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WHITE CULTURAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT
IN POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA:
A PERSONAL NARRATIVE

JOHAN MOSTERT

Abstract

In this narrative, I trace my history as a Pentecostal Afrikaner through South Africa's stormy transition to democracy in 1994. I reflect on my experiences through the lens of Sue and Sue's (2013) seven-stage model of White Cultural Identity Development and the impact of the dissonant treatment that two leaders received from my church, the Apostolic Faith Mission. Both G.R. Wessels and Frank Chikane pursued socio-political objectives while they were ordained pastors. One was white and hailed as a model of ministry excellence. The other was black and delivered to security police only to be tortured as a subversive activist. These experiences propelled me through Sue and Sue's stages toward a commitment to antiracist action (stage 7) and a keen awareness that Pentecostals are not immune to cultural programming that may quench the Spirit.¹

After five years of pastoral ministry, I had to find a way to understand God's people better. A professor in Bible College had proclaimed that ministry is like a three-legged stool. One needs to know God, the Bible, and God's people. I had given my life to the Lord at an early age, and I was baptized in the Holy Spirit at age twelve at a church youth camp. I was actively involved in youth work, and at age fifteen, I was a co-founder of our Soul Winning Club. I had a good understanding of my relationship with God. After four years at Bethany Bible College in California, I added a solid biblical foundation to my personal relationship with God. Two years of Greek and one painful year of Hebrew were the requirements for a Pre-Seminary Major, and by graduation in 1972, I was well on my way to having a grip on two of my professor's three re-

¹ I would like to thank Matthew Paugh and Ally Walsh for their help in clarifying various components of this narrative.

quirements. But after five years in pastoral ministry, I realized that I required work in developing the third leg.

In 1977, I was accepted into Stellenbosch University's graduate psychology program. Stellenbosch is an hour's drive from the Cape Town suburb where I was pastoring a local church for the Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM).² The degree was a one-year, full-time, classroom-based BA honours program that subsequently allows for application to the certified MA psychology programs. It was a huge commitment for a full time pastor with a young family. With my wife's encouragement and my church board's approval, I stepped into the world of Rogerian non-directive therapy at one of the bulwarks of Afrikaner nationalism and Dutch Reformed theological influences, the Seminary at Stellenbosch established by the famous South African theologian Andrew Murray.³

The peaceful oak-lined streets of Stellenbosch and the scenic drive to the campus through stunning vineyards with majestic mountain backdrops stood in stark contrast to the violence that was consuming black townships in 1977. Six months earlier the youth of Soweto near Johannesburg had taken to the streets to non-violently protest the use of my mother tongue, Afrikaans, in schools. When the police opened fire on the protestors with live ammunition on June 16, 1976, twelve-year old Hector Peterson was slain. There is an iconic picture of him being rushed from the scene by a friend carrying his lifeless body. His weeping sister ran alongside them. This picture flashed around the globe and shocked the free world. The violence in the townships spread through the entire country and police were given wide-ranging powers to arrest and detain suspects.

During the 1970s, millions of "non-white persons" were forcibly removed from white areas and relocated in townships, official housing areas for the "non-white" population group that had been created by the apartheid government. In Cape Town, District Six had been declared a "whites-only" area, and tens of thousands of people were being moved about fifteen to twenty-five kilometers away to new Black town-

² The AFM is the largest Pentecostal church in South Africa and was established in 1908 by John G. Lake.

³ Rogerian Therapy was a humanist reaction to the prevailing Freudian approach to helping people and was based on an unconditional acceptance of people, being transparent and non-judgmental.

ships. By this time, areas like Gugulethu, Langa, and Nyanga were boiling over with street violence and Molotov cocktails were being hurled at police vehicles. Fortunately, the road from my church in the southern Cape Town suburbs to Stellenbosch skirted Gugulethu and Nyanga. Sometimes armoured police vehicles and roadblocks might slow my drive, but life in the white suburbs was peaceful. Government-controlled television had been introduced two years earlier, but the nightly news was severely censored. White South Africans were more absorbed by the weekly drama provided by J.R. and Bobby Ewing from *Dallas* than by the violence in the black townships.

