

Servant Leadership: The Style of Frank Chikane from Early Life to the Presidency of Thabo Mbeki

Mookgo Solomon Kgatle

University of Pretoria

kgatles@yahoo.com

Abstract

This article is a historical study of Frank Chikane from early life to the presidency of Thabo Mbeki. The article looks at the early life of Chikane; his experience of the crusade organisation “Christ for all Nations” in 1975; theological studies at the Pan-African Bible Correspondence College; pastoral duties at Kagiso; ordination in 1980; detention by government; suspension by the church; involvement in Institute for Contextual Theology; reconciliation with Adriaan Vlok; involvement in the unity of the Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM); and his role as a director general in the presidency of Thabo Mbeki. The purpose of this article is to demonstrate that the leadership style of Chikane is servant leadership.

Keywords: Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM); South African Council of Churches; Institute for Contextual Theology; Frank Chikane; Adriaan Vlok; Thabo Mbeki

Introduction

Frank Chikane is a South African civil servant, writer and cleric. He is a member of the African National Congress (ANC).¹ He has been actively involved in the struggle against the apartheid system in South Africa. Chikane was influenced largely by the black consciousness ideology. He took part in various movements like the South African Student Organisation (SASO) and the United Democratic Front (UDF). He led structures like the South African Council of Churches (SACC), Institute for Contextual Theology (ICT) and others. In the midst of all these,

1 The African National Congress (ANC) is the Republic of South Africa’s governing social democratic political party. It has been the ruling party of post-apartheid South Africa on the national level, beginning with the election of Nelson Mandela in the 1994 election, the first after the end of apartheid. Today, the ANC remains the dominant political party in South Africa, winning every election since 1994. Its leader, Jacob Zuma, is the incumbent head of state (Wikipedia 2017).

Chikane has been actively involved in his church, the Apostolic Faith Mission² (AFM). He has served the democratic South African government until his retirement in 2009.

This article is a historical study of Frank Chikane from early life to the presidency of Thabo Mbeki. This will be achieved by looking at various aspects of his life: the circumstances surrounding the birth of Chikane; his experience of the crusade organisation “Christ for all Nations” in 1975; theological studies at the Pan-African Bible Correspondence College; pastoral duties at Kagiso assembly; ordination in 1980; detention by government; suspension by the church; involvement in Institute for Contextual Theology; reconciliation with Adriaan Vlok; involvement in the unity of the AFM; and his role as a director general in the presidency of Thabo Mbeki. The purpose here is to demonstrate that the leadership style of Chikane is servant leadership.

A Historical Study of Frank Chikane

Chikane’s early life

Frank Chikane was born 3 January 1951 in Orlando³ West. He was bred in the AFM and has been active in his local assembly, Naledi, where he has served as secretary of the congregation at the age of eighteen. When he was at secondary school, he became a member of the Student Christian movement and evangelical group (Sider 1988, 9). Chikane was regularly challenged by non-believing black students about the dispossession of blacks of their land and livestock and the oppression of blacks by so-called white Christians, who even justified their practices from Scripture. He had to choose either to reject the Bible because it was misused, or to reinterpret it in a relevant context (De Wet 1989, 144).

After matriculating in 1971, he enrolled as a student for a bachelor’s degree in science (majoring in mathematics and science) at the University of the North⁴ (now University of Limpopo) (Lapoorta 1996, 71). According to De Wet (1989), he did not complete his studies because they were disrupted during his third and final year of study, mainly as a result of the

2 The Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa (AFM) is a classical Pentecostal Christian denomination in South Africa. With 1.2 million adherents, it is South Africa’s largest Pentecostal church and the fifth largest religious grouping in South Africa, representing 7.6 per cent of the population (Clark 2007, 42; cf Kgatle 2017, 1). Dr Isak Burger has led the AFM as president since 1996, when the white and black branches of the church were united. It is a member of the Apostolic Faith Mission International, a fellowship of 23 AFM national churches. It is also a member of the South African Council of Churches (Horn 2006).

3 Orlando is a township in the urban area of Soweto, in the city of Johannesburg (South Africa). The township was founded in 1931 and named after Giovanni Orlando, Head of Bantu Administration of Johannesburg from 1925 to 1926. It is divided in two main areas: Orlando West and Orlando East. The township of Orlando was directly involved in some of the most important events of the fight against the apartheid system. Some of the most dramatic clashes between the South African police and anti-apartheid demonstrators occurred in Orlando West. This includes the Soweto uprising where 12-year-old Hector Pieteron was killed. The Hector Pieteron Memorial Museum was established in Orlando West to commemorate those events. In the surroundings of the museum is the house where Nelson Mandela lived for several years while practising law; the house now hosts the Mandela Family Museum (Wikipedia 2017).

