us” to which he referred. Behind them also lies an assumption that all included in the “we” share the belief in the same God and that there is a shared history, time of transition and future for the “we” to which he referred.

The physical layout of the room and the position of Fr Lester meant that his welcome was directed towards the research participants. Thus one can consider whether he was including the research participants and himself in the “we.” Or, was he speaking in the capacity of being a leader of the Cathedral, and thus speaking on behalf of the Cathedral? Was he representing the Crypt Centre as a social justice ministry of the Cathedral? If so, did he implicitly include all of those who were present, whether or not they identified themselves as being a part of the Crypt Centre, in the “we”? Or was he speaking on behalf of a general, broad citizenship of South Africa, of which the research participants were included – but not all of the research facilitators?

Some insight can emerge if one considers Maart's explanation that the Crypt Centre

recognises its need for a temporary team to facilitate its exhibition process (L. Maart, personal communication, 19 January 2011). In the absence of a permanent researcher, the Crypt Centre is experimenting with how to construct a team of facilitators. It draws upon specialists in particular areas, as well as parishioners and students. Although the Crypt Centre is a social justice ministry of the Cathedral, five of six research facilitators of the *Bearing Witness* exhibition were not members of the Cathedral. Furthermore, one was not a South African citizen.

Maart, the main facilitator of the research process, joined the Cathedral in 2007 and is a member of the Cathedral's Social Justice and Reconciliation Group (SJR) and a Crypt Centre committee. She was previously the deputy director of the Robben Island museum. Joining her were two women who have a long history of political activism: Cole,<sup>14</sup> founder and chairwoman of Mandlovu Development Trust, a “collapsible organisation” that promotes active non-violent citizenship to bridge gaps between what is stated in the South African Constitution and practiced (C. Cole 2010, personal communication, April 2010), and Sindiswa Nunu,<sup>15</sup> facilitator of the Cape Town Khulumani Support Centre. Three students were also involved in the research process: Tehseen Khandwalla, who came to South Africa from Holland from February – June 2010 to do research on the 1982 fast towards his Honours thesis in Public Administration; Sarah van Mill, an

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<sup>14</sup> During the 1980s, Cole and Maart were both involved in the United Democratic Front (UDF). Cole was previously the director of the Surplus People's Project and a member of TEAM (The Ecumenical Action Movement). Cole was deeply involved in anti-apartheid activities, particularly in the Crossroads struggle. She continues to engage with land restitution issues. In an interview with me she described herself as a “walking archive” of material (C. Cole 2010, personal communication, April 2010). See Cole 1986; Cole 2010.

<sup>15</sup> Sindiswa Nunu's involvement in the *Bearing Witness* project happened unexpectedly. Tehseen Khandwalla, came to South Africa in early 2010. While doing research, he was given Nunu's contact details. Her details were obtained from the brother of Rommel Roberts (who helped facilitate the 1982 fast) who had attended the first Crypt Centre exhibition.

Khandwalla approached Nunu to interview her about her experience in the 1982 fast. At their meeting, Nunu queried Khandwalla about the Crypt Centre's project. She was concerned about the degree of participation by those who fasted: that they be included, but also being weary of the potential detrimental emotional and psychological effects of their participation. This concern was informed by her personal experiences in engaging in research projects as well as through her role in Khulumani, where she has previously helped to facilitate interviews between researchers and TRC participants. By the end of their meeting, Khandwalla and Nunu agreed to host an information meeting with potential participants. When this meeting took place, instead of being attended by people who fasted in 1982, it was attended by veterans of the apartheid struggle with whom Nunu was in contact through her Khulumani network. This method of trying to contact potential participants ran aground.

When I began my research, I generated a list of the fasters from Black Sash archival material. At this point I (and others) still assumed that Nunu had participated in the 1982 fast. I presented her with a list of the names, asking whether she knew any of them. Although it emerged later that Nunu did not participate in the 1982 fast and thus did not have personal contact with people on the list, through her Khulumani network she recognised two women. With their help, Nunu and I generated contact details of potential participants.

Nunu continued to play an integral role in facilitating transport, communicating with participants and interpreting at story-telling sessions and during individual interviews. Although she did not participate in the 1982 fast, she experienced the effects of the apartheid laws and forced removals, including being bused out of Cape Town. See Nunu (2009) for more details.

American citizen pursuing her Masters in Restorative Justice at the University of Cape Town (UCT); and myself.

Detailing the people who were involved in facilitating the *Bearing Witness* research process demonstrates the broadly inclusive constitution of the temporary team to which Maart referred. One can surmise then that on the first story-telling day, Fr Lester's comments similarly assumed a broadly inclusive "we." It intended to include everyone present. It potentially extended even beyond those present in the room.

Although Fr Lester spoke inclusively, comments made by the research participants as well as the seating arrangements demonstrated the presence of contestation to the broadly assumed inclusion. The arrangement of the U of participants and the role of facilitators indicated a clear distinction between identified roles and placement between fasters and facilitators. Furthermore, Ncisana spoke of "our" Father in reference to Fr Mfenyana, with whom the participants had a history. This implied that Fr Lester and Bishop Anthony were excluded from being "their" Fathers. Her distinction was complicated by Bishop Anthony's comment that "We sing in all circumstances. It's a gift God has given to black people." This remark indicated that although Ncisana may not have identified herself with Bishop Anthony, he included himself in a collectivity defined as being black. Ncisana's own distinction shifted when she articulated the sentiment, conflating blackness with Africanness, that it is African to express oneself with song. Although implicitly Bishop Anthony was not "their" Father, the identification of inclusion shifted in terms of a collectivity identified by being constituted of "black Africans who sing." Furthermore, the comment directed to me to "Not worry about us" indicated a distinction between the research participants and me.

Although the aforementioned comments and seating arrangements highlight the negotiation of contesting parameters of inclusion and exclusion, some decisive actions demonstrated collective inclusion. Although not included as congregational members of the Cathedral, by signing consent forms, research participants agreed to be included in the exhibition process' temporary team. In conversation, Maart expressed to me the Crypt Centre's desire that the participants help to drive the process. Willingness to be involved was demonstrated in particular by one participant who would phone Maart to ask whether there was any way in which she could help with the exhibition process (L. Maart, personal communication, 19 January 2011). A further indication of intentional inclusion happened at the end of the first and second story-telling days. We all stood together and held hands while someone prayed. Although the action was intentionally inclusive of all people present (and assumed shared belief and practice), there is no way of assessing the willingness or reluctance of

each person to participate in that moment.

What emerges through the aforementioned descriptions is the ways in which parameters of inclusion and exclusion surfaced during story-telling sessions, contingent on varied levels of identification, the perspective of the speaker and recipient(s), and the purpose of inclusivity. The Crypt Centre engaged in intentional practices of inclusion, bringing cohesion through the common aim of participating in the temporary team of the Crypt Centre's *Bearing Witness* research process. Through the Crypt Centre's intentional practice of including people beyond the parameters of the Cathedral's membership, one can begin to surmise that the "our" on whose behalf they purpose to speak, as well as to whom they direct the interaction, is similarly intentionally and extensively inclusive. The following chapter historicises the Crypt Centre's normative assumptions of an extensively and intentionally inclusive "our". Understanding this gives insight into the modality of citizenship which the Crypt Centre grapples with positioning and presenting.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### “The People's Cathedral”

*This chapter has three parts. It contextualises the Crypt Centre in relation to the Cathedral. It describes the Cathedral's physical space to demonstrate the normative exhibition practice within the space. It seeks to examine the relationship between the Cathedral and the state through the socio-political history. This deepens the understanding of the Crypt Centre's navigation of who constitutes the signified “our” to which it refers. It also continues to challenge the secular-sacred, public-private divides. It demonstrates how the Crypt Centre uses the Cathedral's practice of remembrance and engagement with the socio-political context to inform its vision, revealing how the vision extends beyond remembrance towards healing.*

#### **The Cathedral in Time and Space**

In “Time, Material Memory and Public Sites” Brent Fortenberry (2010), an archeologist working in St George's, Bermuda (not to be confused with St George's Cathedral, Cape Town!), grapples with the relationship between linear and hierarchical time. He asserts that the present is not discrete or isolated from the past, but is composed of enduring material from the past. Archeological and social memory acts intervene and prolong the existence of material memory that is embedded in public sites (Fortenberry 2010: np). Similarly to Fortenberry's description, St George's Cathedral (and by extension, the crypt) is a palimpsest, housing objects from the past that protrude into and endure in the present. Many of these objects are material remembrances, like monuments and memorials, which bear witness to the dynamic – and at times jarring – relationship the Cathedral has had with its past set in the changing socio-political landscape of South Africa. These include spiritual, imperial and local colonial inheritances, as well as inheritances from democratic South Africa. A brief account of some of these reiterates the normative practice of remembrance in the Cathedral's space and shows how the Cathedral has for long been a commemorative space of exhibition.

The *African Madonna* (1935) carved by Leon Underwood, sits close to a baptismal font with a row of candles nearby. These are lit regularly by anyone as a symbolic gesture of remembrance for a person or event, or to indicate a prayer request. Nearby the *African Madonna* hangs a large quilt, made in remembrance and celebration of people who died from HIV/AIDS. The brass lectern on which individuals place the Bible during services has a plaque that explains how it is dedicated to the memory of those who died in 1896 RMS Drummond Castle shipwreck. Memorial plaques

dedicated to those who died in the Anglo-Boer war, as well as in memory of colonial leaders, hang from multiple walls. Another plaque commemorates the visit of Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip to the Cathedral on 21 March 1995, marking the first Human Rights Day of democratic South Africa. Casting a light on these objects are multiple stained-glass windows, each of which narrates its own story of remembrance. One, by Gabriel Loire of Chartres, is entitled *Christ in triumph over darkness and evil*. Another, named the *Africa Window*, depicts the first Anglican African martyr among other things.

Alongside the walls of the nave<sup>16</sup> and within the side-chapels are more objects of interest to both parishioners who may frequent the space regularly, as well as tourists or visitors interested in the historic or artistic significance of them. Much like a museum, the Cathedral caters for these visitors by offering guided tours of the Cathedral, as well as placing plaques in various places which significant objects.<sup>17</sup> Describing objects like the plaques and stained-glass windows illustrate the way in which the Cathedral's space is imbued with forms of remembrance, commemoration and exhibition practice. Furthermore, the objects themselves allude to an interwoven and juxtaposed Christian, imperial, colonial and emergent past of a democratic South Africa. These presences endure not only through the intervention of material memorials but also in practices, such as lighting candles or inscribing names of particular people on plaques.

