Voice for Truth:

Archbishop Denis Hurley and the Second Vatican Council

by

Brian Thornton

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Abstract

Archbishop Denis Hurley of Durban identified himself as a son of the Second Vatican Council when he said that the council was the greatest experience of his whole life. With that claim as its base this thesis explores how the council defined the archbishop’s life. His time before the council provided experiences and influences that made him ready for the reality of the council. During the council he was informed and formed by his contact with other bishops and theologians. The council provided him with a theological underpinning for two themes which had been germinating in him since his student days. After the council, armed with his new theological understanding, he moved ahead with promoting the two themes. He had been impressed with the newly recovered understanding that the Church was the Body of Christ and all in the Church, clergy and laity, having God-given dignity, had their part to play in the mission of the Church. The second aspect of this understanding was that the God-given dignity of all meant that the Church was obliged to work for the common dignity of all. In his country, South Africa, the logical consequence was that the Church had to object forcefully and vigorously against the “intrinsically evil” segregationist policy of apartheid. This was nothing less than fulfilling the commandment of Christ that everyone was a neighbour. As a bishop, successor of the Apostles, he accepted it as his responsibility to lead the charge.
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That splendid son of the soil, as they say, a great Christian leader, Archbishop Hurley had a lovely story that he tells of three archbishops standing in front of the altar and they are all beating their breasts and saying, "Lord, I'm not worthy, Lord I'm not worthy." Then the church cleaner comes along and stands next to them and he also beats his breast and says, “Lord I'm not worthy, Lord I'm not worthy.” Then one of the archbishops nudges his friend and says; "Just look who thinks he's not worthy.”

Introduction

Broad Setting

They gathered in a rugby stadium in Durban on 28 February 2004. They numbered “more than five thousand people.”¹ After the speeches and eulogies the coffin containing the body of their Archbishop Emeritus was taken and buried in the Lady Chapel in Emmanuel Cathedral. He had come full circle in 64 years. His first appointment after ordination was to the same cathedral as junior curate. Curiously, his first appointment as a parish priest came after he resigned as archbishop. His episcopal successor allowed him to take the reins at Emmanuel Cathedral, a position he held for nine years.

Also present in the cathedral were thirty ladies of The Black Sash. They were an organisation of middle class white women who found the system of apartheid morally repugnant. Starting in 1955 they mounted a series of silent protests outside Parliament and other government buildings. They wore black sashes draped from right shoulder to left hip and carried placards denouncing apartheid. The archbishop had frequently joined them in their silent protests and they had made him an honorary member. This time they came not to condemn apartheid but to praise the archbishop. One of their placards read “Voice for Truth.”²

Denis Eugene Hurley (1915-2004) served as Ordinary of the Archdiocese of Durban (known as the Vicariate Apostolic of Natal until 1951) from his episcopal ordination in 1947 to the appointment of his successor in 1992. This was almost the same period as the lifetime of apartheid, from the general election by mostly white voters in 1948 when the National

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¹ George Purves, Church and City honour Archbishop Denis Hurley. (OMI Information. Rome: General Administration of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate no. 430, March 2004), 1.
² Paddy Kearney, Guardian of the Light: Denis Hurley Renewing the Church, Opposing Apartheid. (New York: Continuum, 2009), 326.
Party took office to the general election with universal adult suffrage in 1994.

Early in this period, in January 1959, Pope John XXIII announced his intention to convene a general council. Archbishop Hurley attended all four sessions of the Second Vatican Council. He made sixteen interventions, ten of which were spoken and six written. In addition, he signed his name to four interventions of other bishops, two spoken and two written. Given that some bishops did not speak at all during the council, the archbishop’s contribution can be seen as not insignificant.

This thesis takes the archbishop’s participation in the council as its foundation. It will examine what influenced him in the years before the council, including his membership in the Central Preparatory Commission. It will look at the ways in which the council itself influenced him and how he began to implement the teachings of the council in his Archdiocese of Durban. This will be considered in parallel with his activities as a vigorous opponent of the South African government’s policy of apartheid.

The first session of the council took place just over fifty years ago. Those who hold it within living memory are now a minority and there are very few participants in the council who are still alive. The anniversary has prompted celebration and reflection, and much commentary in the popular press. Some of it has been well informed. Much of it has been concerned with progress, reflecting whether the implementation of the council’s teachings has been successful. Within the milieu of the fiftieth anniversary and the vast outpouring of information in books, articles and commentaries this thesis is intended to make a useful contribution about an individual council father. His council experience motivated Archbishop Hurley to pursue activities which later made a difference. His record of participation in the

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3. The body established by Pope John XXIII in 1960, which was charged with coordinating the preparation of the position papers to be presented to the bishops at the Council.
council and afterwards deserves this further attention.

This is the broad setting in which the thesis is made. One short meeting with Archbishop Hurley (less than a minute) and fifteen years of living in South Africa, where he was constantly in the news for his anti-apartheid activities, have prompted my interest. But it goes a step further. The South African news media almost totally failed to report the archbishop’s activities implementing the decrees of the council. That is understandable, because defying a government is certainly more newsworthy than encouraging the laity to take a participative role in the Church. Yet, that participative role, understood in its wider context as defined by the council, should have had the laity working day by day towards justice for all and the eventual abolishment of apartheid.

Archbishop Hurley has made the claim that Vatican II was the greatest experience of his life. Years later he was to describe his great passions as implementing the council and opposing apartheid. It is no coincidence that the Kearney biography makes this point in the supporting line of its title: “Renewing the Church, Opposing Apartheid.” It appears worthwhile therefore to consider the connection between the archbishop’s experiences at the council and the two passions which followed so abundantly. The enthusiasm he put into these two great passions evidently derives from the vigour of his words at the council. It points to an underlying determination arising from exposure in his seminary days to the “see, judge, act” method of the Young Christian Workers. This approach of Fr. Joseph Cardijn strongly impressed Seminarian Hurley because, years later, he would write that “the method burst as a huge revolution on the Church.”

4. “The laity, however, are given this special vocation: to make the church present and fruitful in those places and circumstances where it is only through them that it can become the salt of the earth” (Lumen Gentium, 33).

Thesis Statement

On this basis the thesis seeks to demonstrate that Archbishop Denis Hurley pursued a consistently independent way of thinking before, during and after the Second Vatican Council. This independent way of thinking, reinforced by his experience at the council, led him to take increasingly proactive theological and political stances in two disparate endeavours: implementing the decisions of the council and opposing the policy of apartheid.

Procedure

The thesis follows a chronological order, building up enough evidence to justify its conclusion. It is divided into five chapters.

Chapter One: Early Formation

A description of his early formation and social background, will allow a portrait of Denis Hurley the man to emerge. His father was a lighthouse keeper. The remote location of many lighthouses meant that social activity was necessarily and primarily found in the family. The archbishop’s description of his family life will provide valuable information about what shaped him. It will show how his early life influenced his entry into the scholasticate. The South African political landscape will loom as an inescapable feature of Denis Hurley’s youth. The lesson for him that the Church is the Body of Christ revealed the fundamental equality of all people in the eyes of God. His friendship with Ceylonese Oblates was an important formative element in his growing awareness of the inequality of apartheid.

Chapter Two: Before the Council

Father Hurley was, in turn, a junior curate, scholasticate superior, vicar apostolic and archbishop. The archbishop’s actions and contributions before the council will show his willingness to think and act independently. They nourished the development of his theological positions. He opened a process of consultation, starting with the priests of his
diocese. He began acting on his emerging understanding of the worth of those classified as second class citizens (black South Africans). He faced opposition, of course, but this seemed to buttress his belief that he was on the right track. He was motivated by the conviction that it was God’s work to treat individuals with courtesy, respect and equality. The writings of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, with their synthesis of the material and spiritual worlds, gripped Archbishop Hurley vividly. They had a deep impact on his approach to and in the council.

Chapter Three: During the Council

Archbishop Hurley’s first contribution, as with most bishops, was his “suggestions and wishes” of what the council might profitably place on its agenda. Within the Central Preparatory Commission he was soon identified as one of the more progressive bishops. But he was disheartened to discover that the administration was loaded in favour of the status quo. So, his first interventions in the council itself voiced strong opposition to the process. These early interventions provide evidence of his independent style. Additional indications emerge in other writings at the time. His support of juridic rights for episcopal conferences and his feelings about the direction of the council also correlated with his independent personality. Concurrently he was becoming more theologically aware of the dignity and freedom of each person, created in the image of God. His ecclesiology mirrored this, in that he favoured consultative collegiality and greater freedom of action for local ordinaries.

Chapter Four: After the Council

Archbishop Hurley began the implementation of council teachings in his Archdiocese of Durban. He continued and intensified his opposition to apartheid, and stared down the government’s heavy-handed response. His actions in these two spheres, implementing the council and opposing apartheid, are indicative of the independent thinking that had been developing since before the council. We will see his understanding of the dignity of each
human being and his extension of this basic idea to the laity. Notable too are his unfolding ecclesiology of the local church, his understanding of collegiality and his attempt to persuade Pope Paul VI to adopt closer episcopal consultation. Of particular interest is his opposition to *Humane Vitae*, which he put in writing to the pope.\(^6\) Even more interesting is the pope’s surprisingly open response.

**Chapter Five: Summary and Conclusion**

Archbishop Hurley received many awards and honours. These, together with what others wrote and said about him, provide evidence supporting the thesis. His early life experiences and influences, and his participation in Vatican II, “the greatest experience of my whole life”,\(^7\) re-oriented his thinking. No longer could he be a comfortable and compliant white South African. The consequences were his strong opposition to apartheid and his restlessness to implement the council’s decrees, particularly those dealing with lay involvement. Observations and judgements of the archbishop’s words and actions will show whether he was a significant protagonist in the council and its aftermath, and in the ongoing struggle against apartheid. I will consider what he did well and what he left unsaid or undone, what might have been said differently and what attitude he took to his critics. The purpose is to demonstrate Archbishop Hurley’s independent manner of thinking. So an assessment, or critique, of his words and actions forms an indispensible part of establishing the thesis.

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6. *Humanae Vitae* (1968) is the Encyclical letter of Pope Paul VI on the Regulation of Birth. It achieved notoriety because of the phrase in paragraph 11 “that each and every marriage act must remain open in itself to the procreation of human life.”

Chapter One: Early Formation

Preamble

Denis Hurley was born in 1915 to Irish immigrant parents in Cape Town.¹ His birthplace was unremarkable except for the singular benefit it afforded him many years later. When he became too troublesome for the government the natural remedy was to deport him as an undesirable immigrant. But they could not do so because he was South African born, a white South African who opposed the policy of white supremacy. His father had served in the Royal Navy and, when his ship was docked near Cape Town in 1906, had bought himself out of service by paying the required fee of £10.

Lighthouse Years

The former sailor took up service as a lighthouse keeper. He was the assistant keeper at Cape Point, south of Cape Town, when Denis was born. His mother had travelled via Simon’s Town to Cape Town for the birth, 64 kilometres by donkey cart and train. Cape Point is now a popular tourist attraction with a well paved road leading to it. But the observant visitor can see how bleak it must have been in 1915. In 1918 his father took the family to his new appointment at the lighthouse on Robben Island. It was nine kilometres north of Cape Town and within sight of the city. The island later became famous as the site of the prison which housed Nelson Mandela. It became a standing joke between the two of them, years afterward, that Denis Hurley had beaten Nelson Mandela to the island!²

His memories of Cape Point were sparse. His memories of Robben Island were more vivid. On the short voyage from Cape Town to the island he learned that he was prone to

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seasickness, “a poor showing for the son of a sailor.”³ It was only after the Second World War that a newly developed pill came to his rescue. The early influence of his mother is quite evident. “She lived her faith and communicated it easily to her children.”⁴ His father was the more reticent of the two but was, nevertheless, “a convinced solid Catholic.”⁵ Weekly Mass was not possible on the sparsely populated island but a priest sailed over from Cape Town once a month.

In 1923 the family transferred to a lighthouse in East London, on the East Coast, and a year later they moved north to a lighthouse about 40 kilometres south of Durban, also on the East Coast. Schooling was a problem and the only solution was boarding school. His mother’s influence was felt again. “For mother only one kind of boarding school was acceptable, a Catholic one.”⁶ The school was a small one where his sister and he were the only boarders; the day-scholars numbered only fourteen. So they all received a great deal of individual attention. At the completion of primary school the normal custom was to find employment, but this was not an option for the Hurley children. Both parents realised that a lack of secondary education had been a handicap for them. And they had to take account of the question hovering over all when Denis was twelve years old.

“Besides, in my case, there was talk of the priesthood.”⁷ Years later he was not sure how the idea developed. Perhaps it was “of maternal inspiration.”⁸ What did remain in his memory was that many Irish mothers had aspirations that their sons would enter the priesthood. Once they noticed the first hint of interest they would pursue a course of encouragement and engage the Irish religious sisters to add a prayerful boost. So it was off to

³ Hurley, Memories, 16.
⁴ Hurley, Memories, 19.
⁵ Hurley, Memories, 19.
⁶ Hurley, Memories, 23.
⁷ Hurley, Memories, 24.
⁸ Hurley, Memories, 24.
secondary school, boarding again, in Newcastle in Northern Natal, about 380 kilometres northwest of their lighthouse.

There he met another influence in his life, a French priest who had been transferred to the warmer climate in an attempt to save his life. He had been suffering from tuberculosis of the bone. The priest’s English was still in the learning stage and he hit on a clever scheme to help himself and to encourage three boys who had shown some interest in the priesthood. He invited the three of them each weekend to polish the English of the homily he planned to deliver on Sunday morning.

Then disaster stuck the family. Denis’ father, disciplined and hard working, had a breakdown and was treated at a mental hospital for over a year. The result was an early and reduced pension at age 49. The family struggled financially and Denis’ mother was forced to return to her earlier trade of dressmaking. Paying school fees became a problem but the Dominican Sisters of Newcastle made an accommodation. The details are not recorded, perhaps because Denis did not know them. But he does remember that in his case the Vicar Apostolic of Natal, Bishop Delalle “was footing the bill for me.”

**The Political Landscape: A Reflection**

At the end of this writer’s working day in South Africa, I went home in one direction to my white residential area. The black people who worked for the same company went home in a different direction to their black residential areas. In its stark simplicity that was one sad result of the apartheid system. Historically black and white had lived in different residential areas throughout Africa, and had separate schools and hospitals. In due course the demarcation lines became blurred. When independence came to African countries the racial distinctions became economic distinctions. The wealthier black residents had begun moving

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into the better residential areas while many white managers and administrators simply packed up and went “home.”

South Africa was different. At the risk of oversimplification, two factors fed into the difference. The first white settlers arrived at the Cape of Good Hope in the middle of the 17th Century. By the middle of the 20th Century their descendants were in their twelfth generation, roughly speaking. Europe meant nothing to them and they had lost all right of return. The larger grouping of them had developed their own language, Afrikaans, which was not easily understood in Europe. They were sometimes referred to as “White Africans.” The second difference was that the government which came to power in 1948 began legislating racial separation. It put laws into effect to entrench the social reality, to enforce segregation.

The principal behind the legislation was that the different races should live separately but equally. That required separate schools, universities, hospitals, municipalities, sports clubs and so forth. The complication was that there were not just two racial groups in South Africa, Black and White. No, there were separate groups, defined by law, for Indians (descendants of labourers imported from India to work the sugar plantations), Coloureds (mixed race descendants of the early white arrivals and the Hottentots they encountered) and Cape Malays (a group in Cape Town who had arrived on Dutch ships returning from the Spice Islands). To add further complexity there were small groups of Chinese and Lebanese immigrants. These two groups were not large enough to sustain wholly separate facilities. Pragmatically and quietly they lived in “white” residential areas and used “white” facilities without hindrance from their neighbours.

Leaving aside the practical problem of building all those separate facilities the reality of apartheid was that it legislated for separate but equal, but quickly became separate and unequal. One example out of many hundreds will suffice. My daily commute was twenty
minutes. Most of my black fellow workers travelled by train three hours each way from and to the black residential areas, which had been deliberately built far away and out of sight of white sensibilities.

In this environment it was impossible for a white person and a black person to have any social interaction. The two simply could not mix. They did not know each other and the consequence of their mutual ignorance was intolerance and fear. Denis Hurley was raised in such a secluded environment. He had no contact with black people. The only ones he saw on a regular basis were the criminal convicts on Robben Island who came out each day in work gangs. At secondary school, although he does not mention it in his autobiography, the standard of the day was that cleaners and laundry workers and kitchen hands would have been black who lived separately from the white scholars. Their only contact would have been in a master-servant relationship.

There were two chinks in the armour in his case. His father, the former sailor, had seen different parts of the world and had a sense of fair play. Colour and social status had no impact and he told his children “you are not to treat anybody badly in this house.”10 This must have had a positive impact years later when Denis began to meet people of other races. The second chink in the armour was no more than a passing observation, but a strong one nevertheless. From the window of his train he saw a white woman and an Indian woman in an animated conversation on the platform.11 This was a surprise. In South Africa at that time it was a novelty to see and learn that people of two races could converse in such a fashion.

**Studies Abroad: Philosophy**

The trajectory was in place, but not without a hiccup. “I was beginning to experience

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what all young men experience in their 15th and 16th years of age." He managed to rise above the temptations “with the help of God.” It was generally accepted that the sixteen year old Denis would leave for Ireland to begin his novitiate with the Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI). He fell into line and sailed from Durban in early 1932. Why Ireland? There were seminaries in South Africa for diocesan clergy but he had never met a diocesan priest. All the priests of his acquaintance, including Bishop Delalle who paid the bills, were OMI. South Africa was still very much a mission territory, being divided into “apostolic vicariates” rather than dioceses.

His autobiographical account of the first year in the scholasticate (a group photograph shows fifty-eight novices) reveals that it was pleasant and untaxing. His novice master was undemanding. The philosophy classes left him “understanding practically nothing” and he enjoyed summertime cycling trips in the countryside. He made his profession in March 1933 at the age of seventeen. At the beginning of his second year, along with two other novices, he was instructed by the Provincial Superior to take himself off to the OMI scholasticate in Rome for the continuation of his studies. Why those three out of fifty-eight? His autobiography gives no explanation. Nor does it offer any speculation. It reads as though he simply obeyed without question. His biographer adds the comments that his own Provincial had requested this and the novice master, the undemanding one, had assessed him as “a boy of great promise.” Moreover the students in Rome, coming from more than a dozen countries with about nine or ten mother tongues, “were obviously the brightest Oblate

12. Hurley, Memories, 34.
13. Hurley, Memories, 34.
students from around the world.”\textsuperscript{17} The evidence suggests that those in authority had recognised qualities in Denis Hurley that he himself had not yet seen. Looking back years later, Archbishop Hurley “felt that he had gained far more than he would have if he stayed in Ireland.”\textsuperscript{18}

It would take him two more years to make a connection with his studies, which seemed to have nothing at all to do with practical priesthood. During that time he remained a rebel in attitude. “I just couldn’t see that it was in any way relevant.”\textsuperscript{19} In his third year the penny dropped. He found the Aristotelian-Thomistic theory of knowledge “and I loved it.”\textsuperscript{20} He was beginning to understand that philosophy was forcing him to think for himself. He enthused “about the deep, sharp, analytical, logical thinking that it cultivated.”\textsuperscript{21} After passing his final philosophy exams with flying colours he received a handwritten letter from Bishop Delalle. The bishop offered congratulations and expressed himself pleased that the newly self-aware student was not conscious of any increase of wisdom. “Let us always do our best with God’s gifts, but leave all the glory to him.”\textsuperscript{22} Bishop Delalle, too, saw potential in Denis Hurley, then twenty years old.