4 While at this university Chikane was confronted with the philosophy of black consciousness, black or liberation theology, and black power. He became involved in student politics (Lapoorta 1996, 71).

“Viva Frelimo”⁵ rallies which celebrated the independence of Mozambique. De Wet continues to say that although these rallies led to the arrest of many students, Chikane was never arrested. However, he was so involved, providing help to those detained and their families as well as involvement in student leadership, that together with the added stress of the final examinations it led to him having a nervous breakdown during an examination session. Chikane did not return to the university the next year because he was afraid that he might be victimised (De Wet 1989, 145).

Chikane’s experience of the crusade organisation “Christ for all Nations” in 1975

After leaving the university, Chikane did not remain idle. He joined the evangelistic organisation, Christ for all Nations⁶ in 1975 because he was convinced of God’s calling in his life and had good foundation at the AFM (De Wet 1989, 145). In 1975 Chikane went to a crusade organisation of the church called “Christ for All Nations” (2017) run by a German missionary (Pastor Reinhardt Bonkke). Chikane was there for just one year. It was during that time that the contradictions became serious for him, because the letters he received from white Christians who were asking him to come and preach the gospel in certain places were literally saying: “There are a lot of terrorists here. Can you come and preach the gospel?” “There are a lot of Communists here, can you come and preach the Gospel?” And he began to realise these motives for preaching the Gospel were radically different from his own conviction. Whereas he was concerned about the Kingdom of God, other people were concerned about other things (Sider 1988, 10).

Chikane’s theological studies at the Pan African Bible Correspondence College

During 1975 Chikane also registered with the Pan-African Bible Correspondence College,⁷ the correspondence section of the Bible College of the AFM in Africa, in order to be trained as a minister of the AFM. After he resigned at Christ for All Nations, he worked for a short period as an evangelist for the AFM (De Wet 1989, 146). Chikane was of the opinion that the standard of theological education for prospective black pastors in the AFM was too low at that time. He completed his theological training by correspondence through the Pan-African Bible Correspondence College and found that the examination in this course was of a lower quality compared with other institutions. He mentions that he inquired about attending the Auckland Park College in 1980, but he was told that because he is black, that would not be possible (Erasmus 1996, 152).

5 The immediate impetus for the rallies came on 7 September 1974, when the new Portuguese military government announced that it had signed a cease-fire agreement with Frelimo, the dominant local liberation movement, and would grant Mozambique its independence on 25 June 1975 (Brown 2012, 59).

6 The German, Reinhard Bonnke, arrived in South Africa in 1966 as missionary. Eventually he started an evangelistic association, Christ for all Nations, which played an important part in the growth of the AFM in Africa (Steele 1984).

7 This is an institute that offered theological education by extension. It functioned under the authority of the AFM. It was established in 1977 under the name Pan-African Bible Correspondence College, but changed to International Theological Institute (ITI) in 1992. Although ITI amalgamated with the AFMTC in 1996, the name ITI is still used (Erasmus 1996, 106).

Chikane as a pastor in Kagiso in June 1976

In June 1976 he was placed as pastor in a congregation in Kagiso⁸ Township, Krugersdorp (De Wet 1989, 146). Chikane has been a pastor from 1976, even before his ordination (Sider 1988, 9). The Chikane's family experienced hardships at the Kagiso church. There was almost no privacy in the Kagiso mission house of the AFM. Actually, it was the "people's house". Even the groceries that they bought with meagre salaries were not theirs alone. At times when Chikane's wife came home from work at the local high school, she would find that somebody had been busy in the kitchen. This was really too much for her. She would get mad because, at times, the food that had been cooked would be what she had intended to cook for supper. Chikane always calmed her down by saying one could not leave a hungry man "to go in peace" without providing for a basic need—food. Chikane would say: "You cannot just say to a person, 'Well, brother or sister, I've heard your problems. May the good God bless you'" (Chikane 1988, 46).

They experienced hardship even when it was time for them to leave the congregation. A week before leaving the congregation at Kagiso, the congregation organised a farewell function for the family of Chikane. To their amazement, one pastor from the District Committee came and put a big lock on the door of the Kagiso church to stop the function from taking place. Emotions ran high among the congregation. The congregation decided to hold the function outside the church instead of breaking in. It was painful for the family of Chikane to part with the congregation in Kagiso (Chikane 1988, 47).

