

**UCT Press Conversation in partnership with the Harold Wolpe Memorial Trust, South African Council of Churches in the Western Cape (SACC) and the Cape Town Interfaith Initiative (CTII)**

**21 February 2012**

**Panel Discussion: Traditional African Religions in South African Law**

**Facilitator: Alan Rycroft (Department of Commercial Law, UCT)**

**Panellists: Prof Tom Bennett (Department of Public Law, UCT)**

**Dr Sibusiso Masondo (Department of Religious Studies, UCT)**

**Dr Nokuzola Mndende (Director of the Icamagu Institute)**

**Alan Rycroft:** My name is Alan Rycroft and I'm the head of department of commercial law and it seems a strange combination; so I'm already an expert at handling the experts this evening. I looked at the title of the book, *Traditional African Religions in South African Law*: most law students, almost the first concepts they're taught is the concept of the reasonable man. And, of course, this has evolved over time, and there was this English decision which said, well, who was the reasonable man? And the reasonable man is the person on the [champan povulus - sounds like], and I suppose that's a bit like saying the Soweto taxi. But most law students would have one case in particular, a 1960 case, *State versus Ngang*, where a man wakes up night he believes he sees a *tokoloshe* in his house, and he kills the *tokoloshe* – but it's a child. And it's the first case that really most law students are confronted with the crossover between [indistinct] and culture. And the judge was quite ahead of his time where he said in fact, while the reasonable urban person might not believe in a *tokoloshe*, someone who has grown up in a different tradition and culture, might well – and so it was a very significant case. So from a legal and law students' point of view, that's now all we do, and that's why tonight's occasion is very important for us to learn more.

Now each of the speakers have been ask to speak between 15 and 20 minutes, and I've got my sign already prepared with a '10 minutes' and a '5 minutes' sign because I've been told I've got to be quite a disciplinarian this evening. Tom's going to start first, and as I understand it, he's going to talk about the book came to be. And then what I'll do is I'll introduce the speakers as we go along. And then we're going to have about 30 minutes for questions – so if you'd rather keep the questions till the end, make a note of them and we'll have half an hour at the end. Tom.

**Professor Tom Bennett:** Thank you very much Alan, and thank you, Sandy, for getting this gathering together, and thank you all for being here this evening. I'd like to describe very briefly the genesis of this book, which goes under this inelegant title, I'm afraid, *Traditional African Religions in South African Law*. It grew out of an international conference I attended in Durban about four years ago, hosted by Emory University about the state of religion more in Africa generally. Now at the conference I was delivering a paper on the state of traditional African Religion in South African law specifically in terms of that wonderful Constitution Sandy mentioned earlier, and our Bill of Rights. And I think it's just worthwhile to start off by considering the provisions in our Constitution of religion. We, as usual, have very good coverage; Section 15 provides that everyone has a right to freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion: couldn't get broader than that. Section 31 provides that a person belonging a cultural or religious or linguistic community, may not be denied the right with other members of that community to practice a religion and to form and join religious associations. These two Sections are then mediated by Section 9, the equality provisions. And that provides in Section 9, sub-Section 2 equality includes the full and equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms. Now from this we read that all religions should actually be treated equally. And what becomes immediately apparent in South Africa: of course this doesn't actually happen; certain religions are given preferential treatment.

From these provisions, what struck me when I was at the conference was that traditional African Religions very seldom raise constitutional or legal issues; they're just not talked about in law. Alan has mentioned the famous 1960 decision in Ngang's case – and that really was one of the high points of our discussion about Traditional African Religion, if you can really call a belief in *tokoloshe* a matter of religion rather than belief, would curtail into superstition – one of those dreadful loaded terms.

Now in my research into the subject, what transpired was that African Religions were not being talked about in terms of religion and belief so much as matters of culture. And once the whole issue of belief is subsumed under culture, this has actually very serious implications for human rights discourse – because I'm afraid religion is always treated as a much more serious issue than culture is. And we must appreciate that both culture and religion are subject to every other right in the Bill of Rights; so they aren't actually subordinate rights in the Constitution. Now why is it that African Religions are treated as matters of mere culture? This is a tendency that's been going on since colonial times and it's hardly surprising, I think, because the paradigmatic religions in Africa have always the monotheisms, particular of course Christianity and Islam; and anything less than that cannot really be a true religion and therefore doesn't deserve the same sort of status. And I'm afraid

African Religions are sort of open to this type of discriminatory treatment; they don't have the written calendar beneath, they don't have the institutions associated with the monotheisms: the clergy, the churches and all the paraphernalia that goes with it. And as a result people tend to talk as if they don't really believe in Traditional African Religion. It's remarkable that in the 2001 census it's only 3% of the population which claims to believe in a Traditional African Religion – the rest is split between Islam, Christianity, and so on.