**Studies Abroad: Theology**

After the first year of theology at the Dominican Angelicum College in Rome all the Oblate students transferred to the Jesuit run Gregorian University. This was to protect the German students from military service. The Gregorian was recognised as a university by German authorities; the Angelicum was not. Denis Hurley learned that Jesuit methods were somewhat different and he appreciated the change of climate where “there were some

\textsuperscript{17} Kearney, *Guardian*, 30.  
\textsuperscript{18} Kearney, *Guardian*, 35.  
\textsuperscript{19} Hurley, *Memories*, 41.  
\textsuperscript{20} Hurley, *Memories*, 41.  
\textsuperscript{21} Hurley, *Memories*, 41.  
\textsuperscript{22} Hurley, *Memories*, 40.
excellent lecturers.”

He found the courses on Catholic social teaching particularly attractive. He did not have an explanation other than “they seemed to fit into my mental and emotional attitude.” His research on social teaching revealed a level of economic oppression he had never suspected. He read how the banks and mining houses in South Africa had a tyrannical grip on the economy which let them disregard the rights of their workers. The revelation was “a great sharpening of conscience.”

The theology students became very aware that ordination was awaiting them because they began the process of advancing through minor orders, as was the custom at that time. The first step was the tonsure. It must have been a temporary affair because ordination photographs show no evidence that Father Hurley kept it. Achieving minor orders was not without its lighter moments. An oral examination conducted at the office of the Roman diocese was required. When it came to Denis Hurley’s turn the examiner recounted in some detail the story of an early Christian martyr. “I gave the examiner full marks for his story. He gave me full marks for listening and I duly became an acolyte.”

It was the custom that Oblates were ordained after three years of theology, their fourth year of study being completed as priests. Denis Hurley missed his sub-diaconal ordination because of influenza. Thus the process was compressed in his case. He became a sub-deacon on Holy Saturday, 8 April 1939, a deacon in June and was ordained a priest on 9 July. He obtained a dispensation to overcome his young age and the short gap between diaconate and presbyterate. He was twenty three years old as he began his fourth year of theology.

In that fourth year he became aware of the revival of St Paul’s teaching that the Church

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was the Body of Christ. The contribution of Emile Mersch, which he read much later, gave him “a deeply personal realisation and appreciation of the presence of Jesus in the Church and in each member of it.”\(^{27}\) (It is generally accepted that Emile Mersch began a period of intense study of the subject in 1936.\(^{28}\) Pope Pius XII applied the results in his encyclical letter in 1943\(^{29}\).) It helped considerably when Archbishop Hurley told his Superior in Rome that he had some hesitations about the vows of chastity and celibacy. His Superior replied that it was necessary to realise the presence of Christ in one’s life. The answer appears to have been the right response at the right time. More than sixty years later the archbishop remembered that the words “had an explosive significance for me.”\(^{30}\) He recalled that later in his life the sense of Christ’s presence grew continually.

Belgian and French Oblates introduced him to the work of the Belgian priest, Father Joseph Cardijn. He had founded the Young Christian Workers Movement as a counter to the secularisation which gripped so many young people. The movement’s methodology of “see, judge, act” clearly made a strong impression because, years later, he would write that “the method burst as a huge revolution on the Church.”\(^{31}\) (Despite bursting onto the scene in the twentieth century the movement’s methodology can be traced to Aquinas in the thirteenth century\(^{32}\).) The significance of the YCW was that it taught young workers to bring a

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29. *Mystici Corporis Christi*, Encyclical Letter on the Mystical Body of Christ, 29 June 1943. Almost twenty years before Vatican II the encyclical condemns the idea that “the Church contains only hierarchical elements and with them is complete” (17). Rather the Mystical Body of Christ which is the Church includes those “living in the world” (17). They too “can reach the heights of supreme holiness, which, Jesus Christ has promised, will never be wanting to the Church” (17).
32. *Summa Theologica* II-II, 47, 8, resp. The virtue of prudence consists of three acts. The first is “to take counsel” which is an act of enquiry. The second is “to judge of what one has discovered.” The third is “applying to action the things counselled and judged.”
Christian perspective to their daily work. It was an early attempt to teach the laity about being the Church in the world. Archbishop Hurley would later treat this subject with high priority at the Second Vatican Council.

Return to Durban

War was declared on 3 September 1939 but it had little effect on the students at the beginning.³³ Their studies continued and they still took forays into the Italian countryside. German troops invaded France on 10 May 1940 and the picture suddenly looked very different for students from Commonwealth countries. If Italy entered the war as seemed likely, then the Commonwealth students would be enemy aliens. Things moved very quickly. Oral examinations were advanced and the Commonwealth students left Rome one week later on 17 May. They took a train for Bordeaux in the hope of finding a ship sailing out. They had no luck and travelled to Paris where they had to wait for a week. Eventually they took a flight to London and a month later, on 27 June, Father Hurley sailed from Portsmouth on the R.M.M.V. Warwick Castle (his name appears on the list of outbound passengers³⁴). Apart from the delays in securing transport the war had little effect on him. But it was close. When he flew out of Paris the evacuation from Dunkirk had already begun. His flight path probably took him as close as 100 kilometres to the evacuation. He was grateful “not to be within range of the Messerschmitts.”³⁵ The description of his journey shows a curious feature of the war at that time. Direct passenger travel between France and England was still operational. By the time Father Hurley sailed out of Portsmouth, German troops had been in Paris for ten days and Bordeaux was in the German Occupied Zone. Bombing raids over England would start four days later.

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³³ All wartime data is found at BBC History, www.bbc.co.uk/history.
³⁵ Hurley, Memories, 46.
Context

On the day of his ordination, “with the holy oils of this morning hardly dry on my hands”, Father Hurley wrote to his family in Pietermaritzburg that he was “gloriously happy.”36 He thanked them for their prayers which had sustained him “over the rough going of six stiff years in Rome.”37 This description hardly seems to fit with what has already been noted about the undemanding character of his studies. But that is what he wrote at the time. Sixty years later in an interview he explained it as a very disciplined life, rather monotonous and not all that exciting. The studies were too academic and too narrowly related to the manuals.38 The students were not encouraged to read widely and, worst of all, there was no pastoral preparation and no experience of parish work. Their spiritual formation was developed in isolation from the world. They had no training in how to interact with the laity. Nor did they have contact with them. And in what now seems a bizarre omission, they were not trained in preaching or public speaking. In admirable recognition of this deficit, Father Hurley turned for help to a Canadian Oblate who had much experience in debating and thinking on his feet.

What are we to make of this analysis some sixty years later? It is clearly not a rewriting of history. His words at the time, “six stiff years”, which he did not explain then, indicate that something was amiss. He felt the absence of some unidentified element, possibly that he was not ready to engage the world in his new priestly role. Looking at the circumstances, it is possible to detect a pattern.

The remote location of many lighthouses, and the necessity of living on site, meant that

36. Hurley, Memories, 45.
social activity was primarily found in the family. Even Robben Island with its small population was remote, despite having Cape Town and Table Mountain in plain view. The family moved on several occasions so schooling for young Denis was sometimes haphazard. At one point, his older sister, Eileen, was held back a year in a decision he found incomprehensible. They ended up sitting their final primary school examination together. Later, after another move “Eileen and I had to do some catching up on subjects to which we had not been introduced as yet.” Another consequence of frequently moving was that he found himself in secondary school in a class with older boys. His biographer describes his secluded childhood as a complex disadvantage leading his classmates to think of him as aloof, whereas the reality was an “underlying shyness.” He himself wrote that the isolated life “put me back in growing up with sociable instincts” and “I think I was very, very shy.”

What impact did this have on his choice for the priesthood? The words in his autobiography reveal that the decision grew up around him. He thinks that his mother planted the idea but his own words reveal that conviction had not yet come to him. It was generally accepted that he would enter the scholasticate in Ireland. He glossed over his youthful doubts, writing that he managed with God’s help “to rise above” the temptations. This interpretation goes against the view of his biographer: “He had never been a person to change direction easily or to desist from a course of action he had chosen.” The difficulty with this perspective is that it is not at all clear that sixteen year old Denis had made a choice. He appears rather to have gone with the flow, to have followed what was expected of him. We see the lack of conviction in his own description of time in Ireland and Rome. It was

41. Kearney, Guardian, 16.
42. Hurley, Memories, 34.
generally undemanding, uninteresting and boring. Despite this attitude his novice master detected some quality in him, calling him “a boy of great promise.” And his selection to join the brightest Oblate students in Rome was another sign that his superiors saw a good future ahead of him.

Then the tide began to turn. He suddenly realised that the rigorous logic of philosophy was very appealing. He read the social teachings of the Church in papal encyclicals and found them attractive. And we must not forget the revelation that came upon him about the presence of Christ in the Church and in his own life. He learned with horror of the economic control exercised by banks and mining houses in South Africa. He began to see the situation of black South Africans in a new light. His father’s insistence that nobody should be treated badly in his house must have been in the back of his mind at this time of changing attitude. His close friendship with two Ceylonese Oblates was particularly telling; it “caused him to alter drastically his attitude to people of other races.” The social teaching he had learned in Rome challenged his perception of the racial situation in South Africa. And he was learning from his presence in the city of imperial Rome. The architecture and history of the old city, as well as his participation in Vatican ceremonies, were bringing a greater depth and perspective to his Catholicism, far more than if he had remained in Ireland.

Denis Hurley returned to South Africa and his new life as a priest. After many years of undemanding study he had finally found an interest in being a priest and an awareness of the injustice suffered by black South Africans. It was a personal development that would lead to further growth and advancement.

44. Kearney, Guardian, 28.
45. Kearney, Guardian, 35.
Chapter Two: Before the Council

Preamble

He was “an unsavoury character consorting with the American Ambassador.” The opinion of a pro-government Afrikaans language newspaper, Die Transvaaler, appeared twenty years after Father Hurley took up his first appointment as a priest. What led to such characterisation? This chapter will study the archbishop’s actions and contributions before the council, including some events that influenced his growing independence of thought. His theological positions were developing out of his willingness to think and act independently, which in a circular fashion was having an impact on his theology. In this period he began acting on his emerging understanding of the worth of those classified as second class citizens (black South Africans). He wrote and spoke extensively on the subject. He joined and later became president of the South African Institute of Race Relations. He raised the issue within the Southern African Catholic Bishops’ Conference, and persuaded the bishops that opposition to apartheid was fundamental to being a Christian. He held the growing conviction that it was God’s work to treat individuals with respect and equality.

Junior Curate

But in 1940 he was just at the beginning. One of the priests at the cathedral wanted to join up as a military chaplain with the South African troops already leaving for overseas duty. The cathedral administrator was happy to agree, provided that the bishop found a replacement. Thus Father Hurley, the replacement, missed the usual route for new priests in the Vicariate Apostolic of Natal. He had expected an appointment to a rural mission station. There he would have immersed himself in the community and learned to speak and

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understand Zulu. As a consequence he “never mastered this beautiful language.” Twenty years later the cathedral administrator said of Archbishop Hurley: “The people knew he loved them… His Zulu wasn’t very good but that never stood in the way.”

Father Hurley found himself on the lowest rung of the ecclesiastical ladder. Apart from the cathedral administrator there were two senior curates and three retired priests in residence. The bishop’s office and rooms were also in the cathedral rectory. So Father Hurley was in a position where his talents could be noticed by the decision makers. The biographical description of his early ministry does not suggest that he courted attention. The opposite is more likely true. In later years those who knew him would write of his “warm and attractive personality”, “typical modesty” and “characteristic humility.”

A couple of photographs from 1940 show him doing what junior curates do. He accompanies Bishop Delalle who is blessing ambulances for the war effort, and he poses with the first communion class at Marist College. It was a learning experience for him, newly trained but practically inexperienced. He had to navigate between his own enthusiasm and the settled ways of his seniors. He could not have failed to notice, for example, that there was no forced segregation in the cathedral but there was de facto segregation. Coloured worshippers occupied the side pews while Whites sat in the middle. It was a typical South African scene. White parishioners would have thought the setting quite normal and coloured parishioners would have been nervous about complaining. One senior curate wanted to bring

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6. A word used in South Africa to describe people of mixed race, a different racial group from Blacks.
both groups together and allow coloured parishioners full access to all cathedral facilities, the same as for white parishioners. The administrator havered out of fear of upsetting the whites. It appears to have been a sensitive issue for Father Hurley because he was quick to respond, years later, to an accusation that a black man had been refused communion in the cathedral. “I have been associated with Durban Cathedral in one capacity or another for twenty years and I have never heard of this episode.”

After his sermon on the feast of the Assumption a young woman accused him of being too highbrow. He seems to have taken the accusation seriously and with humility. The two became friends and remained so until his death in 2004. Other sermons and talks show his awareness of the situation in South Africa. But it was an uphill and oscillating struggle. It was uphill because of negative feedback. The all-white Catholic Men’s Society, for example, told him they did not wish him to speak again of the social condition of black South Africans. It was oscillating because Father Hurley showed some hesitation about the solution. He did not advocate an immediate change but took the view that Catholics had to work towards a gradual change. Such a cautious approach, which he would learn to abandon in later years, was a cause for concern to those who preferred the status quo and, on the other hand, also to those who yearned for equality.

Father Hurley’s awareness of the social situation was still undimmed. It is worthwhile pausing to remember that this was in the years before the introduction of apartheid, the full-throated assault intended to regulate all aspects of the lives of “non-white” South Africans. Segregation in 1940 was largely a socially conditioned phenomenon, but not entirely. Some

8. Paddy Kearney, Guardian of the Light: Denis Hurley Renewing the Church, Opposing Apartheid (New York: Continuum, 2009), 44.
legislation had already been adopted by the Union Parliament. For example, the whole black population was represented by three white members in the House of Assembly and four white members in the Senate. Whites were prohibited from acquiring land in the native reserves and blacks were prohibited from acquiring land outside the reserves. The Governor General was empowered to govern by proclamation in all black areas.\textsuperscript{11} In this environment and with his background of social studies in Rome, Father Hurley felt impelled to learn what he could about social justice as experienced by black South Africans. He attended some meetings which were promoted by a trade union of black members, and he came up against an unforeseen blockage.

Some senior priests at the cathedral rectory made it clear that it was not appropriate for a junior curate to attend such meetings. He did not rock the boat and accepted their advice, however reluctantly. It saddened him also that other priests had no interest at all in the social teachings of the Church as they applied to South Africa. As a priest under the vow of obedience he bided his time. He had left Rome with two dominant revelations in his mind. His study of the social conditions in South Africa and his conviction that Christ was present in the Church and in his own life came together to inform his attitude and approach as a newly ordained priest. It would be many years and an ecumenical council before he was able to synthesise these two perspectives into a cohesive argument against the evil of apartheid.

\textbf{Teacher}

Wartime restrictions on international travel soon made it obvious that the Oblates of Mary Immaculate could no longer send their students abroad. Ireland was neutral in the war but the waters of the Atlantic Ocean were a danger to shipping of all nations. Rome was out

\textsuperscript{11} Respectively the Representation of Natives Act 1936, the Native Land Act 1913, the Native Administration Act 1937, as reported in Muriel Horrell, compiler, \textit{Laws Affecting Race Relations in South Africa (To the end of 1976)} (Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations, 1978), 1 - 4.
of the question because it had become enemy territory. Thus St. Joseph’s Scholasticate was born in 1943 with its first four students. It was “staffed with three priests and one brother who set up a programme and organised some sort of a studying process that was improved with time.”12 The site, a former hermitage near Pietermaritzburg, about 100 kilometres from Durban, was primitive and poorly equipped. Father Hurley was asked to stand in for one of the staff members who had not yet arrived. He stayed a month. This was less than three years after the completion of his own theological classes. Six months later the Superior of the scholasticate resigned for health reasons and Father Hurley was appointed in his place.

He ceased his life as a junior curate and became, not a senior curate, but a superior in his own right. It helped of course that he had been noticed by Bishop Delalle in Durban, but there was more to it than that. His superiors in his student days had given good reports about him, so that Bishop Delalle had more to go on than just his own recent observations. And it was he who had seen the early promise and paid the bills before Denis Hurley left for Ireland. Where Father Hurley had been discouraged from attending meetings in Durban he now found himself free to dive in. He joined the local debating society for two reasons: to improve his public speaking skills and to meet people with different points of view. It gave him “a vision of the world outside the Catholic Church.”13

This was a striking initiative. We have already seen that he spent his student days in an enclosed environment practically cut off from the laity. He had described himself as shy, more introverted than extroverted. Yet here he was, pushing himself out of his shyness, making the effort to engage with lay people, most of whom were not Catholic. What

motivated him? Could it have been that his sense of social injustice was enough to overcome his shyness? After all “he was a very shy young man.” In later years he was able to subdue his shyness but: “I don’t think it came to him naturally. Not at all.” He himself was not sure. “I don’t know what gave me that confidence because I was a very shy child as a youngster. I suppose it was my success in study in Rome.” Father Hurley was beginning to act on his double conviction that Christ was always present and all South Africans should be treated equally. It is early evidence of an emerging independence of thought.

More evidence is to be found in his leadership of the scholasticate. He introduced speech training into the curriculum as well as regular discussions about South African issues. One of the first four students remembered classes in the forest: “Fr. Hurley trained us in voice formation and speaking among the trees. He was very good at it.” It helped that the other priests on staff and the students were keen to learn about the wider society. He did not know it at the time, of course, but he was able to use material from these discussions in a conference of priests during his second year as bishop. We have already seen that he called his time as a student “six stiff years.” Other than this description he does not seem to have articulated at the time what this meant for him. But he did act on it. His innovations in the scholasticate can be seen as a reaction to what was missing during his studies. He had already turned to a Canadian Oblate for help in public speaking and he had tried to widen his circle in Durban, only to be circumscribed by older priests. As the Superior in the new scholasticate he felt compelled to act against conventional wisdom, trying to remedy the deficiencies of his own training.