These descriptions provide a context in which to understand the initiation of the Crypt Centre. They demonstrate that the Cathedral is steeped in commemorative exhibition practice that conflates it with its practices of remembrance. The Crypt Centre emulates this practice as a contemporary expression towards a particular end. Understanding the different intentions of the Crypt Centre is enabled by examining the socio-political relationship between the Cathedral and state. Although an in-depth account of the Cathedral's history is beyond the scope of this thesis,<sup>18</sup> a brief overview is now set out which pays attention to the forms of relationships that are pertinent to informing the Crypt Centre's vision. This examination also alerts the reader to the fact that negotiating the constitution of "our" has been a long-term endeavor.

## **A Brief Socio-Political Historical Overview**

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<sup>16</sup> The Cathedral is built in the shape of a cross, similarly to the tabernacle of the Old Testament ("A Walk Around St George's Cathedral" nd:1).

<sup>17</sup> This practice resonates with other church spaces, such as Notre Dame, France and Coventry Cathedral, England.

<sup>18</sup> Two Cathedral parishioners are in the process of researching for an in-depth account of the Cathedral's history.

Before the Bishop of Calcutta visited English colonists in the Cape of Good Hope in 1827 and consecrated land at the bottom of Government Avenue to be used for building a church, colonists relied on services conducted by military chaplains at the Groote Kerk and the Castle. St George's Church held its first service on 21 December 1834. Chaplains conducted the services before Bishop Robert Gray arrived in Cape Town in 1848. He was the first bishop to preside over the newly-formed diocese that included the Cape of Good Hope, its dependencies and the island of St Helena (Suggit and Goedhals 1998: 1).

The seminal vision of Bishop Gray was characterised by a “three-pronged thrust: to plant clergy, build churches and preach the gospel” (Ndungane 1998: 8). In the introduction to a collection of commemorative essays 150 years after Bishop Gray's arrival, John Suggit and Mandy Goedhals (1998) reflect that during this period of imperial expansion, “as far as Christian missions were concerned, bishops regarded the expansion of British rule as a gift of providence, and co-operated gladly with colonial administrators to advance their work” (Suggit and Goedhals 1998: 1). Twinned with Bishop Gray's missional vision that cooperated with imperial expansion was a focus on establishing the legal and constitutional foundations of the church, providing order and autonomy for the church in southern Africa (Southey 1998: 21, 24). Alongside implementing these aims, Bishop Gray expressed disappointment with the church building and wished to build a new Cathedral worthy of Cape Town (St George's Cathedral no date: np)

However, Bishop Gray died in 1872 before his dream was realised. Nevertheless, his vision was carried forward by William West Jones, who was consecrated as the second bishop in 1874. Like Bishop Gray, Bishop Jones' plans to construct the Cathedral were interrupted by an economic depression and social unrest building up toward the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer war. Eventually the foundation stone for the Cathedral was laid in 1902 and parts of it have been built incrementally since then. As it stands in 2010, the Cathedral remains incomplete (St George's Cathedral no date: np).

In their introduction, Suggit and Goedhals speak of Peter Hinchliff's 1963 publication *The Anglican Church in South Africa*, which set the Cathedral in “its social and political context, a context which circumstances were forcing the church itself to take more seriously. The book reflected the liberal attitudes which prevailed among the Church Province of Southern Africa (CPSA) leadership at the time: opposed to apartheid, bishops advocated peaceful change through education, negotiation and gradual political reform” (Suggit and Goedhals 1998: 2). An example of these liberal attitudes put into action occurred in 1957, when the Cathedral's Dean Tom Savage

opposed the rising National Party by putting up a sign that stated, “This church is open to all people, at all services, at all times” (King 1996: 9). This stance marked the Cathedral and the steps outside its doors as sites for anti-apartheid activity.

As noted by Maart, twinned with the open invitation of the Cathedral was the response of people (L. Maart, personal communication, 19 January 2011). The Cathedral website captures, and thereby exhibits, some of the ways in which people claimed use of the Cathedral and its steps during the mid 1980s. As some anti-apartheid strategies brought struggles into the city “there were occasions of high drama when the police surrounded the Cathedral, even storming it on one occasion to drive out protesting students and others. Week after week it was packed with protesters and opponents of the government to be addressed by Archbishop Desmond Tutu and speakers from all spectra of political opposition. The Cathedral became a focus of opposition and on occasion could be seen surrounded by barbed wire, police vans and water-cannons. Once a large number of squatters whose homes had been demolished found sanctuary in the Cathedral and were cared for with their babies and children over the weeks as they fasted in protest” (St George Cathedral no date: np).

The convergence of the Cathedral's willingness and the agency of people in the mass democratic movement led to the coining of the phrase “The People's Cathedral.” As Maart described, as political spaces closed and the oppression of the apartheid regime increased, the Cathedral interceded, or acted on behalf of others, while knowing also the limitations of the role (L. Maart, personal communication, 19 January 2011).

At the same time as acknowledging its anti-apartheid sentiment, Suggit and Goedhals discuss how Hinchliff's book recognises the conservatism that simultaneously marked the Anglican Church during apartheid. It was called hypocritical because it did not have black bishops and facilitated expensive white-only church schools (Suggit and Goedhals 1998: 2). It drew criticism for not effectively translating its opposition of apartheid into action (Suggit and Goedhals 1998: 3). As Sarita Stern, who facilitated the stay of the fasters in the Cathedral in 1982 recollected, not all the parishioners and clergymen welcomed the men and women who fasted: “It was a nice experience. But, you can imagine – the Cathedral was still very much British Colonial, you know – I don't like to say it but it was true. This wasn't really their thing” (S. Stern, personal communication, 6 July 2010). Thus, during the 1980s, the Cathedral simultaneously negotiated fulfilling its role of being the “People's Cathedral” as well as conforming to its imperial inheritance. Although it was a popular place for anti-apartheid activism, congregational members were at times resistant to its

activist role.

A particularly influential model of engagement with the socio-political context was offered to the Cathedral in an address given by Albert van Heuvel in Coventry Cathedral, England, in April 1966. At this international conference for Cathedral Deans and Provosts, van Heuvel suggested that a Cathedral should be among other things “a Sign of Pro-existence (for the whole community), a Broadcasting Station for the Voice of the Poor, a Motel for Pilgrims, a Temple of Dialogue, a Pentecostal Laboratory – as well the hut of the Shepherd” (King 1996: 12). These expectations resonated deeply with Dean King, who was Dean of the Cathedral from 1958 to 1988, as well as for those who followed him. Chris Ahrends, who was the sub-dean under Dean King's successor Colin Jones, remarked, “I grew up on van Heuvel's theology. Ted King talked about it always. Colin Jones was also sensitive to that. In my seven years [as the Cathedral's sub-dean] that was what we kept alive” (C. Ahrends, personal communication, July 2010).

The Crypt Centre's Concept Proposal reflects changes in the Cathedral's position in relation to the state during apartheid and notes some of its long-term implications: “Since the arrival of Robert and Sophie Grey 160 years ago, the Cathedral shifted significantly from being partner in the colonial project to fulfilling its prophetic mission by ‘speaking truth to (temporal) power’ under apartheid rule. Today its ministries include a spectrum of social causes. Its HIV and Aids Task Team reaches out to all affected and infected by this national pandemic and the Cathedral continues to be the venue of choice for civil society mass protest action against the ineffective measures by government to address this pandemic. Its service to the destitute and people living on the street through The Arch project continues in the tradition of caring for the most vulnerable, first established in the 1970s. In all its work, the Cathedral seeks to build its ministry of inclusivity, reconciliation, hope and healing” (Concept Proposal 2008: 9).

### **Locating the “Our” in the Socio-Political Landscape**

This overview demonstrates that from its first establishment, the Cathedral has been engaged with the socio-political circumstances of the day. Its building plans were interrupted because of the Anglo-Boer war. It acknowledges a shift from being aligned with colonialism to moving to a position of opposition against apartheid. In more recently years, it has engaged with national socio-political and humanitarian issues like the HIV pandemic and destitution. Informed by the intention to “build its ministry of inclusivity, reconciliation, hope and healing” based on Christian principles, these forms of engagement with socio-political issues challenge the

presumption of separation between public and private, sacred and secular domains.

What emerges too through this overview are some of the seemingly paradoxical parameters of inclusivity and exclusivity within the Cathedral, in part informed by the tension between the aim of intentional inclusivity and the reality of it in practice. Underlying Bishop Gray's three-pronged thrust of church building, clergy planting and preaching the gospel was the expectation for growth. That is, a normative assumption for the Cathedral is for the “our” with which it identifies to be increasingly inclusive of new people - on the condition of people becoming members of the Cathedral. Simultaneously, the Cathedral imagines itself, and has experienced, broader inclusivity beyond merely its membership. This is demonstrated by Dean Tom's Savage's statement that *all* are welcome in the Cathedral, and reiterated in van Heuvel's mandate for a cathedral to be a “Sign of Pro-existence (for the whole community)”. Although “the whole community” remains undefined, in this context, one can infer that it refers to both those who identify themselves as Christian and are members of the Cathedral, and those who are not. Thus, what appears are two forms of inclusivity. One form of inclusion is recognised through joining as a member of the Cathedral. Simultaneously, the Cathedral portrays itself, illustrated through the all-encompassing nickname “People's Cathedral”, as intentionally inclusive towards those who are not members of the Cathedral's congregation. The intentionality of this form of inclusion is demonstrated through its engagement in ministries that reach beyond the congregational members of the church, thus informing the Crypt Centre's signified “our” or “we,” and having implications in terms of what areas of address the Crypt Centre assumes to engage with through its activities.

### **Compassionate Management**

The tension between the parameters of inclusion and exclusion surfaced in everyday events. For example, it was brought to light as the Crypt Centre grapples with how to negotiate safety and cleanliness in the crypt space. To date, there have been some thefts of exhibition brochures.<sup>19</sup> The vulnerability of the material is in part due to the easy access to the space, as well as the location of the crypt in downtown Cape Town. Hugging the corner of the Museum Mile and the intersection of Wale and Adderly streets, the area is not only populated by tourists, students and business men and women. People who are homeless frequently traverse this space too. At times, they enter the crypt seeking food or pastoral care. One Educational Officer informed me that she redirects them to other

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<sup>19</sup> In addition, during my period of research, a silver chalice was stolen from one of the side-chapels in the Cathedral.

parts of the Cathedral, such as to the soup kitchen, when they enter the Crypt Centre.