I tried hard not to allow the violence or political turmoil disturb my pastoral calling. If I had been asked at the time, I would have said that I considered myself quite “verlig” (i.e., “enlightened,” as progressive Afrikaners liked to call themselves). The previous year (1976) I volunteered one day a week to train the first full-time Coloured Youth Team in South Africa.⁴ I disturbed segregation protocols and allowed the team to come to my church in a “white area” every week. There the team and I would spend the morning pursuing spiritual disciplines. I would teach James Kennedy’s *Evangelism Explosion* and introduce systematic theology. My wife made snacks for us and we drank tea together from our white church’s crockery.

But after a few months of spiritual bonding with the team, national security started to unravel and the situation in my country began to unsettle my sense of Afrikaner patriotism. The team arrived one morning clearly disturbed. The violence had spread to their township, and police had burst in on a prayer meeting the previous night and violently assaulted the pastor when he challenged the police’s authority to intrude a church. He was arrested, and everyone was ordered to disperse. When the team and I started to pray together, the girls on the team began to weep inconsolably. The story of their horror and the disappearance of their pastor distressed my wife and me, and we wept with them in our prayers.

At this point in my career, I had no idea what to do with these emotions. I had always been a patriotic Afrikaner. My grandfather after whom I am named was a commander in the Boer War. Our ancestors

⁴ The term “Coloured” is not pejorative. It is the official designation of ethnic descendants of Koisian and mixed European lineage, concentrated in the Western Cape. Afrikaans is also the home language of a majority of Coloureds.

had come from Holland to bring “civilization” and Christianity to Africa. In the seventeenth century, a large group of French Huguenots joined them. These Calvinist refugees had fled to the safety of the Cape from the violent religious persecutions that occurred after Louis XIV revoked their rights for unhindered religion.⁵ My ancestors essentially established a Christian nation, a bulwark of civilization at the tip of the Dark Continent. Over the years my ancestors helped outlaw abortion, pornography, and gambling. Parliament opened in prayer and religious education was mandated in state schools. The country was pro-West and anti-Communist. Our enemies were Marxist terrorists financed by Castro and Gaddafi and the communist regimes of Russia and China. There was no doubt in my ancestors’ minds that God was on our side.

The quarterly (white) pastoral prayer retreat for the district was scheduled to take place the weekend after the Youth Team had shared their distressing story with me. When my district chairman asked for prayer requests, I shared with my colleagues the horrific tale of police violence against one of the local coloured pastors. I asked my colleagues to keep the Youth Team in prayer that God would restore peace to the townships and protect the pastor while he was incarcerated. As I finished my request, the chairman interrupted and firmly chastised me for mixing politics with spirituality. He admonished me to never do something like that again while busy with the Lord’s work.

This was the backdrop for my decision to pursue a graduate degree. Entering the program at Stellenbosch was an avenue to escape the bifurcated religious politics in the church. It was a way to affirm my Afrikaner roots because Stellenbosch was the bedrock of the Afrikaner academy. For decades, Afrikaner Pentecostals had been considered a lunatic fringe of Christianity in South Africa. Pentecostals were the “happy clappies” who appealed to the lower classes and eschewed formal education; Pentecostal pastors went to Bible schools instead of studying at the great Afrikaner universities like Stellenbosch. The establishment tolerated Pentecostals because they staunchly supported the National Party. Yet the system of Afrikaner affirmative action still ensured that only members of the Dutch Reformed (DR) churches were considered for the best government appointments, the finest senior

⁵ The Edict of Fontainebleau (1685) was issued by Louis XIV of France, and it revoked the religious freedom of Protestants that had been guaranteed to them by the Edict of Nantes of 1598.

corporate positions, and the select management posts in the many Afrikaner-controlled parastatals. Stories abounded concerning the best and finest Pentecostal members who were forced to renounce their Pentecostal heritage and accept DR membership in order to be considered for senior appointments.

