

**“An oasis in a desert of segregation”:
factors that led to the rise and decline of the
Edendale Lay Ecumenical Centre
in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa**

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Abstract

One way to comprehend the historical development of theological education in the South African context is to employ the case study approach. This approach enables us to understand the factors and dynamics that shaped and influenced particular projects and thereby extract vital lessons for doing theological education effectively in our contemporary context. The Edendale Lay Ecumenical Centre (ELEC) is but one such project that contributed immensely to the development of theological education through the training of lay leadership for the church and society in South Africa during the difficult years of apartheid. Despite the fact that this centre was the only one of its kind aimed at the empowerment of lay leadership, being ecumenical in orientation and founded and managed by black people, it is surprising that it has been virtually neglected by historiographers. This article intends to critically examine the factors which have led to the rise of ELEC through its founder, the Rev Enos Zwelabantu Sikakane. Its focus will be to look at its historical development and primary objective of providing a theological education characterised by four pillars, namely; laity, ecumenism, context, and political relevance. It will also look at the mitigating factors that led to the collapse of this ambitious project. Through telling the story of ELEC, the article strives to demonstrate a number of factors that have shaped the successes and failures of theological education initiatives in the South African context as well as the lessons one needs to take into consideration if an effective and sustainable theological education is to be provided in the future.

Introduction: contextual issues on theological education

From 1967-1987 the Edendale Lay Ecumenical Centre (ELEC) under the leadership of its director, the Rev Enos Zwelabantu Sikakane (affectionately known as EZ Sikakane) was a pillar of theological education in South Africa. Four features made it a unique project that was unprecedented and unparalleled in the black context of South Africa. Firstly, it was the only theological centre to be founded and totally run by Black people themselves. Secondly, it was the only institution dedicated to prove theological education to lay people for leadership in the church and society. Thirdly, it was the only institution that was committed to the training and promotion of ecumenism in black churches. Fourthly, it was the only institution that dared to promote radical streams of theological education such as liberation and African theology to both the laity and clergy.

As a result of its robust work in theological education, the ELEC earned itself adulation from most Christian leaders, especially those who were black and lay, and who had experienced “resentment and constant harassment from the apartheid government”.ⁱ However, the white oligarchic government of the day was not alone in its resentment of the ELEC. Some church leaders also shared such feelings because of the inferred subversive theological education the Centre offered ordinary people, who suddenly did not have to depend on the clergy and church hierarchy to teach them about their faith, but instead, could now learn it through the ELEC. Most of the enemies of the ELEC argued that it was bringing politics into Christianity especially the black laity religion.ⁱⁱ

The ELEC is a case study of another stream of theological educational institutions that contributed to the training of leaders for the church in South Africa. Founded, run and supported by black people without the assistance of the whites, whether in the church or outside, it remained a unique venture that is worth exploring when taking stock of the historical development of theological education in South Africa. This article captures the factors that led to the rise and subsequent decline of

the ELEC. Scantly written material, writings and oral interviews provide a window into its work through which we are given glimpses of its legacy. It is imperative that the story of the ELEC is told for it is not just its story, but an important part of the history of theological education for liberation in South Africa.

In an attempt to fulfil this task, this article has been divided into five sections. First, we will look at the dominant attitude and conditions of lay ecumenical education in South Africa as provided by the Western-initiated “mainline” denominations. Secondly, we will look at the factors that led to the development of the ELEC. Thirdly, in what is understandably the longest section an appraisal will be offered of the ELEC and Sikakane’s work and legacy. Fourthly, we will look at the factors that mitigated its decline. Fifthly, we will conclude by drawing the main arguments of the article to a close.

Methodology

The methodology of this article is based on library research, archival documentation, oral history, interviews and an inaugural lecture presentation and discussion held in Edendale during 2006.

Library and archival research

Little has been written on the life and work of EZ Sikakane and the ELEC. Indeed, there are only a few articles written by him, such as an essay entitled “Evangelism in Rural Areas” contributed to the book edited by Michael Cassidy, *I will heal their land* (1974). Another was a paper read at the annual conference of IDAMASA entitled “Breaking New Ground.” A key article consulted, was by a committee that motivated in 1986 for Sikakane to be offered an honorary doctorate by the University of Zululand entitled “Proposal for the Conferment of an Honorary Degree.” There is also his obituary in the 1993 *Minutes of Conference* of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa (MCSA). A number of short articles from the *Ilanga lase Natal* about or written by EZ Sikakane were also utilised. Finally, the World Wide Web revealed a few of his articles and conference addresses, all of which have been helpful.

Interviews

Ten interviews were conducted for the purpose of researching this article. These included interviews with three of his children, Mandla, Mboniswa, and Dumisani, and his former colleagues, Joseph Sithebe, Lymon Dlangalala, Drummond Geveza, Leonard Nkosi, Mr Madlala, Mr B Zulu and Dorcas Mkhize. An interview was also conducted with the Rev Nicholas Bhengu, who has been collecting material on Sikakane in pursuit of his own theological studies based on the work of the ELEC. Finally, all interviews were evaluated in order to provide a glimpse of how each person knew and understood Sikakane.

Fortieth celebration

In 2006, at the invitation of the family and trustees of the ELEC, the present author had the honour of delivering a lecture on the life and work of EZ Sikakane and the ELEC. The event was attended by government officials including the current Premier of KwaZulu-Natal, Dr. Zweli Mkhize, activists, clergy and academics. The purpose of this lecture was to reflect on the legacy of Sikakane and the ELEC and thereby inspire the religious community to contribute to nationbuilding and continue with the work of building democracy in South Africa. Invigorating discussions were held before and after the lecture, all of which provided more data on this enigmatic, “larger-than-life” leader. What follows are the fruits of these three research methods.

The church and lay theological education

EZ Sikakane’s commitment to education as a source of liberation and empowerment for oppressed people compelled him to regard the black church as a site of struggle for the liberation of black people. This was even more important after the white oligarchic nationalist government passed the Bantu Education Act of 1953. This piece of apartheid legislation ensured that “education was to be the means of transmitting apartheid ideology and maintaining social control”.ⁱⁱⁱ Church mission schools, which up until that date had provided black people with a good education, were expropriated by the apartheid government in terms of this Act. Only the Roman Catholic, South African Bishops’ Conference (SACBC) refused to hand over their schools to the government, opting rather to sacrifice government

funding and run their schools independently, so as to continue providing good education for black people.^{iv} At this time, the World Council of Churches (WCC) engaged the South African Council of Churches (SACC) to forge a common response to the apartheid regime. A consultation by major denominations was held under the auspices of the WCC at the Cottesloe Student's Residence, Wits University in Johannesburg to look at this issue, but no common agreement was found. Instead, there were more divisions, especially from the Afrikaans churches (e.g. the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk) that were supporting the apartheid government.