On one occasion while I sat and chatted with two Educational Officers while they were on duty, a flamboyantly-dressed man with a long stick came in and went to the toilets only to find them locked. He explained to the waitron at Cafe St George, which occupies part of the crypt space, that he wanted access to take medication but was refused entrance. He returned to the Educational Officers and was redirected outside. Shortly afterward the waitron came to the Educational Officers desk and expressed his concern about the man's entrance. Originally the Crypt Centre ablution facilities were left unlocked. After being confronted with a few instances such as the one detailed above, the Crypt Centre and Cafe St George decided to restrict access to ablution facilities to patrons of Cafe St George and visitors of the Crypt Centre exhibition.

In addition to managing the entry of homeless people into the space, prior to the Crypt Centre opening, people who were homeless stayed around the perimeter of the crypt and used the bay window holes as a defecation area. Aside from being unpleasant, this has health implications for the restaurant area on the other side of the windows and for the Crypt Centre seeking to attract visitors. This issue and the distribution of responsibilities between the Cafe, the Cathedral and the Crypt Centre were raised at multiple Crypt Centre committee meetings. The Crypt Centre committee recognises that the defecation issue extends into other downtown Cape Town areas too, and is also sensitive to its role of service as a social justice ministry. Negotiating the security and cleanliness concerns requires what Maart described to me in conversation and during the Crypt Centre committee meeting as “compassionate management.”

The aforementioned socio-political overview and account of contemporary concerns highlight the ways in which the “People's Cathedral” has to negotiate complexities as to what inclusion looks like in practice. Be it in taking a stand against an exclusionary political regime, in managing opposing attitudes amongst parishioners as to the presence of fasters in the church, or responding to security and cleanliness concerns in contemporary circumstances, the Cathedral (and by extension the Crypt Centre) grapples with maintaining an intentional and a broadly inclusive “our” as expressed by Dean King Savage, van Heuvel and Bishop Gray, while simultaneously negotiating all its contingencies. Having established the relationship between the Cathedral and the socio-political context, the following portion of this chapter considers how the Crypt Centre retrospectively draws upon the Cathedral's relation with the state to imagine the Crypt Centre's vision and intent. This begins to reveal the ways in which the Crypt Centre extends beyond the Cathedral's practice as an exhibitivite place of commemorative remembrance towards functioning as

a social justice ministry.

### Contextualised Imaginings

Current Cathedral parishioner and long-time political activist Di Oliver,<sup>20</sup> who helped developed the concept for the Crypt Centre, explained that the idea of having something like the Crypt Centre emerged from conversations between members of the Cathedral's Justice and Reconciliation group (CJR).<sup>21</sup> In particular, two other parishioners and herself – all of whom were trained as social workers – began to talk with Fr Lester about “what reconciliation meant and the shortcomings – and the successes and the shortcomings of the Truth [TRC] commission” (D. Oliver, personal communication, 1 July 2010). Their conversations coincided with discussions about how to use the crypt space, which was unoccupied at that point.

In addition, Oliver attributed significance to Fr Lester's leadership in helping the Crypt Centre to be realised. “He gave us a new breath of life because Father Terry is our political priest. He has huge political experience of his own and a very clear idea of how important it was for Cape Town to realise a lot about itself and its own history and how much reconciliation is at play here, even at an interfaith level.” These reasons combined with the current socio-political climate: “We've emerged from that period of dancing around the new government to wanting to be much more critically engaged” (D. Oliver, personal communication, 1 July 2010).

It is by retrospectively galvanising around previous examples of the Cathedral's engagement with the state in a context that recognises the need for critical engagement with the state that the imaginings for the Crypt Centre's vision emerged. In particular, the Crypt Centre's vision drew upon the Cathedral's dual colonial and anti-apartheid past. Fr Lester, who during the interview would speak of the Cathedral and Crypt Centre synonymously, characterised the long trajectory of the Anglican church's history in South Africa as being both a part of the colonial enterprise as well as being an authority independent of the state: “People were also given tools to critique the very person who brought the message....they came with their Bible in one hand, Mozart, Bach – you know – all that sort of stuff in the other hand, played their classical music to the Coloureds, then

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20 Di Oliver has had a long history with the Cathedral and Cape Town politics. She was an active member of the Black Sash and sat on the Provincial Council. Her late husband, Brian Bishop, was an active member of the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission and spent 23 nights sleeping in the Cathedral's Lady Chapel during the time in which the fasters stayed there in 1982 (D. Oliver, personal communication, 1 July 2010).

21 On 12 September 2004 the Cathedral became a Centre of the Cross of Nails as an outworking of Di Oliver's attendance of a conference on reconciliation held in Coventry. Formerly known as the Community of the Cross of Nails, the group is now called the Cathedral Justice and Reconciliation group (CJR) (D. Oliver, personal communication, 1 July 2010).

there's a sharing in the afternoon of gin and tonic – an interesting mix of religion, faith, intellectual pursuit, deep argument and discussion and debate. I think we were influenced by those sorts of things and also the independent Anglican Church as state – *the right to have a place in the state for criticism*. It's not just Her Majesty's government – also Her Majesty's opposition” ([italics mine] T. Lester, personal communication, 24 June 2010).

Fr Lester drew parallels as to how the British model of the relationship between the Anglican Church and state offered a particular spiritually-grounded modality for the Cathedral during the apartheid years. “There was a way apartheid was critiqued [by the Anglican church] – not just a dehumanising critique but ‘This is not fair’ – stuff the House of Commons was built on[...] Previous Deans not were not necessarily persecuted for anti-government sentiment, they just had a sense of the right to say it and could back it up with intellectual arguments. Because they were deeply spiritual people who spent time on their knees, did daily offices, who read scripture on a daily basis from one end to the other, and this end back, again and again, steeped in tradition and spirituality, when they made a statement it was not just to provoke or critique. It came out of a very rounded, wholesome place” (T. Lester, personal communication, 24 June 2010). Fr Lester concluded that “In a way the church is not just a place from which you throw darts at the government, but it becomes a place where they can belong, because we're all in need of healing of sorts. The Cathedral becomes that sort of place as the Mother church. It is also an important place where we can look at our inaction at the past – particularly in regard to the closing of some churches.”

The twin imaginings of the Cathedral as a place to challenge and a place of compassion, particularly as modeled during the Struggle years, provides insight into the Crypt Centre's aim to have presentations that are “dynamic and thought provoking,” that “stimulate reflection, critical thinking and dialogue – and touch the heart” as well as the working principle where “emphasis will be placed on the (often intangible) human experiences, reflecting our need to lament and hope, and for compassion, forgiveness, healing and communion” (Concept Proposal 2008: 4). What facilitated the idea of the Crypt Centre was the convergence of two elements: 1) a long lineage of the practice of remembrance and engagement with the socio-political context with 2) factors particularly relevant to the Cathedral in the contemporary South African context. One contemporary factor was the desire to be more socio-politically engaged in the post-apartheid context. Another was the presence of people in the Cathedral who have for long engaged in political activism informed by their Christian beliefs, such as Oliver, Fr Lester and Maart. Twinning belief and socio-political

engagement does more than challenge the separation between public and private domains. Far from being distinct, Fr Lester's comment indicates that spiritual grounding *provides* the moral authority for socio-political engagement.

While Fr. Lester, Maart and Oliver, as some of the key visionaries and implementers of the Crypt Centre and its exhibitions, explained its intention and provenance, like any process, it has involved tensions and received critique. The Crypt Centre was not the only bidder for the use of the crypt space. One of the women who helped to envisage and develop the proposal explained that she found herself in a difficult position of having to “choose sides” between the Crypt Centre and another bidder after she felt that decisions were made in her absence. She intimated that the Crypt Centre may have stolen some ideas from the other bidder. Although she remains in close relationship with the members of the Cathedral who are involved with the project, and believes that the exhibition on the 1982 fast is a valuable project, she has not participated in the Crypt Centre’s implementation (personal communications, July 2010).

Furthermore, Sydney Lockett, who was the director of the Board of Social Responsibility at the Cathedral in the 1990s and a founding member of TEAM, and who is currently an independent contractor in development work, questioned the appropriateness of the Crypt Centre in contemporary circumstances. He remarked that although there is nothing currently that resembles the Coloured Labour Preference and Group Areas Act, “what we do have is xenophobia and I haven’t seen the Cathedral coming out very strongly in that regard. If we had parallels with those days [the 1980s], then you’d have – the Cathedral is well-placed – you’d have Congolese and others fasting in the Cathedral. You’d have Zimbabweans fasting in the Cathedral.” Reflecting on the absence of such activity, Lockett added that “the church has changed, the whole ethos of the church has changed” (S. Lockett, personal communications, June 2010).