One day during my social psychology class, the professor introduced the class to Leon Festinger's concept of cognitive dissonance.⁶ She explained Festinger's suggestion that cognitive dissonance is an emotional discomfort that arises when an individual simultaneously holds two conflicting cognitions. She then used the illustration of the discomfort that would result if, for instance, someone found out that his best friend was a member of the African National Congress (ANC).⁷ It would be impossible for him as an Afrikaner to simultaneously hold these two opposing cognitions without experiencing an intense need to reduce the dissonance. He would either need to demote the friend in his estimations or elevate his perception of the ANC. It is impossible to live with such a paradox. Finally, I had an explanation for the paradox that I was living. I am an Afrikaner. I am also a member of God's family and this family included people persecuted by Afrikaners. What was I to do?

WHITE RACIAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT

In retrospect, I think that my response to the discomfort of cognitive dissonance was to immerse myself in the academy. I had done poorly in high school. In my twelve years of schooling, I attended fourteen different schools on two continents and had to change my primary language from Afrikaans to English at age ten. By the end of high school, I had to write exams as a bilingual student. My academic success at Bible College and subsequently at Stellenbosch was a revelation to me. My degrees provided me an opportunity to accept a position as pastoral counsellor to two hundred children at the children's home of our national church's Welfare Department in Johannesburg. I immediately began to

⁶ The phrase comes from Festinger's classic work *When Prophecy Fails: A Social and Psychological Study of a Modern Group that Predicted the Destruction of the World* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1956).

⁷ The ANC was the party of Nelson Mandela and up until that time still classified as a terrorist organization.

work on an M.A. in psychology with the University of South Africa, and I completed an internship with the South African Railways to qualify as a counselling psychologist. In order to qualify as a social worker, I completed my PhD at the University of Pretoria in 1991. Because all of this academic activity was happening while I worked myself up the ranks as a full time employee at the AFM Welfare Department, I was cocooned safely in a parallel universe isolated from the political upheavals taking place in nation and the church. However, by the time I was appointed National Director of the Welfare Department of the AFM in 1989, things were beginning to unravel.

Sue and Sue suggest that when persons want to become effective multicultural helpers, “they must free themselves from the cultural conditioning of their past and move toward the development of a non-racist white identity.”⁸ By way of a seven-stage strategy – naivete, conformity, dissonance, resistance and immersion, introspection, integrative awareness and commitment - Sue and Sue seek to help white multicultural workers address denial of the sociopolitical impact of racism in society and move toward appreciation of multicultural beings. The conformity phase, the second of seven phases, accurately described the circumstances of my life at that time. The life stories of two prominent political figures whose lives had intertwined with mine would catapult me into dissonance, the third phase.

The conformity phase is characterized by a minimal sense of personal awareness of race. Certainly, my experience with the Coloured Youth Team had served to disturb my conformity, but to a large extent, I still harboured a sense of white cultural superiority. I remained ethnocentric and believed that my cultural values were simply better and more highly developed than those of the other race groups in my nation. We, the whites, were God’s gift to bring culture, Christianity, and civilization to the African nations. We were “obliged” to treat coloured people differently because “that was the law,” “they did not speak our language,” “they had an inferior education,” or because “they had different cultural values that were not only quaint but inferior.” But my racism was shifting from self-centered ignorance to denial.

⁸ Derald Wing Sue and David Sue, *Counseling the Culturally Diverse: Theory & Practice* (Sixth Edition. New York: John Wiley Publishers, 2013), 319.

POLITICS AND THE CHURCH:
A VICE PRESIDENT OF THE AFM
BECOMES AN APARTHEID SENATOR

The dissonance phase arises when participants must deal with inconsistencies. At this time, the information at hand or the experiences of life appear to be at odds with the participant's denial. The inconsistency I struggled with arose from my observation of two major political figures in the church, one White and the other Black.