Now this tendency of quietly sweeping African Religions under the carpet and pretending, not pretending, just assuming that they're something else, is assisted by the language. At this conference in Durban I was struck by the fact that pejorative terms were constantly being used when dealing with matters of religion. The most famous example in South Africa of course is something like the term 'sangoma', regulated into English is 'witchdoctor'. But it's more subtle than that. [ATR participants enter] Let me pause for a moment while you come and find a seat. You usually need a degree in cartography to find your way around the campus and it takes a long time to get to these lectures, I can tell you, from own bitter experience. I was talking about language and religions and I was saying that [indistinct] more subtle places when veneration of the ancestors is spoken of as 'worship of the ancestors', and with all of the connotations with that in English, and particularly Christianity of idolatry – now this type of language does nothing to ensure that Traditional African Religion are treated with equal respect, and that really is the purpose of this book: to investigate how the law treats religions and whether there is equal treatment. Now as far as I know, this is a first book of its kind in Africa which takes the specific point of view of the specific subject matter, and I'd really like to thank my contributors for what they have done to bring this book out. Unfortunately we have only one of the contributors with us this evening, that's Sibusiso Masondo, from UCT, but the contributors came from all points, from New York, from Kenya, a goodly sprinkling of people from around South Africa. And the subject matter includes traditional healing, the environment in religion; obviously a full treatment of the Constitution; ritual killings, and so on. Hence, the book has been, I must say, an absolute pleasure to bring out. It's been quite remarkable how obedient everyone was to keeping to deadlines, which is rare for this type of event – and thank you all for coming. At this point I can now hand over to Alan, who will introduce Sibusiso Masondo. [applause].

**Alan Rycroft:** Thanks, Tom. So was the general instruction to the book and now we come down to perhaps more the meaty stuff. Dr Masondo is a lecturer here at UCT and he's going to try and help

us understand the difference belief, culture, religion and culture, and give us some example of how this plays out in practice. [applause].

**Sibusiso Masondo:** Good evening. I'll try to be a reasonable man, I'll try very hard to be a reasonable man. It is a well documented fact that African Traditional Religion was discriminated against practice by missionaries, as well as colonial and apartheid governments. Dr Mndende, who is among us, points out that under these regimes the public profile of African knowledge systems declined and African Religion became an 'underground praxis'. Religious historian David Chidester has documented a history of intolerance toward African religious traditions from the time when settlers set foot on South African soil. Initially there was a denial that Africans had a religion, based on the idea that Africans had no idea of a Supreme Being or God. And then later on that belief changed; they then started saying, but, no, Africans have a religion but it's a religion of an inferior kind, it's 'superstition', it's not really religion but stuff that is made up. You know most of us have superstitions; most of you don't put on your left sock before the right one, and so on. So African Religion was reduced to that kind of thing, to a superstition. Now, such an assertion implied that Africans were at the same level as animals and therefore had no rights, thus justifying the seizure of land and oppression of Africans in general. Later there was acceptance that Africans did have a religion but it was of an inferior kind.

The 1993 Constitution ushered in a dispensation of racial inclusiveness and human rights. Freedom of religion was one of the rights that was introduced. There was an attempt by the writers of the Constitution to avoid making the same mistakes as the previous regimes by privileging one religion over others. The Constitution recognised that South Africa is a religiously plural society, and aimed to protect people's rights to belong to any religion without fear of being discriminated against or persecuted. Freedom was also extended to those who hold no religious beliefs. This protection of religious freedom should be understood as part of the project of cultivating tolerance in a previously deeply divided society. I'm not going to go into Section 15 and Section whatever – Tom has dealt with that. But the 1996 Constitution ushered in an era of openness, democracy and human rights in South Africa. The Bill of Rights was designed to protect people from abuses by private citizens or the state. Religion is subordinated to the authority of the state. It has the ability to mould people but it has to do so within the parameters of the state. Historically, religions have been implicated in human rights violations throughout the world. State morality has clashed with religious morality: thus the failed constitutional challenge by Gareth Prince to put aside a decision by the Law Society of the Western Cape not to register him as an attorney because, as a Rastafarian, he had been convicted on two occasions for possession of *intsango* (cannabis).

In this presentation I want to reflect on how African Traditional Religion (ATR) has fared in the face of secularism in South Africa. We will consider a number of practices that have caught the attention of the public. Chirevo Kwenda, in defining African Religion, bemoaned the fact that African intellectuals, in their attempt to define what it means to be African, were preoccupied with trying to correct outsiders – that’s the first thing. Secondly, they paid homage to Western shrine keepers, and seeking acceptance from the West. For Kwenda, the version of African Religion produced by the scholars is tainted. However, there is a version that is produced by ordinary people, who simply do what they do without caring who is watching them. In the post 1994 period a number of events related to African Religion have been brought to the public attention through the media. Some of these events were highly controversial: botched circumcisions, *ukweshwama* ritual, ritual slaughter of animals, virginity testing, polygamy – the president, ‘*muthi*’ murders, witch-findings and burnings – all these came up.