## **Conclusion**

Oliver and Fr Lester's explanations alert one to the fact that although the Crypt Centre is engaging with familiar themes of remembrance in an exhibition modality, in which the physical space of the Cathedral also partakes, the vision and intention of the Crypt Centre move beyond the initially obvious one of healing in a post-apartheid context. Alongside recognising the shortcomings of the TRC and acknowledging a persistent need for reconciliation, the Crypt Centre seeks a means to keep the state accountable. It recognises the need for places of deliberation and reflection in contemporary South Africa. Ahrends summarised this expectation for remembrance beyond healing:

“Re-membering is about putting together the membership of a community which is so fractured and broken. So it's a very powerful act of remembering people who belonged to the city and who were then evicted from it, or broken from it or torn out from it” (C. Ahrends, personal communication, July 2010). Ahrends alerts the reader to the conflated significance of remembrance. Alongside it referring to putting things together, it is integral to responding to socio-political issues. Although not without the experience of tensions or receiving critique, the Crypt Centre utilises the notion of commemorative remembrance to provide information as to the reasons for current day issues, such as the contemporary make-up of Cape Town. Furthermore, it assumes that remembrance offers a means and source of ideas of how to respond (or not) to the contemporary issues. Fr Lester, Oliver and Ahrends' articulation demonstrates how the convergence of remembrance in the Crypt Centre's vision and practice helps to establish it as a social justice ministry.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Shifting Sand of a Desert Space in a Market Place

*This chapter contextualises the Crypt Centre, demonstrating how it inserts itself, and is inserted, as a social justice ministry within Cape Town. Whereas Chapter Two provided a general overview of the role of museum exhibitions, this chapter details the location of the Crypt Centre in relation to other exhibition spaces and the broader socio-economic and contemporary heritage sector of Cape Town, South Africa. By establishing how the Crypt Centre imagines itself as a “desert space in the market place” that tactically draws upon museum modality and its spatial significance, the chapter begins to demonstrate how the Crypt Centre legitimises Cathedral in a contemporary context. This helps establish the Crypt Centre as a capillary space for deliberative activity.*

#### Introduction

On 8<sup>th</sup> March 2010, when I first met Lynette Maart, the main facilitator of the *Bearing Witness* research project, she took me to the crypt of the Cathedral. Located underneath the Cathedral's sanctuary, the entrance to the crypt opens on to Wale Street, at the convergence of the pedestrian Government Avenue and the frequently commuted Adderly Street, close to St George's Mall. We entered a white, unfurnished area consisting of multiple archways and pillars. This was only a portion of what constituted the basement space of the Cathedral. Another section houses organ pipes and another part, the columbarium. Much of the basement is not excavated.

Previously used as a dressing room of the choir before services, in the 1970s and 1980s the crypt was the only place in downtown Cape Town where men and woman from any racial classification could congregate and buy inexpensive meals that were prepared and donated by members of the Cathedral congregation (C. Ahrends, personal communication, July 2010). In 1982 fasters fed and bathed their children in the crypt space. Since then, it was leased out as a jazz bar and also remained empty for some time (D. Oliver, personal communication, 1 July 2010).

Through an archway were steps that led down to an area with recessed sitting spaces and a kitchen area. My eyes caught sight of a commemorative plaque on the wall as I scanned the space. As we walked around, Maart described the plans for its upcoming function – to house the Crypt Memory and Witness Centre and Cafe St George. As she motioned where the coffee shop would be and how the Crypt Centre's exhibitions would be displayed, I tried to imagine how the space would be transformed.

On 31<sup>st</sup> May 2010 I saw its transformation. After the 10am Sunday service, I attended the

official opening of the Crypt Centre and entered the space for a second time. Archbishop Thabo Makgoba, Cathedral parishioners, representatives from local museums and people who were involved in the *1989 Peace March* exhibit were invited to attend. Dean Rowan Smith blessed and consecrated the space. Following this, anti-apartheid activist, Cathedral parishioner and prominent contemporary civic leader Dr Mamphela Ramphele gave the opening address. Her address was followed by a prayer of grace and a reception in Cafe St George.

My second encounter with the crypt space was in stark contrast to the first. The area with recessed sitting spaces housed Cafe St George's tables and chairs. The first exhibit done by the Crypt Centre, completed in 2009 and housed temporarily in The Link<sup>22</sup> at the back of the Cathedral until the completion of the Crypt Centre's space in the crypt, was displayed in the remaining area. Entitled *Glimpsing Hope, Marching for Peace*, (hereafter referred to as the *1989 Peace March* exhibition) the 2009 exhibition explored three themes: 1. The Darkest Moments, which covers some of the apartheid regime's activities, 2. Standing for the Truth, which depicts defiance actions and campaigns in the 1980s and 3. Peace Marches, which represents the September 13<sup>th</sup> 1989 Peace March initiated by Archbishop Desmond Tutu,<sup>23</sup> as well as additional peace marches precipitated by this event. Based largely on photographic images and with an emphasis on the experience of ordinary people as opposed to prominent leaders, the exhibition also included some sculptural representations, DVD footage, painted designs and quotes on the floor, and a Memory Book for visitors to record comments.

### **The Museum Context**

Evident in the *1989 Peace March* exhibition and the Crypt Centre were the practice of remembrance and the theme of endurance and triumph over the apartheid regime. In this way, the Crypt Centre appeared to align with the contemporary focus of other museum exhibition spaces in South Africa. However, as the following section details, complexities surface with this initial obviousness. The following provides a contextualisation of exhibition spaces in relation to debates on globalisation as well a more focused consideration of some of the complexities of exhibition spaces in the contemporary South African context. This overview provides a framework in which to

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22 Designed by Sir Herbert Baker, in the original architectural plans The Link connects the main body of the Cathedral with the Chapter House, a meeting hall designed by Revel Fox ("A Walk Around St George's Cathedral" no date: 1). However, as it stands, the Cathedral is incomplete. Although it does not link to anything, the section of the Cathedral is still referred to as "The Link".

23 Tutu was archbishop at the Cathedral from 1986-1996. He retired from public engagements in October 2010.

locate the Crypt Centre' tactical use of contemporary museum modality.

Defining museums as “repositories of knowledge, value and taste” Ivan Karp (1992) argues that museums are one of the means through which the knowledge and values of civic society are expressed, understood, preserved and developed (Karp 1992: 5). *Museum Frictions: Public Culture/Global Transformations* (2006) deliberates on the changing role of museum exhibition spaces. The edition focuses on the frictions that surface at the intersection of global processes and museological practice post 1990s (Karp & Kratz et al 2006: 2). Editors Ivan Karp and Corinne Kratz are quick to note that global connections, communications and processes are centuries old, despite the contemporary focus on globalisation which tends to describe them as a new phenomena – a point reiterated by Tony Bennett (Karp & Kratz et al 2006: 5; Bennett 2006: 47). Contemporary museums continue to depict certain worldviews as “highly effective machineries in the capacity to transform modes of thought, perception and behaviour – in short, ways of life,” thus engaging in similar practices of early nineteenth century museums. Yet, the difference lies in the contemporary context of the practice (Bennett 2006:57). Museum spaces can be sites of political contestation, “global theatres of real consequence” that mobilise local identities, histories and concerns with potential international effect (Karp and Kratz 2006: 3, 4).

Recognising both the increased role and uneven flows of forms of new media in organising museum spaces and lobbying on issues, Karp and Kratz (2006) comment on the constant negotiation of museums in contemporary circumstances, as they blend and balance education and entertainment for financial sustainability (Karp and Kratz 2006: 13). Furthermore, Karp and Kratz acknowledge the growing influence of tourism and the heritage sector on museum institutions (Karp and Kratz 2006: 15). Leslie Witz (2006) pays particular attention to the influence of tourism and heritage on museums in post-apartheid South Africa. He describes the conflicting demands that confront national museums as they grapple with the historical role of museums, exhibitions and the increasing role of tourism in contemporary South Africa's economy.

On one hand, in the post-apartheid context there have been efforts to elevate South Africa's past as a “national inheritance” to be preserved as a heritage for future generations (Witz 2006: 107). In 1999, the Iziko Museums were established and mandated to focus on social history, art and national history that predominantly represent resistance, reconciliation and “triumph of the human spirit” (Witz 2006: 120; Rassool 2006: 293). Local government also mandated museums to research and represent the experiences of ordinary people (in particular, “black”) and local social history (Witz 2006: 108).

Yet at the same time, the primary focus of the Department of Arts and Culture in the post-apartheid South Africa has been to develop the economic potential of cultural industries (Witz 2006: 109). A consistent touristic appeal of South Africa's has been the adventure of a colonial-style journey. Described as “a world in one country,” by 1947 South Africa was known for its wildlife, primitive tribalism and examples of modern society (Witz 2006: 131). Witz argues that the consolidation of the world in one country motif and the growing tourism industry of contemporary South Africa increased the incentive for museums to present history in simplified, commodifiable packages that resonate with the discourse of exploration and discovery (Witz 2006: 109, 114). Public museums are left to negotiate representations of a “colonial journey” that sell to an international tourist audience alongside the imperative to replace a colonial heritage with the heritage of the “new South Africa” as part of social transformation (Witz 2006: 110). Noteworthy in negotiating this tension is the blurring between museums and the wider heritage sector.

Nationally-mandated public museums are not the only ones that exist in contemporary South Africa. Ciraj Rassool's (2006) describes the history of the District Six museum, an independent “community-museum” in Cape Town, South Africa. This provides one example of how the idea of the museum can be critically appropriated for “radical purposes” (Buntinx and Karp 2006: 213). Distinguishing it from a business museum in which structure, participatory process and internal capacities are secondary, and from national museums that frequently represent hegemonic discourses, Rassool describes the District Six museums' negotiations with commercialism and museumisation (Rassool 2006: 310, 293). He argues that what makes it distinct are its methodological practices: it is “an independent site of engagement, a space of questioning and interrogation of the terms of the post-apartheid present, and the institutions, relations and discourses embedded in its production and reproduction. It has also operated as a hybrid space of research, representation, and pedagogy” (Rassool 2006: 290). Through these methods, the District Six museum had established a position of legitimacy to talk about the future of South African citizenship as well as pursue a land restitution process (Rassool 2006: 290).

### **Locating the Crypt Centre**

It is within the longer trajectory of museum spaces, as well as the more immediate context of museums and exhibition spaces in contemporary South Africa, that one can locate the Crypt Centre. The initial proposal for the Crypt Centre was for it to be a museum or place of memory (Concept Proposal 2008: 43). Although in its finalised form it is called a centre, the Crypt Centre

nevertheless engages in museum practice. As a registered Sector 21 company, it acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits material, focusing specifically on three themes: (i) the Cathedral in relation to the City; (ii) Witness and Protest and (iii) the relationship between Church and State (Concept Proposal 2008:7).

On one hand, the Crypt Centre closely resembles national South African museums. Its perception of the past being a heritage, indicated through the slogan “Remembering our Heritage, Witnessing our Present, Visioning our Future,” is reflective of Witz’s detailing of the imperative to have the past viewed as a national inheritance, notably in the expansive implication of the “our”. Similarly, the contents of *1989 Peace March* exhibition and upcoming *Bearing Witness* exhibition resonate with the themes of resistance and reconciliation, specifically focusing on the experiences of ordinary people, which resembles the focus of Iziko Museums. Simultaneously, the vision of the Crypt Centre resembles the description Rassool gives of the District Six museum’s methodological practices:

- “In reflecting on and working creatively with this history, emphasis will be placed on the (often intangible) human experiences...Process is therefore as important as product.
- In working with the layers of history, the past will be used to shed light on current realities and challenge us to take responsibility for our future” (Concept Proposal 2008: 4).

