

**Rev. Enos Zwelabantu Kush Sikakane<sup>©</sup>**  
*Founder/Director, Edendale Lay Ecumenical Centre, Edendale*



**Personal**

Born 28 May 1915 in Ladysmith of Anton (mail-bag carrier) and Annah Sithebe  
Methodist  
Married Winnifred Xaba (nurse) 12 July 1944  
4 sons, 4 daughters

**Education**

1925-30 Cwembe Primary School, Ladysmith  
1931-2 Matiwanoskop Intermediate School, Ladysmith  
1933-5 Polela Pevensey High School, Polela, Agriculture Diploma  
1936-7 St. Francis College, Mariannhill, T4  
1948-50 University of Fort Hare, Alice, C.P., B.A. (Theology)  
1949 (private study) Matriculation  
1961 University of South Africa, Pretoria (correspondence courses) distinction in Biblical Studies  
& Systematic Theology  
1961-2 Ecumenical Institute, Celign, Switzerland, post-graduate Certificate in Theology

**Career**

Principal, Jononoskop Primary School, Ladysmith 1938-9  
Principal, Driefontein Higher Primary School, Ladysmith 1939-44  
Probationer minister, Ndwedwe Methodist Church, Ndwedwe 1945  
Probationer minister, Durban Methodist Church, Durban 1946-7  
Assistant minister, Port Elizabeth Methodist Church, Port Elizabeth, C.P. 1951-3  
Superintendent minister, Peddie Methodist Circuit, Grahamstown, C.P. 1954  
Assistant minister, Durban Methodist Circuit, Durban 1955  
Superintendent minister, Durban Methodist Circuit 1956-65  
Director, Edendale Ecumenical Centre, Edendale 1965 -

**Foreign travel**

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<sup>©</sup> Dee Shirley Deane (1978): BLACK SOUTH AFRICANS. A Who's who. 57 Profiles of Natal's Leading Blacks. Cape Town (Oxford University Press). ISBN 0-19-570148-8 (210 pages), pages 187-189

**Transcribed for study purposes:**

Liberation Processes in pre- and post-colonial Southern Africa (LIPSA)  
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<http://www.benkhumalo-seegelken.de/suedafrika.html>

USA, cultural exchange programme, university tour, All-Africa Church Mission Committee conference, church programme consultations 1955, 62, 72, 75, 76  
Switzerland, church management & committee conferences, home mission workshop 1962, 68, 72, 74, 76  
Germany, Association of European Lay Training Centres leadership course, annual conferences, Ecumenical Centre programme consultations 1962, 68, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76  
Kenya, All-Africa church conference workshop 1967  
UK, lay training leadership course, Methodist Church & British Council of Churches conferences, mission consultation 1968, 69, 72, 74, 76  
Ivory Coast, All-Africa church conference 1969  
Zambia, to found Association of Lay Training Centres in Africa 1972  
Greece, Lay Training Centres seminars 1972-3  
Nigeria, Lay Training Centres conference 1973, 76  
Holland, Interdenominational African Ministers Association of SA, programme consultations 1976  
Sweden, Ecumenical Centre programme consultations 1976

### Memberships and Offices

Edendale Lay Ecumenical Centre (founder), director 1965 to date  
Idamasa (Interdenominational African Ministers Association of SA) programme director 1973 to date  
African Bank of SA, director 1975 to date  
Association of Lay Training Centres in Africa, chairman 1972-3  
International Ecumenical Institute, Geneva, Switzerland, management board 1968-74  
Inanda Seminary governing council 1973 to date  
Mahlabatini Development Training & Coordinating Centre, Mahlabatini, trustee 1972 to date  
Nation Building Press Association, director 1975 to date  
Inkatha yeNkululeko yeSizwe 1975 to date

### Other interests

Music, scouting, football

### Awards/Presentations

Best Student of the Year award, World Students Federation, New York City 1962

### Address

*Home*  
Edendale Lay Ecumenical Centre  
P.O. Box 63  
Plessislaer 4500  
Natal

### Telephone

(0331) 81018

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as above

*'A bank director?'* This is often repeated incredulously of this humble, elderly pastor. Six foot of skin and bone, afflicted with a limp due to an artificial kneecap, and an occasional stammer which in fact tends to augment his natural eloquence, Rev. Enos Sikakane often carries the bags for fellow-travellers, like a servant. *A saint*, he has been called. He pays no heed to arthritic aches and pains, and nobody has ever seen him angry.