Liberation theology from the United States of America (USA) and Latin America was beginning to take root in South Africa, spreading the message that God was on the side of the poor and oppressed. This was popularly referred to as "God's preferential option for the poor".^v This was coupled with the emergence of African theology which argued that Africans could be Christians without having to abandon their culture.^{vi} During this time, the WCC supported the establishment of Regional Councils of Churches e.g., the All African Council of Churches (AACC). Part of its commitment was to develop theological centres in these regions to equip the World Church for missionary work.^{vii} Sikakane was involved in ecumenical initiatives at an international level since his training at Switzerland and that exposed him to the need for theological educational centres in Africa. As an educated man and voracious reader Sikakane had been exposed to the emerging theologies such as liberation theology and African theology. Sikakane saw all this as important for conscientizing oppressed black people in South Africa to use in their liberation against the leading advocates of racism, namely the apartheid regime, white-led, denominationally-centred churches and Eurocentric theology.

Furthermore, he saw the need for skills development so that black people could earn a living. Supremely, Sikakane understood the Christian gospel in terms of empowering people religiously, politically, culturally and economically. This motivated him to embark on the establishment of a lay Ecumenical Centre in South Africa which would be owned and run by black people.

Sikakane's Edendale Lay Ecumenical Centre (ELEC) in KwaZulu-Natal (formerly Natal), South Africa, was the fourth Christian educational institute to be founded by a black person after John Dube's Ohlange Institution (1901),^{viii} Charlotte and Marshall Maxeke's Wilberforce Institution^{ix} and Paul Mabilitsa's Alexandra Primary School (1921).^x The ELEC was unique because it was specifically aimed at providing theological education which emphasised liberation theology, African theology and skills development to lay Christians for church leadership. The failure of the church to take black leadership seriously in terms of church leadership and unity came into the open through a confession made by Mvume Dandala, the then Bishop of the MCSA, when he appeared in front of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) on behalf of the MCSA to ask for forgiveness for the mistakes of the past made by his church. As he acknowledged:

We allowed our skewed society values to dictate our actions. We paid unequal stipends to our ministers. We trained our ministers incorrectly and in most cases we did not equip our ministers for the struggle against apartheid. We stationed our ministers racially ensuring that both black and white congregations were locked into their own separate cultural world instead of allowing them to be informed by one another. For a long time we did not recognise black leadership in our midst ...^{xi}

The ELEC is one of those initiatives by black church leaders to develop and sustain their own theological educational institutions for the education of their own people (blacks) with or without the assistance of the western mission church. Through the ELEC, Sikakane implemented the dream of black ministers in the Western-initiated, "mainline" churches that were led predominantly by whites, to provide African and Black conscious-centred theological education and leadership for their churches. This can simply be understood as an expression of independence by the black church in response to the complacency of the church with regard to issues of equality as expressed by Dandala in the above quotation.

EZ Sikakane: the man behind the ELEC

It is in the midst of poverty and the annihilation of the human rights of African people, during the immigrant labour system and the rise of African nationalism that we have to locate the rise of Sikakane, the pioneer and founder of the ELEC.^{xii} Sikakane's life and work was formed by the political and religious landscape of his country, South Africa, a topography which, he felt, was tilted towards an unhealthy privileging of Whites at the expense of Blacks, manifested and evidenced in both the church and society. EZ Sikakane was born of a humble Christian family on May 28, 1915 at Matiwanoskop, a rural community near Ladysmith in KwaZulu-Natal.^{xiii} His parents were Anton and Anna Sikakane, both of whom were committed members of the Zulu Congregational Church (ZCC). They were tenants

on a farm where his father was expected to work six months of each year and for the other six months he was free to work in Johannesburg. When in Johannesburg, Anton Sikakane would worship at the Methodist church because there was no Zulu Congregational Church there.

The young Sikakane began his education at the local school and then moved to the Mariannhill Roman Catholic Mission just outside Durban, where in 1936-1937 he completed the T5 and T4 Teacher's Certificates. In 1938, he taught at Jononoskop and became principal at the Driefontein government school. While teaching at Driefontein, his school was under the granteeship of the Rev Walter Gcabashe, and the mission community (*Abasemakholweni*) was under Chief Stephen Khumalo, who was a lay leader in the MCSA. Sikakane fell under the influence of both these men. Rev Gcabashe requested Sikakane, who had just joined the local Methodist Church, to teach Sunday school. After a successful tenure as principal, Sikakane offered for the ministry of the MCSA and passed his candidate examinations in 1944. In the years 1945-1950, the MCSA sent him to study for ministry at Fort Hare University. In 1950, he was ordained as an MCSA minister. He was then posted to a number of circuits as a pastor in the Eastern Cape before coming to Durban in 1955, where he worked as a Superintendent Minister, a very senior position in the church at the time. He stayed there from 1955-1960. It was while living in Durban that he felt the call to focus his ministry on empowering black lay leadership.

In 1962, Sikakane won a scholarship to attend the Post-Graduate Certificate in Ecumenical Studies by the Chateau de Bossey in Geneva, an ecumenical institute of the WCC in Switzerland. It was during the course of his studies that his consciousness about the importance for ecumenism was planted. The same year, he was awarded the prize as the best student of the year by the World Student Federation based in New York. This award offered him an opportunity to visit Germany and other countries. While in Germany, he came across an ecumenical centre that was built to empower people after World War I. It equipped them with skills to develop themselves and rebuild their communities. In an address delivered to the Interdenominational Minister's Association of South Africa (IDAMASA) Sikakane observed the urgent need for developing black leadership for the church:

A question may be raised whether Black people in the church were born to be led or to be trained to lead also. Many White church leaders seem to take for granted that we have to be instructed and not consulted. Our area of work is regarded as mission fields, a practising ground for leadership. Plainly speaking we seem to be enslaved to a Master and servant relation. We look to IDAMASA for emancipation. IDAMASA must produce a programme of action. Time is against us?^{xiv}

In 1965, Sikakane requested the MCSA to set him apart on secondment so that he could build an ecumenical lay training centre. The request, while granted, was met with much reservation by a church which patently did not share his vision. His decision to leave the church to start such a centre was thus met with much cynicism from within the church. Some colleagues in the ministry who were opposed to his ideas thought that he was out of his mind. As Rev Joseph Sithebe, one of his colleagues at the time in the Durban Circuit would later observe:

Abantu abaningi babecanga ukuthi uSikakane useyahlanya, ngokuthi ashiye "amafutha" i-Durban circuit ibandla elikhulu, elalinemali eningi nomuzi omkhulu wemishani. Ibandla laseDurban Circuit lalihlonishiwe ngempela, futhi uma umuntu ewumengameli walo wayehlonishwa esontweni. Nango-ke uSikakane eshiya leli bandla ethi uyoqala isikole sokufundisa amakhohla ukusebenzela isonto. Sonke sasithi useyahlanya uSikakane.^{xv}

(Many people thought Sikakane had lost his mind when he left prestigious congregations such as Durban circuit, with money and a big mission house, a church that was well respected; even its ministers were respected. Then he left to go and start the Lay Training Centre, we did not understand that and we thought he was mad.)