Chikane's ordination in 1980

Chikane was ordained as pastor in 1980 after the completion of his theological training in 1979. Apparently abstaining from participation in any politics was one of the conditions expected from him in order to be ordained (Lapoorta 1996, 71; cf De Wet 1989, 146). Chikane explained his decision to become a minister in the AFM, "which seemed quite conservative, and which was dominated by Afrikaners who were part and parcel of the system of apartheid as follows: 'This is the church within which I was brought up. But there is something more than that. It was the depth of its spirituality that appealed to me. However narrow and shallow this could be, it is this depth of spirituality ...'" (Chikane quoted in De Wet 1989, 147).

Chikane's detention

Chikane was detained by the South African Nationalist government more than once. He was detained in: January 1977–February 1977 for 7 days; 6 June 1977–January 1978; November 1980 for 3 days; 20 November 1981–7 July 1982 (De Wet 1989, 146). The first detention in January 1977–February 1977 was purely because of Chikane's pastoral work. The police were looking for his younger brother and one of his friends, who belonged to his father's congregation in Soweto. They came to Chikane because they thought his brother might be hiding with him. It was later discovered that both parents of the other youngster were also detained. The second time from 6 June 1977–January 1978, Chikane was detained because he

8 Kagiso is a township situated in the Krugersdorp area west of Johannesburg in Gauteng Province, South Africa.

was helping families of detainees. The police detained Chikane and tortured him heavily for six weeks. A deacon from the AFM supervised the torture (Sider 1988, 10).

During one of his incarcerations he was removed from his congregation. Since he was imprisoned for his political convictions, he was regarded as a terrorist by the church (Yong 2006, 130). This was precisely the strategy of the apartheid system. They would detain legitimate leaders of the community for representing the grievances of their communities and thereby criminalise them. This was how they justified brutal and inhuman acts against people to stop them from resisting oppression and exploitation (Paul 2006, 80).

Chikane's detention was both unfair and painful. It was unfair in the sense that in both instances of his detention he was mistakably detained by the police of the nationalist government. It was painful in the sense that a fellow member of his church facilitated the torture as punishment for his detention. It is amazing that these incidents did not stop Chikane from continuing to serve humanity. They did not stop him to serve the people of South Africa. They rather fuelled him on to continue to strive for truth and justice for all people of South Africa.

Chikane's suspension

The AFM decided to remove Frank Chikane from the church while in detention, because he was an embarrassment to the church. The church demanded his removal; otherwise they would withdraw their financial support to Chikane's congregation. The congregation did not agree to his removal while he was in detention. Rather, they preferred that after his release, Chikane should come and answer for himself. On the contrary, when he was released after seven months, the leaders convened a meeting to suspend him (Sider 1988, 11).

During August 1981, according to De Wet (1989), Chikane was suspended by the West Rand District Council of the AFM. He was accused a number of times by the church, such as involvement in community projects and politics. His suspension (for one year) was upheld by the National Executive Council in October 1981, and tacitly prolonged in 1982 (De Wet 1989, 147–148). The reasons for the suspension were that “he did not keep the promise he made regarding the conditions of his ordination and that there is no change in his attitude.” He was not reinstated the following year; and he was asked to return his credentials a year after that. It was only through the “reinstate Chikane campaign”—an organisation within the AFM—that the suspension was eventually lifted by 1990 (Anderson 1992, 52).

The charges which formed the basis of his suspension were as follows:

- He should not appear in the press, especially in a critical sense against the state.
- He should not attend or accept invitations by other groups outside the church, especially political groups.
- He has misdirected his efforts by speaking against the church in South Africa in non-Christian gatherings.
- His ideas are revolutionary and communistic.
- Last, he has not submitted to the authority of the church (Lapoorta 1996, 72).

In some instances, his family was asked to leave the church parsonage even though they were unable to locate other accommodations and would have effectively been homeless (Richardson 2013, 51). It was these experiences at the hands of an insensitive AFM leadership that led to Chikane's complete identification with the political aims of the black liberation movements in South Africa. They exposed him to various leadership positions in the church and outside the church (Clark 2005, 160). Chikane continued to oppose apartheid, and was arrested again in 1985 on charges of treason. After Chikane had been formally acquitted of the treason charges, he continued the resistance (Yong 2006, 131).