The inclusion of “the community” in the research process resonates with some of the ideas Karp (1992) and Karp and Kratz (2006) explore about the relationship between communities and museums. However, unlike the District Six community-museum and other community museums, the Crypt Centre was initiated by an already established institution, and unlike a museum, it was a key player in the events it purposes to represent. Rather than the *Bearing Witness* exhibition process being a result of activism from within a “community” of fifty-seven people who fasted (as in the case of the District Six community-museum, which emerged from people’s own private collections of memorabilia), the Crypt Centre *sought out the fasters*, and took on the dual role as spokesperson for the experiences of the fasters, as well as key player in their experiences.

The Crypt Centre is strategically located by being a social justice ministry and a centre; it is neither fully a museum nor a community-museum. The idea of a centre goes beyond the role of being an exhibition space. It invokes ideas of forum, dialogue and process. In addition, Café St George suggests active participation by creating a space for dialogue. This alludes to Habermas’ concept of the public sphere as a place “where citizens debate the issues of the day” (Hamilton

2009: 355), as well as being characteristic of Burkhalter et al.'s (2002) descriptions of public deliberation. And yet, it is not a public sphere. It is a social justice ministry.

While museums may see separate public and private domains and sacred and secular practices, the Crypt Centre does not. Although the aforementioned details some ways in which the Crypt Centre's vision and practices align similarly, where the Crypt Centre deviates from the Iziko Museums' mandate is through the inclusion of God at work (as detailed in the previous chapters and demonstrated in the contents of the *1989 Peace March* exhibition), as opposed to merely the triumph of the human spirit. The Crypt Centre is a publicly-oriented centre that depicts the negotiation and interrelationship between the implications of privately-held beliefs and socio-political issues. In this way, the Crypt Centre establishes itself as a faith-based space expectant to offer and engage in deliberative activity.

### **Financing Matters**

The manner in which the Crypt Centre works towards ensuring financial sustainability further demonstrates its tactical positioning as it negotiates Weber's separation between the spiritual and secular. In his foreword to the theological reflection written by Shannon Wright on the *1989 Peace March* exhibition, Dean Rowan Smith stated that the Crypt Centre's "ministry adopted a 'loaves and fishes' approach to the research task, trusting that God would make much out of little, as we had limited resources" (Wright 2009: 7). The reference to "loaves and fishes" alludes to Biblical accounts where Jesus miraculously multiplied loaves of bread and fish to feed thousands of people (Matthew 14; Mark 8). Dean Smith's quote not only indicates the financial constraints of the venture but also offers a faith-based perspective on how financial needs might be met. Interlinked with this approach, the Crypt Centre has sought support from parishioners through fund-raising events, such as the Dean's benefit concert and a comedy evening hosted in Cafe St George.

In addition, as a non-profit organisation, the Crypt Centre is also engaged in a number of strategies to raise funds towards the *Bearing Witness* exhibition. This includes generating income through Cafe St George and high-profile donors.<sup>24</sup> Crypt Centre committee members have, and plan to, submit applications to local, provincial and overseas funding bodies such as the British Council, Atlantic Philanthropies and City of Cape Town: Arts and Culture fund, as the submission dates

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<sup>24</sup> Donors for the *1989 Peace March* exhibition included Trinity Church Wall Street, New York; the Office of the Mayor of Cape Town; HCI Foundation; Independent Newspapers; Iziko Museums; Cape Town Partnership; The Photo Journal and individual patrons including Carl Lotter, Di and Don Oliver and Henry Bredekamp (Exhibition brochure 2009: np).

arise. In early 2010 an application was submitted to the National Heritage Foundation. It was rejected due to a decrease in available funding. The committee was advised to reapply in 2011.

The Crypt Centre explores ways to navigate the shrinking availability of funds due to the contemporary economic climate. It recognises that funding bodies sometimes perceive religiously affiliated endeavors as divisive in global struggles. In November 2010, the committee solicited Horst Kleinschmidt's help with developing and pursuing funding. Kleinschmidt, who previously led the International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa (IDAF), managed to help secure funds from the Claude Leon Foundation. The tactical drawing upon the idea of the museum is illustrated in the Claude Leon Foundation application. Whereas the Crypt Centre's vision speaks of it as a "new social justice ministry," the funding proposal emphasises the Crypt Centre as an "educational project" (Claude Leon application 2010: 5, 8). Although subtle, an emphasis like this one indicates the Crypt Centre's awareness of a predominant thought that separates spiritual and non-spiritual domains. It uses the leverage and discourse granted by museum modality to navigate a so-called "secular" domain while remaining spiritually grounded.

### **A Crypt in Cape Town**

The preceding discussion details how the Crypt Centre negotiates museum modality and an expectation of a separation between secular and spiritual places and practices. Compounding this is its tactical location as a part of the Cathedral situated in the central business district of Cape Town. The following seeks to demonstrate how the Crypt Centre inserts itself, and is inserted, within Cape Town in order to legitimate its contemporary presence. The Crypt Centre's project proposal acknowledges: "St George's is also ideally positioned to take advantage of the high pedestrian and tourist traffic which comes right past its door on a daily basis. Indications are that with new developments in the immediate precincts, visitor numbers will continue to show strong growth – as will opportunities to partner with civic, private and educational entities. St George's Cathedral can draw strength from and capitalise on the other sites of memory in Cape Town - many of which are in walking distance of the Cathedral and are world leaders in their fields" (Concept Proposal 2008: 3).

The awareness of its tactical spatial significance is demonstrated by its engagement with the Cape Town heritage tourist sector. The Crypt Centre is part of the Company Garden stakeholders group constituted by the Cape Town Partnership. This partnership "between the public and private sectors working together to develop, promote and manage Cape Town Central City" includes

heritage and cultural groups and sites in and surrounding the Company Gardens (Cape Town Partnership 2009: np). In September 2010, the Crypt Centre participated in the *My Cape Town Weekend*, which coincided with the Iziko Museums' annual Heritage Week. Initiated by Cape Town Tourism, the idea was presented to the Cape Town Partnership. Recognising that one of the barriers in developing and promoting Cape Town is funding, the *My Cape Town Weekend* aimed to cultivate tourism Cape Town residents. Entrance to most museums was free for the duration of the *My Cape Town Weekend*. There were a number of activities hosted throughout the city that intended to encourage exploration of Cape Town's heritage.

The *My Cape Town Weekend* provided the Crypt Centre with an opportunity to be inserted, and to insert itself, within a broader heritage tourist sector, as well as providing a valuable opportunity to stretch the Crypt Centre's limited marketing resources. The Crypt Centre was advertised in the Weekend's programme. During the *My Cape Town Weekend* the Crypt Centre sold the most publications since it had opened. This form of participation demonstrates the Crypt Centre's engagement with what Witz (2006) described as the convergence of the heritage sector and museums in exploring the economic potential of cultural industries.

Alongside engaging in this sector is the Crypt Centre's addressing current socio-political issues. The tactical positioning that enabled this was described by both Oliver and Ahrends: "The fact that we're located right next to Parliament and that we're in the Museum Mile and that the Cathedral is still, is in this amazing position in the city, it can easily have a prophetic voice on other issues as well" (D. Oliver, personal communication, 1 July 2010). Ahrends reiterated: "[The Cathedral] needs to be place of profound inclusivity and spirituality. So why does it have exhibitions? It doesn't have exhibitions to try and mirror the museum that is up the road. It doesn't have meanings which try to mirror what's happening in Parliament. It's got to be different to all of those things. It's got to have an edge. And it can occupy a space which can be more provocative than a National museum. The National Museum has to be reflective of a whole range of opinions. A Cathedral can be very provocative. It can challenge. It can also be very accommodating. It can be very warm and inclusive and loving and a rather soppy exhibition. It can make people want to cry. On the other hand, it can be very...take a line around the exclusivity of the city, around what's happening to the poor, around the fact that we're creating this extraordinary wealthy inner-city which provides less and less space for the ordinary citizen and yet we want to make it inclusive of everybody" (C. Ahrends, personal communication, July 2010).

The Crypt Centre's proposal and involvement in The Cape Town Partnership locates it

tactically in relation to tourism and other sites of memory. Yet, as Ahrends and Oliver articulate, the Crypt Centre is more than merely a means to develop local cultural industrial economy. The Crypt Centre bridges the separation between the secularism of museum modality in public spaces and the privacy of spiritual practices by grounding itself as a place of “profound inclusivity and spirituality” that anticipates being prophetic while engaging with contemporary socio-political issues, like the growing exclusivity of Cape Town. This demonstrates the spiritually-informed public prominence of the Crypt Centre, as well as its unfurling as a social justice ministry grounded in Christianity. Furthermore, it alerts one to the imagined reach, or areas of address, of those with whom the Crypt Centre intends to engage. The Crypt Centre seeks, in one sense, to “self-educate” the Cathedral by involving the Cathedral’s congregation in financial support, exhibition processes and involving parishioners as Educational Officers. Its educative vision intends to include school children, pedestrians, South African citizens, as well as civic and private sectors of society. In addition, the Crypt Centre positions itself in relation to the South African state, seeking to engage all that is signified by Parliament’s presence, in its deliberative activity. Alongside these locally-imagined publics, the Crypt Centre is aware of engaging with overseas tourists and the parallels that can be drawn between South Africa and other contexts. Thus, although emergent from and responding to local content, the Crypt Centre assumes it has relevance beyond South Africa’s borders. This, however, does not mean its relevance is felt in practice.

### **Desert Space in the Market Place**

In addition to the significance of the Crypt Centre’s placement in relation to the city and other museum-like space as reinforcing its tactical positioning, is the layered symbolic and political attachment to the Cathedral, and by extension, the crypt space. This further questions the separation between a secular and sacred, public and private domain. The Crypt Centre strategically invited Mamphela Ramphele to give the opening address. Recently made an honorary member of the Advisory Council for the Council for the Advancement of the South African Constitution (CASAC), Ramphele is a prominent figure on South Africa’s socio-political landscape. To choose Mamphela is to perform a commitment to active citizenship (de Vos 2010: np).