The Edendale Lay Ecumenical Centre

At the close of 1965, Sikakane moved from Durban to Pietermaritzburg where he stayed in a four-roomed house with his family of ten to start the work of building the Edendale Lay Ecumenical Centre (ELEC). Sikakane had identified a number of reasons why Edendale was the best place to build such a centre. These included:

- The provincial capital of Pietermaritzburg, where Edendale is situated, was seen as the centre of South Africa for people coming either from Cape Town or Johannesburg to do their training.^{xvi}

- Edendale was one of the few freehold communities where people were allowed by law to buy land and own title deeds, it being free of the Native Land Act of 1913 which did not allow black people to purchase land.
- Edendale was a natural choice for this project due to its long history of being a Methodist Christian Community (*Abasemakholweni*). The Methodist Church had established a mission centre at Edendale in the 1860s and most of the members of Unzondelelo, which was the incubator of the ELEC dream, came from this community.

Key to the initial stages of the ELEC was the *Unzondelelo Movement*, a black movement within the MCSA whose main aim was to raise funds for mission work in black communities. Having been started in 1874, *Unzondelelo* was very strong in KwaZulu-Natal and had raised funds to support poor congregations so that they could finance their mission work and give bursaries to black ministers in training. Sikakane was a respected member of *Unzondelelo*. Although *Unzondelelo* was the main player under the leadership of MCSA ministers such as Walter Gcabashe, Lambert Zwane and Abner Hlatjwayo, there were other church leaders who participated because from the beginning the centre was to be ecumenical in nature. *Unzondelelo* contributed an amount of R500 for the purchase of the land, which was 10.7 hectares in size.^{xvii} The Rev Alpheus H. Zulu, the first black bishop in the Anglican Church, who at the time was bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Zululand, contributed an amount of R200 on behalf of his denomination and the Roman Catholics also made a contribution in the years that followed for the building of the hall.

Over the years, the ELEC has dwindled away/declined and its focus has changed completely. What is left now are the buildings which have been hired out to different NGOs who do work ranging from research, HIV and AIDS, and nursing schools. While this is true, the original aims and objectives can still be found today.

Factors that mitigated the development of the ELEC

A number of important factors led to the establishment of the ELEC. These included political, social, ecclesial, economical, ecumenical, and liberation theology. In this section we discuss these factors.

Political

Political factors were firmly entrenched in the establishment of the ELEC. The ELEC was not only a training centre for the struggle against poverty, but it was also a symbol of the black churches' resistance against apartheid. In 1948, the National Party won the elections and had vowed to maintain White supremacy by putting in place the policy of separate development, otherwise known as apartheid. What followed were a number of laws which sought to relegate the position of black people in South Africa to that of servants to white people. These laws included the Group Areas Act of 1950, and the Bantu Education Act of 1953, and the Extension of University Education Act of 1959, which saw the government taking charge of mission educational institutions with the aim of providing inferior education for black people. Those that were left were the few white schools which could afford to run without government subsidies.^{xviii} In spite of the fact that in 1958 the MCSA had taken a position that defied the Group Areas Act of 1950, professing itself to be a "One and undivided church", this noble commitment was not experienced at the local congregational level.^{xix} While the 1960 Cottesloe Consultation held in Johannesburg called for the church to take a clear position against apartheid, there was much reluctance on the part of the white churches to radically oppose the system. The Christian Institute (CI) founded by Beyers Naude was encouraging the rise of an activist or confession church. Basil Moore and Sabelo Ntwasa and his colleagues were already teaching a black theology which sought to encourage black people to see God as affirming their blackness and raising their consciousness. There was need for a theological education that could empower black Christians, especially the laity, with a Christianity that would respond meaningfully to the heresy of apartheid. The ELEC was a timely response to this challenge.

Ecclesial

The ELEC was built when South Africa was in the middle of apartheid. There were no black centres that focused on the theological education of black lay people for leadership and ecumenism. Even existing seminaries, which were focused on the training of black clergy, were controlled by the white leadership of the church and they were not aimed at focussing on the africanisation and politicisation of theological education. Sikakane strongly believed that the socio-economic and political situation of the day warranted black Christians from western-initiated "mainline" churches to equip themselves with

theological education which could be used as a weapon to fight segregation, not only in society, but also in the church. Segregation was mostly apparent during meetings dominated by the white leadership.^{xx} The same sentiments are echoed by Daryl Balia who observes that in the MCSA there was a little contribution by black people in the leadership of the church. For Balia, the blame lies squarely on the shoulders of the white church leadership who were not committed to training black clergy for leadership in the church:

The rules of the British church were simply laid down without due consideration to the African cultural heritage. The synods and conferences were organised with debating procedures and lists of priorities already established. The African, not having the opportunity to master the western standards of eloquence, would have been silenced by his more able white brethren. The meetings were simply intended for the “*superior race*” and even when Africans were admitted they were overawed, and feeling their inferiority; could not act or speak effectively.^{xxi}

Furthermore, there was hardly any commitment from the white church leadership to make the church accessible to black people so that they could own it. In fact, some white church leaders did not see the individual black person as an equal partner and owner of the church. An example of this is the negative attitude from the leadership of the Anglican Church citing Edwin Farmer who observed that:

The natives (in the Anglican Church), if they have attended the parish church, have to sit in seats at the back, and at the Holy Communion go up to the altar after the Europeans. They have scarcely been treated as parishioners; neither invited to vestry meetings, nor allowed any voice in the election of church officers ... The natives have to learn that in church matters, as well as in social and political, they must be subservient to Whites.^{xxii}