The AFM Welfare Department was established by the visionary leadership of a dynamic young pastor in the 1940s. G.R. (Gerrie) Wessels was a white pastor of a large flagship church in Johannesburg.⁹ At age twenty-four, he was elected to the Executive Council in 1937 and at age thirty to the office of Vice President of the entire AFM. His charisma and humour made him a popular public speaker. He became an authority on communism; his lectures on "The Church and Communism" often had to be moved out of the local AFM churches into community halls where it was reported that as many as five thousand people would attend. Wessels was a brilliant orator and his national prominence was so significant for the church that he was recruited by the National Party (NP, or "Nats") to become a senator in 1955. The NP was the party of "separate development," or apartheid, which had won the general election in 1948. The significance of his appointment might be compared in the United States to the appointment of James Watt as Ronald Reagan's Secretary of the Interior or John Ashcroft as Attorney General under George W. Bush with one added dimension. Unlike Watt and Ashcroft, Wessels was an ordained minister and the elected office of a church at the time of his selection. The political implications for such an appointment had wide-ranging ramifications.

⁹ See Isak Burger and Marius Nel, *The Fire Falls in Africa: A History of the Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa: A Centennial Edition 1908-2008* (Vereniging: Christian Art Publishers, 2008). They discuss in considerable detail "the political upheaval around pastor (senator) G.R. Wessels "in a chapter devoted to "Unrest and Schism" in the church (152-158). Burger (current president of the AFM) and Nel largely succeed to provide a balanced historical perspective of the history of the church. It is written, however, from a White perspective and excludes significant Black perspectives on issues that had historical significance, such as the political impact of Wessels appointment to the South African Senate by the National Party.

On the one hand, Wessels' appointment offered affirmation from the Dutch Reformed arbitrators of Afrikaner cultural life that Pentecostals might become more socially acceptable and worthy of ecclesiastical and governmental respect. On the other hand, Wessels also represented the rising aspirations of Afrikaner Pentecostals. John G. Lake and Tom Hezmalhalch who came to South Africa straight out of the Azusa Street revival had established the AFM in 1908. English was the principle language in both the church and national politics. South Africa had lost the war of independence with Britain at the turn of the century (the Boer War) and was now part of the British Commonwealth. When Wessels was elected to the Executive Council, he was the only Afrikaner and the only member who belonged to the National Party. Wessels' rise as a senator was a huge step forward for Afrikaans and Pentecostals.

Tension began to rise with Wessels' anti-communist speeches, perceived by some in the church as promotion of the NP. This was a time when NP politicians were warning of the dangers of "swart gevaar" (literally "the black danger") and the support that liberation movements were receiving from communists. Also in the mix was the erosion of the pacifist position of AFM. In 1923 the Executive Council informed the government that "our acceptance of the Scriptures does not permit us to take up arms."¹⁰ The church's pacifism was again affirmed in the Second World War when the church allied itself with the American and pacifistic Assemblies of God. Wessels' appointment while he was still serving as AFM Vice President was compromising the apolitical nature of the church.

The appointment was a blatant political manoeuvre by the NP to co-opt the church. Its policy of disenfranchising people of color had reached critical levels. Their politicians were receiving severe criticisms from other members of the Commonwealth for apartheid. The party's strategy required control of the upper house of Parliament, so they artificially enlarged the Senate from forty-eight to eighty-nine members, giving the NP a majority of seventy-seven. Wessels was one of these appointments. According to many of my black colleagues, it was at this moment that the AFM lost credibility and became a pawn of the apartheid regime. Wessels' appointment alienated apolitical members of the church as well as many English speakers and caused a split in the

¹⁰ Quoted in Burger and Nel (2008), 120.

church. By the 1958 national elections, the NP had gained full control of the state and only whites were legally entitled to vote.