Chikane and the Institute for Contextual Theology

Chikane joined the Institute for Contextual Theology⁹ (ICT), a Christian think-tank inside of the South African Council of Churches¹⁰ (SACC) which promoted liberation theology. In September 1982 Chikane became full time co-ordinator of (ICT), and in 1983 was appointed Director of ICT, of which he became the general-secretary in 1983 until 1987 (De Wet 1989, 412; cf Chikane 1988, 183). In 1985 a group of 151 clergy released the Kairos Document,¹¹ a Christian indictment of apartheid, and Chikane played a key role in drafting it. Chikane also supported the idea of the ICT housing black theology as one of its projects (Molobi 2010, 6).

Chikane (1988, 89; also see Erasmus 1996, 184) describes the value of his five-year involvement at the ICT as "to systematise and develop" his "theological understanding" of his "Christian pastoral praxis." At the Institute he learned more about black theology, African theology, liberation theology and Asian theologies. Chikane chose to side with the victims of society. He sees this as taking "sides with the Kingdom of God proclaimed by Jesus" (Chikane 1988).

Chikane and the South African Council of Churches

Chikane was elected General Secretary of the SACC in July 1987 (Yong 2006, 131). The profile and influence of the SACC as an instrument of change became extremely significant. He led the SACC through one of the most crucial periods in the history of the struggle against apartheid, just before its demise. He won wide-ranging respect in both the political and

9 The struggle in this country was for justice that would lead to liberation, restoration and reconciliation. The church, however, did not have an appropriate theology to undergird that struggle. As a response to this reticence or inability of the churches to act appropriately, ICT came into being in 1981. ICT fashioned itself according to the prophetic tradition and unapologetically advocates a theology of liberation as determined by the dynamics of the southern African context. ICT counts itself among those working towards the establishment of God's reign on earth (Institute for Contextual Theology).

10 The South African Council of Churches is a fellowship of churches and organisations which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour, according to the Scriptures, and therefore seek to fulfil their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Council affirms, on the basis of the Scriptures, that the Church is the Body of Christ and therefore is one. Though obscured and marred by sinful division, this unity of all Christians is the gift of God and does not need to be created (Constitution of the SACC).

11 In 1985 the repression of the majority of the population in South Africa by apartheid reached its height. At the same time resistance was growing inside and outside the country. Following their theological reflection, Christians involved in the liberation struggle called upon the churches to opt clearly for resistance and solidarity. This served to strengthen the world-wide anti-apartheid alliances. They called their challenge the Kairos document (Leonard 2011, 245).

ecclesiastical spheres as well as the admiration of the youth in the townships, which can be described as the anti-apartheid movement “storm troopers” (Balcomb 2004, 28). Chikane focused on changing the image of the SACC from a political movement to one that can play a role of mediation. Today, the SACC stands for human rights in churches and can even address the ruling party because of Chikane’s influence.

Chikane and Adriaan Vlok

Adriaan Johannes Vlok is a former Minister of Law and Order and Correctional Services during the apartheid government. As a minister under the apartheid government he was given a mandate by the National Party government and he became involved in the assassination of anti-apartheid activists, especially at the time when he was still Minister of Law and Order. Chikane was one of Vlok’s victims; he ordered chemical poisoning of Chikane, although Chikane survived the poison (Mandela 1994, 704; cf Kgatle 2012).

According to a report by the BBC (28 August 2006), in mid-2006 Vlok came forward with public apologies for a number of acts that he had not disclosed to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), and for which he could therefore be prosecuted. In a dramatic gesture, Vlok washed the feet of Chikane who, as Secretary General of the SACC, had been targeted by him for assassination. Subsequently, he washed the feet of the 10 widows and mothers of the “Mamelodi 10”, a group of anti-apartheid activists who had been lured to their death by a police informant. Later that year (2006), Vlok appeared at the AFM’s tenth year unity celebrations conference in Boksburg, offering the same gesture.

It took Vlok two months to arrange the meeting. He had one thing in mind and that was to ask for forgiveness. At this meeting forgiveness was asked and given, and as an act of humility, Chikane allowed Vlok to wash his feet. Vlok, who gave orders to blow up Khotso House, and so many other operations, had undergone a transformation after the death of his first wife in 1994. He said it took him 12 years to come to a point where he could rid himself of his own pride and selfishness (Els 2007, 216).

According to an *Independent Online* news report, Vlok arrived at Chikane’s office and handed him a Bible with the message: “I have sinned against the Lord and against you, please forgive me” (John 13:15) on its cover. Vlok continued to say that “I take you as a representative and an embodiment of all the other people I should be talking to. He then asked for water, he picked up a glass of water, opened his bag, pulled out a bowl, put the water in the bowl, took out the towel, and said: ‘you must allow me to do this’ and he then washed Chikane’s feet in his office” (*Independent Online* 2006).