Gabriel Setiloane referred to this as the need for African Christians to stop being “politically docile” and take charge of their political role both in the church and in society.^{xxiii} Within the MCSA, black people had already begun organising themselves in order to influence the leadership in the church. By late 1962, Sikakane, together with some of his colleagues, began organising to break the trend of White leadership in the church. Meeting secretly and faced with intimidation, they decided to raise the name of Rev Seth Mokitimi to stand for the presidency of the MCSA. He was defeated with one vote. In 1964, they raised his name again and he won the vote with a landslide victory, thereby breaking decades of white leadership in the MCSA. From this success, the black leadership gained encouragement to work for the leadership of the church. However, Sikakane realised that for black people to be effective in their leadership of the church, they needed a highly conscientized black leadership, both clergy and laity. Over and above this, to maintain the church required financial resources and most black people were poor and were struggling to support it, thus the church was poor. Sikakane was known for his famous saying that:

The church is the ordinary people who wake up every morning to catch taxis to town to work, the church during the work is in the bus stations, and it is on the factory floors and also in the industries. Christians cannot afford to go to church on Sunday and greet Jesus good morning and after worship bid Him “good bye”. Jesus was in them throughout the week, because He is always in the church and they are the church and the church is everywhere during the week.^{xxiv}

For Sikakane, these were the people who needed to run and own the church; they needed to be equipped with the necessary theological education to understand their faith and how they fitted into the leadership of their church. They also needed to be given skills so that they could earn a living not only to regain their dignity, but also to support their churches.

Economic

Most lay black Christians were confronted by unemployment and grinding poverty, so-much-so, that even though they appreciated the church and would have liked to know more about their faith and its leadership, they could not afford to leave their families and receive theological education. There was a need for institutions within their communities that would provide theological education opportunities so that they could be equipped for leading their churches. Linked to that, was the fact that most Christians needed skills so that they could earn a living and also contribute financially to the work of

their churches. Not all these people could afford to leave their jobs and communities and attend theological institutions and skills training centres. What would be a viable option would be for theological education to be provided from within their communities and this needed to be accompanied by skills development. This is the gap that the ELEC sought to close.

The Ecumenisation of the African church

Not only was the ELEC a symbol of political resistance in the church and society, but it was also a symbol of the black churches' resistance to the Western missionary churches' division of the African people through denominationalism, thus making them weaker and more vulnerable. A key pillar of the ELEC was therefore ecumenical education and collaboration. Sikakane observed that Christian denominations had divided black people along denominational lines. Even in one family, people were divided according to which worshipping community each belonged to. Sometimes, even clans were divided into mission fields owned by the mainline denominations. As a result, while black people used to identify themselves according to their clans and common tribal groups, they now identified themselves along Christian denominational lines, e.g., as umWeseli (Methodist), umLuthela, (Lutheran) umSheshi (Anglican) or umRoma (Roman Catholic) or UmAfrika (African Congregational Church). The division of black people according to their church denomination thereby contributed to the weakening of African people as a whole so that they could not face their common enemy which was apartheid. The ELEC aimed at uniting black people across denominational lines so that they could worship God without being divided by their denominational membership. As has already been observed, Sikakane decried the reluctance of Africans to unite across church denominational divides:

There is great resistance to church unity or ecumenism in our South African context because when blacks and whites are considered, priority is given to Caesar – Christ comes second. No church in South Africa will open its doors to a greater non-racial participation in administration and leadership. In revival or evangelistic campaigns great stress is laid on the vertical – “Glory to God in the Highest” – while little is made of the horizontal – “the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.”^{xxv}

These were known as organisations of *Amabandla Ahlangene*, “United churches.” Echoing the same sentiments three decades later, Molefe Tsele could observe that:

We need to begin by affirming the nature of an ecumenism, which has grown without theologians and mostly even against the views of official ecumenists. We call this grassroots ecumenism. There are currently three areas where African ecumenism finds strong expression: songs, women's prayer groups and funerals ... We thus need to say that for Africans denominationalism is largely an ethnic coincidence. A person happens to wake up and realise that he or she is Lutheran and then decides to make the best of it. We could be anything.^{xxvi}

Even within its curriculum, there were discussion themes on the origins of church denominations and how black people could be united beyond their denominational affiliation. Sikakane's vision for the ELEC was that it would unite the African people and reverse the legacy of the church denominationalisation that had erstwhile divided them, thereby making them powerless. For him, black people were poorer and weaker when divided by denominationalism, but this could be reversed through ecumenism, which would unite people across denominational lines.

The aims and objectives of the ELEC

- To train black, lay people on preaching, basic leadership of a congregation, church administration, fundraising and also development of skills.
- To build a facility that would be owned and run by black people. In the past, black people had to hire space from white-led institutions even if they were owned by multiracial churches. The ownership and control was always in white hands and so blacks needed to ask permission to use those facilities and would need to put up with racial tendencies from the whites who controlled them. The ELEC would provide facilities that black people could use and run in their own way without having anyone watching over their shoulder. The property itself was to engender black pride and confidence.

- To provide a safe space for black Christians to organise seminars, workshops, political and community meetings, and special services, such as Easter which provided them with all the necessary amenities such as a meeting hall, dormitories, a kitchen and rooms suitable for group meetings. This was very important at a time when townships did not have community centres or halls, while at the same time their movement to the city was limited by the pass laws. Centres owned by churches were situated in urban centres, which were out of reach for most black people who were not allowed in those areas because of the Group Areas Act and the pass laws.
- To train black people for leadership both in the church and society. There was an observation that in mainline churches black people were relegated as subordinates under white leadership. Racism had enabled the churches to maintain the status quo of black people being subordinates and even though they were in the majority in the church they had not been allowed to take control of the mission, vision and resources of their churches. The ELEC aimed at providing theological education for leadership in both the church and society so that they could assume leadership roles.
- To build ecumenism and create unity among black Christians who had been divided by denominationalism. One of the qualms that Sikakane had with the church was that when it came to Africa it found a people who were not divided on religious grounds. He was thus committed to face the scourge of denominationalism and unite Christians and thereby re-unite African people.
- To develop skills among black people through training so that they could help themselves and improve their economic situation, which was characterised by gross poverty and disenfranchisement.
- To develop self confidence and pride among black people through training that conscientized them through Bible studies that were leaning towards black liberation and African theologies. Over and above this, the centre was in a black community, owned by black people, and was thus a shining example for conscientizing black people to believe in themselves.^{xxvii}

Achievements of the ELEC

When the ELEC was opened in 1967, the following programmes were offered, which over the years benefitted thousands of individuals:

- Weekly Bible studies on different themes available to Christians and non-Christians alike.
- Theological perspectives on humanity and politics, Africa and the Bible, church and politics, church and apartheid, African Christianity, discussions on denominationalism.^{xxviii}
- A black community programme which organised seminars on contemporary themes e.g., African culture, lobola, ancestors, African music and drama, African politics.
- Skills for church lay leadership.
- African music (religious and secular).
- Domestic education (sewing, home economics, etc.).
- Industrial education (agriculture, aquaculture, and other skills).
- Facilitation of fieldwork for ministerial students from FEDSEM and other institutions who needed to be plunged into a real situation of ministry.
- Facilitated programmes for the WCC's Programme to Combat Racism (PCR) and other related initiatives aimed at undermining apartheid.