Anyone who has spoken to the older generation which lived through the war in any part of the Commonwealth is sure to have heard anecdotes about easy-going Italian prisoners of war. The stories have the common element that Italian prisoners were released to work on local farms and often found themselves fitting in with local life. Father Hurley approached the commandant of the nearby prison camp and soon had three Italians working at the scholasticate, a carpenter, a chef and a mechanic. They were useful additions in the facility. Staff and students treated them as equals, socialising and playing football with them. One of the Italians remembered in later years that life in the scholasticate was like a family. They attributed this to Father Hurley’s leadership and reported their high opinion of him on two separate occasions to visiting bishops. His biographer speculates that this had a positive effect on the choice of a new bishop in Natal.  

Then Father Hurley did something unheard of and courageous, given the circumstances of the day. A black student, studying in Lesotho, then known as Basutoland, had to leave the high altitude country for health reasons. Jerome Mavundla was welcomed into the hitherto whites-only scholasticate. It can only be imagined that staff and students and prisoners kept their heads down. To have a black man live in a white area was a clear breach of law and custom. But the arrangement seems to have escaped attention. From the scholasticate’s point of view it was a success. The white students learned that a black person could be “normal” and the black student learned that not all whites were indifferent. “Everyone was sad when he left to be ordained a priest.” Father Jerome Mavundla was the first Zulu ordained as an

19. It was then a British colony, landlocked and mountainous. Its lowest altitude of 1400 metres above sea level is the highest low point of any country in the world! (www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/africa/lesotho/Island.htm).
Oblate, and Father Hurley had demonstrated again that he was prepared to act in favour of justice.

**Vicar Apostolic**

The telephone call was abrupt. “He had not grown up in a telephone culture.” Bishop Delalle had resigned as bishop earlier in the year, after forty two years of service, and was administering the vicariate until his successor was appointed. He instructed Father Hurley to get himself off to Durban that very day. When told of this brief conversation, a fellow priest came to his own conclusion that the search for a bishop was over. He remarked to Father Hurley: “Remember me when you come into your kingdom!”

“Without hesitation and with innocent self-confidence” Father Hurley accepted the appointment that Bishop Delalle conveyed to him. It was December 1946. He had been a priest for seven years and was thirty-one years old. He chose Father Jerome Mavundla, his black former student, to be the bishop’s assistant at his Episcopal consecration. In this way he made it clear to all the whites in attendance that he had no intention of ignoring the black population.

It was expected that most bishops in the country would attend his consecration. So the Apostolic Delegate took advantage of their presence and set up a bishops’ meeting. They had not met for ten years. They would take a day away from their meeting for the consecration of the new bishop. As it turned out, he attended the first few days of the meeting as a bishop-elect and the final few days as a bishop. As vicars apostolic the bishops were encouraged by Rome to meet in regional assemblies to discuss matters of common interest. Five such

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assemblies had been held from the mid 1800s to 1938. The oldest available records date from the meeting in 1895.\textsuperscript{25} The sixth meeting in 1947 decided to formalise its structure. Thus the Southern African Catholic Bishops’ Conference was established, “a most valuable and important innovation”,\textsuperscript{26} together with an administrative board. The advantage of the administrative board was that it could function between meetings of the full conference. It was a decision ahead of its time and it was noteworthy for two reasons. Firstly, it lacked the ambience of an “episcopal” conference because the hierarchy did not exist. It was more correctly a conference of apostolic vicars. The bishops of an apostolic vicariate were still delegated by and subject to the Bishop of Rome. Secondly it was among the earliest conferences of bishops anywhere in the Church. Archbishop Hurley reports that the first conference was established in the United States.\textsuperscript{27} The date was 1919.\textsuperscript{28} As a comparison the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops “was founded in 1943 and officially recognised by the Holy See in 1948.”\textsuperscript{29} It would be almost twenty years before the Second Vatican Council gave form to episcopal conferences and it was four years before the establishment of the South African hierarchy. Bishop Hurley was elected to the administrative board and the Apostolic Delegate was elected as president. It was “a choice which looks quite astonishing now.”\textsuperscript{30}

The new bishop’s workload quickly became heavy. Added to his responsibility in the Bishops’ Conference was that every mission, outstation, school and convent wanted to meet him (in an apostolic vicariate there were no established parishes). He soon learned of the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{26} Garner, “Organisation”, xvii.
\item \textsuperscript{27} Hurley, \textit{Memories}, 51.
\item \textsuperscript{29} Website of the \textit{Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops}, http://www.cccb.ca/site/eng/.
\item \textsuperscript{30} Hurley, \textit{Memories}, 51.
\end{itemize}
pressing need for money. Oblates from Europe had poured into Natal after the war and the church was expanding. “There was no shortage of priests or religious.”

There was an increasing demand for classrooms, churches, chapels, clinics, transport and teachers. He began to devise a plan for an overseas fundraising drive. The consequence was that he was away from the vicariate apostolic from March 1950 to January 1951, but the fundraising effort in the United States was a success. He was still in the US when he learned that the hierarchy had been established in South Africa and he had been appointed Archbishop of Durban.

In the midst of all this activity he managed to maintain a speaking schedule. It was usually not what his audiences wished to hear. He told his former debating society in Pietermaritzburg that whites had to accept the end of white supremacy and the equality of all. Otherwise “the country was doomed to a future of strife and bloodshed.” This approach, warning of consequences, was not likely to succeed with an audience that held economic and military power. Then he began to argue from a Christian perspective, expressing himself in a theological way. He confessed to an audience in 1949 that he had been brought up in a white privileged society. He had found it difficult at first to accept the humanity and equality of black people, but now he understood it in Christian terms. Changing the system should be an objective of Catholic Action. It was a problem “to test the mettle of any man or woman who has gazed on the crucified Christ and called him Lord and Master.”

He was giving voice to the two positions he brought back from Rome, the presence of Christ in the Church and the downtrodden condition that was the lot of black South Africans.

31. Hurley, Memories, 53.
32. Hurley, Memories, 78.
33. Kearney, Guardian, 56.
34. Kearney, Guardian, 58.
He was beginning to bring them together into one theological argument. Those who accept Christ as Lord and Master must accept the equality of all his people and treat them with Christian dignity. To do otherwise was effectively to deny Christ. Bishop Hurley was also finding his own feet. A long-time friend said: “Once he became a bishop and then an archbishop he had more authority and he used that to promote justice.” Even so, he faced internal opposition. The Apostolic Delegate “wanted the bishops to avoid taking any public position on segregationist policies.”

Some months later, Archbishop Hurley addressed the Kolbe Association Winter School. The Association was a group of lay Catholics, mostly academics and university graduates “who met to hear and discuss papers on topics of church interest and Christian concerns in society.” He expressed the notion that Christians should not shun the world but should be engaged in the world. The mission of the Church was the salvation of souls and this mission brought the Church “inevitably into contact with the material conditions which affect souls.” After a lengthy analysis of social conditions in South Africa he told his audience that a general system of discrimination disparaged the dignity of others. “The suggestion that complete apartheid is in the interests of all races is hypocritical.” Years later he commented that “the paper though full of good intentions exudes the atmosphere of unconscious white supremacy.” Archbishop Hurley was still learning and developing!

He admitted on one occasion to going too far. “I blotted my copybook.” In an address to the Indo-European Council of Pietermaritzburg he suggested that the Indian community

37. Hurley, Memories, 147.
40. Hurley, Memories, 95.
accept residential segregation as a gesture of goodwill and as a means of allaying European fears. “My proposal was firmly and angrily rejected.” In his written response Dr. Dadoo said: “The archbishop's proposal is not only wholly unjustified, but also misdirected.”

**The Bishops Speak**

We have seen above that the Apostolic Delegate did not want the bishops speaking publicly about segregation. He had written to Bishop Hurley in 1949 advising him “not to criticise the government at the moment.” But Bishop Hurley did not hold back. He wrote a series of articles for the *Southern Cross* under the general title of “Catholic Action.” The colour bar, he said, was “a heavy stone tied about the neck of the Catholic Church in South Africa.” It forced the Church to duplicate its facilities and it divided its people into those who had a deeply ingrained racial prejudice and those with a swelling tide of resentment. It was un-Catholic to protect the purity of race and economic supremacy of white people at the expense of others. He made it clear that opposing the colour bar was fundamentally Christian. “I am sorry if my words are hard; many sayings of Jesus were hard too, but he said them; and we, who must give voice to his teaching, must say them too.” Resolving the issue was a subject crying out for Catholic Action. Through Catholic Action men and women of the Church should be prepared for representation in government.

In 1951 the establishment of the hierarchy gave the diocesan bishops a boost in confidence. They were no longer quite so in thrall to the man from Rome. Bishop Hurley was elected chairman of the Bishops’ Conference in 1952. That year he “helped the Conference

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issue its first statement on race relations.”

There is no need to write here of the discussions and disagreements leading up to the decision to make a statement. It is enough to point out that the Apostolic Delegate tried to the last to stop the statement. He feared that the government would forbid the flow of priests and religious into the country, claiming that it was the government’s target to limit Catholics to 5% of the population. His fear was not unfounded. The Prime Minister had warned in Parliament that his party did not recognise the rights of those “who preach equality”, because such people were either communists or communistically inspired.

Moreover, a deputation to the Prime Minister in 1949 had warned about “increasing Roman Catholic influences in South Africa which are threatening to become a danger to the Protestant cause.” No wonder that the bishops too were anxious about antagonising the government. They asked Archbishop Hurley, “the most outspoken of the bishops”, to prepare a draft statement that was forthright but without “harmful criticism.” Eventually they agreed on the text of the Statement on Race Relations which was issued in June 1952.

In the language of the time the bishops wrote: “Discrimination based exclusively on grounds of colour is an offence against the right of non-Europeans to their natural dignity as human persons.” It promoted an evolutionary process of moving towards equality and full participation in the life of the country. Archbishop Hurley commented years later that the statement reflected “the unquestioning acceptance of white cultural superiority.”

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47. Hansard LXIV, 774, quoted in Abraham, MA Thesis, 36.
52. Prior, 169.
53. Hurley, Memories, 91.
patronising statement and very primitive “and one that I blush to read now.”⁵⁴ Despite the shortcomings of the statement it did finally break the “corporate silence”⁵⁵ of the bishops. But it was obvious that they were not in touch with political reality. The month in which the document was issued was the same month in which was launched the Defiance Campaign. It was a campaign of civil disobedience using non-violent methods learned from Mahatma Gandhi who had spent twenty-one years of his earlier life in South Africa.

A Deeper Struggle

The bishops were soon plunged into political reality. The Bantu Education Act 1953 removed responsibility for the education of black pupils from the provincial governments and placed it under the control of the central government. The Act required that church schools be handed over to the government to be run according to government ideology. The purpose behind the act was to maintain white supremacy by limiting the education of black pupils. The Minister of Native Affairs said in the Senate that the education of black pupils would be geared to their position in South African society. “In terms of this policy, there was no place for them in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour.”⁵⁶ Failure to hand over the schools would result in a complete cessation of government funding. Some churches did so, but for the Catholics “it was a battle over religious freedom rather than human rights.”⁵⁷

It was also a battle against intransigence. Archbishop Hurley had come to the opinion that negotiating with the government and attempting to be non-critical was no longer possible. Nothing less than the integrity of the Christian message was at stake. He said that

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⁵⁵. Hurley, Memories, 92.
⁵⁶. Reported by the South African Institute of Race Relations, see Kearney, Guardian, 75.
⁵⁷. Hurley, Memories, 118.
apartheid “was opposed to justice, charity, the unity of the human race and the unity of the mystical body.” Compromise was out of the question and a clash with government was inevitable, and the sooner the better. “It would be better to fight while our moral position was intact and strong instead of weakening ourselves by compromise.”

Here again we see the archbishop melding human rights with the Christian message. It was becoming more of a single issue for him, the issue of living authentic Christianity. But some bishops were still wary of opposing authority and they voted to send a deputation to meet the Minister. They intended to convey the message that promoting Christianity was essential for the civilisation of black people. The Minister’s private secretary replied that the Minister was willing to meet but nothing would change as a consequence. The bishops’ proposals were a direct negation of the Bantu Education Act and “it is only fair to state this unambiguously in advance so that you can decide whether a deputation has any value for you under such circumstances.”

The deputation went ahead. The Minister, Dr Hendrik Verwoerd, “received us courteously” but did not budge an inch. The three bishops and one priest in the deputation were all South African born while the Minister had been born in The Netherlands. When Dr Verwoerd talked of foreign interference Archbishop Hurley pointed out that the Minister was the only foreigner in the room. The Minister spoke of problems in the Catholic system which would be resolved by the State. Archbishop Hurley replied: “they are nothing in comparison with the troubles that your system will experience.”

The deputation had been a failure, except that it had emerged very clearly that the gauntlet was down. We can skip over the next few years quite quickly. Archbishop Hurley convened an urgent plenary session of the

58. Minutes, plenary session of bishops, see Kearney, Guardian, 74.
59. Kearney, Guardian, 75.
60. Hurley, Memories, 106.
bishops. It was agreed to keep the schools and to embark on a heavy fund raising and publicity campaign for the purpose. The publicity included a letter of support from Pope Pius XII to Archbishop Hurley spread across the front pages of the *Southern Cross*. The Church lost some of its schools but “succeeded in raising funds to maintain some of the others.” Archbishop Hurley was less than satisfied. The campaign had been a success but something was missing. “When the rights of the Church were threatened we had no hesitation in taking up the cudgels strongly. When there was a wider question of human rights being under attack, we were much more cautious and hesitant.”

In 1957 the government passed the *Bantu Laws Amendment Act*. It included what became known as the “Church Clause.” The Minister of Native Affairs was empowered to “direct that the attendance of Africans at any church or religious service in the white part of a town should cease as from a date specified.” This move caused astonishment among the Christian Churches and many church leaders individually spoke against it. Archbishop Hurley said that “he would instruct his clergy to continue exactly as before without regard to the consequences.” The response to this legislation was a turning point. The Minister had dismissed complaints against the legislation as “coming from a few church leaders who did not represent lay views.” His remark backfired because it led to greater lay participation: “for the first time the Catholic laity played a leading role in opposing apartheid.” The bishops continued to fight back under the chairmanship of Archbishop Hurley. They collectively directed that a statement be read at all Masses throughout the country on 21 July

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68. Abraham, MA Thesis, 162.
1957. They solemnly declared “that no other authority than the Hierarchy has competence to decide on admittance of persons to Catholic places of worship.” They continued to “inform their Clergy and flock that there is no restriction on attendance at any Catholic church and that they, the Bishops, take full responsibility for admission to Catholic churches.”

In the face of this strong opposition, which was undisguised civil disobedience by the Church, the legislation remained on the books “but the provisions of the Act concerning the churches were never strictly applied.”

Archbishop Hurley saw a deeper issue in the legislation. While satisfied that the provisions of the “Church Clause” would not affect the Church he was disappointed that they had not been able to stop the application of the other provisions of the Act. “The suppression of the already severely limited social and cultural contacts between blacks and whites was for Hurley the greater tragedy.” Only years later and after many more government standoffs did the realisation dawn on Archbishop Hurley: “Had we been better politicians we would have known that they were more afraid of us than we of them.”

Later that year, 1957, at a plenary meeting of the Bishops’ Conference, the Chairman, Archbishop Hurley, placed the topic of apartheid first on the agenda because of its importance. It was necessary, he said, to recognise “the right of all races to evolve towards full citizenship in the country - something which apartheid unconditionally denied.” There remained a difference of opinion on issuing a declaration about apartheid. Archbishop Garner wanted no such statement but Archbishop Hurley “advocated specific mention and

71. Kearney, Guardian, 82.
condemnation of apartheid as many Catholics accepted apartheid in South Africa.”

A draft statement prepared by the Administrative Board was debated at length. The old fear about the government restricting the immigration of missionaries was still evident. On the other hand, said the Apostolic Delegate, the Church had little to lose since it had lost all its school subsidies. “Archbishop Hurley argued strongly and persuasively” and the motion to issue the “Statement on Apartheid” was finally accepted. The statement was a landmark because the conciliatory tone of the past had not worked and was finally abandoned. It was more activist too, calling on whites “to pursue more vigorously the change of heart and practice that the law of Christ demands.” The system was “intrinsically evil.” It was blasphemy to claim that apartheid was the will of God while ignoring “the offences against charity and justice which are apartheid’s necessary accompaniment.”

Renewals in the Church

Preoccupied as he was with the scourge of apartheid and all that flowed from it, Archbishop Hurley still found time to be excited by “lively renewals in several aspects of Catholic life.” He mentions biblical, theological, liturgical and catechetical renewals as well as the intensification of the lay apostolate. “It was a vigorous scene.” Catholic Action in South Africa was inspired by the “see, judge, act” method of the Young Christian Workers, which the archbishop had first encountered as a scholastic in Rome. Catechetics was of such fundamental importance that he proposed to the Bishops’ Conference that a catechetical

76. Reprinted in Prior, Catholics, 172.
77. Reprinted in Prior, Catholics, 171.
78. Reprinted in Prior, Catholics, 171.
79. Hurley, Memories, 139.
80. Hurley, Memories, 139.
institute be established for the whole country. The particular difficulties of South Africa can be seen in the publication of a new catechism in 1969. It appeared in twelve languages. The theological renewal “centred largely around the mystery of the Church as Body of Christ”, a doctrine which had gripped Father Hurley forcibly in his final year in Rome. But it was the writings of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin which had “a tremendous impact with his remarkable synthesis of the material and spiritual worlds.”

Archbishop Hurley read The Phenomenon of Man “about five times to fully grasp the flow of Teilhard’s argument.” The background deserves a mention. In 1944 the Vatican censors found the book unacceptable and “forbade its publication.” During a curial reorganisation in 1966 the responsibility for maintaining the list of banned books was not assigned. A clarification some months later reported that the list still preserved its moral strength but was “no longer to have the force of ecclesiastical law.” This ambiguity followed some years after an archbishop, a defender of orthodoxy, admitted that a banned book had had a significant influence on his thinking. He wrote: “There are no grounds for this accusation” against Teilhard. During the council Archbishop Hurley praised Teilhard when he spoke “of the ideas that have lately begun to be circulated and which have their origin principally in the splendid vision, religious and scientific, evolutionary and eschatological, of that illustrious son of the Church, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin.” It was “a

81. Hurley, Memories, 140.
82. Southern Cross (2 July 1969) 1, reproduced in Hurley, Memories, 141.
83. Hurley, Memories, 139.
84. Hurley, Memories, 139.
86. Hurley, Memories, 150.
clear shot across the bow of the Holy Office.”

Archbishop D’Souza of Bhopal spoke in the council and decried that Teilhard’s works were “indiscriminately condemned.”