Wessels' connection with the Government also opened new doors of cooperation for the development of the AFM's Welfare Department and its work among white members. In 1960, Pasch Poggenpoel, a pastor with a degree in social work, was appointed to succeed Wessels as the second Director of Welfare for the church. Poggenpoel was a skilled diplomat, and he succeeded in negotiating subsidies from the Department of Welfare for the church to care for abused and neglected children. Low-interest loans were obtained to build ten homes for the aged and two low-income retirement villages. Care for the infirmed and aged was subsidized by the Department of Welfare, and dozens of social work posts were approved for the church. Every year, as part of a strategy to woo the government, Wessels began inviting cabinet ministers to the AFM's massively popular Easter conferences. These conferences mirrored the traditions of the old camp meetings and combined the excitement of nightly revival meetings with the pomp of Easter celebrations. The children's home service, held on the afternoon of Easter Friday, was a standard high profile event that served as a fundraiser for the Welfare Department and a public relations event for the church. Year after year, we entertained a member of the Cabinet, even our controversial Minister of Police during the height of the township violence. When the "non-white" sections of the church officially appealed to us to reconsider these ill-advised invitations, we found it more financially advisable to woo apartheid politicians than to align ourselves with our black brothers.

When I say "we," I mark my re-entry into this story. By this time, I had worked my way through the ranks of the Welfare Department, received a promotion to Deputy Director, and served on the Department's management board. During this period, the inconsistencies in my worldview began to multiply and my dissonance grew. In 1979, the AFM White section officially conceded that there was no scriptural justification for the racially divided structure of our church, and we adopted a Declaration of Intent that I supported. Though we knew in our hearts that this was the right decision, the implications of such a declaration would be cultural suicidal. Year after year, delegates tried to stall, recall, re-evaluate, reconsider, and generally postpone constitutional decisions to effect structural changes.

In 1983, auditors informed the church that the coloured old aged home in Cape Town had to be removed as an asset from balance sheets of the coloured section and put on the Welfare Department's balance sheets because we were the official government-registered welfare organization for the church. Our involvement in this project had been minimal. As the delegate assigned to explain this legal anomaly to the General Council of the coloured section, I experienced increased dissonance. The meeting of several hundred delegates produced passionate debate concerning the immorality of the government's proposed Tricameral System whereby different races would produce different governments. For the coloured section, my presence at their council served as just another example of the oppressive systems that discriminated against them. It was a severely traumatic experience for me. During the debate Bennett Petersen, a brilliant, young, chartered accountant and an ordained pastor took the floor.¹¹ He railed against "our arrogance." He accused me of racism and angrily reminded me that not one of the whites in the AFM had ever sought forgiveness for our support of apartheid.

I had rarely been the object of such loathing. I was devastated because I considered these people "my brothers in the Lord." Furthermore, since Afrikaners shared a common language with the coloured nation, I had no idea that our policies had produced such hurt and deep feelings of betrayal. When I stood to respond, I did the unthinkable. I acknowledged to the Council that, if in fact no one from the white section had ever asked for forgiveness for our support of apartheid, that as a member of the National Office, I now publicly asked for that forgiveness. But in my anxious embarrassment, I glossed over the confession and immediately began to explain the legal issues related to the question at hand.¹² During a lunch break, I sought out the accountant who led the verbal assault on me. His anger was long from subsiding, and with a group of his similarly angry friends, he vented his frustrations even further. Although I have since become good friends with

¹¹ At this time, Petersen was one of only five hundred non-white Certified Chartered Accountants in South Africa.

¹² I was subsequently chastised by white colleagues for the audacity of my remarks and for the way I had "pandered to radical elements in the church." I had to argue that there was no other way to respond if we wanted to work towards a future of cooperation and unity with our brothers and sisters.

this group of radicals, this encounter left me emotionally drained and launched me into full-fledged dissonance.

DISSONANCE INDUCED BY THE RELEASE OF MANDELA

During the years of violent resistance to apartheid, South African life was so compartmentalized that people were often ignorant of events happening in the same city. Subversive news was censored. Social contacts between the races were strictly proscribed. While my home was just a few kilometers from Alexandra Township, whites never went into townships except when they dropped off labourers at the township edge. On many occasions, we could hear the exchange of gunfire as police cracked down on suspected “terrorists.” We had heard of the dreadful “necklacing” of alleged police informants who were burned alive because they were suspected of collaborating with the illegitimate state. We would see the acrid smoke of burning tires rise over the township. But as a white ordained pastor of the AFM, I did not even know the name of the black AFM pastor in neighbouring Alexandra or the location of his church.