Conference Centre

Black people had no centres of their own where they could go for workshops and seminars to educate themselves. Even those who belonged to White denominations such as the MCSA, Anglican and Roman Catholic churches found it difficult to use those retreat centres run by whites who did not regard black people as co-owners of such projects. Furthermore, such facilities were located in white areas which made it difficult for blacks to access them because of the Group Areas Act which ordinarily forbade them to go into such areas. The ELEC thus became a centre for the people and by the people. Black people could come and go freely without fear of the law. Pastors organised workshops and seminars there for their people. Even political organisations used the ELEC for their meetings. Mandla Sikhakhane (the son of EZ Sikakane) who also worked at the ELEC remembers with fondness the meetings that were held there:

ELEC provided a safe space for black people to organise themselves without fear, although at a later stage it was targeted by the security agencies. But it was a place for church seminars and workshops, political rallies, a place where trade unions and other civil society groups met to plan and strategise on how to fight the government ... I still remember people like Harry Gwala and Steve Biko addressing meetings there.^{xxix}

Federal Theological Seminary

In 1976, the ELEC came to the rescue of the Federal Theological Seminary (FEDSEM), which had been expelled from the Transkei by the homeland's Chief Minister, Kaiser Matanzima. FEDSEM faced possible collapse following the signing of a law in 1975 that expropriated the property, thereby effectively closing down the seminary. Emissaries were sent by the governing body to look for alternative accommodation and land where it could be relocated. This did not prove an easy task and the time was short since they needed to open classes in the following year. In what has been described as a generous move in 1976, Sikakane suspended all programmes of the ELEC for a period of three years and offered the buildings to FEDSEM. FEDSEM occupied the ELEC for a period of four years in total and from there was able to develop its own seminary site and buildings at Imbali. Through such generosity of spirit, the ELEC was thus able to provide a space for the largest ecumenical seminary for the entire Southern African region, thereby rekindling the spirit of black and liberation theology and its fight against apartheid. FEDSEM found a natural home at the ELEC because it was a place of theological education that was progressive and had the interests of black people and their freedom at heart. Reflecting on this, Khoza Mgojo states:

Rev EZ Sikakane once helped the ecumenical church out through the centre. When the Federal Theological Seminary was kicked out of Fort Hare and we had nowhere to go to he welcomed us into the seminary. He suspended all the programmes of the centre to accommodate the college and we were not just Methodist ministers but we had John Wesley College (Methodist), St Peters (Anglican), St. Columbus (Presbyterian) and the John Albert Luthuli College (UCCSA). We were an ecumenical seminary, and ELEC became our natural home for over six years.^{xxx}

As a result, the ELEC went beyond helping the laity of the church and became a place of training for Methodist, Anglican, Presbyterian and Congregational clergy who were part of FEDSEM. ELEC therefore contributed immensely to the church struggle against apartheid. It empowered black people with Christian education and it also instilled confidence and pride. ELEC was not only about converting people to Christianity, but it also aimed at encouraging them to see Christianity as a self-critical and liberating religion. It resisted such negative influences as denominationalism and Eurocentricism that usually accompanied the Christian gospel. Young people thus found a space through which they could be conscientized. Speaking at the banquet, one of the prominent people to emerge from Edendale, the honourable Bheki Cele, the then KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Community Safety and Liaison – who is now the National Commissioner of Police – stated as follows:

As young people we grew up in this community. ELEC was our place of safety, where we were politicised. Sometimes we would pretend that we were having a service, whilst we were having a political meeting and the police would not disturb us because this was a Christian compound.^{xxxi}

As with most church-related institutions that were politically active, the ELEC became a site of struggle because its activities were deemed to be subversive by the apartheid government. It was systematically targeted by the state security forces, whereby police and other operatives often attended meetings that took place there. Sikakane was visited by police and constantly harassed, his passport being revoked to stop him from travelling overseas.

Among the prominent leaders who addressed meetings at the ELEC were the late Harry Gwala "The lion of the Midlands", Selby "Nkonka WeFusi" Msimang, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi, Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, Manas Buthelezi, S'bu Ndebele, Premier Zweli Mkhize, Steve Bantubonke Biko, Reggie Hadebe, Archie Gumede, Inkosi Mhlabunzima Maphumulo, DCO Matiwane and many more.^{xxxii}

Over the years, the ELEC has dwindled away and the focus has changed completely. Nothing of the original aims and objectives are visible today. All that is left are the buildings which have been

hired out to different NGOs who do work ranging from conducting research, HIV and AIDS, nursing schools, etc.

Factors that led to the decline of the ELEC

Leadership

The decline of the ELEC began in 1983, when Sikakane retired and left the Centre under the care of a new director who had been promoted from the position of Director of Programmes. Unlike the former director, Mr Aubrey Madlingozi was not ordained, had no experience of the church, and he did not have any theological education. He had originally been employed as a coordinator of the cultural programme and rose through the ranks to become the de facto deputy director. He was then sent to do short courses on project management by the centre. It did not take long after his appointment for funding and administrative problems to emerge and threaten the survival of the ELEC. There was also dissatisfaction on the side of the director that he was experiencing problems from the trustees who did not want any change from Sikakane's dream and vision for the centre. As a result, he became frustrated by the fact that he could not initiate any new ideas or instigate change. After two years in office he resigned and Mr Sydney Dube was appointed as the new director. Dube was a committed Christian and a member of the MCSA (a key founding member of the ELEC). However, he was also a lay person and had no theological or educational training. At the beginning Dube seemed to be doing very well with his work but a problem emerged when he wanted to introduce some new programmes and redirect the functions of the ELEC. These were resisted by the Management Committee and trustees who felt that he was moving away from the original aims and objectives of the Centre. Being frustrated, he too left the organisation. Mr Mboniswa Sikhakhane was appointed and was the third director of the organisation. Mboniswa is the son of EZ Sikakane the founding director of ELEC. Other than the fact that he had done project management training in the US, he did not possess any theological qualifications. Another disadvantage was that he was not ordained and had no rapport with the ecumenical movement which formed the constituency base of the ELEC. This further helped the decline of the centre.