Years later other council fathers gave a favourable opinion. One said: “Several bishops spoke about Teilhard at Vatican II. No question but that we owe a lot to his genius.”

Another said that Teilhard’s analysis that all of humanity has its destiny in Christ shows “that here the tendency of Pauline Christianity is in essentials correctly grasped from the modern angle and rendered comprehensible again.”

Teilhard’s argument traced the stages of evolution through to the most exciting stage, the interplay of human thoughts and feelings. This required “love as the binding force to prevent disaster and hold the process on course.”

Then came the irrefutable conclusion that such a systematic and consistent development must have an object, an omega point, for which it is all intended. “The reflection of faith identifies this omega point as Christ.”

With this background, said the archbishop, he found himself ready for the Second Vatican Council.

Context

Archbishop Hurley commented on his episcopal ordination at such a young age: “I happened to find myself in a lift that was going up.”

His pastoral and missionary experience was limited and he himself, towards the end of his life, said “that he had been fifteen years

95. Hurley, Memories, 150.
96. Hurley, Memories, 151.
too young." If we accept that number of fifteen then he would have been ordained a bishop in March 1962, just in time to attend the first session of the Second Vatican Council. He would not have prepared his vota for the council. Nor would he have been a member of the Central Preparatory Commission. Nor could he have persuaded his fellow bishops to take a stand against apartheid, oppose the “Church Clause” and lead the fundraising campaign to save Catholic schools. What would have happened without him can only be speculated. What happened with him is described in this chapter. What happened to him is an important development of his own understanding about the presence of Christ and the role of the Church, clergy and laity, in the world.

A series of essays published to commemorate the establishment of the South African hierarchy contains a contribution from Archbishop Hurley on the Mission of the Church. He refers to the great commission given to the Apostles, including the promise: “I am with you always, to the end of the age” (NRSV Mt 28:20). His response about the role of bishops is revealing.

No wonder that the Church to whom those words were addressed has been so conscious of Christ in her, and of the power that comes from Christ; and no wonder that the men, who exercised that power, despite their human failings and weaknesses, have spoken with a strength and conviction that no human quality could account for.

Here we see an early indication of his conviction that the Church could not be silent or inactive when faced with the injustice of apartheid. It points to the struggle that was beginning in him. He knew about his own shyness but was here confronting the deep

99. Series I, Volume II of the council documents was entitled “Consilia et Vota Episcoporum ac Praelatorum”, or “Suggestions and Wishes of Bishops and Prelates”, generally known as “vota.”
realisation that, as a bishop, he was expected to extend himself. We see why a lifelong friend said that it did not come easy for him. His conviction that the Church should be active matured in the face of rejection by white parishioners and his fellow bishops. His first tentative actions, attending labour union meetings, were curtailed by senior priests. Later when he was in a position to act on his own he did not hesitate in breaking the law and bringing a black student into the scholasticate. His calls for a gradual change evolved into demands for immediate change because the system was so unjust. His trust in negotiation with the government collapsed when he was confronted by the ministerial brick wall of white domination. He was learning more and more that opposition to apartheid was not just a political stance. It was fundamentally Christian because it was not possible to be a follower of Christ and ignore the plight of so many of His people.

He was uneasy about the achievements of the bishops. Certainly they had defended their right to allow anybody into a Catholic church and they had fought the government on the schools question. They had referred to apartheid as “intrinsically evil” and they had transformed themselves from passivity into activity. But it was not enough for Archbishop Hurley. The Church had to do more in the world and he saw this as the realm of the laity. In their factories, offices, homes, farms, barracks and playing fields the laity were the commandos of the Church. It was an evolving position. Catholic Action was the great weapon of the Church and he saw it as dependent: “the incorporation of the laity in the apostolic mission of the hierarchy.”\(^{101}\) But he was already thinking along lines that would be fully explored and developed in the Second Vatican Council: “There are so many places that no member of the clergy can penetrate.”\(^{102}\)

Chapter Three: During The Council

Preamble

It was, he said in retrospect, “the greatest experience of my whole life.” But it did not start auspiciously. It began in 1959 when Archbishop Hurley failed to answer a letter from the Vatican. He had looked at the letter and “wondered why the Church needed a council. There seemed to be no special crisis.” A reminder letter in March 1960 “jerked me into a sense of urgency.” In historical perspective, that was the month of the Sharpeville Massacre, when South African police shot and killed sixty nine unarmed black protestors. It shocked the world and “Sharpeville passed into the mythology of horror stories.” The archbishop dusted off his Latin dictionary and grammar book and got to work. He sent off his proposals and received “a very friendly and fraternal acknowledgement” dated only seven days later. He hoped his Latin, unused for twenty years, was comprehensible. He was unaware that all submissions were to be recorded for publication. “The halting Latin of my humble suggestions lies enshrined in one of the mighty tomes of those Acta.”

The Second Vatican Council met in the last quarter of each of the four years from 1962 to 1965. Archbishop Hurley was more involved than these dates suggest. His service in the Central Preparatory Commission allows this chapter to cover the years just before and during the council, from 1959 to 1965.

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Suggestions and Wishes

The archbishop’s list of suggestions and wishes for consideration at the council points to his independent way of thinking. In the years between his return from Rome and this response to Rome he had faced many challenges which led to an evolution in his attitudes. We can trace the considerations in this list to particular events in his earlier ministry. Archbishop Hurley divided his contribution into ten points, the first five being theological considerations, then five practical considerations. His vota fill a little over two pages in the mighty tome entitled “Suggestions and Wishes of Bishops and Prelates.” He has prepared his own English version.

Theological considerations:

1. Concerning the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ and the Holy People of God, including its liturgical and apostolic activity under the influence of its Head and Spirit.
2. Concerning the hierarchy as a college of bishops united to the Supreme Pontiff offering due submission in relation to the government and teaching office of the Church.
3. The joint ministerial responsibility of priests and bishops, expressed in their teaching office and care of souls.
4. Concerning the laity and its participation in the priesthood and mission of Christ with special attention to Catholic action.
5. Concerning relations between church and state and concerning human freedom in relation to the requirements of the Church of Christ and the authority of the state.

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Practical considerations:

1. Concerning a method of uniting the bishops of the world in closer union with the Holy Father in the government of the Church, including fairly frequent consultations and the establishment of episcopal conferences in all areas of the world.

2. In regard to the liturgy of the Church, in the matter of pursuing these highly desirable aims, namely, instruction of the faithful on their participation in the Christian Mystery, these can hardly be achieved without fairly frequent use of vernacular languages.

3. Catholic action.

4. Catechesis of the faithful, as a vision of the mystery of Christ, inspiring mind and heart and drawing clarity and fervour from scripture and the liturgy of the Church.

5. Education of seminarians with a view to adapting this education better to pastoral requirements. Present-day education is too theoretical. It does not convey a true vision of the Mystery of Christ.

The recovery of the theological insight about the mystery of the Church as the Body of Christ “had an explosive significance” for the archbishop.⁹ So it is hardly surprising to find it at the top of his list. When the hierarchy was established in South Africa in 1951 the bishops ceased being mission delegates of the pope and became residential successors of the apostles. This boosted their confidence, especially in confrontation with the government. It was only through the united front of the Bishops’ Conference that the bishops were able to issue their statement on apartheid and oppose the government on schools and the ‘Church Clause’. Thus Archbishop Hurley’s familiarity with conferences of bishops has informed his second theological and first practical considerations. His comment in this latter instance reveals his understanding that bishops’ conferences were not widespread, even twelve years after the

⁹ Hurley, Memories, 44.
formalisation of the South African conference.

There is a brief mention in Chapter Two of discussions held in the scholasticate during Father Hurley’s time as Superior. Some of the material from these discussions was used later in a gathering of priests after his episcopal ordination. “I began the practice of holding an annual ‘meeting of missionaries’.”\textsuperscript{10} In other words he consulted with his priests, a practice not at all common in 1947. Years later he reflected on the minutes of these consultations: “their cautious and cozy wording revealed the paternalistic mentality of a colonial-minded clergy.”\textsuperscript{11} But it was a beginning and the experience of the consultations led to the archbishop’s third theological consideration.

We saw in Chapter Two that Catholic Action was a topic of interest to the archbishop. So it is a surprise to see his third practical consideration in two words only. The absence of an elaboration catches the eye. On the other hand his interest in the topic was well established. He was one of twelve bishops and many priests who had attended the South African Catholic Action Conference in February 1959.\textsuperscript{12} He saw Catholic Action as the participation of the laity in the mission of the hierarchy. But he also had a wider view in mind, even if not fully articulated. He understood that the laity moved in the world in places which the hierarchy could not attend. He seems to have furthered this idea with his fourth theological consideration. There he depicts the laity as participating in the priesthood and mission of Christ. This is a more responsible and mature participation than simply assisting the hierarchy. Later he would write about a deeper reflection on the role of the laity. It became obvious that defining the role of the laity as assisting the hierarchy was insufficient.

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{10} Hurley, \textit{Memories}, 67.
\textsuperscript{11} Hurley, \textit{Memories}, 68.
\end{flushleft}
“The laity had their own job to do besides helping the bishops do theirs.”

There should be no eyebrows raised about the fifth theological consideration on relations between church and state. It is a concern which follows from the confrontations between bishops and government.

The second practical consideration seems to deal with the liturgy of the Church. But evidence of the archbishop’s concern with liturgy is sparse. This does not fit with his enthusiasm for the renewals that were then being applied in the Church; a “vigorous scene”, he called it. Among them the liturgical renewal “was of crucial importance for the Church in missionary countries, including Southern Africa.” It seems unlikely that Archbishop Hurley was unaware of these liturgical developments. In his memoirs he devotes a whole chapter to an analysis of the Church as he saw it at the beginning of his episcopacy. His only mention of the liturgy is a passing reference to “ascetic liturgy centred on the Latin Mass with little congregational participation.” So the suspicion arises that his concern is not liturgical but catechetical. He wants to instruct the faithful on their participation in the liturgy. It reads as though he has no thought of changing the liturgy. Years later he remembered differently. Those in the Central Preparatory Commission had been “affected by the liturgical revival... changes had to be brought about to make it more the peoples’ liturgy and less a clerical liturgy.” The disagreement over liturgical reform was one “of the factors that played a part in differentiating progressives from conservatives.” Changes would come

later as we shall see from his contributions to the Central Preparatory Commission, his interventions in the council, and his implementation of liturgical reform after the council.

Catechesis of the faithful, his fourth practical consideration, was clearly on the archbishop’s mind. His proposal to set up a catechetical institute is evidence of that.20 A year after preparing his vota he addressed the Catechetical Study Week in Eichstätt: “catechetical renewal is one of the vital necessities of our day.”21 Just as clear is the reason for his fifth practical consideration. We noted earlier how dissatisfied the archbishop was with his own studies; the memorable phrase “six stiff years” comes back to mind.22 We saw too that he tried to improve the situation during his time as a scholasticate superior.

The archbishop’s vota are distinctive for what they omit. There is no mention of apartheid or segregation. The vota do not seek to help Catholics understand their Christian duty to treat all people with charity. It is true that his notion of Catholic Action is evolving towards seeing lay people as active Christians in the world. And his theological consideration about church-state relations springs from the bishops’ opposition to government apartheid policies. But it is strange that the subject which was a major focus for so long, and could reasonably be foreseen to continue so, merited not a mention. Indeed, only one list of vota from a South African bishop noted it.23 Archbishop McCann listed racialism as one of many errors which should be condemned by the council, “so that the dignity of each human being as a child of God and brother of Christ may be defended.”24 We shall see later how Archbishop Hurley answered this omission.

20. Hurley, Memories, 140.
22. Hurley, Memories, 45.
The Vatican bureaucracy had slipped up. Its records were not up to date. Archbishop Hurley was sure of it.\textsuperscript{25} He had stepped down as chairman of the Bishops’ Conference in February 1960. The new chairman would have been the obvious choice. But in July 1960 the letter from Rome told Archbishop Hurley that the Holy Father had approved his appointment to the Central Preparatory Commission. There were 101 members of the commission whose task, drawing on the work of other specialist commissions, was to guide the preparation of the preliminary drafts of council documents. It was soon apparent that the members “were divided into conservatives and progressives” with the curial representatives being “preponderantly conservative.”\textsuperscript{26} This does not mean that he held a wholly negative view of the curia. The curia members were very human and efficient, “one of the most brilliant and dedicated administrative machines in the world.”\textsuperscript{27} Their main fault was that they had “developed along one groove for centuries.”\textsuperscript{28} Archbishop Hurley was identified among the progressives. From the beginning “the Suenens, Liénarts and Frings saw him as one of theirs.”\textsuperscript{29} His own attitude was reciprocal: “I found myself wholly in sympathy with the transalpine cardinals like Alfrink, Frings, König, and so on.”\textsuperscript{30}

The commission met in seven sessions between June 1961 and June 1962, for a total of sixty-five days. Archbishop Hurley missed the third session in January 1962. In his fifty-six

\textsuperscript{25} Hurley, \textit{We Give Thanks}, 24.
\textsuperscript{26} Hurley, \textit{We Give Thanks}, 24.
days of attendance his name appears ninety-eight times in the reports of proceedings, seventy-four as voting records and twenty-four as reports of his speeches. There were fifty-six topics spread throughout the seven sessions of the commission. They were a ragbag, “a scattered collection of themes. There was no order to it and I was extremely perplexed.”31 He spoke nine times on subjects that were in his vota and fifteen times on subjects that were not. He was not reticent about giving his opinion!

Archbishop Hurley thought the schema on catechetical instruction very pleasing because it based the catechetical renewal process on the study and practice of modern principles.32 On the formation of seminarians he was “very critical about what had been placed before us.”33 Pastoral formation as the purpose of seminary training was not set out at the beginning of the document. Only when the purpose was clearly stated would it be possible to put in place the means to attain the end.34 Later, he addressed the commission On Relations between Church and State.35 He would speak at greater length on this subject in the council to widespread acclaim. For now, what he thought was a “persuasive and polished paper” was dismissed by his neighbour, Archbishop Lefebvre, as “not Catholic doctrine.”36

His brief speech on bishops’ conferences was moderate in comparison with the later development of his thinking. He thought that decisions of bishops’ conferences “do not beget juridic obligations.”37 He dismissed the document on the apostolate of the laity because it

needed a major clarification.\(^\text{38}\)

We saw above that the archbishop’s \textit{vota} did not treat the topic of liturgy with warmth. But he was enthusiastic about the draft document of the preparatory commission. He remarked that it laid down the foundations not only of a great renewal of liturgical life but also of the whole of Christian life in the Church.\(^\text{39}\) He was “excited about its contents.”\(^\text{40}\) “It provided a model of what was needed.”\(^\text{41}\) He explained it as the work of one dedicated man, Father Anibale Bugnini, who had assembled for the purpose “some of the best liturgical scholars in the Church.”\(^\text{42}\) The document was a turning point for him because he began to see the good that the council might achieve. He later wrote that “the paper on liturgy brought some joy to the proceedings.”\(^\text{43}\) It was so well regarded that it became “the only major document that would survive the scrutiny of the fathers after the council had been solemnly convened.”\(^\text{44}\)

Just six months later, after the closing of the first session of the council, Archbishop Hurley resolved the ambiguity in his \textit{vota} over liturgy and catechetics. “Because faith and liturgy are inseparable, so are catechesis and liturgy, for catechesis is the communication of faith.”\(^\text{45}\) He refers also to the “catechetical message of the liturgy itself.”\(^\text{46}\) The archbishop was one among many who were inspired by the document on the liturgy. It helped kindle his enthusiasm for the council.

His experience with the Central Preparatory Commission was his second turning point.

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38. \textit{Acta Praeparatoriae}, vol. 2 part 4, 536.
He became more despondent the more he saw the curial members of the commission turning the agenda to their own wishes. They ignored the other bishops “whose opinions did not need to be taken seriously.” He remained perplexed by the discussion topics. “We did not seem to be dealing with the main issues that should be engaging our attention in so important a matter as a general council.” Some of the topics suggest that he may have had a point:

1. On clerical habit and tonsure;
2. On the provision, unity and division of parishes;
3. On Mass stipends.

This state of affairs helped him “understand why a council of the universal church was needed.” He wrote: “I had come a long way from my initial questioning of the need of the council.” Alongside his frustration about these and other topics sat his growing unease about the content and manner of preparation of documents for the council. Curial staff were left to their own devices to compile the position papers after the members of the commission had gone home. “The playing field was anything but level.” He began to look forward to how the council might be conducted. He did not like what he foresaw. In a gathering of almost three thousand people it could only be debating chaos! On his own initiative he wrote a proposal for the conduct of the debates. He freely admitted in later years that he was thinking in terms of the Anglo-Saxon form of debate, a verbal jousting of give and take. He did not anticipate the Roman style of debating in which speakers would make their comments

47. Paddy Kearney, Guardian of the Light: Denis Hurley Renewing the Church, Opposing Apartheid (New York: Continuum, 2009), 110.
51. Hurley, We Give Thanks, 24.
52. Hurley, We Give Thanks, 24.
and a secretarial team would collate all the contributions into a written summary. “There wasn’t really a debate of point answering point; person answering person, it was just a series of talks.” He distributed his proposal to bishops of the progressive camp and sent a copy to Cardinal Roberti, the president of the sub-commission for the procedures of the council. He received a friendly response but it went no further. “I was obviously barging in where angels feared to tread.”

Archbishop Hurley’s voting record in the commission is revealing. Voting was not a simple yes/no affair. The bishops, as later in the council, had three choices: placet, non-placet and placet iuxta modum. These are translated as “pleasing”, “not pleasing” and “not entirely pleasing.” The third choice, says the dictionary, is “a qualified though essentially positive vote.” Archbishop Hurley used his own translation: “in favour”, “against” and “in favour but with an amendment.” Elsewhere he translated the third vote as: “it pleases but in a limited way.” His wording suggests that he saw the third vote not as positive but as negative. He used the system to good advantage. Only three of his votes are simply placet and two simply non-placet. He used the third vote fifty-eight times to express his misgivings. Some of his remarks are quite lengthy reflecting his displeasure at the direction of the commission. With his remaining eleven votes he bent the rules. He voted “in favour” but added comments to show the measure of his favour. Working the numbers shows that 93% of his votes aroused him to comment. He was not a passive participant.