Acknowledging her own battle between engaging as an active citizen and retreating for reflection and silence, in her address at the opening of the Crypt Centre, Ramphele pondered the role of the Cathedral as a “desert space in the market place” of the heart Cape Town. She described it as offering a place to meditate and to witness to what matters most. Ramphele challenged the

audience to reflect on their individual and collective efficacy of being “watchful witnesses in our young democracy.” She spoke of the Cathedral needing to be called to keep the “hope of greatness” alive. She called it to be a place to help all people within South Africa to “make friends with time and to break the hold that time has on us” (Ramphela 2010: np).

Ramphela's allusion to a “desert space in a market place” has palpable symbolic weight in a Christian context. The Old and New Testaments of the Bible describe the desert as being a place of trial, confrontation, preparation and spiritual growth. It is a place to encounter God. Moses encountered God through a burning bush in a desert and was told to take off his shoes because the ground was holy (Exodus 3). After God brought the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt, they spent a period of 40 years in the desert wilderness. This period followed their failure to trust God for provision (Exodus 16, 17) and their disobedience in choosing to worship a golden calf instead of worshipping God (Exodus 32). God responded by leading them through the desert wilderness to grow their faith in Him before they enter into the Promised Land. In the New Testament, John the Baptist, the precursor of Jesus Christ, withdrew to the desert beyond the Jordan before entering into his public ministry of baptism and prophecy about the coming of Jesus Christ (Matthew 3). Similarly, Jesus Christ is recorded as having entered the desert for forty days of prayer and fasting before beginning his public ministry. During his time in the desert he confronted the temptations of prince of the world (satan), refusing to worship satan instead of God (Luke 4:1-13).

In comparison to the desert being characterised as a place to be alone with God, for confrontation and growth, Biblical references to the marketplace describe it as a public place where people mill about and greet one another, and where rulers can be encountered. Sick people were brought to the marketplace in the hopes that Jesus would heal them (Mark 6). Acts 17 describes how Paul “reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there” (ESV 2002: Acts 17:17). In effect, the Biblical marketplace was the socio-political business centre of the day. It is also the place where greed and commercialism (the ugly side of public life), are present<sup>25</sup>.

For Ramphela to describe the Cathedral as a “desert space in a marketplace” is to highlight its situation in Cape Town along the civic spine while also attesting to its spatial significance in another register: it is a spiritually endowed space. As part of the Cathedral, the Crypt Centre is not privately removed from the everyday activities of social functioning. Its tactical location within

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25 Thanks to Carolyn Hamilton for articulating this point.

Cape Town's marketplace inserts it as a place to witness, confront and moderate the exploitative potential of the marketplace. Its location troubles a separation between secular and sacred, public and private domains.

Ahrends summarizes its tactical, symbolic significance, describing the Crypt Centre as being a place of confrontation and reckoning: “We find when we're willing to go down and into, when we ride the waves of our own self, when we go down deep into the sort of sub-strata of our being...what we will find is our common foundations as human beings. That is my theology. So in a way, maybe it's very appropriate that the memory centre is down in the bowels of the Cathedral, on the basis that that's the foundation. [...] It could be a little journey that you make down underneath, and it's inward, and deeper, which is where we find our own – that's the journey we all need to make” (C. Ahrends, personal communication, July 2010).

## Conclusion

The Crypt Centre's involvement and partnership with the Cape Town heritage and tourism sector, as well as the methods used to secure funding, demonstrate how it tactically draws upon the mode and idea of the museum. For Ramphele to describe the Cathedral as a “desert space in the marketplace” is to position the Crypt Centre, as part of the Cathedral, as a spiritually-grounded space for confrontation and wrestling within the hustle and bustle that marks day-to-day economic, social, and political activities of downtown Cape Town. In this context, the combination of the Crypt Centre's physical location on the civic spine of the city, participation within the city's activities, and inclusion of Christian-based practices, asserts the contemporary legitimacy of the Cathedral. This demonstrates a counterpoint to Weber's separation between public-private, sacred-secular spaces and practices.

Hamilton (2009) argued for spaces of active public deliberation in South Africa in a context where the formal public sphere is corralled. The Iziko Museums complex, which dominates the civic space, largely presents a view of the past and of heritage that services national interests. By entering into a museum modality from a position within the civic spine, the Crypt Centre contributes an alternative space of engagement. It is not a counterpublic sphere, where activities are often marginalized and “have remained largely outside of the central political arena” (Hamilton 2009: 365). Albeit using different words, Ramphele and Ahrends' descriptions of the Crypt Centre resonate with Hamilton's definition of a capillary space for deliberative activity *within* the civic centre. As van Heuvel described, the Cathedral is a “Temple of Dialogue”, a place for reckoning,

growth and confrontation. Given the tactical position of the Crypt Centre and its engagement in public deliberation as a social justice ministry, I argue that the Crypt Centre is a capillary space in contemporary South Africa which positions itself as if to engage international visitors, the South African state, local citizens, and members of the Cathedral's congregation in deliberative activity through bearing witness.

## CHAPTER SIX

### Bearing Witness, Bearing Reality

*Collectively, the previous chapters have demonstrated the role of remembrance in the Crypt Centre and the Crypt Centre's navigation of inclusions and exclusions in its practice, as surfaced by activities related to the Bearing Witness exhibition. They have established the symbolic and physical significance of the Crypt Centre in Cape Town and its tactical use of museum practice. They have demonstrated ways in which its activities express its vision and establish it as a social justice ministry.*

*This chapter considers the Crypt Centre's approach to bearing witness. It reflects on forms of bearing witness in the Crypt Centre's space, contextualising the practice. It reveals the influence of multiple layers of remembrance and bearing witness in the Cathedral which inform the Crypt Centre. The chapter explains what informed the choice of the Bearing Witness exhibition to be hosted in March 2011. It reiterates how bearing witness in the Crypt Centre legitimates the Cathedral in contemporary South Africa. What emerges is a relationship between the practice of bearing witness and a modality of contemporary citizenship for South Africa, both within and beyond its borders.*

#### Introduction

During any Sunday morning service, the Cathedral contains an array of sights, sounds, smells and tastes. Songs of worship and praise to God are sung in English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa, frequently accompanied by an organ and choir. Between the songs, prayers and benedictions are said. Incense is swung towards people's bowed heads, rising and mingling in the trail of carbon that burns from lit candles. When one's eyes scan towards the front of the building, they may rest on a sculpture that hangs suspended in the air behind the altar, depicting a crucified Jesus with two women on either side.

The activity of a congregational service can be contrasted with the intermittent silence of the space during the week, where the drone from traffic on Wale Street is muffled in the arches of the edifice. On a dark wintry morning in June 2010, the Cathedral was quiet when I entered. I made my way past the rows of wooden chairs that formed the pews in the nave, which is where the congregation sits, and walked towards a side-chapel on the left-hand side of the sanctuary. I had arrived in time to attend the early morning Eucharist service.

I seated myself amongst a small group of about 20 people, minutes before the service began at 7.15am. Next to me were some regular morning service Cathedral parishioners, who included two homeless men. Also present were local and international visitors. Although St George's Cathedral holds morning services every day of the week, as well as a lunchtime Eucharist, the

particular attraction of this morning was that Archbishop Desmond Tutu was to conduct the service. He did so occasionally when in Cape Town.

Tutu led us through the Anglican liturgy of the said Eucharist service: scripture was read,<sup>26</sup> someone led us in the Prayers of the People<sup>27</sup> and at times those of us participating in the service could respond collectively, repeating phrases found in the *Book of Common Prayer* which provides the structure for the progression of the service. During the service, Tutu asked whether anyone present was new, and if so, where s/he was from. A number of us responded to his query. A South African woman stood up and explained that she had recently returned to the country after years of exile. Two Americans introduced themselves as exchange students. Another American couple spoke of being missionaries. The husband was visiting his wife in South Africa briefly, having recently left Burundi. I stood up to say I was from Pretoria, but had been studying in Cape Town for the last five years.

Tutu welcomed those from afar and near to South Africa and to the morning service before extending peace to us with “Peace be with you.” He invited all of us to pass the peace to one another. This meant greeting one another by hugging or shaking someone's hand. After passing the peace, Tutu blessed the sacraments of bread and wine and offered communion to those who wanted to receive it. I joined the queue that formed, receiving a crisp wafer to dip in wine before returning to my seat. Sitting quietly in the stillness of the moment, I watched as Tutu wiped clean the silver chalice that moments earlier had held the sacramental wine. I was struck by the tender rhythm of his hands, their contemplative caressing of the cup. Minutes later, these same hands grasped each of ours in a handshake as we departed from the side-chapel of the Cathedral to our respective activities of the day.

### **Bearing Witness Hinged on Remembrance**

In Chapter Two, I briefly considered the concept of bearing witness, distilling the way in which it is interlinked to practices of remembrance, as well as its transformative significance in a Christian context. Whether in court, in a dramatic performance or in a religious context, bearing witness requires observation, accuracy and intentional recounting. Tom Heuerman and Diane Olson (2000) describe bearing witness as an action that “requires that we experience the life of another

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26 The Anglican Church uses a Lectionary that provides a schedule for daily scripture readings. These usually include four readings: Old Testament, Psalm, New Testament (excluding the Gospels), and Gospel. All parishes in a given Anglican province follow the Lectionary that is adopted by a given Province (Bratcher, D. 2010:np).

27 These prayers range from praying for the parish leadership to local government to international concerns.

and then take compassionate action. The action we take, our moment of authenticity, requires courage, and we may have to bear the results of our courage and action” (Heuerman and Olson 2000:1). Implicit in their description is the association of bearing witness with authenticity and truth.

The details in the aforementioned descriptive passage allude to ways in which the death and resurrection of Jesus is remembered in the space and practices of the Cathedral: besides the Cathedral being built in the shape of a cross and accompanying the visual reminder in sculpture of Jesus' death, is the verbal injunction and practiced outworking in communion of bearing witness to Christ. In effect, the regular practice of remembering Jesus' death and resurrection through communion is a culmination and convergence of remembrance and bearing witness within Christianity: while engaged in the act of remembrance of Jesus, people bear witness to their faith in Him as well as to the significance of his death and resurrection.

In Chapter Four I demonstrated how, as an extension of the Cathedral, the Crypt Centre uses the Cathedral's practices towards implementing its vision. Similarly to the way in which the Cathedral is a place of bearing witness, to enter the Crypt Centre is to enter a place that inducts one both explicitly and implicitly in an act of bearing witness. The following seeks to understand in greater detail the role of bearing witness in relation to the vision and practice of the social justice ministry.