The report continues to say that, although Chikane described the apology as “genuine”, it has failed to address other related matters involving Vlok. Two years after apartheid activist Stanza Bopape was shocked to death by police and then dumped into a crocodile-infested pool, Vlok had reported to Parliament that the investigation into the young man’s disappearance was continuing. Vlok refused to reveal the names of the officers who Bopape had been with at the

time he disappeared, but said he would do so if ordered by the Harms Commission. The Harms Commission decided that there were insufficient grounds for holding a hearing. It was only when the policemen responsible for torturing Bopape to death with electric shocks applied for amnesty that the truth about his disappearance emerged (*Independent Online* 2006) .

Although Vlok refused to reveal the names of the officers who Bopape had been with at the time he disappeared, the confession by Vlok and forgiveness by Chikane convinced most whites in South Africa to believe what had for so long been rumoured, namely that a so-called Christian government would do such a thing as poisoning people with chemical and biological weapons (Chikane 2013, 50). In addition, the unexpected and courageous act of remorse and confession towards Chikane by Vlok is remarkable. His forgiveness by Chikane has shed an entirely new light on reconciliation in South Africa. It occurred completely outside the official process of the TRC (Boesak 2008, 645).

Chikane and the AFM

The AFM has been divided for years; it took two presidents of the AFM, one (Frank Chikane) elected by the composite division¹² of the church, and the other (Isak Burger) elected by the white division to move towards unification. They moved towards the AFM under one legal entity tied together by a common constitution and at an executive level by liaison committees with equal representation, dealing with property and finance, liaison and doctrine, ethics and liturgy (Anderson 2000, 100).

At the beginning of 1995 the composite division requested that the process of unity be accelerated. A joint meeting of both Executive Councils was held on 22 February 1995 to discuss this request. At this stage the composite division was on the point of giving up negotiations with the white division. Chikane, as the President, convinced the composite division to pursue unity. He argued that history will one day honour the composite division for their determination. At that stage on the other hand, Burger shared his dream of a unified church with a number of the Regional Councils of the white division. He convinced them that unification was God's will for the AFM (Burger and Nel 2008, 429).

The white section experienced a lot of tension and fears about the future of the unified church. They were convinced that change is not necessary due to lack of knowledge caused by church apartheid (Alberts and Chikane 1991, 63). At one stage the possibility of a schism was a looming reality. Many conservative whites believed that unification with the composite division would inevitably lead to domination by the majority. The Executive Council requested Burger to visit all white regional councils before the crucial Workers Council of 1996 to inform

12 The composite division existed as a result of delaying tactics and reluctance for unity by the white section of the Apostolic Faith Mission. The black, coloured and Indian sections of the Apostolic Faith Mission decided to unite to form what is called the composite division, while the white section remained independent and it was declared a white division. As a result of the composite division, Apostolic Faith Mission moved from four sections to two divisions: the composite division (black, coloured and Indian) and the white division (Kgatle 2016, 215).

pastors and other leaders about the process of unification. He successfully convinced the white division to complete the road to unification (Nel 2012, 139).

In the United AFM Frank Chikane's courageous stand is acknowledged by many members black and white. After he led the creation of the composite division and subsequently the unification of the two divisions, there was a lessening of the tension among members of different races in the church. Chikane remains one of the outstanding ecumenical church leaders in South Africa, and one of the finest ever to emerge from the Pentecostal movement (Anderson 2000, 96).

During his term as vice-president, Chikane's contribution was constructive and positive. He never tried to agitate whites, even though he had been tortured by an AFM elder from the white division during the years of struggle. His expertise in public administration and excellent abilities to establish relationships at the highest levels of government worked to the advantage of the AFM in various countries. Chikane's good reputation brought about a connection with several states (Burger and Nel 2008, 458).

Chikane in the presidency of Thabo Mbeki

Chikane has been involved in the liberation movement (through his membership of the ANC) even before his appointment as the director general in the presidency. During the late 1980s and early 1990s, he was able to mediate between the South African government and the ANC, right up to F.W. De Klerk's announcement of the release of Mandela. It is difficult to overstate Chikane's influence during this period. When the ANC became the ruling party in 1994, Chikane also became part of government (Balcomb 2004, 28).