The members of the commission finished their work in June 1962 and went home. Had it all been worthwhile? The opinion later emerged that the preparatory phase had been a waste of time because it bore no relationship to the end result of the council. The bishops writing their vota had all been “prisoners of a preconciliar mentality.”\(^\text{60}\) There is an element of truth to this. In Archbishop Hurley’s case we have seen that his vota were an expression of his experience as a bishop and his enthusiasm for the renewals that were swirling around the Church. We have seen too that his thinking moved forward after he prepared the vota. So to a certain extent his vota were “preconciliar.” But that is the mark of their value. It was precisely the preparatory period with all its frustrations and lack of focus that directed the thinking of its participants, and other bishops who were paying attention, towards the type of council they wanted, “what a future council could mean for the Church.”\(^\text{61}\) It was an invaluable measure of the “development that occurred amongst the bishops themselves.”\(^\text{62}\)

**The Council Begins**

With a touch of humour in an oft quoted passage in his opening address Pope John regretted that his pastoral office obliged him to listen to “prophets of gloom.”\(^\text{63}\) He disagreed with their defeatist attitude. He spoke positively and optimistically, thus establishing the tone for the council. “The greatest concern of the Ecumenical Council is this: that the sacred deposit of Christian doctrine should be guarded and taught more efficaciously.”\(^\text{64}\)

Archbishop Hurley’s name appears sixty-five times in the multi-volume record of council proceedings. Most of these, forty-five, are an administrative record of attendance and attendance.
voting. The other twenty show his contribution to the council debates. In four of these he added his signature to a document presented by another bishop. Thus he showed that he agreed with the contents but did not make the interventions himself. That leaves sixteen which he presented personally, ten spoken and six written. 65

Two of Archbishop Hurley’s interventions have curiosity value. Both of them appear in an appendix volume published in 1983. The first, a two line “intervention” reveals that bishops were allowed to suggest amendments to their earlier interventions. Archbishop Hurley asks to insert a word into his intervention on the Church. 66 The second curiosity is a three page intervention on religious freedom dated 28 September 1964. It is not printed with the other proceedings of that day. It bears the hallmark of a misplaced document which was found too late for inclusion where it belonged.

In his first intervention Archbishop Hurley criticised the text of the proposed Message to Humanity. The draft said that the council comprised the successors to the Apostles “forming one apostolic body headed by the successor of Peter.” 67 While the phrase was perfectly true and heartwarming to Catholics the words “probably will cause offence rather than win the goodwill especially of our separated brothers.” 68 Other bishops had suggested amendments too. “It was finally decided to add only one amendment (a reference to the Blessed Virgin) and the document was approved for publication.” 69 It might be tempting to

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say that the archbishop “lost” this round. But a positive perspective sees that he was developing an ecumenical sensibility. In historical parallel it was 20 October 1962, two days before the world learned about the Cuban missile crisis. \(^{70}\) “The world held its breath.”\(^ {71}\)

It did not take long, eleven days, for the archbishop to become “thoroughly dismayed by the procedure.”\(^ {72}\) The debate became a “somewhat boring succession of interventions.”\(^ {73}\) No wonder that the two coffee bars, known as Bar Abbas and Bar Jona, became so popular! The consequence was that he decided not to speak on the schema on the liturgy when his turn came around. He announced to the gathering that he was “moved by the charism of brevity”\(^ {74}\) and handed in his prepared comments as a written intervention. His remarks were far from critical. It was “a most beautiful schema.”\(^ {75}\) Here we see the development of his understanding that liturgy and catechetics go hand in hand. “If we wish to renew the apostolic spirit in the Church (and this, I think, is an aim of this ecumenical council), it will be necessary to reform the liturgical life, not apart from catechetical and moral renewal, but in close conjunction with them.”\(^ {76}\)

Then he jumped in with both feet. During “the first doctrinal clash”\(^ {77}\) a month after the council had opened, he used some rather trenchant and colourful language to describe a basic sticking point. Everyone was agreed, he said, that the fundamental purpose of the council was pastoral. But there was no agreement on the meaning of “pastoral.” On the one hand: “Some

\(^{70}\) “John F Kennedy and the Cuban Missile Crisis”, BBC History (London: British Broadcasting Corporation), www.bbc.co.uk/history/worldwars/coldwar/kennedy_cuban_missile_01.shtml.

\(^{71}\) Hurley, Vatican II, 22.

\(^{72}\) Hurley, Memories, 155.

\(^{73}\) Hurley, Memories, 155.

\(^{74}\) Acta Synodalia, vol. 1 part 1, 327.

\(^{75}\) Acta Synodalia, vol. 1 part 1, 327.

\(^{76}\) Acta Synodalia, vol. 1 part 1, 328.

declare that the council can act pastorally simply by defining the truth, by safely storing the
seed of the Gospel in the granary of dogmatic definitions.”78 On the other hand the “truth is
not merely to be safeguarded, but to be proclaimed; ...the seed of the Gospel is not to be
stored up in the granary of dogmatic definitions but to be scattered and sown throughout the
world.”79 He referred back to his experience of the preparatory commission. After all the
interventions and suggested amendments “I was amazed to discover that the schemata had
been amended only slightly, and very slightly indeed, in a pastoral direction.”80 He
hammered home his point. The council was in a crisis and would continue so unless
something drastic was done. In the preparatory commission we “were voices crying in the
wilderness”81 There was no central direction and “therein, so to speak, lies the original sin of
this council.”82 He proposed a special debate in the council aula or that a special commission
be set up to deal with the issue between the first and second sessions of the council. “Only in
this or a similar way can the Council be redeemed from the original sin of the preparatory
work and reach a successful outcome.”83

He made one more intervention that year, equally forthright. It was not pleasant, he
announced, to play the devil’s advocate but there was no escaping the task. There was a
defect running through all the preparatory work for the council; “a lack of unity and
coordination.”84 That was why he was “not greatly pleased with the schema” on the
Church.85 He had to “propose again”86 that the problem could be solved only by a special

commission working between the first and second sessions of the council. It was necessarythat “the entire preparatory work be redone.”87 He came back to the same theme as his earliercriticism: “there is practically no need for defining truths, since they are not in any dangerthat would call for conciliar consideration.”88 If the pastoral objectives of the council were tobe met then the bishops had to speak out. They had to present doctrine in a way “that is notjuridical or desiccated, but is imbued with a kind of unction and love for God andneighbour.”89 We see here the theme, repeated from Chapter Two, that bishops had to extendthemselves with trust in God, despite their own weaknesses. This intervention, and his earlierremarks about the pastoral direction of the council, captured the mood of many bishops. When Pope John established the special commission Archbishop Hurley wrote a big “ThankGod” in his notes.90

Forging Ahead

In September 1963 four black schoolgirls in Alabama were killed by “a bomb hurledfrom a passing car.”91 On the other side of the ocean the second session of the council wasabout to convene. Archbishop Hurley was soon in action. He deplored the inadequate treatment given to priests in the draft document on the Church. Priests deserved more attention, he said, because they performed all the work that a bishop could not. A bishop was a remote figure to most of his flock. He depended on the priests who were his “hands and feet, his eyes and ears and voice.”92 The archbishop illustrated his meaning with humour, which may have lost some of its sparkle in spoken Latin. “We all know that in the reading of

pastoral letters whether the bishop’s words sound like the trumpet of the archangel or like a list from the telephone directory depends completely on the priests.”93 We know that Archbishop Hurley was not happy about his own seminary training. We know too that he began consulting his priests shortly after his episcopal ordination. It follows from these concerns that he would address the council on the important role of priests helping a bishop. His suggestion to divide the chapter on the hierarchy into three distinct sections for bishops, priests and deacons “was not accepted.”94 But the voices “raised on the floor of the council” in this second session had a direct consequence.95 Later, in the fourth session, the council promulgated the Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests.

We have seen that the archbishop’s vota proposed the establishment of conferences of bishops in all areas of the world. His written submission to the council went a step further when he argued in favour of juridic power for those conferences. Such power had not been needed in the past but would be necessary in the future. If decisions were to be allocated to bishops’ conferences, liturgical matters for example, then the decisions, of necessity would be juridical. “We cannot avoid the issue”, he said, because it is the price of decentralisation.96 If bishops’ conferences did not assume juridic power then “we reject ‘decentralisation’ and acknowledge ourselves to be incapable of assuming collegial responsibility.”97

Later, in its fourth session, the council approved the formation of episcopal conferences.98 It would be helpful if they were established “in all parts of the world”,99 a phrase that could have been lifted from Archbishop Hurley’s vota. After the council, Pope

98. Vatican Council II, Christus Dominus: Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church, 37.
Paul VI decreed that they were to be set up everywhere “as soon as possible.” Several council documents delegated authority to episcopal conferences, such as adapting local programmes of priestly formation, regulation of the local liturgy, the use of the vernacular, and varying the local administration of sacraments. And episcopal conferences were in a position to contribute “to the concrete realisation of the collegiate spirit.” In 1983, Canon Law described an episcopal conference as “a permanent institution” which “has juridical personality by virtue of the law itself.” All of this appears to have granted Archbishop Hurley’s wish for juridic power. This discussion however steers clear of the later controversy about the teaching mandate of episcopal conferences as distinct from their juridic power.

The bishops came back to Rome for the third session and the contrast was striking. Archbishop Hurley compared the opening Mass with that of the first session. “In 1962 renaissance pageantry was still piled high over the divine mystery.” In 1964 much of that had disappeared and “the emphasis was on the participation of the community.” The changes were the result of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, which had been promulgated at the end of the second session. The bishops were beginning to see the practical

107. Canon 449.
108. Pope John Paul II (*Apostolos suos*, 21 May 1998) wrote that the teaching authority of bishops belongs only to individual bishops and to the entire college of bishops with the pope. Thus groups of bishops acting together have no teaching authority. Francis Sullivan SJ questioned this, arguing that “there is no fundamental difference of a theological nature” between bishops’ conferences and regional councils whose teaching authority was readily accepted in the early Church. “The Teaching Authority of Episcopal Conferences”, *Theological Studies*, vol. 63 no. 3 (Sept. 2002), 493.
application of their own decisions. But it was not over; much more still lay ahead of them. There was even a suggestion that a fifth session would be necessary.

Archbishop Hurley made five interventions in the third session, one of which would mysteriously appear in the appendix of council proceedings. Four of his interventions dealt with religious freedom, the lay apostolate and seminary education. They can all be traced back to his vota. His final intervention on the Church has to be approached more carefully. One cannot claim a direct derivation from the archbishop’s vota. To do so would present a clear anachronism. The document under debate was “the only major document to have originated directly from a suggestion made on the floor of the conciliar Aula itself.” But it is possible to see in the vota and earlier writings some patterns of thought which would develop into support for The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World. When Cardinal Suenens made the suggestion on the floor, repeating what he had already proposed to the Central Preparatory Commission, he distinguished between the Church within its nature and structure, ad intra, and the Church looking outwards to its mission in the world, ad extra. The pastoral constitution dealt with the ad extra part of the equation.

So when Archbishop Hurley spoke in his vota of the laity and Catholic Action and of the relations between church and state, he was beginning to think ad extra some years before Cardinal Suenens introduced the phrase. And we must not forget even older parts of his thinking, the first from the end of his student days and the second from his reading in the years before the council. We have already seen the intense conviction aroused in the archbishop that Christ was present in the Church and in his own life. “To my mind the growth and recovery of the theology of the mystical Body of Christ made the greatest

contribution to Vatican II.”\textsuperscript{112} When people came to understand what St Paul really meant, that the Church was the Body of Christ, the implications grew and grew. “Before that the Church had been an organisation, now it was something alive.”\textsuperscript{113} One of his greatest inspirations was Teilhard de Chardin, as already noted. He was angry that Teilhard’s writings were banned, “so when I got the chance in the council to give him a boost, I did.”\textsuperscript{114} Thus we see the theological progression from the belief that the Church is the Body of Christ and from Teilhard’s synthesis of the material and spiritual worlds. It leads to support for the notion that the Church exists in the world, not apart in a vacuum, and needs to be actively engaged in the world.

**Improvements Emerge**

Looking at the tone of Archbishop Hurley’s interventions we see a continuation of his forthright critique. Some proposals in the *Declaration on Religious Freedom* “openly contradict the declarations made by the magisterium.”\textsuperscript{115} But it was no longer the wholesale condemnation that we saw in the first and second sessions. He was beginning to see good points in the documents and he said so. He spoke at some length against the classical argument for the union of church and state, just as he had done in the preparatory commission. The argument held that civil society was bound to acknowledge and worship God “in the manner in which God himself has indicated, namely, through the Catholic Church.”\textsuperscript{116} He concluded that this “teaching on union between church and state must be abandoned.”\textsuperscript{117} He continued his argument in a written intervention in the fourth session. The *schema* was still lacking because it depended mainly on a philosophical argument which “has

\textsuperscript{113} Jones, “Hurley’s World”, 5.
\textsuperscript{114} Jones, “Hurley’s World”, 5.
\textsuperscript{115} *Acta Synodalia*, vol. 3 part 2, 515.
\textsuperscript{116} *Acta Synodalia*, vol. 3 part 2, 516.
\textsuperscript{117} *Acta Synodalia*, vol. 3 part 2, 517.
a certain unreality about it.” 118 The schema “should point out that we now clearly see that the state has no religious competence.” 119 We can see the influence of his experience in South Africa where he had encountered the State’s total lack of empathy for the Church.

The schema on the apostolate of lay people contained some good elements but “I agree with those who complain of repetition, lack of substance, vigour, and the development of logic.” 120 As with earlier interventions he saw “an inversion of the normal order of logic”, 121 because the means to attain an end were stated before the end was identified. Similarly the schema On the Church in the Modern World had some good points but also had a basic defect which “consists in the schema's having been composed before its purpose was clearly settled. On the contrary, the destination of a journey should be known before the journey begins.” 122 He had argued in a similar vein, as we saw above, about the inversion of the means and the end in the document on priestly training in the preparatory commission. There were “merits, especially commendable” 123 in the schema on formation in seminaries and his intervention was largely supportive. But “the treatment of philosophy in the schema needed to be enlarged so that more could be said about its purpose, role and method, and its relationship to theology.” 124 One phrase in this intervention is especially telling. Seminary discipline should allow students to “govern themselves, to use freedom wisely.” 125 We shall see the significance of this when we consider in the next chapter the archbishop’s advocacy of the principle of overriding right.

The question has to be asked however why the archbishop was less critical of this

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120. Acta Synodalalia, vol. 3 part 4, 118.
schema. In the first session of the council he had been elected as a member of the commission for Seminaries and Catholic Education. His work in this commission gave him a greater chance to influence more directly the wording of the schema. And that is what he did.

It was two years before the schema was presented to the council in its third session. During that time the members of the commission had listened to and contributed to the severe criticism of early schemas. They learned the lesson. “They had time to catch the spirit abroad among the fathers” and their decree was received gently.126 Archbishop Hurley remembered that there was “a chorus of praise for the seminary schema.”127 Members of the commission had to alter their proposed speeches in defence of the schema. They added “a few criticisms of their own to make a debate of it”!128

In the fourth session Archbishop Hurley was still arguing against poorly prepared documents, just as he had done in the preparatory commission. Did he feel that nothing much had changed? After debating the schema on the Church in the Modern World he noted that “one is left with a feeling of profound discomfort.”129 Other bishops “were critical not only of the contents but also of the Latin style of the schema.”130 The debate had dealt with matters which were too complicated for the time available. It was not “worthy of an ecumenical council.”131 The participants had allowed themselves to be led astray into areas in which they were not competent. His criticism hit the bone. “In many cases the fathers who discussed economics sounded like men out of their depth.”132

130. Hurley, Vatican II, 123.
Apartheid in the Council

Only one South African bishop came close to this subject in his *vota*. Archbishop McCann listed racialism as an error to be condemned. The topic received little attention in the council or its documents. The opening *Message to Humanity* contained the assertion: “We are giving witness that all men are brothers, whatever their race or nation.”¹³³ One of the sixteen documents, the declaration on non-Christians, carried the message more strongly. “The Church reproves, as foreign to the mind of Christ, any discrimination against people or any harassment of them on the basis of their race, colour, condition in life or religion.”¹³⁴

Bishop Ddungu of Masaka in Uganda addressed the problem directly in a brief intervention. Racial discrimination was “among the most acute problems in the world today.”¹³⁵ He regretted that the schema treated racial discrimination as just one among many types of discrimination. He implored the council to speak more clearly and strongly on the subject. A survey of the African Church at the council¹³⁶ identified six bishops who made passing reference to racism.¹³⁷ Archbishop Hurley adds three other bishops, two American and one Indian.¹³⁸ As for the South African bishops: “we did not think of it in time.”¹³⁹ His biographer says that he was too busy with the “new theological ferment” and he missed “the opportunity provided by the council for a resounding condemnation of apartheid”, an omission which he regretted.¹⁴⁰ But the evidence is not conclusive. At the time he himself

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¹³⁷. Bishops Soares de Resende (Beira), Malula (Leopoldville), Mason (El Obeid), Lamont (Umtali), Duval (Algeria) and Yago (Abidjan). *Acta Synodalicia*, respectively vol 2 part 5 page 226, 3 5 737, 4 1 268, 2 3 496, 4 3 605 and 3 6 220.
¹³⁹. Hurley, Memories, 165.
was not certain that apartheid was a fit subject for the council. He reasoned that the problem was a limited one geographically. It was found in the United States, South Africa, Southern Rhodesia and Australia “to some extent.”

He concluded that “the problem hardly seems worthy of the attention of an ecumenical council.” In the same article he noted that the effects of racialism in the United States and Southern Africa were felt around the world. Showing his uncertainty he added: “We cannot but hope therefore that the problem of racism will appear on the council agenda.” While the council did not mention apartheid by name the wording of Nostra Aetate was a clear condemnation of racial discrimination. That, after all, was the crude basis of the apartheid system. Who can forget the comment made in the Senate in Cape Town that black people were limited to “certain forms of labour”? Nostra Aetate at least allowed the South African bishops to point their government to the Church’s overwhelming vote against discrimination. Whatever uncertainty Archbishop Hurley felt about raising the issue in the council we shall see in Chapter Four that, after the council, there was no uncertainty about his practical opposition to apartheid.

**Context**

The Race Relations Act came into force in Britain on 8 December 1965 “making racial discrimination unlawful in public places.” The Second Vatican Council came to an end that same day. Archbishop Hurley had been active in the preparatory commission, the seminary commission and the council in general. His involvement in the debates was direct and critical. In the early days his contribution helped the council recover from unfocused

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144. Reported by the South African Institute of Race Relations, see Kearney, *Guardian*, 75.
rambling. We remember too his consistent refrain during commission and council debates. He found it annoying that so many draft documents did not first establish a purpose to be achieved. Without a purpose, he argued, the discussion was just going around and around. There were two exceptions. The first was the *schema* on the liturgy which had been compiled by a group of well renowned liturgists. The second was the seminary *schema* which was well received in the council. The archbishop’s involvement in the seminary commission helped bring some order to the *schema* and gave it a purpose. The easy reception of this *schema* suggests clearly that his criticisms of earlier *schemata* had been spot on.