### **Why *Bearing Witness*?**

A point of departure to understand the presence of bearing witness in the Crypt Centre is to articulate the choice of the *Bearing Witness* exhibition. The Concept Proposal records the Crypt Centre's focus on three themes: (i) the Cathedral in relation to the City; (ii) Witness and Protest and (iii) the relationship between Church and State (Concept Proposal 2008:7). The “Witness and Protest” theme intends to examine “from theological perspectives what is meant by being fully human – in all its complexity including our value bases and shadow sides” (Concept Proposal 2008:10).

The proposal lists a selection of events as potential lenses through which to explore the Witness and Protest theme: “Forced removals (Crossroads, Nyanga and KTC battles) linked to the current land reform questions; political transformation through civil society action – UDF and student protests (Purple Rain and release of Nelson Mandela campaign); the End Conscription Campaign: just war – war in the townships and on the borders, the South African War, WWI &

WWII; and establishing Democratic Governance; the TRC and justice and reconciliation today; Current issues – Aids (TAC and Chatt), refugees, the Holocaust and housing (people living on the street and Delft); Robben Island and the leper ministry, women's struggles, sexuality, international issues such as renditions and torture, and struggles for democratic rights in other countries" (Concept Proposal 2008:10). What the Concept Proposal conveys is the way in which remembering forms of witness and protest in the past were anticipated as entry points for examining current socio-political issues, such as land reform questions and struggles for democratic rights. This provides a primary level of explanation as to the connection between remembrance, bearing witness, and concerns for social justice.

Maart explained that the choice to pursue the *Bearing Witness* exhibition needs to be understood in relation to the *1989 Peace March* exhibition. She described the *1989 Peace March* exhibition as "softer." It worked well as a first exhibition because it galvanised around reconciliation and triumph. Representing an event in which many were included made it accessible to a broad audience. By contrast, the *Bearing Witness* exhibition is sharper, it has an edge. In her view, it has the potential to raise many issues, including the impact of the Coloured Labour Preference Law, exclusions from the city and the continued fight for inclusion of Africans in the city. It surfaces the role of women and family in the anti-apartheid struggle. It confronts the way in which apartheid was divisive along racial, gender and spatial distinctions, and can use it as an entry point to consider current divisive activities.

Maart explained that in part, what motivated the choice of exhibiting the 1982 fast was the fact that African stories in the Western Cape are often shadow stories that have been short-changed and are not frequently publicly visible in Cape Town. In addition, the 1982 fast showcased the story of a group of people as opposed to an individual. Not only did the collective experience appeal, but it depicted the experience of ordinary people as opposed to focusing on clergymen and religious leaders. Furthermore it illustrated the effect of the role of deep belief (L. Maart, personal communication, 21 June 2010).

Maart's reasons for the contents of the *Bearing Witness* project and the Concept Proposal imply an understanding that marginalised stories are valuable, that depicting the experiences of ordinary people has contemporary salience, and that the issues pertaining to the 1982 fast still have public significance in contemporary circumstances. Together these further demonstrate the Crypt Centre's relationship between remembrance, bearing witness and social justice concerns.

## Exhibiting Bearing Witness

Having established the Crypt Centre's reasons for choosing the *Bearing Witness* exhibition, let us consider the convergence of multiple registers of bearing witness with the socialisation role of exhibitions at work in the Crypt Centre space. Although it is impossible to account for how every visitor responds to the exhibitions, examining possible registers of bearing witness surface what people may respond to as “familiar grammar and vocabulary” (Magubane 2004: 48). This provides a foundation from which to consider some of the elements envisioned in the modality of citizenship offered by the Crypt Centre.

One must remember that at the time of writing this thesis, the *Bearing Witness* exhibition was incomplete. Thus, it is impossible to state definitively how people respond to the registers of bearing witness presented through the *Bearing Witness* exhibition. However, there remains the opportunity to consider the possibilities of bearing witness in the space (to which one is inducted whether or not the focus of the exhibition is bearing witness), as well as through the content developed towards the *Bearing Witness* exhibition.

Some insight can be gleaned by reflecting on responses to the *1989 Peace March* exhibitions. Educational Officers, who facilitate the Crypt Centre experience by offering tours and general information to visitors, told me about some of the responses people had had to the *1989 Peace March* exhibit. Someone recognised her father in a photograph and planned to ensure that he comes to the exhibition. A woman who identified strongly with her Afrikaans background explained how she felt obligated to view such exhibitions but also struggled to know how to respond to feeling guilty about the role of Afrikanerdom in apartheid, given her positive identification with her background. An Educational Officer described a family that peeked in at the door, but upon seeing the photographs commented that while the photographs were good, it was time to move on. They refused to engage more with the Educational Officer. Another visitor burst into tears, overcome as the photographs triggered old memories that had had little opportunity to surface. Although pregnant with local significance, the *1989 Peace March* exhibition resonated with international visitors too. A visitor from Ireland drew parallels between South Africa's apartheid legacy and the consequences of conflict in his home context. A visitor from Palestine commented that she drew hope from the peace march story for contemporary Palestinian concerns.

The aforementioned demonstrate the way in which the *1989 Peace March* exhibition resonated differently with people who had intimate knowledge of the event, as well as those from further afield. Emotive responses varied, soliciting appreciation, tears and aversion. What this

illustrates is how the *1989 Peace March* exhibition offered familiar vocabularies and grammars that resonate with visitors, enabling some to draw analogies within and beyond democratic contexts.

### **Bearing Witness to Extraordinary Ordinaries**

In light of the effect that the *1989 Peace March* exhibition had on some visitors, let us consider some of the registers of bearing witness that may surface through the *Bearing Witness* exhibition content. An explicit register of the exhibition is to bear witness to the plight of the fasters in 1982: to make meaning of their experience in the past. This possibility is dual-layered, because a visitor is invited to view an exhibit which itself depicts men and women engaged in a form of bearing witness – they fasted to bear witness to their plight. A visitor is inducted into bearing witness to ordinary people taking extraordinary measures in circumstances wrought with socio-political injustices.

The proliferation of newspaper articles, photographs and other memorabilia from 1982 record the extent to which people outside the Cathedral participated in responding to the fast: local and international journalists, parishioners, politicians, clergymen and other South African citizens bore witness, or gave meaning to, the fasters' act of bearing witness. Thus, alongside demonstrating ordinary people taking extraordinary actions to bear witness to injustice, the contents of the exhibition opens the possibility that there is room for people to bear witness today to the plight of others.

Added to this register are the layers of historical and daily spiritual practices of bearing witness and remembrance that happen as part of normative activities within the Cathedral and are detailed in preceding chapters. For some, the spiritual practices of prayer and fasting in the contents of the exhibition illustrate a familiar grammar and vocabulary of bearing witness. Whether or not this resonates with the viewer familiar with it as a faith-based practice, by citing a vocabulary of bearing witness to circumstances with obvious injustices, the contents of the *Bearing Witness* exhibition uses grammar and vocabulary that extends beyond religious practice.

Not only does the content of the *Bearing Witness* exhibition depict forms of bearing witness, but during the research process, research facilitators, clergymen and others engaged in the practice of bearing witness by listening to the recounting of the experience of the 1982 fast, as described in Chapter Three. This form of bearing witness resonates with other processes of bearing witness that are familiar features of the democratic South Africa' landscape, such as the TRC of 1996 to 98. This multiply-cited register depicts bearing witness as a normative practice beyond faith-based contexts.

It resonates as an active practice within a post-apartheid context.

One of the arguments presented in Chapter Three about the role of narration was that narrating facilitates the re-establishment of a sense of meaning and identity in the wake of trauma. It is arguable that the value of narrating the past is also beneficial in non-traumatic contexts. Narrating any significant events can be a way to establish or re-affirm meaning. This is enabled by someone bearing witness, or validating the narration. By viewing exhibitions hosted by the Crypt Centre that depict and commemorate the Cathedral's role in the past, one is invited to bear witness to the Crypt Centre's narration of the Cathedral's history. A visitor bearing witness to the Cathedral's history validates its contemporary significance as a place of bearing witness.

A more implicit register of bearing witness is the invitation to bear witness to the conditions of the 1982 fast with the possibility of drawing analogies to present day circumstances. The previous chapters have revealed the ways in which the Crypt Centre intends to use the contents of the *Bearing Witness* exhibition as a platform from which to address current-day socio-political concerns. There is the possibility of drawing inescapable analogies between the past role of the Cathedral to its present role of bearing witness, as well as between past socio-political conditions and present concerns. In this way, the Crypt Centre positions itself to be a space for “watchful witnesses in our young democracy” (Ramphela 2010: np). Like Magubane's account of the ethnographic exhibits that helped precipitate a shift amongst British citizenry, the invitation to bear witness to the *Bearing Witness* exhibition comes with the expectation that it may elicit cognitive shifts amongst the viewers, particularly by drawing analogies between current issues of housing and influx control in the Western Cape and beyond.

### **Returning to Citizenship**

If Birmingham's (2008) argument stands, then the bearing witness that happens in and through the Crypt Centre's space, and particularly the *Bearing Witness* exhibition process, exemplifies contemporary democratic engagement. This legitimises the Cathedral as a contemporary democratic space. However, whereas the Crypt Centre exemplifies Birmingham's argument on one hand, at the same time it complicates it. While it might be that the practice of bearing witness is fundamental to democracy, the contents of the *Bearing Witness* exhibition demonstrate that it is not exclusive to democracy. The bearing witness of the 1982 fast took place in a non-democratic context. The analogies drawn from it have relevance beyond the democratic South African context. In fact, the Crypt Centre assumes they are relevant to an audience beyond South

Africa's borders.

This was underlined by the Cathedral's assumed normativity to be intentionally inclusive, which, by extension, informs the Crypt Centre's practices. What emerged is that the Crypt Centre imagines itself as engaging with an extensive audience, while at the same time negotiating contingencies and parameters of inclusion. The intentional inclusivity was reiterated during the service when Tutu welcomed visitors from near and afar, through the Prayers of the People which were inclusive of local and global concerns. This practice of intentional inclusivity extends into the ethos of the contents of the *Bearing Witness* exhibition, which implicitly conveys that there is the value in bearing witness to injustices, regardless of the form of government in place. Or, put otherwise, it assumes that all forms of government benefit from citizens bearing witness.