The other issue raised during the interviews was that ordained ministers no longer supported church-related programmes that were led by lay people thereby causing the ELEC to struggle to attract support from churches once Sikakane retired from leading the organisation.

Political

South Africa's political changes of 1990 did not spur on the ELEC, but rather shook it to the very core, causing it to never be the same again. The work of the ELEC was based on uplifting the oppressed black people who lived under apartheid. The theme of liberation, empowerment and resistance ran through all of its programmes and activities. As with most theological institutions of the day, its theology was focused, as John de Gruchy has noted "on *resistance* and needed to change to *assistance*".^{xxxiii} Its agenda needed to change from the *deconstruction* of an unjust government to the *reconstruction* of a new democratic government and society. For a church-related institution this required a radical paradigm shift in doing theological education at the ELEC. This meant that the liberation theology paradigm, which had been the foundation of the centre, had run out of time. There was a need to refocus and redirect the role of the Centre, especially the theological education that was being taught. For Sikakane, the ELEC was important because it crossed racial barriers when white people taught development skills to black people and black people taught the Zulu language to white people. Observing this rare crossing of racial boundaries he referred to it as "an oasis in the midst of segregation".^{xxxiv}

Financial

Post 1994, in the new democratic dispensation in South Africa, there was a marked decline in donor funding for NGOs in general. International donor agencies started to think that since South Africa had reached a democratic stage, there was no more need for funding. In fact, the government was anti-NGOs and discouraged funding to these organisations. This left most of the organisations in the lurch without financial resources to continue their empowering of communities. Programmes collapsed and

many NGOs closed down. The current director of the ELEC told the present author that since 1994 they have lost a total of eight donors and had to retrench forty-two staff members.^{xxxv} In addition, they had to close various programmes because there was no money to run them further. It is unfortunate that theological education, such as we have seen with the ELEC, depended on overseas funding even though they trained religious leaders for the South African society. The South African church has always found it difficult to fund its own initiatives and this has led to the collapse of many programmes that were not only vital to the work of the church, but benefited the country as a whole. For example, one of the failures of FEDSEM was that churches were no longer honouring their agreements on financial contributions and thus the MCSA was left to carry the financial burden of the institution alone. As a result, when the MCSA left, FEDSEM collapsed. In spite of the impeccable record of the SACC in working for the end of apartheid and support for those involved in the struggle, it depended on overseas funding. The contributions from its member churches are so minimal that the organisation would be closed down if they had to solely depend on them.^{xxxvi}

Ownership

One recurring issue evidenced during the interviews was the ownership of the centre. The director of the centre and also his elder brother argued that the centre was owned by the trustees, and not by the Sikakane family, which is a very noble and correct understanding. They thus expected the trustees to be active in making sure that the ELEC gets out of the gutter and starts running again. However, some Trustee members felt that they did not have power over the centre, as it is very much controlled by the family, and even then by just one or two members of the family, not all of them. Linked to this, was the confusion about the role of *Unzondelelo* in the ownership of the centre. Members of *Unzondelelo* argued that their organisation has a stake in the centre, in that they started the centre and even bought the land upon which the centre was built. To exacerbate this thinking, *Unzondelelo* was even allowed to build its museum premises on the site of the centre. The question of who really owns the centre and who has the responsibility of making sure that the centre is revived again and thereby halt its downslide is a real one, but unfortunately finds no response, except that it is a lay ecumenical centre. The constitution states clearly that the project is owned by the trustees of the ELEC who are themselves accountable to the members of the ELEC who must come from the member churches and organisations. Unfortunately, the majority of the trustees are no longer in office through old age, death and other factors, and they were never replaced. Even the member churches have been allowed to lie dormant and are not actively involved with the ELEC. As a result, the director has been left to run the ELEC on his own.

Initiatives such as the Institute for Contextual Theology closed down for the same reasons. In fact, a number of regional bodies of the SACC closed down so that five of the provinces are today without regional councils of the SACC. The reason for this is lack of funding. The collapse of the ELEC as a result of financial instability is part of the bigger challenge facing other institutions of theological learning across the country. However, when these institutions close down, it is not just the church that suffers, but society as a whole. Theological institutions have trained people who have gone on to provide leadership in the church, civil society, academic institutions, and even in government. The collapse of theological education should not only be a problem for the South African church alone, but for all sectors of society.

Ecumenical

Since 1994, there has been a steady decline of commitment to ecumenism in South Africa. There are three reasons that account for this. Firstly, the end of apartheid, which was a common prophetic target of the churches, meant that churches lost a point of collaboration. Most black churches worked together to conscientize their members through workshops, seminars and programmes on what the common role of the church was in its fight against apartheid. These activities were enabled by the financial support that the church received from sympathetic donor agencies, mostly from overseas.

With the collapse of apartheid, there was no common problem that motivated the churches towards unity. International donor agencies withdrew not only with respect to para-church organisations, but also most NGOs because of the belief that democracy brought with it local resources. This paralysed many church-related organisations whose foundations were ecumenical.

Second, the new government in South Africa needed people with skill sets to help it in the process of national reconstruction. The church had for many years been under the leadership of highly educated and skilled leaders, who were then recruited to join government and assist in the

reconstruction of the country. Leaders were recruited from para-church organisations such as the SACC, various NGOs, and University faculties of theology, to work for government. Good as this was meant to be, it left a leadership vacuum in the church and the ecumenical movement as a whole. Leaders were replaced by people who did not have the same qualities as former incumbents. Most of the time they were replaced by lay people, with no theological training and no church constituency to add to the ecumenical organisations that they were employed to lead. Most of the time these new leaders, even though there were some good activists or administrators, because they were not trained theologically they did not understand what ecumenism was and why it was important to maintain. As a result, it was allowed to collapse. It must also be noted that the ecumenism that collapsed was the official one, and not the one that developed from grassroots level. This one still operates at the level of the community such as at night vigils, funerals, etc. It still needs to be encouraged not to remain at the community level but reaches further to the national level. The collapse of ecumenical organisations led to the eventual collapse of theological education, because that is where it received its main support. This was the case with the ELEC when the ecumenical movement lost its vigour, causing it to lose support from its partners and ultimately suffer the loss of the theological education project itself.