In 1994, Chikane was appointed as the Director General in the office of the Deputy President, Thabo Mbeki, and remained there until June 1999. Chikane became the Director General in the office of the President in June 1999, when Thabo Mbeki became the President of South Africa. He served in this position until he retired in 2009. Chikane continues to be a member of the ANC, even though he is no longer in government (Burger and Nel 2008, 272).

As an ANC member, he continues to have a voice in the day-to-day politics of the movement in particular and the South African government in general. Chikane continues to be vocal in his own party the same way he was vocal in the system of apartheid. He stands for the truth, even if it means confronting his own political party. Recently Chikane warned his party, the ANC, of the possibility of a decline in the last municipal elections. Chikane said that the ANC ran the risk of losing many municipalities if they did not solve the current challenges.¹³ Indeed—the ANC lost three big metros and other wards. Chikane continues to warn his party about another decline in the upcoming national elections in 2019.

Chikane has also started to publish a series of books where he explains his role as a director general in the presidency of President Thabo Mbeki. In *“Eight days in September, the removal*

13 See a report by City Press on 4 October 2015.

of *Thabo Mbeki*” (Chikane 2012) for example, he describes the eight-day period in 2008 from 19 to 26 September when the National Executive Council of the ANC decided to remove Mbeki from the presidency. As secretary of the cabinet and director general, Chikane was directly responsible for managing the transition from Mbeki to Motlanthe and then to Jacob Zuma.¹⁴

In another book “*The things that could not be said, from AIDS to Zimbabwe*” (Chikane 2013), he discusses a range of important issues that marked Thabo Mbeki’s presidency: threats to state security; drugs, pharmaceuticals and the poor; corruption; Thabo Mbeki and HIV and AIDS; Zimbabwe; the growth employment and redistribution programme (GEAR); the media as a target of intelligence projects; freedom of expression and state secrets; and the Jackie Selebi and Vusi Pikoli matter.¹⁵ The two books and other publications by Chikane show that he continues to stand for truth, even in the liberation movement.

Leadership Style of Frank Chikane

Black Pentecostal

Chikane is a black Pentecostal in every sense of the word. He participated in the development of the AFM assembly in Naledi, Soweto. He served this assembly with faithfulness and diligence (Chikane 1988, 31). Chikane extended his ministry beyond the boundaries of vertical concentration. He ventured into community development in order to balance the pendulum between the vertical and horizontal aspects of ministry. Chikane proclaimed a gospel that encompasses salvation and liberation, reconciliation and social justice (Lapoorta 1996, 71).

Chikane’s vision of the responsibility of churches contributed in a major way to the evolving Pentecostal movement discourse in South Africa during the late 1980s (Borer 1995, 255). During Chikane’s leadership in the ICT and SACC, their profile and influence as instruments of change became extremely significant. He led them through one of the most crucial periods in the history of the struggle against apartheid, just before its demise. He won wide-ranging respect in both the political and ecclesiastical spheres as well as the admiration of the youth in the townships, which can be described as the anti-apartheid movement “storm troopers” (Balcomb 2004, 28).

Chikane met great resistance from both ends of the Pentecostal/political spectrum. On the one hand, it was resistance from his politically conscious peers, who identified him with the oppressor because of his faith. On the other, it was resistance from his fellow Pentecostals because they identified him with political radicalism (Balcomb 2004, 27). Chikane’s involvement in politics was seen as taboo according to Christian beliefs and the Pentecostal movement. Light and darkness had nothing in common. Empowerment of the Holy Spirit had nothing to do with society. Pentecostals saw political change as irrelevant at best or even contrary to God’s plan and thus counter-productive (Horn 2006, 227). Similar to many

14 Frank Chikane, *Eight days in September, the Removal of Thabo Mbeki* (Picador, Africa, 2012).

15 Frank Chikane, *The things that could not be said: From Aids to Zimbabwe* (Picador, Africa, Johannesburg, 2013).

evangelists and fundamentalists in South Africa, Pentecostals maintain that the secular and the sacred (the church and the “world”) must be kept apart (Pillay 1987, 46).

In keeping with the traditional apolitical stance of classical Pentecostalism (learned from their North American missionaries), involvement in politics was considered as sinful and advocated only by liberal Christians. At best, individuals had to resign from pastoral church ministry to engage in the struggle against apartheid; at worst, such persons were considered “backslidden” in pursuing these kinds of activities. Following the government’s official position, African nationalism and black political movements were considered to be inspired by communism. Hence, the representative of the evil system of an anti-Christ is proliferated (Yong 2006, 130).