By the time I was asked to serve as the new National Director of the Welfare Department in April 1989, my dissonance phase had left me with guilt for the sins of my people, shame that I had done so little to work against the system, anger that so many of my Afrikaner brothers and sisters were clueless in their support of apartheid, and depression that reflected my hopelessness for the future. The white section was moving at a snail’s pace to implement the structural reforms that we claimed the Holy Spirit had convinced us was the right thing to do. Though my contact with the non-white sections of the church was limited, I began to feel their anger and frustration. My white brothers and sisters increasingly saw me as a political sell-out, and some even accused me of being a card-carrying member of the ANC. My black brothers and sisters tended to see me more as a collaborator with the apartheid regime.

Though the pressures of the Dissonance Phase often include periodic retreats into denial, I felt increasing tension with my cultural conditioning. I needed to pledge my allegiance to the Kingdom of God, even if that disturbed my allegiance to my culture, my people group, and my nation.

Ten months after my appointment as the third Director of Welfare for the Church, the South African miracle of reconciliation dawned onto the global political landscape. President F.W. de Klerk released former “terrorist” Nelson Mandela from prison and unbanned all the liberation movements. On Sunday afternoon, February 11, 1990, the country sat glued to television screens awaiting the first glimpse of the man who had been jailed twenty-seven years earlier because he opposed apartheid. Pictures of him were from the 1960s, and no one had any idea what he would look like or what he would say. Everyone was terrified, anxious, yet hopeful.

From the moment of Nelson Mandela’s first speech on the steps of the Cape Town City Hall where Archbishop Desmond Tutu received him, Mandela spoke of peace, reconciliation, and hope for the future:

We remain committed to peace and, if the government gives us the opportunity...we are ready to make a positive contribution towards the peaceful settlement of the problems of this country.

I am working now with the same people who threw me into jail, persecuted my wife, hounded my children from one school to the other...and I am one of those who was saying, “Let us forget the past, and think of the present. “

People will feel I see too much good in people. So it’s a criticism I have to put up with and I’ve tried to adjust to because, whether it is so or not, it is something which I think is profitable.

I was planning to help correct the errors in South Africa and had forgotten that the first step in doing so was to overcome the weakness of the one South African I knew very well, myself.¹³

¹³ Quotes taken from *Nelson Mandela by Himself: The Authorized Book of Quotations*, (Edited by Sello Hatang and Sahn Venter. Johannesburg: Pan Macmillan, 2011) 105, 121, 127.

POLITICS AND THE CHURCH:
AN ANTI APARTHEID ACTIVIST
BECOMES VICE PRESIDENT OF THE AFM

In all the years that I attended our Annual Conferences, visited hundreds of churches, and attended many revivals, not once did I hear a message in tongues or a prophecy in which the Lord indicated to us his displeasure with our racism. As a Pentecostal minister of the gospel who cherishes the work of the Holy Spirit, this realization remains particularly hard for me to process. The awareness that our cultural programming, our conditioning, and our traditions can be so strong that we can “quench the Spirit” remains a source of major cognitive dissonance in my spiritual development. If I was not able to hear such a simple message because of my stereotypes and cultural programming, how many other messages have I missed?

By 1988 the black, coloured, and Indian sections of the church decided to sidestep the delay tactics of the white church and constituted their own single presbytery. As a Welfare Department for the church, we saw the handwriting on the wall: adapt or die. With all the changes taking place in the country, the Welfare Department’s destiny was to be a service arm for the whole church, not for just the white section. So in 1991, the Welfare Department initiated official talks and set up a strategic planning meeting to negotiate the future of the department. My team and I were fully aware that the negotiations meant our future positions could be on the line. The first meeting with the black delegation was extremely tense because the leader was one of the most controversial political figures the church had ever produced, Pastor Frank Chikane.