Theological

In the early days of the democratic government there was a deliberate anti-theological climate present in South Africa. Two reasons account for this. Firstly, theology had been used by some of the churches to support the apartheid ideology. Some churches had stood behind the apartheid government and had drawn their justification from religious texts. Pastors and chaplains of the former South African Defence Force were used to spread the gospel of separate development as a divine project. This caused many activists to have a negative attitude towards theological education, especially Christian education, because it had been used against them. When they came into power theological education became the first casualty. As one university vice-chancellor puts it:

When we were in exile we would always look at the number of graduates from South African universities and would be shocked that every year there were more graduates of theology, than there were of science. We thought that the government was training black people for heaven not for running this country.^{xxxvii}

Consequent to this, there was a deliberate intention by the State to sacrifice theological education and put more resources into disciplines that provided scarce skills, which had not been given to black people before. This action resulted in the collapse of theological institutions in a number of universities because of the lack of financial support. With black people now having the opportunity to study disciplines that ensured more prestigious careers than those in the church, students no longer considered theology a viable option for study. This has meant that for the past fifteen years or so, there has been a devaluation of theological education and a general malaise in the value of theological education for society as a whole. Linked to this is the idea of limiting theological education to ministerial formation or simply training people for the church instead of for the church *and* society. When theology is seen as only good for the training of ministers it is then relegated to an inferior status in the hierarchy of educational programmes. It is seen as something that is solely the responsibility of the church. The problem with this idea is that graduates of theology be they ordained or lay, only find work in the church and not in society. Graduates of theology do work in communities; helping people in their time of need such as bereavement, others run community development projects, while some work with government in initiatives that improve people's lives. It is thus wrong to relegate theology to the church alone, as society also benefits from theological education; government must therefore contribute to theological education for the good of society as a whole.

Lessons from the ELEC for the future of theological education

The ELEC was founded by a group of black Christians under the catalytic and pioneering vision of EZ Sikakane, a former prominent MCSA minister in what was then known as Natal. The ELEC is remembered for having been a well that provided an African and liberation-orientated theological education to people who not only came from KwaZulu-Natal but also from other provinces across the country. It was, as its current director Mboniswa Sikhakhane correctly puts it, "a nucleus for development, ecumenism and community mobilisation".^{xxxviii} For the past two decades however, the ELEC has been on a steady but constant decline, a situation which has been mourned by those who participated in its establishment from *Unzondelelo* and other ecumenical movements, not only in

KwaZulu-Natal, but across the country. Its collapse came at a time when there is an even greater need for theological education to train black people for leadership in both the church and society.

The ELEC was hailed as one of the few initiatives that intentionally reflected on the experiences of racism by black Christians and encouraged them to campaign and work not only to end racism in society but also inside the church. Over and above this, it was aimed at empowering lay black people for leadership positions in the church, which was usually dominated by the clergy. It was observed that lay people did not own the church, but were merely seen as assistants to the ordained who were the real owners of the church. The ELEC aimed at reversing this kind of thinking. As Sikakane observed:

I am one of those who are convinced that Africa has a distinctive contribution to make to the world. If Africans had wings to fly they would fly. If there were sufficient opportunities for exploration of fellowship both in extent and depth there would be good relations with both black and white. A lay training would open more gates for fellowship within South Africa and the world, rather they prefer to be given an opportunity to discover and determine the road to unity. Layman *[sic]* does not desire to be dictated to by ministerial “experts” what God’s will is for them, rather they prefer to be given an opportunity to discover and determine the road to unity.^{xxix}

Throughout its work, the ELEC empowered ordinary black people – especially the laity – through theological education so that they could take control of the church. The ELEC believed that the laity was the *real* church, not just the clergy. It aimed at turning black people from being satisfied with the status quo, into getting involved and initiating projects that would add value to their communities. Again, as Sikakane had correctly stated that:

Despite our higher education we are only intelligent domestic servants with no urge to tackle new frontiers within the framework of national inter-dependence.^{xl}

The ELEC had a vision of a time when black people would be free in South Africa. When this time came, they would need to provide leadership both inside the church and in society. Such preparation would be through the medium of theological education.^{xli} Through the leadership and teaching of EZ Sikakane, the ELEC taught a theology that did not end with providing knowledge for the head and heart, but also for the hands, arguing that Christians needed skills that could improve their economic situation. This ensured that the Christian gospel was holistic and liberatory. For this to be achieved, the ELEC had to be embraced as the pride of black people, through which they could work out their own liberation. As Sikakane observed:

It is a creative expression of our potential, a power to decide on one single ray of the sun among so many, following, observing closely and liberating our resources. It is like the finding of a pearl of a great price, the liberation of the whole man.^{xlii}

The political context in South Africa placed the ELEC under a difficult situation requiring it to do theological education whose content and methods were aimed at resolving the contradictions and paradoxes faced by Christians. These including viewing life as a pilgrimage between the church and a racist society, Christianity and African culture, clericalism and lay empowerment, church and politics, political pacifism and political activism. Two reasons make its decline a source of despair for those with interest in theological education. Firstly, it was the only theological institution in South Africa that was dedicated to the training of black lay people for theological education with special emphasis on ecumenism. Secondly, its decline was preceded by the collapse of other theological institutions such as FEDSEM, Theological Studies at Wits, University of the North, and at the University of Cape Town. The collapse of these fine institutions signalled the larger threat faced by institutions of theological education throughout South Africa.

It is important to note the basic characteristics of the theological education that was offered at the ELEC in order to note its uniqueness. Firstly, the goal of the curriculum at the ELEC was to empower black people – not only Christians but also non-Christians – with theological knowledge that helped them regain their sense of dignity which was trampled upon on a daily basis by the apartheid system that people lived under. Secondly, the content of the education was based on their experience of life. The curriculum was built on themes that concerned people, church and politics, leadership and administration, both in the church and society. Their basic experiences of these themes would be supplemented with book knowledge and other sources. Thirdly, the method used in the teaching and learning situation was participatory and practical, more especially when it came to skills-learning. The

education was contextual, meaning that it addressed the issues that the learners faced at a particular place and time, which in this case was racism and the imposition of a westernised form of Christianity, which did not take into account the African experience and context.

Conclusion

This article provided a critical examination of the factors that led to the formation, and the rise of ELEC under its founder, the Rev Enos Zwelabantu Sikakane. It specifically argued that the ELEC addressed an important need – especially among the black church leadership – which was to provide lay leaders from the ecumenical community with theological education. It was further argued that this was important in the context of apartheid where there was a real need to conscientize Christians from a theological perspective to become engaged in the struggle against apartheid. A detailed appraisal of the work of EZ Sikakane, the pioneer of the ELEC was offered.