Sikakane is vital, energetic, on the go from 5.00 a.m. to midnight. A moderate himself, his friendships straddle the political spectrum. Left and right, young and old, those who know him love him. An admirer remarked, 'He always says just what is needed, and just when and how it's needed.' But his diplomacy is far from cultivated. It's in him, his friends say - 'a natural'.

According to an old Zulu tradition, a child born at sunrise comes into the world to fulfil a particular destiny. It was just as the sun rose on 28 May in 1915 that Annah Sithebe gave birth to Enos Zwelabantu Kush.

But early circumstances could hardly have seemed less auspicious. Enos became a herdbooy at five like all the rest. His early schooling was broken by a shutdown precipitated by a dispute over funds between the local chief and the mission-board. But as Enos left, a teacher stopped him, and said he hoped Enos' father would continue his education. 'Why me?' Enos wondered. 'Plenty of other children were smarter. But the teacher didn't say anything to them.' Something had been seen in him that he couldn't see in himself. It was this accolade that motivated him.

It was during 1944 that Sikakane became aware of a call to the ministry, and he was ordained while taking his degree at Fort Hare. Post-graduate study at the University of South Africa (he got a distinction in Biblical Studies and Systematic Theology), and in Switzerland, and an observer-tour of church, university and leadership-programmes in the US gave Sikakane a grasp of the setting of project-objectives, administration and fund-raising.

On his return to South Africa a new concept struck him. At an ecumenical centre where Christians and non-Christians, young and old, educated and illiterate Blacks all could come together, they could pool their own resources, never before tapped, towards their own community development. 'After all, *Thy Kingdom come* means here and now, not after we die. But first people have to believe in themselves.'

He applied for a release from the church to devote himself to this project. It was first denied: funding looked too uncertain. Two years later, in 1966, an overseas-grant came through and a permit to buy land for the Edendale Centre. Sikakane was given church clearance to go ahead. Candidates for the Black board of trustees who hold the title-deeds to the freehold-property were nominated from all the denominations. 'Up till now,' says Sikakane, 'the Whites took the lead in everything. Here we took the lead ourselves.' Reverse apartheid? 'This was never the idea. Our motivation was the historic fact that Blacks had always been the followers, the dependents. We were turning this around. Of course, the Whites couldn't get over the shock. At our official opening, not one White minister from my own church showed up. I suppose that says something.'

Conferences and workshops were led by professionals in all fields: sex-education, organic farming, home-economics, management-training, ballet, music, hair-styling, conversational English, home industry. Leadership reared its head. People who had never before spoken in front of a group, who had never entertained the idea that they had anything to contribute - these men, women and youths, of whom many had never seen the inside of a school - were standing up now, speaking out, suggesting, directing, aspiring. For Sikakane, it was the proof of the pudding. 'Everybody has something in him. This was what Christ saw. When people realize you have seen something in them, it comes out.'

How does he bring people out? Sikakane says it's not a technique. 'I just don't take over. I *draw* them out, I let them find their own direction no matter what that direction is.'

The centre was soon bursting at the seams. Over the years from 1968 to 1975, sleeping, kitchen, dining and residential quarters as well as classrooms and halls were added. The staff was expanded.

'An oasis in a desert of segregation,' Sikakane calls it. Whites coach Black candidates for Junior Certificates and Matriculation. And Blacks give Whites crash courses in Zulu. Everybody can work together because they have found the human aspect in one another. And it's a home away from home for Blacks from all over

South Africa. Anybody coming through can have a bed and his morning tea if he wants it.'

Meetings with Sikakane are always fruitful. They achieve something, they're not just talk. 'It's because we stick to just a couple of issues so that people can really go into each item. Long agendas are like film shows. People sit back and dry up.'

Even those who are clearly out for themselves don't bother Sikakane. 'Whatever the motives are, the work can still be of service to everyone. And, when people fulfil their own potential, you cut back on jealousies. They stop thinking of how much luckier others are.'

Sikakane's present operation is a fund-raising scheme whereby two million working Africans would contribute a cent a day, totalling R6 million yearly to fund community centres throughout South Africa, for technical schools and scholarships, geared to the post-liberated society.

And what about the escalation of violence and the present prospects? What is needed now? 'A miracle,' Sikakane concedes. And the church, that 'sleeping giant', could wreak one, *if only* all would rise together to force the government to bring down apartheid.

Meanwhile, Sikakane urges Blacks to take the initiative and not to wait for the Whites to act. 'We are not a race of beggars waiting for the crumbs to drop from the table of our self-styled masters. We recognize only *one* master. And it's not the government of South Africa.'

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