Chikane was the son of an AFM pastor and active in youth and Sunday School work. He started his studies at the University of the North in the early 1970s, but because of political disruptions on campus was unable to complete his education. In 1975, he joined the African evangelistic team of German evangelist Reinhardt Bonnke and in 1976 he took over the AFM church in Kagiso near Soweto from his father. In this same year, when student protests erupted in Soweto, Chikane instinctively began to reach out to victims of the violence. Like the AFM’s first political luminary, Senator Wessels, Chikane “believed in a two dimensional ministry of preaching the gospel and becoming

involved in the community to actively change people's fate."¹⁴ But unlike Wessels, Chikane spoke out against the status quo, and his activities began to draw the attention of the Secret Police. From 1977 until the late 1980s, Chikane was often detained without trial and tortured. He would later testify that the most difficult part for him to process was that his torturer was a policeman who himself was a lay leader in an AFM white church. Chikane was active locally and nationally. In Soweto, he became part of the leadership of the Soweto Civic Association. With other religious leaders, he was instrumental in the publication of the influential "Kairos Document," a great offense to many conservative sectors in the church.¹⁵ On a national level, he became a leader in the United Democratic Front and among the most powerful anti-apartheid voices in the nation.

His socio-political activism became a major stumbling block to the white missionary overseers of his district, and in 1980, he was ordered by the church to keep busy with the preaching of the gospel and to leave aside his political involvements. The AFM committee charged with monitoring his activities was in constant contact with the Security Police about his activism and, on the committee's recommendation the church finally suspended his ordination in 1981. In 1985, he was charged with high treason and placed under house arrest. In 1987, the South African Council of Churches acknowledged his leadership, and Chikane became the first Pentecostal to be appointed General Secretary. His two immediate predecessors were the luminaries, Dr. Beyers Naude and Archbishop Desmond Tutu. This high profile appointment was such an offence to the government that the Minister of Police approved the assassination of Chikane. On April 23, 1989, security forces intercepted Chikane's luggage at the airport while he was on his way to Namibia and impregnated his clothing with deadly, secret organophosphate chemicals.¹⁶ The miraculous circumstances surrounding the intervention of a medical university in Namibia and his subsequent recovery remains a source of utter amazement to this day.

¹⁴ Burger and Nel, *Fire Falls*, 272-273.

¹⁵ The "Kairos Document" was a theological statement issued by a group of black theologians highly critical of apartheid and a State Theology that perpetuated violence. See <http://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/challenge-church-theological-comment-political-crisis-south-africa-kairos-document-1985#content-top>.

¹⁶ Burger and Nel, *Fire Falls*, 274.

After I met Chikane and began to learn his story, I found the impetus necessary to push through Sue and Sue's fourth phase of Racial Identity Development, the resistance and immersion phase. While all of this was happening to Chikane, I was employed at the Welfare Department of the same church on the northeast side of Johannesburg. I, too, was pursuing social interventions on behalf of the poor and marginalized. I was annually rubbing shoulders with apartheid politicians and negotiating funding contracts with government bureaucrats. The head office of the white section was a stone's throw from my Welfare Department office. The white church leader who accused Chikane of socio-political involvements had to drive past the gate of the old aged home established by Wessels and turn left out of the road that one-hundred meters further led to the gate of our children's village for two-hundred orphaned and abused children. Chikane's accuser knew me personally and was intimately acquainted with our social services, adoption services, and planned HIV/AIDS strategies. But in perplexing irony, Chikane was prosecuted for community social activism, while I received a promotion for similar activities.