Furthermore, by contrast to the secularism assumed in Birmingham's argument, the contents of the Crypt Centre's exhibition are grounded in Christian practice. Birmingham's model for bearing witness assumes a secularist reality that inadequately accounts for the Crypt Centre. As demonstrated in previous chapters, the Crypt Centre functions as a capillary space that functions within a spiritually-grounded reality.

Having asserted that the Crypt Centre functions as a capillary space, let us return to the matter of the intended areas of address included in the deliberative activity. Although it is possible through my analysis to recognise potential areas (eg. tourists, the Cathedral congregation, the South African state), there are some points worth noting. First, given that the *Bearing Witness* exhibition was not exhibited at the point of the termination of my research, I cannot confirm whether the imagined areas of address were fully actualized for this exhibition. In addition, part of the intention of my research was to tease out the assumed "our" in the Crypt Centre's plan to interpret heritage, witness the present and envision the future. This question sought to examine the constituents engaged in the capillary space. On one hand, what emerged in response to the query were implicit areas of address which I have made explicit through my analysis. On the other hand, what emerged was that although the Crypt Centre spoke on behalf of an all-inclusive "we", it was in the process of articulating more explicitly its areas of address during the process of my research. This was made aptly visible during a committee meeting where two website designers presented their proposal for the Crypt Centre's webpage and conversation turned to consider the question of who was included as part of the intended audience. Furthermore, this process of articulation took place in the context of constant navigation, both implicitly and explicitly, of the parameters of inclusion in the Cathedral, which holds in tension the fact that inclusion in membership is based on identifying with particular

beliefs and one of those beliefs in practice is the expression of an ethos of intentional inclusivity. Lastly, van Heuvel's mandate for a cathedral to be a "Sign of Pro-existence for the whole community" indicates an assumption that informs the Cathedral, and by extension, the Crypt Centre's, imaginings. It assumes its relevance to an extensive community, beyond close proximity and local concerns. Therefore, the Cathedral, and by extension, the Crypt Centre, seek to engage with a broad and intentionally inclusive area of address. However, to demonstrate the Crypt Centre's intentionality is not to argue that it does in effect have this extended reach. Rather, it purposes to give insight into the normative assumptions by which the Cathedral, and by extension, the Crypt Centre function.

### **Conclusion**

The Crypt Centre acknowledges that "what is meant by being fully human" includes "all its complexity including our value bases and shadow sides" (Concept Proposal 2008:10). What emerges from the registers of bearing witness at work in the Cathedral, the Crypt Centre and the contents of its exhibitions, is a positioning of engagement that may enable a visitor to draw on various analogies from a number of different registers of bearing witness that resonate with his or her own circumstances. Portrayed in the multiple registers is the inclusion of the ordinary and the marginalised, as well as the significance of a spiritually-grounded modality that is socially engaged in bearing witness to present socio-political concerns. The Crypt Centre, functioning in the imaginative mode of an extensive area of address, presents this depiction as if it is readily available to people, assuming that it will resonate with affinity or with conflict, within and beyond the South African context.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### Conclusion

The Cathedral Crypt Memory and Witness Centre Concept Proposal and Development/ Business Plan's Project Summary reads “The Cathedral Crypt Memory and Witness Centre is a proposed new ministry of the St George's Cathedral Parish, with a vision to create an inspiring and sacred space of dialogue, hope and healing, where the Anglican ethos is expressed and a prophetic voice concerning social justice is formed and humanity in its fullness is celebrated and expressed” (Concept Proposal 2008: 1). The document details the Crypt Centre's working principles. These include acknowledging that the project will foreground aspects of history that are relevant to the Crypt Centre's vision, emphasise the “(often intangible)” human experience, consider history in light of present issues and the future, aim to dynamically reflect multiple narratives even if contested, embed itself in an Anglican Christian ecclesial theological tradition, reflect an ethos of inclusivity, emphasise the Cathedral's rich symbolism and establish links with other places of significance in the surrounding Cape Town area and the Cathedral's international community (Concept Proposal 2008:4,5).

The preceding chapters have demonstrated ways in which some of these working principles have surfaced in practice, particularly in relation to four themes: remembrance, the parameters of inclusions and exclusions, the tactical positioning of the Crypt Centre, and the role of bearing witness. Having established the interlinking between remembrance and bearing witness, the study revealed the thickly layered practice of bearing witness that surfaced in the Cathedral's and Crypt Centre's activities. It demonstrated how bearing witness is an integral and normative part of Christian practices that take place in the Cathedral, showing how the regular practice of sharing communion at a Eucharist service was a form of bearing witness. The fasting which took place in 1982 was another example. The research process for the *Bearing Witness* exhibition included forms of bearing witness undertaken in story-telling days and individual interviews. The exhibition display based on the 1982 fast will itself bear witness to a past event. Viewers of the *Bearing Witness* exhibition are invited to bear witness to three things: the experience of the fasters, the activities of the Cathedral and others during the 1982 fast, and the Cathedral's current-day activities. This thesis shows that these multiple layers of the practice of bearing witness validate the experiences of many individuals, validate the role of faith, and validate the contemporary role of the Cathedral.

Furthermore, the study reveals that the Crypt Centre establishes itself as a faith-based public space that tactically draws on two public sphere resources of being located on the civic spine and engaging in museum exhibition practice. Through remembrance and museum modality, the Crypt Centre creates analogies between past and present circumstances through which it seeks to socialise viewers of the exhibition space, moving and transforming them. This is done by seeking to present a modality of citizenship for parishioners, participants and people from further afield. The constitution of this modality will be considered shortly.

A further, unanticipated form of socialisation surfaced. The facilitators and participants of the *Bearing Witness* research process underwent degrees of transformation and education. This is demonstrated by the various adjustments made by the Crypt Centre as to the focus of the project (e.g. first assuming that the fast was associated with Crossroads) as well as momentary movement towards healing through narrating experiences.

Consideration of the use of “we” and “us” at the story-telling days and the forms of inclusion expressed in literature generated by the Crypt Centre, as well as in the Cathedral’s socio-political history, alerted the reader to the polyvalence of the shifting signifiers of “we” and “us.” Attending to the practice of establishing a temporary team, as well as the long-term navigation of inclusions and exclusions in the Cathedral and in the Crypt Centre, demonstrated the negotiation of a tension between an expressed “ethos of inclusivity” and some of the difficulties of putting it into practice. While seeking to be relevant and accommodating to visitors from within and beyond South Africa, the navigation of these complexities continues in the Crypt Centre.

### **“Our” Citizenship**

The study revealed that, conceptualised as a capillary space, the Crypt Centre is emerging as a place for dialogue and deliberative activity. In particular, it grapples with the question of citizenship. Underlying the Crypt Centre's modality for citizenship is an assumption of intentional inclusivity.

The inclusivity is informed by an assumption of shared brokenness, as defined by Fr Lester and Ahrends, as well as a need for healing and a need to have validated belonging. Implicit in the Crypt Centre is a shared responsibility towards needs and issues. The Crypt Centre's intentionally inclusive “our” extends this responsibility beyond a South African audience to international viewers. Although locally significant, the practice of intentional inclusion in which the Crypt Centre engages moves beyond state borders. In this way, the Crypt Centre assumes and presents a modality

of inclusive citizenship on a global plane.

While this may sound appealing, the attitude of inclusivity has limitations. Beliefs, attitudes and assumptions are critical in guiding people's choices. For some, whether or not the Crypt Centre hosts exhibitions that might be of interest to them, its location in the crypt of a Cathedral can be unappealing, given their own assumptions and beliefs about Christianity. Furthermore, although seeking to be locally and internationally inclusive, currently exhibitions are only in English, which in effect excludes large portions of the local and international population. As described by the reactions of some to the *1989 Peace March* exhibition, visitors are not always receptive to the contents of exhibitions. As with any exhibition that depicts the accounts of experiences of multiple individuals, there is also a matter of making decisions as to what to include, which could inadvertently exclude experiences of significance. Regardless of who the assumed or intended areas of address include, the efficacy of engagement with the group is contingent on the group. Thus, although situated as a space inviting dialogue and deliberation, its success depends upon the ways in which people choose to engage in the space and the willingness to be transformed through the engagement.

Nevertheless, the approach of the Crypt Centre towards remembrance, bearing witness and negotiating inclusion and exclusion extends some of the parameters of previous bodies of literature on the role of exhibition spaces (eg. Karp, Bennett) and explorations about citizenship in contemporary circumstances (eg. Hamilton, Birmingham). Whereas these omit the sacred and spiritual as part of capillary spheres, museums or public spaces, the Crypt Centre's vision and practice, as surfaced through the *Bearing Witness* exhibition, indicates the contrary. It demonstrates a synergy between personally-held beliefs and engagement in public life, integrating belief in the spiritual with publicly expressed practices. This challenges a predominant and pervasively influential line of thinking since the Enlightenment, notably expressed by Weber (1946).

I return to Hamilton's (2009) conclusion that “to speak, then, one must be secure in one's citizenship. And to be silenced or to self-silence is to be denied, or to deny, one's citizenship and to open up the possibility of the denial of our common humanity” (2009: 372). By contrast, as a capillary space, the Crypt Centre is a place that exhibits in order to secure legitimacy and to explore and express a form of citizenship. It does so by depicting and modeling imaginings of what it is to be fully human. This imagining, which is also modeled through the research process towards the *Bearing Witness* exhibition, includes being socio-politically aware, intentionally inclusive, and actively involved in deliberative activity and bearing witness to the socio-political issues of the day.

The Crypt Centre invites its imagined areas of address and its visitors to draw analogies from and through acts of remembrance to consider what lies beyond what reality is telling them as it witnesses to them. It invites them to be watchful witnesses.

### **Postscript**

There can be a fear that the hours poured into research towards a thesis will be lost on a shelf, collecting dust, hidden within the relative thinness of the final draft. By contrast, the Crypt Centre has graciously engaged with my work – even in draft form. Perchance, one draft reached some Crypt Centre committee members just before their strategic planning meeting, held in early January 2011. I was informed that (although still half-baked!) the draft helped committee members to sharpen their conceptual framework. It alerted them of the need to carefully consider the Crypt Centre's identity, navigating what relationships it wants to develop with other entities, given its tactical position. The Crypt Centre is a work in progress that continues after this thesis is submitted. It will unfurl in time.

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