Archbishop Hurley enjoyed the extracurricular activities, the daily features of life during the council. These included informal lectures, workshops and evenings of debates over dinner with clergy and laity and “a few hard-bitten media people.”  

146 He did not know it at the time but he was preparing himself for episcopal life after the council. He was learning and developing every day. This points to the reason for his embrace of the council, the experience of a lifetime as he called it: “I would describe Vatican II as the greatest project of adult education ever held in the world.”

We have seen how his *vota* reflected the issues of church life in South Africa. The language of the *vota* suggests a concern for the Church *ad extra* even though that phrase had not come into general use. His comment on the laity, for example, showed a movement away from the perception that the laity did nothing but help the bishops. His own experience as a student informed his call for a reform of seminary training. He pushed for juridic power in episcopal conferences and favoured consultative collegiality. He was to say, years later, that


147. Simmermacher, “Hurley Remembers.”
collegiality had not happened. He dismissed the synod of bishops as “not really a collegial institution” because only the pope was authorised to convocate the synod and to approve the election of its members. Here he was, forty years after the council, still not reticent about pointing out defects.

One of the archbishop’s vota was written with insufficient clarity. We saw how his apparent concern with liturgy was in reality a concern with catechesis. Only later did it become clear that he saw liturgy and catechesis hand in hand. Catechesis of the liturgy was essential but the liturgy itself was also a catechetical tool. We shall see an even clearer picture when we look at his implementation of liturgical reform after the council. His concern about the debating procedure in the council prompted him to write a procedure for consideration. The fact that he was politely rebuffed does not detract from his initiative and sense of responsibility.

The word ‘apartheid’ did not feature in the South African vota, nor in any debates or documents of the council. This was a puzzle, given the enormous importance of the subject in South Africa. But that was Archbishop Hurley’s answer. The problem was geographically limited and therefore not of concern to a council of the worldwide church. It is true that he did write in favour of opening the topic for discussion, but it was obviously not a priority for him because he took no further action. Yet the council’s rejection of racial discrimination and its insistence on the equality and dignity of all people would form an important foundation for the fight against apartheid. Archbishop Hurley was absorbing the valuable lesson of dignity and freedom of the person because all were created in the image of God. The theology of the presence of Christ in the Church had made a deep impression on him.

In the council gatherings Archbishop Hurley met bishops from all around the world and was exposed to many new ways of thinking. He had been down this road before when he lived in Rome, but it was different now. He had authority and responsibility this time. It was up to him to lead the charge in his Archdiocese of Durban. He would do so with a renewed sense of the universal church and a clearer understanding of the Church’s existence and responsibility in the world.
Chapter Four: After The Council

Preamble

The White Rabbit put on his spectacles. “Where shall I begin, please your Majesty?” he asked. “Begin at the beginning,” the King said, gravely, “and go on till you come to the end: then stop.”¹

It is an easy temptation to think that as the Second Vatican Council came to an end the implementation began. But it was not so; there was an overlap. The bishops could not “begin at the beginning” because there was no clear beginning. Some of them began their implementation during the council as they started looking forward to time after the council. We saw in the last chapter that the council as a whole was moving in this way. Archbishop Hurley’s description of the opening Mass of the third period gave an example of the changes already underway as a result of the council.

The archbishop himself took part in two important initiatives as we shall see, and he used the time between council sessions to intensify his opposition to apartheid. After the council he maintained his twofold interest of implementing the teachings of the council and attacking the “intrinsic evil” of apartheid. Apart from setting up parish and diocesan structures the former had him thinking about the Principle of Overriding Right. The latter took him into the undelved depths of Limehill and the Namibia trial. While describing his activities in his two main fields of interest it will be important also to reflect on his reasons for doing so. We will see the continuing development of his independent manner of thinking. His regard for the dignity and freedom of the person, created in the image of God, informed his theological approach in all his activities.

The Overlap Period: Vatican II

As early as the first period of the council some bishops began contemplating the vernacular in the liturgy. That they did so is no great surprise. The subject of liturgical renewal was already in the air. We saw in Chapter Two that Archbishop Hurley was excited about the renewals being discussed before the council. Years later, as we saw in Chapter Three, he remembered that those in the preparatory commission had been affected by the liturgical revival. More than a year before the promulgation of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, Sacrosanctum Concilium, Archbishop Hurley found himself talking to bishops from Australia and the United States about a common English translation of the liturgy. Years later they could not remember which of them had first proposed the common translation. At some stage in their discussions they realised, somewhat wryly and perhaps to their own amusement, that they should invite a British bishop to join their group. After all, it would be incongruous not to include the “mother country” of the language.²

The group held its first formal meeting in October 1963, six weeks before the promulgation of Sacrosanctum Concilium. They were joined by bishops from five other countries. Effectively it was the first meeting of ICEL³ even though it would take several years for that name to be adopted.⁴ It portrayed Archbishop Hurley working internationally, outside the confines of his own diocese. His interest in implementing the council, in this case opening the liturgy to the people through their own language, had him remain a member of the ICEL Board for thirty eight years, sixteen of these as chairman.⁵ Reflecting another of the archbishop’s abiding interests, ICEL under his chairmanship was commended as “a model of

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² Paddy Kearney, Guardian of the Light: Denis Hurley Renewing the Church, Opposing Apartheid, (New York: Continuum, 2009), 117.
³ International Commission on English in the Liturgy. The Secretariat is located in Washington.
⁵ Page, “Promoter”, 59.
collegiality, collaboration and consultation for the universal church.”

The South African bishops as a group also participated in the overlap. In January 1964, the month after the promulgation of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, the bishops met in Pretoria “to work out how to implement the document.” Their most pressing concern was to celebrate Mass in the vernacular. Their work resulted in the widespread introduction of the vernacular two years after the council. Archbishop Hurley was not satisfied. It was one thing to have the liturgical words in the vernacular, but he wanted everything at Mass in the vernacular. This included the singing. There was little available by way of Catholic church music in English, so he set out to remedy the situation. Together with a university lecturer in music, Moira Birks, who was “renowned and respected for her formidable technique”, the archbishop sought out new hymns for liturgical use. The archbishop’s musical skill is beyond the scope of this thesis. It was a field to which he was clearly prepared to devote considerable time and effort. The evidence suggests a high level of competence. In addition to “Thirty-one Hymns by Denis Hurley” we find that the final hymn at a school anniversary Mass was composed by Moira Birks, with words by Denis Hurley.

**The Overlap Period: Apartheid**

During the same intersessional period Archbishop Hurley continued his fight against apartheid. This time there was an unintended consequence. With the installation of a new Prime Minister in 1958, Hendrik Verwoerd, the official explanation for the validity of

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6. Part of the wording of an award given by the Centre for Pastoral Liturgy at the University of Notre Dame, reported in Kearney, *Guardian*, 164.
apartheid took an insidious shift. Blacks resident within the South African borders were not really South Africans at all. Instead they were Zulu or Venda or Xhosa or Tswana or any other group according to their tribal background. Each of these groups formed a “nation” and was entitled to self-determination in its own ethnic area. Many blacks in South Africa were urban residents by this stage and two or three generations removed from living in tribal homelands. This inconvenient fact was irrelevant to the government because the black residents would be welcome to stay, provided they obtained work visas as “foreign” migrant labour. There is no need to describe the government policy in any more detail. It led to the creation of “Bantustan” homelands with their own parliament buildings, resident South African ambassadors and all the paraphernalia of independent countries. They were widely ridiculed around the world, but there was comic relief of a sort. Casino gambling was illegal in South Africa but these “independent” countries legalised it within their own borders. South Africans in their thousands, white and black, took advantage of the loophole. The Bantustan system collapsed inevitably after white South Africans voted for universal adult suffrage.

Back to Archbishop Hurley. The South African Institute of Race Relations invited him to deliver the annual Hoernlé Memorial Lecture in January 1964.12 His chosen title for the lecture delivered its own message, one we have seen before: *Apartheid: a Crisis of the Christian Conscience*.13 The lecture was “a brilliant analysis of the apartheid problem.”14 Apartheid was not really a political problem, he said, but more rationally a Christian problem. It was impossible in the archbishop’s view for any genuine Christian, one “who has

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12. Named after a husband a wife team who each served as President of the SAIRR.
gazed on the crucified Christ and called him Lord and Master”, to believe in the morality of apartheid. The solution was to appeal to Christian conscience. In his lecture Archbishop Hurley demolished the arguments for separate development. He proposed that if separate development were to be considered a moral good then it would have to meet four conditions:

1. The policy must be feasible.
2. It must meet with the free consent of all parties involved.
3. There must be a proportionate share of sacrifice.
4. The rights of all parties must be adequately protected during the transition period.

Anyone with a rudimentary knowledge of conditions in apartheid South Africa will quickly realise that these conditions would not be met. Despite its nuanced explanation of separate development the government had no intention of going down this road. The reason was obvious and evident. “The bias is unmistakeable. South African legislation unashamedly accepts the principle of discrimination.” The big mistake, as the archbishop explained it, was to treat religion and politics as two separate compartments of one’s life. Politics could not be divorced from morality for politics involved human thought and decision which were tested against a person’s moral code. A believer could not keep his religion out of politics because “his religion goes with him into public office in the form of a moral outlook and a conscience trained to apply that outlook to specific situations.”

The choice, as most white South Africans saw it, was to live with the present system of injustice to blacks and preserve white civilisation, or to grant equality to all and witness the consequent destruction of white society. Whites believed in human dignity and liberty for

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themselves but did not see why these rights should be shared with others. This gave the archbishop the title of his lecture. “This is the crisis of the Christian conscience in South Africa.”\(^\text{19}\) The fundamental evil of apartheid was that it refused to recognise the human dignity of people who were not white. By the power of law it “pours scorn on the humanity of men and women created with an inborn hunger for recognition.”\(^\text{20}\) It was an essential duty of the Christian to oppose apartheid by the witness of his life. “A white man’s love for God is on trial every time he meets a non-white neighbour.”\(^\text{21}\)

Archbishop Hurley’s lecture was widely covered in the press. This led to the unintended consequence mentioned earlier. Archbishop Whelan of Bloemfontein was not convinced that fighting the government on human rights was an appropriate avenue for church involvement. He had viewed the strong stance taken by the bishops against apartheid with some misgivings. He was profoundly irritated by Archbishop Hurley’s actions and statements and the media attention he attracted. Archbishop Whelan put his views in writing for the press. He disagreed that separate development was fundamentally evil because there was nothing morally wrong about living separately. He had been influenced by the new government policy of self-determination for all groups. Directly contradicting Archbishop Hurley he took the view that the Christian law of love “was only for individuals and their motivation, not for public policy.”\(^\text{22}\)

Many newspapers gave this front page treatment. Some even praised it for the change of policy on the part of the Catholic Church. The damage was done and the hubbub spread far and wide. *The Catholic Herald* in London said that Archbishop Whelan’s statement “had

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brought joy to the enemies of God.”  

Archbishop Hurley, no shrinking violet as we have seen, jumped into immediate action. He flew to Cape Town to see Archbishop McCann, then the chairman of the Bishop’s Conference. Archbishop Hurley persuaded the reluctant Archbishop McCann to call a plenary session of the Bishops’ Conference. Both archbishops spoke to the press about the Whelan statement, individually pointing out that it did not represent official church policy. The Apostolic Delegate intervened because he feared a potential split among the bishops. Finally a statement by the Bishop’s Conference pointed out that their policy on apartheid was unchanged. Archbishop McCann, a former editor of the Southern Cross, pressed the current editor to stop all coverage of the matter. The paper itself said that it was suspending coverage in accordance with a “directive received.”

The fallout was far reaching. The subject was no longer in the news but people did not forget. The danger in Archbishop Hurley’s view was that white Catholics had been encouraged to believe that apartheid was compatible with Catholic principles. It was the exact opposite of the call made in his Hoernlé lecture. Even more troubling was that the plenary session had unearthed a surprising number of bishops who supported Archbishop Whelan’s position. The Apostolic Delegate, too, showed some hesitation about confronting the government. Many bishops did not want to rock the boat, again the opposite of the activist Archbishop Hurley’s approach. In keeping with his activism he wrote to the Vatican Secretariat of State explaining his opposition to apartheid. He added his fear that the Apostolic Delegate considered separate development to be justifiable in principle. There is no record of a response but it became known that the Apostolic Delegate “had sent negative

24. A year later, in February 1965, he became the first South African to receive the red hat.
reports to the Vatican about Hurley’s views.”26 Was this perhaps the first black mark in the file concerning the bestowal of the red hat?

Archbishop Whelan died unexpectedly two years later. Archbishop Hurley spoke at his funeral about “burning himself up in the service of God... He was driven by a great love - for God, for his Church, his priesthood, his religious family, for people.”27 The evidence suggests that Archbishop Hurley did not bear a grudge.

**Lay Participation**

The work continued on two fronts. Archbishop Hurley was keen to encourage the council’s vision that the laity shared the priestly, prophetic and kingly functions of Christ. We have seen in Chapter Two that he began consulting his priests shortly after his episcopal ordination. In Chapter Three we saw in his *vota* that he had moved forward from the idea that the laity had no other purpose than to assist the bishops. Now it was time to talk to the laity. After considerable consultation with the laity (and the clergy!) the first result was the establishment of parish councils. Their constitutions, mostly drafted by Archbishop Hurley, provided a flexible structure so that parishes could propose amendments as they saw fit. In taking these first steps the archbishop was as much in a learning mode as the people. He did not impose rigidity but allowed for variation in the light of experience. As well as contributing to parish life the new councils “were expected to work for improved race relations and to cooperate with other local churches in common ecumenical projects.”28 Thus the archbishop combined the implementation of the council with the fight against apartheid. The ecumenical aspect was to play a role in later years when Archbishop Hurley himself joined with other church leaders in the anti-apartheid struggle. A photograph shows him at

the front of the “Freedom March” in 1989, side by side and arms linked with bishops of other churches and Muslim leaders.\textsuperscript{29}

There was an aspect to the establishment of parish councils which probably did not please the archbishop. It was a stopgap and gave the impression of making the most of a bad situation. In parishes with black and white parishioners together separate parish councils were set up, with a proviso that they hold a joint meeting at least once a year. The ostensible reason was to overcome the language barrier between English and Zulu speakers. In the context of apartheid this did not present a favourable image. On the other hand the action made it clear that black parishioners were not to be omitted, despite the language difference.

The consultation went further. The archbishop established a diocesan pastoral council with membership open to laity and clergy. Then he added a diocesan synod to discuss diocesan policy. The first meeting of the synod was held in December 1968 “long before any other diocese in South Africa took such an initiative.”\textsuperscript{30} To overcome the language issue there was a simultaneous translation of proceedings. Also present were observers from other Christian churches. In his opening remarks the archbishop made it clear that he took the message of Vatican II seriously. The word ‘church’ no longer meant those who had authority in the Church, but it now meant the whole community of the Church, all its members. The synod, of course, was a consultative body according to Canon Law, but the archbishop had a high regard for the synod process. After each meeting of the synod he “made a point of promulgating, without exception, the synodal resolutions.”\textsuperscript{31}

Back in 1960 Archbishop Hurley had been appointed chairman of the South African

\textsuperscript{30} Kearney, \textit{Guardian}, 147.
\textsuperscript{31} Kearney, \textit{Guardian}, 148.
Bishops’ Department of Catechetics and Education. He found himself “plunged into a new world of catechetics.” He thought of catechetical renewal as a vital necessity and listed the subject among his vota. His enthusiasm continued after the council. He saw that it was time to move away from the rote learning of the penny catechism and adopt a more up-to-date methodology. He engaged experts, people who had been working in the field in Europe, for their advice on implementing the new methodology. He was clear however that it was not to be an import from Europe. South Africa needed its own programme that would reflect the culture of the country. And of great importance, the quality of the catechetical books for white and black children was to be identical. Black children were not to be short changed. We saw in Chapter Two that the resulting catechism, a series of volumes under the general title People of God, was published in twelve languages. The complexity of the project is illustrated by different reports, eleven languages in one record and fourteen in another. But the success of the series cannot be doubted. “It was subsequently translated and amended for other parts of Africa.”

Collegiality was much on the mind of Archbishop Hurley. So it is no surprise to find him as one of the delegates discussing liaison and pastoral cooperation between the bishops of the countries in Southern Africa. The result was IMBISA, the Inter-Regional Meeting of Bishops in Southern Africa. The administrative office is in Harare and it consists of nine countries in six episcopal conferences. Two of its episcopal conferences representing three countries were, and are, Portuguese speaking. This presented a particular difficulty, not only of language, but also of theological and political viewpoints. Getting agreement on their first

32. Hurley, Memories, 133.
33. Kearney, Guardian, 100.
34. Kearney, Memories, 178.
35. Kearney, Memories, 178.
36. Inter-Regional Meeting of the Bishops of Southern Africa (IMBISA), imbisa.wordpress.com/about/.
joint pastoral letter proved very taxing. Even the redoubtable Archbishop Hurley was forced to comment, likely with a double meaning: “We don’t speak the same language.”37 But he pressed on. His suggestions included visiting each other in their own countries. His own visit to Angola gave him a better understanding of conditions in a country with a communist government. He then proposed that two English speaking bishops should learn Portuguese, and vice versa. His third proposal was to invite Angolan seminarians to study in South Africa. That one took almost fifteen years to come to fruition.38 There is no need to delve any further into the early divisions within IMBISA. It is enough for our understanding of Archbishop Hurley’s leadership to note that the Angolan bishops began to feel more at ease. They appreciated his efforts “to understand them and to help the other South African bishops to do so.”39

We see in the narrative so far that Archbishop Hurley was pushing ahead with implementing the decrees of the council. He did this locally in the Archdiocese of Durban by establishing parish councils and other consultative bodies, and by adapting hymns for local use. He did it nationally with changes to the liturgy and the introduction of the vernacular, and as part of the catechetical drive of the South African Church. He did it internationally via his memberships in ICEL and IMBISA.

**Principle of Overriding Right**

In addition to all this Archbishop Hurley found other avenues of proceeding with his twin preoccupations of implementing the council and bringing apartheid to an end. He combined the writing of journal articles and books with direct action. In 1966 he wrote about

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the principle of overriding right.\textsuperscript{40} In an interview three years later he referred to it as the principle of option.\textsuperscript{41} He had stumbled upon a new formula, “if I may be pardoned the presumption”, which arose out of the realisation that “we have no general principle in our moral theology dealing with situations in which right and duty clash.” \textsuperscript{42} He gives some examples.\textsuperscript{43}

a. Killing in self defence is the result of the clash between the duty to preserve life and the right to safeguard one’s own. The right predominates.

b. Stealing food represents the clash between the duty to respect another’s property and the right to have sufficient food to sustain life. The right predominates.

c. Faced with the prospect of performing an action which will have both a good effect and an evil effect, one has the right to the good effect and a duty to avoid the evil one. The right predominates.