Both the political and Pentecostal spectrum failed to stop Chikane’s involvement in politics. Instead they fuelled him to continue to fight for the liberation of black people. He continued to fight racial segregation and white supremacy even in his own church. Chikane remains one well-known example of black Pentecostals who challenged racial injustice within the AFM. Despite the disapproval of the better part of the leadership body of the church—including some black leaders—Chikane, a pastor within the movement, actively participated resisting apartheid (Richardson 2013, 51).

Black theologian

Chikane supported black theology.¹⁶ Black theology is a theology arising from the need to articulate the significance of the black presence in an inhuman and hostile white world. It is the black people’s reflection on their experience under the guidance of the gospel values. It affirms blackness and black humanity (Mbanjwa 2013, 261). It is a theology that seeks to relate God and Christ once more to the black man and his daily problems. It grapples with existential problems and does not claim to be the theology of absolutes. It seeks to bring back God to the black man and to the truth and reality of his situation (Biko 1978, 94).

Black theology turned the gospel into an instrument of liberation and black Christians could appeal to the gospel ethos to resist the extreme demands of racial domination and bondage. In proclaiming liberty to the poor, the oppressed and the downtrodden, black people became witnesses to the biblical God who has special concern for those who are trampled underfoot by the powers that be in any society (Molobi 2010, 44). It is a theology that advances the struggle of the people by empowering and providing them with the spiritual and emotional resources to engage in that struggle (Moore 2011, 5).

For Chikane, there is no such thing as a “universal” theological interpretation. Rather, each interpretation is dependent upon the situation in which theologians find themselves, and each

¹⁶ Black theology is about black people interpreting the gospel in the light of black experiences as well as interpreting black experiences in the light of the gospel. What was central to black experience in South Africa was their systematic racist oppression and interpreting the gospel called for an answer to how the Scriptures address this reality of oppression. The answer advocated by the black theologians was that the gospel was a message of liberation of the oppressed. This had to be understood as an authentic Christian response to oppression (Moore 2011, 3).

interpretation supports, rejects or legitimises certain forms of praxis. He rejects any theological interpretation of the South African situation which comes from the perspective of the rich and privileged, because they advocate status quo praxis (Chikane 1985, 100).

Chikane professed that theology is demanding because it challenges theologians to forfeit power and status to align with God's disadvantaged. Chikane's theology sought to return to the community for solutions regarding racial injustice. He was relevant to black culture primarily through a focus on community centeredness. Chikane yearned to do the same under God's authority, establishing a liberation motif for the disadvantaged community. His theology spoke out against those who used the Word of God and talked above the congregation. Using Western and academic ideals, their interpretation of the Bible was irrelevant to a black audience. Chikane noted that the discrepancies in theology flourished in South Africa. The domination of theology resulted in power for some and oppression for others (Howard 2006, 175).

Chikane saw a need for theology to be de-Hellenised and de-Westernised, so that the black theologian could identify with the humanity of Christ (Chikane 1985, 41). He formulated theological reasons for rejecting apartheid, both inside and outside the church (Chikane 1992, 123). Chikane believed that black theology should liberate the people from oppression (Horn 2006, 242). He believed that he had been called to liberate the people. Liberation to him meant the struggle of people to obtain their rights. Chikane emphasised that the black man needed to participate in the politics of the day. Government should also talk to people about their needs and expectations (Burger and Nel 2008, 273).

Civil servant

Chikane was not only a servant leader within Pentecostal ranks. He was also a servant in government because of the position he held as the director general in the presidency. For Chikane, there is a very thin line that divides the secular and the sacred. He did not see anything wrong with being a Pentecostal and being involved in a secular job. On the contrary, this involvement increased his influence in society and the church. This influence has opened doors for a relationship between the church and government. It has strengthened the ties between institutions like the SACC and government.

Humble leader

Humility is taking the lowest in order to fulfil the purpose of God. An element of humility is the willingness to stand back, putting the interest of others first and facilitating their performance. It is also about modesty (Dierendonck and Patterson 2010, 159). Selflessness is inherent to humility. It reflects a willingness to put the interests of others ahead of the leader's own interests. It involves the ability to recognise the worth of others and reinforce and strengthen that worth (Bell 2006, 74).

This principle is modelled by Chikane because he was able to take the lowest place when his feet were washed by a former minister of a Nationalist Government, Adriaan Johannes Vlok. Adriaan Vlok planned and facilitated Chikane's assassination. Humble servants do not judge

people according to their past but are able to forgive and forget the injustices of the past. Vlok would not have washed Chikane's feet had he resisted. In order for reconciliation to take place, the victim and the perpetrator must forgive each other. It also took humility and forgiveness for Chikane to welcome Vlok in his office so that he may wash his feet. Chikane had a choice, to reject his apology, but instead embraced him. Therefore, Chikane is a servant leader because of his humility, submission and forgiveness.