This article also took a look at the contributing factors that led to the eventual collapse of this ambitious project. The collapse of theological education in centres such as the ELEC did not reflect on the lack of the importance of theological education, but rather on the failure of the churches to appreciate the importance of such institutions at a time when they were crucial for the future of the church and society during national reconstruction. A general lack of good leadership schools has contributed to the collapse of institutions of theological education. This requires all theological education training to be accompanied by training on project leadership and management. This would ensure that those who are involved in such institutions can lead them successfully. As with secular education, people are trained for school management, theological institutions must train its people in the management of theological institutions so that they can run effectively and efficiently and do not collapse with the change of leadership, as seemed to happen with FEDSEM and the ELEC.

It has been argued that Sikakane's view of ecumenism at the ELEC was much larger than just bringing about cooperation among church denominations; instead, it sought to reverse the legacy of denominationalism which had divided African people to the core by confining them to different denominations. There is a need for the ecumenical community to look for new ways to revive this vital education. It was further argued that the collapse of theological education had to do with the drying up of donor funds, most of which came from overseas donor agencies. South African churches have to take responsibility for not raising financial resources locally to fund theological education but always depending on overseas donors.

While in terms of the content of theology, the African church had come of age, it had not done so in terms of resourcing their institutions. The resultant collapse of the ELEC is a symptom of a bigger problem faced by the future of theological education in the country. However, this is not just a challenge for the church but for the social, economic and political development in South Africa, much of which depends on the contribution of the church for the well-being of society. The call to revive and fund theological education is crucial for the church and for society, which benefits from a vibrant church. As Walter Brueggemann put it, "For any church that wants to live beyond its generation it needs to educate itself from one generation to another."^{xliv} Applied in this article, this means that if the church in South Africa wants to live beyond the current generation it needs to seriously review the state of theological education in the sub-continent and devise mechanisms of reviving it, especially with regards to a lay theological education that prioritises development and ecumenism.

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Endnotes

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- 1 Mandla Sikhakhane, "Interview 1," Interview by R Simangaliso Kumalo, Tape Recording, Edendale, July 20, 2009.
 - 2 Khoza Mgojo, "Interview 1," Interview by R Simangaliso Kumalo, Tape Recording, Pietermaritzburg, June 19, 2009. The Rev. Dr. Khoza Mgojo has for the past two decades been a member of the Management Committee of ELEC.
 - 3 Joy Brain and Philippe Denis, *The Catholic Church in contemporary Southern Africa*. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications 1999), 190.
 - 4 Brain and Denis, *The Catholic Church in contemporary Southern Africa*, 194.
 - 5 David Bosch, *Transforming mission: paradigm shifts in the theology of missions*. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 435.
 - 6 Gabriel Setiloane, *African theology: an introduction*. (Johannesburg: Skotaville Publishers, 1986), 29.
 - 7 John Briggs and Mercy Amba Oduyoye, *A history of the ecumenical movement, Vol. 3, 1968-2000*. Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2000), 469.
 - 8 See Heather Hughes, "Double elite: exploring the life of John Langalibalele Dube." *Journal of Southern African Studies* 27/3, (2001), 443-458.
 - 9 TD Mveli Skota (ed.), *The African who's who: an illustrated Classified Register and National Biographical Dictionary of Africans in the Transvaal*, (Johannesburg: CNA, 1965), 29.
 - 10 SS Matsepe & Mokhele Madise, "An African church found a school." *Studia Historae Ecclesisticae* 31(2), October 2005), 353-357.
 - 11 Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Minutes of Faith Community Hearings, East London, (November 17-19 1997), 23.

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- 12 His father gave him the name Zwelabantu which means “land of the people” because he was born soon after his father, who had grown up on a farm, had saved up enough money to buy a piece of land for himself and his family.
- 13 *Minutes of Conference*, Enos Zwelabantu Kush Sikakane, (Cape Town: Methodist Publishing House, January 1992), 99.
- 14 Enos Zwelabantu Sikakane, Breaking new ground. An address to the IDAMASA Consultation held at the Edendale Lay Ecumenical Centre, (1975), 3.
- 15 Rev. Joseph Sithebe, “Interview 1,” Interview by R Simangaliso Kumalo, Tape Recording, Edendale, May 22, 2006.
- 16 Leonard Nkosi, “Interview 1,” Interview by R Simangaliso Kumalo, Tape Recording, Edendale, June 22, 2009. Nkosi was a former trustee of ELEC.
- 17 Sibusiso Nyembezi, *Umlando KaNzondelelo*. (Pietermaritzburg: Reach Out Publishers, 1994), 81.
- 18 For instance, with regard to the Methodist Church, out of 1954 schools that provided education to over 24,000 Black pupils, with the exception of the four ‘White’ schools, Epworth, Kingswood, Kearsney and St. Stithians, all were taken out of the hands of the church.
- 19 Mboniswa Sikhakhane, “Interview 1”, Interview by R Simangaliso Kumalo, Tape Recording, Edendale, July 20, 2009. It is also important to note that Sikakane’s surname is spelt differently from those of his sons who use “h”, when he did not have an “h”.
- 20 Mandla Sikhakhane, “Interview 1”, Interview by R Simangaliso Kumalo, Tape Recording, Edendale, July 22, 2009.
- 21 Daryl Balia, *Black Methodists and white supremacy in South Africa*. (Durban: Madiba Publications, 1991), 86.
- 22 Edwin Farmer, *The Transvaal as a mission field*, (London: Wells, Gardner, Darton and Co. 1900), 106.
- 23 Gabriel Setiloane, “Where are we in African Theology?” *In All Lutheran consultation on Christian theology and Christian education in the African continent*. Gaborone, Botswana, (October 5-14, 1978), 15.
- 24 Mandla Sikhakhane, “Interview 1”.
- 25 Enos Zwelabantu Sikakane, “Evangelism in rural areas.” In Michael Cassidy, *I will heal their land*. (Pietermaritzburg: African Enterprise, 1974), 151.
- 26 Molefe Tsele, “African Ecumenism within the context of NEPAD.” In Ernst Conradie (ed.), *African Christian theologies in transformation*. (Cape Town: The Upper Room, 2004), 116.
- 27 Mandla Sikhakhane, “Interview 1”.
- 28 One of the memorable activities of this programme was when it invited Steve Biko to address religious Leaders on their role in the context of apartheid. Biko delivered his groundbreaking speech entitled “The church as seen by a young layman” This was held in May 1972 at ELEC. See Steve Bantu Biko, *I write what I like*. (Johannesburg: Picador Africa, 2004), 58.
- 29 Mandla Sikhakhane, “Interview 1”.
- 30 Khoza E Mgojo, Interview with Guy Vezi of *Umafrika*, Port Shepstone, (June 15-22, 2006), 14.
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