The common element is that, given a clash between a right and a duty, the right comes first. He asks whether it is possible to generalise this into a principle, that whenever the exercise of a right infringes an obligation, the obligation ceases. But this is not absolute. He recognises that there must be some proportion between the right and the obligation. A second qualification is that there must be a necessary connection between the right and the infringement of the obligation such that it is impossible to exercise the right without infringing the obligation. This principle can balance and mollify the rigidity of the well known principle that the end does not justify the means. The principle of the overriding right


\textsuperscript{42} Hurley, “A New Moral Principle”, 619.

\textsuperscript{43} Hurley, “A New Moral Principle”, 620.
appears to be “an advance on the principle of double effect and to render it redundant.” In addition, the principle throws light on the concept of intrinsic evil. A human act is evil in itself only when the obligation of avoiding it can never be overridden by any right. But an overriding right can make an intrinsically evil act permissible. This was written two years before *Humanae Vitae* in which the claim of intrinsic evil in paragraph 14 would exercise many minds. Finally, Archbishop Hurley acknowledges that some unforeseen consequences make the principle unacceptable. “One can find out only by putting it up for debate.”

There were three responses. Father Duggan wrote that the principle of overriding right was invalid, because a right “cannot override duty.” Monsignor McReavy accused the archbishop of stating his case with a “lack of precision.” Father McCormick’s basic objection to the principle of overriding right was that it was not a principle at all because “it does not provide the means of solving a problem, but simply formulates a solution at which one has already arrived.”

Archbishop Hurley replied in three articles. And that is where the trail seems to run cold. No other articles or information could be found on the subject. Clearly, the topic did not set the theological world on fire. So why did Archbishop Hurley raise it in the first place? A possible answer lies in his conviction that the laity have their own mission in the Church and the world. When the archbishop grasped the dignity of the laity he was led to the conclusion

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that the apartheid system which demeaned the God-given dignity of black people was fully unchristian. The system also attacked the dignity of white people, as he argued on many occasions, because it seduced them into a false and perverse belief that they were superior in God’s eyes. It is not too difficult then to imagine that the archbishop was trying to find a way, by the principle of overriding right, to help people negotiate the many difficult choices they faced in a system so replete with wrongs and evil consequences.

The breakthrough had come one morning in January 1966, a month after the end of the council, in the commonplace circumstance of taking tea! “It hit me between the eyes”, he said, that when there was a clash between the many aspects of a particular human situation, the individual was free to choose. 51 This was because “the most important thing was not the law but the person.” 52 This theme had earlier appeared in the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World. 53 The archbishop went on to explain that he had received a scholastic training, along with which went legalism. During the council he heard murmurings against the established teaching on birth control. “I was quite shaken” by the speeches of four bishops who were attacking something he had previously thought unquestionable. 54 He began “gnawing at the problem” and eventually arrived at the principle of overriding right. 55 “Once I had the principle I could immediately make the application.” 56

Collegiality

During an audience of bishops from Africa with Pope Paul VI on 11 October 1967, Archbishop Hurley mentioned that several issues were of concern to him. The pope invited

53. “Man's dignity demands that he act according to a knowing and free choice that is personally motivated and prompted from within, not under blind internal impulse nor by mere external pressure” (Gaudium et Spes, 17).
him to write on any points he thought worthwhile mentioning. He did so five days later suggesting that the pope take into his confidence, on the subject of birth control, the two hundred bishops then attending the synod in Rome. He was sure that the guidance of the Holy Spirit would lead to a magnificent outcome. “Do not let the opportunity pass, Holy Father.”\(^5^7\) The effective message of this letter was that the pope should reverse his earlier decision to reserve the topic of birth control for himself. Two years later he acknowledged his own change of mind, having said at the council: “I approved Pope Paul reserving the question for himself.”\(^5^8\) The pope did not accept the archbishop’s suggestion. Seven months later he issued the encyclical *Humanae Vitae*. The encyclical was a blow to Archbishop Hurley, who expected to lose his mitre because of his publicly stated opposition. He wrote once more to the pope, in April 1969, setting out his opinion about the implications for collegiality. The council’s view of collegiality was now made more difficult because of the strong reaction to *Humanae Vitae*. There was a deep chasm between the pope’s authoritative statement compared with the attitude of a significant and vocal section of the Church. “Two obvious examples are the questions of contraception and compulsory celibacy.”\(^5^9\)

He added that the council’s emphasis on collegiality required that papal primacy be looked at in a new fashion. The fundamental theological question was whether collegiality should be exercised on a permanent and universal basis. Archbishop Hurley questioned whether the pope had a charism for discovering truth without consultation. Rather, he should preside over the search for truth “ensuring that use is made of all the means that faith and prudence suggest.”\(^6^0\)

\(^{57}\) Kearney, *Guardian*, 137.

\(^{58}\) O’Grady, “Letter of Law”, 152.

\(^{59}\) Kearney, *Guardian*, 137.

\(^{60}\) Kearney, *Guardian*, 138.
Such a letter might be seen as foolhardy. Archbishop Hurley’s biographer wrote that it “showed great confidence and courage.” But on this occasion the archbishop himself may have felt some apprehension about his forthrightness. He closed the letter with the hope that his words did not cause offence. His only purpose in writing was to make a “humble contribution to the solution of pressing problems.”

Not only did the archbishop keep his mitre after this frontal attack, but he received a personal reply from the pope about three months later. The time lag suggests that Pope Paul had spent much time and given careful attention in composing his reply. He accepted the archbishop’s sentiments of loyalty to the papal office, but chided him for expressions which “a less well disposed reader might find somewhat wanting in respect for the Apostolic See.” Clearly the pope treated the archbishop’s opposition with respect and courtesy. He defended his record saying that he constantly listened to “truly competent persons” who were animated by a sensus fidei. It did not matter that there was vocal opposition to *Humanae Vitae*, because there would have been opposition from another quarter if he had announced an entirely different decision. Then he defended his responsibility to make a decision personally after prayerful consideration of all points of view “humbly and with trepidation” because “we can never renounce the responsibility which is and will remain Ours personally by divine disposition.” This remark showed that Pope Paul felt the weight of the Petrine office. With his carefully crafted response to a fellow bishop, and only the mildest of rebukes, he showed, ironically, that he was practising collegiality, albeit not in the manner wished by Archbishop Hurley.

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64. Kearney, *Guardian*, 139.
Forced Removals

Limehill was where Archbishop Hurley got his hands dirty. “Removal” meant the implementation of government policy to move black people out of white areas into black areas. The wishes of the black people being removed were not taken into account. Throughout the country, over a period of about twenty years, some three and a half million people would eventually be moved. A Franciscan friar in northern Natal had warned of the impending removal of 12,800 people from his mission station and nearby areas. Leaders of various churches, the Black Sash, the Institute of Race Relations and others formed a Committee of Church Representatives to work against the planned removals. Archbishop Hurley became the chairman. Was this political activism? The argument can be made that the archbishop stepped over the line from church leadership into political agitation. Some of his fellow bishops were wary of this type of confrontation, as we have already seen. We have also seen that the archbishop’s motivation was simple. He saw an affront to human dignity which demanded a Christian response. The committee’s letters to the Minister of Bantu Affairs proved fruitless. The minister refused to meet them. In a last-minute telegram to the minister Archbishop Hurley asked: “Before God, how can you bear the responsibility?” Some days later the minister issued a public rebuke that calling on God was done “for publicity purposes.”

Early on the appointed day the open-backed lorries arrived accompanied by security police. People and belongings were loaded onto the lorries. They were taken and deposited in the open veld at Limehill, about thirty five kilometres away, where preparations were quite

68. Kearney, Guardian, 150.
inadequate. “Tents were available but had not been erected, the water supply was insufficient, and latrines had not been dug.” Archbishop Hurley drove two hundred kilometres from Durban and found people sitting in the veld bewildered and devastated. He was among those who helped the people put up their tents. The presence of clergymen at Limehill prompted the Minister of Bantu Affairs to speak in Parliament about villains in their long black and white dresses.

Soon typhoid and gastro-enteritis set in. Government officials downplayed the number of children who died from these afflictions. Archbishop Hurley was indignant at the suffering of the people and he took simple and effective action. Together with the same Franciscan friar he returned to Limehill and counted every child’s grave in the cemetery, making a careful record of all seventy three names and ages. The archbishop gave this information to the press. Government officials could not argue with such clear evidence. The personal result for the archbishop was that he became solidified in government eyes as an enemy of the state.

The Trial

Seventeen years later came the standoff. The archbishop had become interested in South West Africa. He was entering his second term as chairman of the Bishops’ Conference and South West Africa was one of four countries whose bishops were members of the Bishops’ Conference.

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71. Cosmas Desmond OFM. His book about forced removals (*The Discarded People*, Johannesburg: Christian Institute, 1969) was widely read and eventually banned in South Africa. He was placed under house arrest for five years, prohibited from having visitors and from preaching and celebrating Mass. He broke this law and continued to celebrate Mass in public. Archbishop Hurley also broke the law and visited him at home. The government ignored these breaches.
72. The former German colony was ruled by South Africa according to a League of Nations mandate. South Africa refused to cede control when the United Nations claimed it as a Trust Territory in 1946. In 1968 the UN resolved to rename the territory Namibia. South Africa ignored this resolution with the result that both names, Namibia and South West Africa, became used interchangeably.
of the conference. South Africa’s claim to be the legitimate ruler of the territory allowed it to send in South African police as a peacekeeping force, in addition to the South African army already in place. Skipping over the complex politics of the territory and why the police were there in the first place, stories of army and police atrocities against black people began filtering back to Archbishop Hurley. It seems likely that the archbishop regarded this as one more manifestation of apartheid’s immorality, and therefore within the purview of the Bishops’ Conference.

Reports from Namibian bishops about atrocities in their country were so harrowing that some South African bishops could not contemplate that their own troops and police could be involved. In Archbishop Hurley’s view direct action was required. It was agreed that a team of six bishops, himself included, would go to Namibia and make their own judgement in situ. They spent a week talking to people in villages and mission stations. What they heard was worse than they feared. Back in South Africa the report they released to the public caused a storm. There was no escaping the political content in the report. Contrary to government claims, they said, the people in South West Africa feared South African forces more than the guerrillas. The people were overwhelmingly in favour of the removal of South African forces so that they could elect their own government. The paramilitary police unit known as koevoet was singled out as the most vicious group in the territory. The fallout was immediate and immense. The bishops were invited to speak with various government departments in Europe and North America about their findings. A summary of their report was banned and newspapers were threatened with prosecution for reporting it. Archbishop Hurley himself was eventually charged under the Police Act with publishing “untrue facts”

73. The four were South Africa, South West Africa, Botswana and Swaziland.
74. Afrikaans for “crowbar.”
about police actions. He faced up to five years in prison if convicted.\(^75\)

At his first court appearance there was some mirth when the magistrate asked the defence lawyer about the proper way to address an archbishop. The lawyer replied: “Your Grace, Your Worship.”\(^76\) In preparation for the case the archbishop’s legal team had flown to Namibia and collected even more evidence against the *koevoet* unit. Then there were two developments in parallel. Firstly, the archbishop himself had been quite dismissive in his attitude about the whole case against him, although he did admit to some apprehension because the consequences for him held “unpleasant possibilities.”\(^77\) But then he began to see that he could present evidence in court and speak about things that would not be possible outside the courtroom environs. His enthusiasm increased accordingly. Secondly, there was widespread international interest in the trial. Not only would the press descend on the courtroom, but staff in foreign embassies in South Africa as well as bishops in Europe and North America were planning to attend. South African ambassadors abroad began to hear warnings from their host countries. Nelson Mandela wrote from prison to Archbishop Naidoo of Cape Town: “Archbishop Hurley is often in my thoughts especially now. I would like him to know that.”\(^78\) The defence team became more aware of increasing uneasiness in the prosecuting team. For most of the prosecutors this was their first contact with Archbishop Hurley. His impressive height and reputation only added to their anxiety. After all he was the epitome of the dreaded *Roomse gevaar*.\(^79\) They were clearly aware that the defence strategy was to put the state on trial. The leader of the defence team wrote later: “His Grace had become the prosecutor and I was totally focused on getting a conviction.” Then the

\(^{75}\) Kearney, *Guardian*, 221.  
\(^{76}\) Kearney, *Guardian*, 222.  
\(^{77}\) Kearney, *Guardian*, 222.  
\(^{78}\) Kearney, *Guardian*, 223.  
\(^{79}\) Afrikaans for “Roman danger.”
government caved in, and announced that all charges would be withdrawn.

Archbishop Hurley "now stands vindicated and the truth of his charges has been implicitly acknowledged." He was glad to be rid of the charges but disappointed that his evidence would not come out in open court. So he sued for malicious prosecution thinking that the evidence would be made public in this way. The government settled out of court.

**Context**

As we have seen, the archbishop said that Vatican II was the greatest experience of his life. So we can expect that his actions after the council should demonstrate how he responded to this "greatest experience." That is what this chapter has tried to explain.

As is clear by now, Archbishop Hurley responded to the council along two distinct highways, implementing the decrees of the council and opposing apartheid. Within his own archdiocese he put in place several mechanisms to enable the laity to feel as though they belonged. It was no longer good enough, he said, to look at the "Church" as the hierarchy. The reality was that everyone in the Church participated in the mission of the Church. The secret for the laity was to understand that their "mission" should occupy their thoughts and actions everywhere they went, even in their workplaces. So, parish councils, a diocesan council and even a diocesan synod all came into play in the Archdiocese of Durban. The liturgy was recast into the vernacular and the archbishop personally wrote or rewrote many hymns for liturgical use. This gave us a glimpse into his musical competence, but no more than that because music was beyond the scope of the thesis. He turned his attention also to improving the mode of catechetical instruction. The result was an instructional system based more on the message of scripture rather than rote learning. We saw also that the archbishop

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was behind the preparation of a series of instruction books in many languages. Several other countries in Africa used the books later, translated into their own languages.

The archbishop, as we saw, was active in the international arena. He worked towards a common worldwide English translation of the liturgy through ICEL, and he pursued his enthusiasm for collegiality through the Southern African Conference of Catholic Bishops and through IMBISA. This collegial enthusiasm brought him into correspondence with Pope Paul VI. His letter to the pope was forthright and possibly foolhardy. The pope did not take umbrage but wrote a careful reply displaying both courtesy and collegiality.

On the second highway Archbishop Hurley immersed himself ever more deeply into opposing apartheid. His Hoernlé lecture, in which he demolished the arguments for separate development, led into the unfortunate public disagreement by Archbishop Whelan. Archbishop McCann used his considerable influence to take the argument out of the news cycle, but the damage was already done. Archbishop Hurley fretted that some white South Africans had been comforted to learn that one of their bishops saw nothing immoral in separate development. But, in another peek into the archbishop’s character, he cast aside his irritation when he preached at Archbishop Whelan’s funeral.

There is no need to revisit Limehill and the koevoet trial, except to ask the question whether Archbishop Hurley had gone too far. He was criticized for his political activity; some said it was unseemly for a bishop to stoop to such levels. Indeed there is a point of view in the Church which holds that priests and bishops should take no part in politics. Who can forget the image of a recent pope wagging his finger at a Jesuit priest who held a ministerial post in government? But that was a government office. It was not in the same dimension, as the archbishop explained in a homily in Emmanuel Cathedral two days after news that the charges had been withdrawn.
There were two elements to his explanation. Firstly, the Church had to go where there was suffering and the bishops had to take the lead. There was much suffering in Limehill and Namibia and it was appropriate, even imperative, that the bishops bring this into the open. “Those of us who went to Namibia found Christ in the suffering of the Namibian people.”

Secondly, knowing that he would startle many people, he said that the gospel was political. The reason lay in the law of love, which was required of all human behaviour, personal, domestic and political. He emphasised that politics was subject to the law of love because “a society must try to live the justice practised by Christ.”

82. Kearney, Guardian, 224.
Chapter Five: Summary and Conclusion

Preamble

In his retirement and during his second year as Administrator of Emmanuel Cathedral, Archbishop Hurley accepted appointment as Chancellor of the University of Natal. He was seventy-eight and he held the post for five years. The previous year, 1992, had seen the referendum in which white voters had effectively put an end to apartheid. The job, said the archbishop, was “largely a matter of getting dressed up in ornate and cumbersome gowns.”1 The Vice-Chancellor, Brenda Gourley, saw it differently. He was “an articulate, compassionate and impressive spokesman for the University.”2 Then, with her own twist of humour, she added that the two of them working together were often known as “the Hurley-Gourley show.”3 Similarly, the lead lawyer in a case eight years earlier, which dealt with detentions without charge, attributed the success of the case to the solid and unflappable evidence given by Archbishop Hurley. The lawyer remarked on several occasions: “When you’re in the hurly-burly, it’s good to have the burly Hurley.”4

We have looked at the Archbishop Hurley’s life before, during and after the council. The particular focus was the archbishop’s own assertion that Vatican II was “the greatest experience of my whole life.”5 That experience gave him the motivation to look outside the accepted confines of church activities. The Church belonged in the world and opposing apartheid was a necessary consequence of this vision of the Church. The most important teaching to come out of the council was twofold, he said. First was the overriding purpose of

the Church: “the pursuit of holiness, a holiness that consists of the gift of divine life, the inestimable privilege of enjoying in our human life the presence of Christ and his Father and of the Holy Spirit”; second “was the involvement of the Church in the world.” Archbishop Hurley took to heart the council teaching that “the joys and hopes, the grief and anguish of the people” are “the joys and hopes, the grief and anguish of the followers of Christ as well.”

This final chapter will recall those features of the archbishop’s life which proved to be active turning points. Their impact on the archbishop was to make him a vocal and determined opponent of apartheid, and restless to implement the council’s decrees, especially those dealing with the laity. Other turning points were passive in the sense that there were no active lessons to be applied, only consequences to be absorbed. I will refer to some awards and honours that came his way, what others wrote and said about him and how these comments support the thesis that he pursued a consistently independent way of thinking. Judging the archbishop’s words and actions will tell us whether he was a significant protagonist or only one of the supporting cast in the council and its aftermath and in the ongoing struggle against apartheid. I will consider such matters as what he did well and what he left unsaid or undone, what might have been said differently, how he dealt with criticism, what attitude he took to his critics, whether his intransigence was good or bad in the circumstances, and how he weathered the fame that came his way.

**Active Turning Points**

In the scholasticate he was not a convinced student for the priesthood, drifting along in classes that he considered irrelevant. He seems to have been unaware that his novice master

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regarded him as “a boy of great promise.” Then he discovered, almost with a sense of shock, the new emphasis on the presence of Christ in the Church. He came to realise this presence in his own life, an understanding that had an “explosive” significance for him. Concurrently the social teaching of the Church alerted him to the less than satisfactory conditions of black people back home in South Africa. He learned about the Young Christian Workers Movement which he would later describe as a “huge revolution.” This early attempt to teach the laity about being the Church in the world would be developed in Vatican II and would provide the theological base for the archbishop’s actions after the council.