Chikane modelled humility in this regard. He was able to swallow his pride and allow Vlok to wash his feet. In leadership, a leader must be humble to a level of forgiveness, reconciliation and restitution. Leaders must not be selfish but love other people and desire to reconcile with them. Leaders must not hold the past against the next person but be willing to forgive and to move on. Chikane is a humble leader because he was able to take the lowest place before the former enemy. Chikane was willing to come down from his office as a director general to allow his feet to be washed by the former oppressor. Chikane is a true humble leader who continues to remain humble for the sake of the purpose of God upon his life. It takes humility to continue to serve people of all race, gender and age.

Team leader

Team leaders enable teams to do their best by empowering and providing resources for them (Manz 1999, 122). The team leader knows the vision and understands how to achieve it, but realises it will take a team of leaders and workers to accomplish the goal (Hybels 2002, 150). Leaders begin to develop wisdom when they realise that they cannot do everything on their own (Maxwell 2005, 266). The responsibility for the team's effectiveness is not solely on the leader's shoulders, but is shared by the group. Control over final decisions is not the responsibility of the leader, but best left to the team (Lues 2009, 223).

Chikane is considered a team leader because he was part of a team that united the AFM. Chikane worked with Isak Burger to unite the AFM. It took both Chikane from the composite division and Burger from the white division to unite the two divisions of the AFM. The two leaders saw the possibility of a united AFM. They respectively made sacrifices in order to accommodate the other division. It takes a team leader to prioritise the needs of others and pursue unity. They together had to host a series of meetings outside the boardroom, in a coffee shop in the morning or a restaurant during lunch. They had to go back to their constituents and convince them that unity was possible and urgent. Chikane and Burger had to organise prayer and fasting meetings to pray for the unity of the church.

The achievements highlighted above would not have been possible if Chikane had remained silent about the injustices in his Pentecostal church and the government of South Africa. A leader like Chikane is a team leader because of the courageous steps he took to move towards the unification of all races in the AFM. Chikane continues to serve the united AFM. He now serves as the President of the AFM International, which is a fruit of the unity of the AFM. Chikane is always willing to serve the church, even in his busy schedule.

Conclusion

Frank Chikane has been studied historically by looking at various aspects of his life: the circumstances surrounding his early life; his experience of the crusade organisation “Christ for all Nations” in 1975; theological studies at the Pan-African Bible Corresponding College; pastoral duties at Kagiso; ordination in 1980; detention by government; suspension by the church; involvement in Institute for Contextual Theology; reconciliation with Adriaan Vlok; involvement in the unity of the AFM; and his role as a director general in the presidency of Thabo Mbeki. The leadership style of Chikane has shown that he is a true black Pentecostal, black theologian, civil servant, humble leader and team leader. This article concludes that his style of leadership is undoubtedly that of servant leadership.¹⁷

A servant leader does not simply serve, but makes followers independent and capable and desirous of serving other people (Covey 2002, 31). A servant leader serves from a base of love—the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Zohar 2002, 112). The power of the servant leader is the ability to combine the best of being a leader with the best of being a servant (DeGraaf, Tilley and Neal 2004, 134).

Chikane demonstrated servant leadership when he endured detention by the Nationalist government and suspension by the AFM. A servant leader is able to go through difficult times and tribulation. This is not a general suffering but to forsake self-will to do the will God. A servant leader does not live to please others but to please God. The destiny of a servant leader is an appointed destiny. It is willingness to live a life of pleasing God at all times. This may result in persecution from all directions of life. Suffering does not mean a life of poverty, sickness or death, but to be persecuted because the leader follows Jesus.

It is evident that Chikane was chosen to be a servant leader even in his early days. He is an example of a black Pentecostal who fought for the rights of his people. Furthermore, he was determined from his early days to be a role player to unite people of different race, age or gender. He was prepared to fight for the marginalised black community. He participated in his local assembly, ICT, SACC and was a political activist since his early days.

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¹⁷ Biographical note: Mookgo Solomon Kgatle is a PhD (New Testament) graduate and research associate at the Department of New Testament Studies, University of Pretoria. This article flows from his PhD thesis titled Servant leadership in Mark 10:35-45 applied to African Pentecostal Christianity, completed under the supervision of Prof. Dr Ernest van Eck.

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