As I became more aware of Chikane's story, I was forced to face my own racism. I became increasingly aware of how racism had been maintained in the media, advertising, educational materials, and decision-making. As with the other Racial Identity Development Phases, I was aware that anyone who remains in the resistance and immersion phase could do more harm than good. A guilt-driven over-identification with minorities to escape one's own whiteness in the resistance and immersion phase is not healthy and certainly not appreciated by minority groups. The appropriate therapeutic response is to move to phase five, the Introspection Phase. This phase requires searching, questioning, observing, dialoguing, and reformulating what it means to be white. At this stage, one must acknowledge the racial disparities that brought privilege to whites and develop a constructive commitment for change and reparation. I entered the introspection phase during the process of negotiations with my black colleagues about the future of a non-racial Welfare Department.

After the ANC won the general election in 1994, President Mandela invited Chikane to use his talents in civil service. Chikane was appointed Director General of the Vice President's office. When Thabo Mbeki succeeded Mandela as President of South Africa in 1999,

Chikane was promoted to one of the most powerful civil servant positions in the nation. In his capacity as Director General in the State President's office, Chikane managed the day-to-day activities of all cabinet ministries. He served in this capacity until the end of Mbeki's term of office in 2009.

DEVELOPING A THEOLOGY FROM MY SOUTH AFRICAN NARRATIVE

Both Wessels and Chikane were gifted Pentecostal leaders who loved God, the church, and their people. Both discovered that their talents were valuable assets to the cultural leaders of their days. Both used public discourse and leadership skills to address the socio-political distress of their respective people groups: Wessels to the discrimination against both Afrikaners and Pentecostals in Afrikaner culture and Chikane to the discrimination and violence against blacks in apartheid South Africa. Both were accorded praise by their respective people groups for their heroism and courage.

I have no illusions that I was being groomed to perpetuate the legacy of Wessels and Poggenpoel. This was particularly clear to me since I am also Poggenpoel's son-in-law. I have no reason to doubt that my appointment as the third Director of Welfare was destined to be the epitome of my career and that I would have gladly perpetuated the successful legacies of my predecessors. However, two things changed that trajectory, only one over which I had any control. The first was the release of Mandela from prison and the democratization of our nation. Only a fool would deny that drastic changes were on the horizon for the privileged position of the White Welfare Department including almost \$2,000,000 in annual government aid to provide services for whites only.

The second factor to change this trajectory was the relationship between my team and Chikane's team of negotiators. There is no doubt that our reaction to our first meeting was one of shock as we listened to Chikane's "demands" for an equal stake in the management and control of the Welfare Department. Eventually, the negotiators began to trust one another and listen to each other's stories. We created opportunities for retreat to pray and plan future strategies. In 1994 when the completely integrated new management structure of the Department

was convened, the board graciously appointed me as Director of the new Department. One of the three original negotiators, Dr. Japie LaPoorta, was appointed as my Deputy Director alongside my former Deputy Director Eben Muller. The third negotiator, Sam Tshabalala, became Vice Chairman of the Board and one of my best friends with whom I continue to have cordial relations. Together LaPoorta, Muller, Tshabalala, and I set in motion the process of total integration of our residential facilities and regional management councils. We placed social workers in underserved black townships and launched a national, community-based strategy to deal with poverty, HIV/AIDS, and social deprivation through local church-based initiatives.

I have to conclude that although Pentecostals pride themselves for sensitivity to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the South African story provides ample support for the proposition that cultural factors filter our perception of Kingdom values. National interests, patriotism, and cultural programming are more powerful forces than Pentecostals care to acknowledge. We are not immune to quenching the Spirit. As an educator, I would like to believe that Spirit-empowered and prophetic teaching must help the church to rise above these cultural filters. The South African story suggests that, if Pentecostals wanted to reach such a goal, three elements would need to be incorporated into the endeavour. First and most important is a commitment to globalization and cultural diversity within the body of Christ. The Pentecostal church has to be constantly exposed to the voices of those who are culturally different and who do not share our particular nationalistic perspectives. Second, we need a commitment to urgently pursue a greater understanding of global church history, including case studies provided by persons like Wessels and Chikane. Finally, Pentecostals need to draw insights from the literature on cultural diversity, such as that provided by Sue and Sue that could illuminate their progress toward becoming effective multicultural change agents.