He accepted episcopal appointment in 1946 “with innocent self-confidence.” He began preaching about the evil of segregation. His early speeches and sermons were characterised by a warning tone. If whites did not surrender supremacy they were doomed to a future of bloodshed and strife. This message had no impact. The people to whom it was addressed held economic and military power and appeared to themselves to be invincible. As a corrective the archbishop began to argue a theological perspective, that it was a Christian’s duty to treat all people equitably and with love. Removing segregation was a matter for Catholic Action, a viewpoint about the laity which would be solidified during the council.

The National Party was elected to government in 1948 and began enacting laws favouring white supremacy. The Church was drawn into opposing the policy of apartheid, firstly with polite pleas and then with direct confrontation and civil disobedience. Two significant battles were the school funding issue and the “Church Clause.” After much agonising over the proper form of response the bishops released a statement condemning

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apartheid as “intrinsically evil.”\textsuperscript{12} The archbishop faced his own inner conflict. The power of Christ residing in the Church had taken hold of bishops throughout the history of the Church. It had led them into action “that no human quality could account for.”\textsuperscript{13} The difficulty for Archbishop Hurley was to overcome his shyness, a trait which he recognised early in his life and which never left him. He worked at it continuously but a friend commented: “I don’t think it came to him naturally.”\textsuperscript{14}

Archbishop Hurley found himself entranced by renewals in church life which were underway mostly in Europe; “a vigorous scene” he called it.\textsuperscript{15} The renewals centred on the mystery of the Church as the Body of Christ. It was the same doctrine that had gripped Father Hurley’s attention during his final year of studies in Rome. Then he discovered the writings of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. His analysis of evolution led to the irrefutable conclusion of an omega point, which the light of faith identified as Christ. In later years the archbishop was able to conclude that the renewals and his reading of Teilhard made him ready for the Second Vatican Council.

But his first reaction was sceptical. He was not sure why the Church needed a council. He was appointed to membership of the Central Preparatory Commission and his scepticism continued. He was perplexed by the sad lack of organisation, by the scattered collection of themes. He spoke very critically about the documents prepared for the commission members. He became more despondent as he saw curial staff ignoring the stated wishes of commission members. Only one of the documents, that on the liturgy, awoke a favourable, even excited,

\textsuperscript{15} Hurley, Memories, 139.
response in him. It changed his thinking because it enabled him to grasp that changes for the better were possible. He then realised what a future council could mean for the Church.

His early interventions in the council were very critical of the draft documents. He was “thoroughly dismayed by the procedure.”16 A level of weariness could be detected when he criticised yet another document and said it was “not pleasant to play the role of devil’s advocate time and again in the conciliar debates.”17 His persistence, and that of other bishops, paid off when Pope John established the special commission to work between sessions. There was still much to criticise but the tide had turned. There was a noticeable improvement in efficiency, so not all his later comments were critical. Dealing with the relations between church and state, for example, he said “This is well put.”18

The archbishop’s participation in the council, all aspects of it including friendly dinners and discussions with theologians, were another turning point for him. It was not a sudden revelation as had been some earlier turning points; it was more gradual. His contributions to debates, meeting like-minded bishops and some not so like-minded, listening to theologians, learning new perspectives, all gave him a renewed sense of the universal church and its place in the world. The theology of the presence of Christ made a deep impression about the God-given dignity and personal worth of each individual. The implications “just grew and grew”19 and gave theological shape to his life after the council. He said that, before he came to this realisation, “the Church had been an organisation, now it was something alive.”20

After the council he applied himself with his customary vigour to putting the decrees of the council into practical effect. He understood this to mean more than liturgical and

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catechetical reform. The Church had to live its evolving vision that the laity belonged. This meant that they had to be catechised to understand that they were the Church in the world. In South Africa this belief encompassed a dimension which was not welcomed by many white Catholics. As the Church in the world they were to behave towards their black countrymen with loving impartiality. It went a step further. They were expected to recognise the dignity of black Catholics for they too were the Church in the world. In the archbishop’s mind this was no less than the council demanded, and it led to another turning point for him. He was forced to reconcile his activities in the political arena with basic Christianity. He explained it by saying that the gospel was political.21 All human behaviour, personal, domestic and political was subject to the law of love, as mandated by Christ.

**Passive Turning Points**

We have seen that Pope Paul responded generously and collegially to the archbishop’s letter about papal primacy. The subjects of concern were contraception and compulsory celibacy. In an interview years later Archbishop Hurley spoke about “two issues that I regret the council did not address: priestly celibacy, and birth control in marriage.”22 Following the letter and papal response he did not lose his see as he feared, but he also did not endear himself to those tasked with identifying potential members of the College of Cardinals. And his increasingly assertive public actions were a bridge too far for some. “Rome was never entirely comfortable with his unequivocal stance, the refusal to sit on the fence.”23 Clearly, he never angled for the “red hat” appointment. If that were in his mind then he would not have spoken so openly about *Humanae Vitae*. Nor would he have said that he was not "satisfied by

the theological grounds on which women's ordination has been ruled out.” 24 Nor would he have added: “at the Second Vatican Council there were many of us who said that at the Third Vatican Council they would bring their spouses.” 25

In the Central Preparatory Commission Archbishop Hurley spoke in favour of “the participation of bishops of the whole world in the government of the universal church.” 26 We saw in Chapter Three how his position evolved into supporting juridic power for episcopal conferences. His instinctive inclination towards decentralisation turned him into a vigorous supporter of the South African Bishops’ Conference and of its regional equivalent, IMBISA. He argued vigorously in his letter that Pope Paul should consult the two hundred bishops then in Rome for a synod. He was convinced that the result would be magnificent. The pope did not do so and this gave the archbishop one of his main reasons for objecting to *Humanae Vitae*. The pope had withdrawn the subject from consideration by the council and had ruled against the advice of his own commission. This left Archbishop Hurley disagreeing “with the method of the consultation - and with the result.” 27

His major criticism and disappointment in the aftermath of the council was that, despite his experience of episcopal cooperation at the council, the Church had not moved forward with collegiality. It was a fundamental criticism in his letter to Pope Paul and it was a fundamental criticism of the synods. The Synod of Bishops “is not really a collegial institution.” 28 This was because power was still centralised with only the pope being authorised to convocate a synod and decide its programme. He saw the same centralising effect

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in the battle over translating liturgical texts. Archbishop Hurley was very critical when Rome effectively annulled the work of ICEL. He spoke of it as “a distressing departure from the spirit of collegiality in favour of authoritative imposition.”\(^{29}\) He lamented the “uncompromising demand that the change be accepted without demur.”\(^{30}\) And he revised his view of the Roman Curia, writing that “it seems to be more concerned with power than with humble service.”\(^{31}\)

**Awards and Honours**

The University of Natal, of which he became Chancellor, had awarded him an honorary Doctorate of Literature fifteen years earlier. In total he received ten honorary doctorates, including one from Saint Paul University, Ottawa.\(^{32}\) He accepted civic honours in Italy and France and was given the Freedom of the cities of Pietermaritzburg and Durban. Perhaps the honour which pleased him most was the South African Order of Meritorious Service given by President Nelson Mandela. “The award came a month before the sixtieth anniversary of his priestly ordination.”\(^{33}\) Nelson Mandela wrote of him: “Your quest for justice is a source of inspiration to many South Africans.”\(^{34}\) Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi, a hereditary Zulu chief, whose friendship with the archbishop was warm and cool at different times, spoke at a memorial service for him. Archbishop Hurley “pointed out how it is part and parcel of Christianity to recognise that all human beings are entitled to the same dignity.”\(^{35}\)

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Archbishop Desmond Tutu, retired Primate of the Anglican Church in Southern Africa and a winner of the Nobel Peace Prize (1984), used to say to Archbishop Hurley in the very dark days: “‘I’m glad I can skulk behind your enormous stature’, meaning both his physical but mainly his moral stature. I give great thanks to God that he was there.”

He had expressed his admiration even more forcefully shortly after receiving the Nobel Peace Prize. He addressed the Catholic Bishops’ Conference and their president, Archbishop Hurley. “He told them he was not fit to tie their president’s shoelaces.”

Alan Paton, the first to refer to him in these words, said on the archbishop’s seventieth birthday that he was the guardian of the light. He had been “warning and guiding for the greater part of his seventy years. And he has done it with great faithfulness for which today we give thanks.”

He was “a stalwart of anti-apartheid action”, his courage “is legendary in South Africa and known throughout the world”, and he was “above all a man of the Spirit and prayer.”

And at least three publications feature contributors writing with admiration about Archbishop Hurley. Faced with such a chorus of praise how does one begin to criticise the archbishop?

Assessment

One starts with the archbishop’s own self assessments. We have seen in Chapter Two how he admitted to blotting his copybook.\(^{44}\) Looking back on early statements of the South African bishops he said they were nothing more than “bland resolutions”\(^{45}\) and “so horribly patronising”\(^{46}\) His successor wrote of him: “He used to comment on how weak he felt the Church’s statements in the fifties were. Yet he was just as critical of himself, because at that time he was chair of the SACBC.”\(^{47}\) In writing his memoirs Archbishop Hurley referred to the organising committee for the Marian Congress. At its first meeting in 1951: “I realise with shame and horror that there is not one Zulu among them.”\(^{48}\) Then he looked at the other twelve committees working on the event. Practically all of them were headed by priests. “We were a very clerical church in those days.”\(^{49}\)

But this is not fair. We cannot criticise the archbishop for comparing his later positions with his earlier positions. Throughout these chapters we have seen examples of development. He learned that dealing politely with the government did not work and he moved into head-on confrontation and civil disobedience. He learned for himself that his public speaking skills needed improvement. He learned that warning his white audiences of unfortunate consequences did not move them. He turned to appealing to their Christian compulsion to love all people. He absorbed the conciliar lesson that the Church encompassed more than just the hierarchy. As a result he established parish and diocesan consultative groups. Most strikingly of all as a student he became aware of the revival of the teaching that Christ was

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present in the Church and in himself personally. So when the archbishop reports on changes in his position over the years he is doing nothing more than reflecting on the development of his own attitudes. We would see it differently had he reported no growth in his position, had stultification set in.

This does not mean that he was immune to criticism. We saw in Chapter Two how a lady in the congregation called one of his sermons too highbrow. That was in 1940. Rather than shrug her off he asked her advice and remained friends with her for the rest of his life. A group photograph in her own book of reminiscences shows the archbishop at her granddaughter’s christening in 1997.\(^50\) In 1976 he engaged a new secretary. Within three months she found the job so demoralising that she was ready to leave. When Archbishop Hurley learned of this he apologised and paid attention to her complaints about working conditions. He changed his own method of work, helped to modernise office systems and generally lightened the atmosphere. She stayed for eleven years.\(^51\)

These pages have noted that many have written and spoken in praise of Archbishop Hurley. We have seen many occasions when he rose to a challenge and achieved a successful outcome. He also judged himself harshly, especially when he thought a good result was not good enough. He accepted criticism so stoically that no evidence could be found of him bearing a grudge against his critics. Nor did he hold any resentment when decisions did not go his way, so determined was he to work collegially. His fellow bishops acknowledged that “he was a good loser; when his view did not prevail, he graciously moved on to the next issue.”\(^52\) But there are at least three matters which he left undone or incomplete. In the first case there is no evidence that he even saw the necessity of it.

\(^{50}\) Petal Mary O’Hea, *Meandering, Living Life to the Full*, (Hereford: Self-published, 2008), 141.
\(^{51}\) Kearney, *Guardian*, 172.
\(^{52}\) Kearney, *Guardian*, 211.
Archbishop Hurley spent his anti-apartheid energies criticising the policy itself and warning the white people who lived apartheid at the expense of their black countrymen. He included himself in that criticism on the day in the early 1950s when “it suddenly hit me so hard that I was a member of an oppressive, oppressing race. I was quite devastated by it.” However he did not issue any warnings to black people about the consequences of apartheid. This may seem a strange comment in the circumstances. After all he did warn black people against opposing apartheid with violence just as he had earlier warned the white government against using violence to bolster apartheid. No, the meaning here is that he cajoled whites into accommodating blacks, but did not encourage blacks to accommodate whites. Why should they be accommodating when they were the oppressed? The cleric in Archbishop Hurley might have thought about preaching forgiveness and understanding. Maybe the message would not have been received kindly but it was a Christian imperative nevertheless. This writer met a number of black South Africans who were favourably impressed by the caring attitude of some white South Africans. They were usually astonished, not only at the revelation that some whites opposed apartheid, but also at their own ignorance for not having previously understood this. They could not be blamed because the separation enforced by apartheid had suspicion and ignorance as inevitable consequences. In summary, an opportunity to preach the Christian message to the largest sector of the population was not found.

We saw in the previous chapter that Archbishop Hurley proposed the Principle of Overriding Right. Some responses appeared in writing and the archbishop answered those responses. At that point the discussion had run its course. It remained as unfinished business, which was somewhat surprising because the archbishop had suggested that this principle

made the principle of double effect redundant. But this was not enough to prompt further discussion. The archbishop’s motive for the proposal was to deal with the gap in moral theology. There was no principle that addressed situations in which right and duty clashed, he said. Looking at what moved him, his appreciation of the worth of every individual, reveals a more basic motive. He was trying to provide people with a methodology for decision making in very complex circumstances. After all, killing another person was sinful, but there were exceptions. Stealing was sinful, but there were exceptions. He wanted to help people discern what exceptions were acceptable and not sinful.

The principle may have been unfinished business, but it was not forgotten business. One feature of *Humanae Vitae* which galled the archbishop was the declaration of intrinsic evil. This meant by definition that there were no exceptions. At the Synod of Bishops he said that it was difficult to explain to married couples “that artificially limiting the exercise of one faculty of life is intrinsically evil, while the act of exterminating life itself is not.” In marriages where one partner had AIDS, he did not understand how the use of a condom could be forbidden. In language reminiscent of the principle of overriding right he said: “It’s a clash of moral values, and in such clashes people should be free to choose, especially to choose the more important value, in this case the life of a spouse.”

Finally, the archbishop did not pay enough attention to the priests of his diocese. It is clear that the relationship between bishop and priests was firmly in his mind. He told the council that priests deserved more attention in the conciliar documents because they performed all the work that a bishop could not. A bishop depended on his priests and it was they who could make a bishop look good or bad by the way they read out his pastoral letters,

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whether “like the trumpet of the archangel or like a list from the telephone directory.” Why did he not follow through on his deep concern for his priests? The assumption is that even for a workhorse like Archbishop Hurley there were only so many hours in the day.

His sentiments were certainly favourable. We saw that his vota included the “joint ministerial responsibility of priests and bishops”, and his worry about seminary training that “present-day education is too theoretical.” Years before the council he began consulting his priests and even earlier, as the Superior, he had introduced some training innovations at the scholasticate. He was one of the voices at the council which influenced the preparation and content of the “Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests.” He did not live up to his own aspirations here. According to his Vicar-General the archbishop knew that he was too much of a ‘desk man’ and not sufficiently a ‘people’s person’. “He felt that he had not given sufficient time to developing personal relationships with his clergy and people.”

On the other hand he was open to those who wanted to talk to him, instructing the same Vicar-General “that if any priest wanted to speak to him on the phone, he should be put straight through.” One troubled priest said of the archbishop fifteen years later: “He saved me. He was full of compassion and understanding of human frailty.” It was not only priests. An Anglican who was a conscientious objector, “a troubled schoolboy”, remembered that “I was emboldened by the sense that this great Christian figure was with me.” Archbishop Hurley knew that he should have been more outgoing towards his priests. There is a sense that he compensated for his lack by leaving the door wide open for any who moved towards

59. Kearney, Guardian, 177.
60. Kearney, Guardian, 273.
him, because “by nature, I fear, and this has become clear to me in later years, the personal touch and concern do not come easy to me.”  

Context

This is the tale of one bishop at the Second Vatican Council. It has looked at his actions and words in the council and how the council influenced his later actions and words. When looking at the years before the council it has been important not to read backwards, not to look at his early life as though it were leading inexorably and inevitably into the council. What is clear is that Archbishop Hurley’s life before the council gave him a base on which the council built. The council provided him with a clearer theological understanding of the two themes which had motivated him before the council and continued to motivate him afterwards. It is no wonder then that he often referred to the council as “the greatest experience of my whole life.”  One can imagine the great joy that prompted him to add a second unforgettable experience. It was “to see Nelson Mandela sworn in as President of a free South Africa.”

As early as his last year of study in Rome he had picked up on the re-emerging theology that the Church was the Body of Christ. As he grew in his understanding, the presence of Christ “increasingly became a basic element of my spiritual life.”  He also found himself more and more interested in the social teaching of the Church. As a result his dissertation had an unusual title for a theology student: *Economic Domination Through Credit Control.*  This gave him greater clarity about working conditions back home, what he

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64. Crowley, “Long Distance”, 342.
called “a great sharpening of conscience.” 67 Years before the council he developed an understanding that black people in South Africa were mistreated. The theology of the presence of Christ helped him to see the worth in every individual. Discussions about Catholic Action gave him an early appreciation of the mission of the laity in the Church. The themes were in place before the council; the council intensified them.

Many driven people are impatient with their less competent colleagues. Archbishop Hurley thought he had to complete some tasks himself if they were to be done properly. “Because he was a perfectionist, he found it difficult to delegate.” 68 But this trait also gave him certainty about his course of action. Some would call it determination, some would call it intransigence. Both attitudes seemed to sit in him side by side. On the question of conscientious objection, for example, most if not all of his fellow bishops felt that he went too far in supporting it. He saw it differently however. White people, and only white people, were being conscripted to fight in support of apartheid, so conscientious objectors were obviously and correctly fighting against apartheid. Whatever the cost to himself, as we saw in the koevoet trial, the archbishop would not give up the pursuit of truth. It was true that apartheid had to be defeated and it was true that the laity had an important role to play in the mission of the Church. He pursued these two truths with an independent spirit and in parallel. It has now become clear that they were two sides of the same coin. The presence of Christ gave the laity their right and responsibility in the Church, and gave black people their right to be treated with equality. Bishop William Slattery of Kokstad said that Archbishop Hurley modelled himself on the great bishops of antiquity. They bowed towards Rome but worked

67. Kearney, Guardian, 32.
out their own theological positions “proudly and with personal responsibility.” With Archbishop Hurley acting out this independent disposition, it is easy to understand his concern for truth and his directness with authority. We can think again of the anonymous lady of the *Black Sash* who wrote “Voice for Truth” on her placard. She had it right.

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