The post 1994 dispensation also created a situation where marginalised traditions were given space and public profile. The dominant public view of ATR or African Religion was generally negative before 1994. For some African Christians, it was deemed an embarrassment to be seen to be engaged in traditional rituals and practices, or to consult traditional specialists. African Christians continued to practise some of their rituals, albeit without the knowledge of the missionary authorities and their pastors to this day. Sacrifices would be performed at night and feasts would be held during the day. These traditional rituals would be referred to as either ‘tea’ or ‘dinner’. Many Christians were uneasy with the use of the traditional terms *umsebenzi* or *tirelo*, that’s meaning ‘service’, because these terms, ‘tea’ or ‘dinner’ were part of the missionary discourse. The same is true for consultations with the sacred specialists, which would be done secretly. Dr Mndende accused African Christians of double talk and serving two masters. Among fellow Christians they professed the power of the blood of Jesus but among traditionalists they swore by the power of their ancestors for health and good fortune.

House opening rituals have become common in urban areas, in other words, African Religion is found in urban areas now. McAllister observed that among AmaXhosa, ancestral religion was adapted to meet the needs of a changing socio-political and economic reality. With the advent of migrant labour, African men moved from their familiar rural setting to the unfamiliar and supposedly dangerous urban areas. Ancestral religion was affected by this movement. There was an appeal to the ancestors for protection on the journey as well as during their stay in the urban areas. Initially, urban areas were not perceived as places where people settled permanently because the rural areas provided all the elements that made one human. Migrant labour became another aspect of male

initiation – in this instance a man has to prove his manhood through his ability to earn money to both build a homestead and cater for the needs of his wife and children. Post 1994, with Africans being allowed to stay permanently in the urban areas and being able to purchase property in former white suburbs, there developed an idea of ‘house opening’ rituals. During this ritual, ancestors are invited to come and stay in the house with the owner and the family.

*Ukweshwama* is one of the rituals that have captured the nation’s imagination and sparked a fierce debate and contestation that ended up in court. The meaning and content of the celebration were not the contested subjects. The Animal Rights Activists petitioned the High Court in Pietermaritzburg to instruct the Zulu King not to allow the ritual killing of the bull during the celebrations in 2009 because it constituted cruelty to the animal in question. *Ukweshwama* belongs to the cluster of fertility rituals. Fertility can be theorized as favourable conditions for production and reproduction. For communities that derived their livelihood directly from the land, the relationship with the land and the environment in general was very important. Communities like this were aware of what famine means for their livelihood and their survival. These rituals ensured that people are reminded of their dependence on nature for their livelihood. What is the relevance of an agricultural ritual to a nation that is urbanising and getting more detached from the land? Is it possible therefore to translate the meaning and content of this ritual for a modern society?

Well, for me, *Ukweshwama* can be described as the ritual of the first fruit. During the ritual, the King – who is the first citizen, the ritual leader or chief priest, the link between the royal ancestors and the rest of the group, the custodian of the tradition – would taste the first fruit of the season. After this all people in the land can eat of the new crop of the season. One of the major aspects of this ritual is thanksgiving to the ancestors for their provision. It highlights an important link between people and the environment on which they depend. However, what became part of the public debate was the apparent barbarism and cruelty of killing the bull. The Animal Rights Activists failed to convince the court and it confirmed the right of the King to have the ritual without any alterations. The ecological aspect of *ukweshwama* was not debated and reports about the customs were not mentioned. After going to court and winning the contest, King Zwelithini announced during the celebrations in 2009 that he was reinstating circumcision as part of male initiation. Being aware of problems experienced throughout the country with regard to this issue, he pointed out that he was going to consult other African groups and enlist the help of the medical fraternity in carrying out the custom. And I heard at the time people saying it is not proper. By doing this he responded to critics of virginity testing that it only focussed on girls. He was seen to be doing something to create

awareness among boys about HIV and AIDS. His decision stood on two pillars; first, restoration of an old custom and, second, medical evidence that circumcision reduces chances of contracting HIV.

The subject of ritual slaughter came to the public view after the release of Mr Tony Yengeni from prison. The family believed that there was something defiling about prison. He had paid his debt to society for corruption and he needed to be cleansed and restored to his previous position both in the family and the community. The family maintained that it is part of their tradition to slaughter a bull for a cleansing ceremony. Since the animal is dedicated to the ancestors, it is expected that it should bellow to indicate that there is acceptance of the offering in the ancestral world. The public debate that ensued highlighted the tension between culture and aspects of the law. The ability to negotiate these tensions points to the strength of the South African constitution and the institutions that support it.

Again, rainmaking and fertility rituals were very prominent among Southern African people because of the fact that we have a subcontinent that is very dry – rain sometimes goes away for a long time, so you don't have enough rain. So you need a constant supply of good rain, so you need to have a very rain-maker. So these rainmaking and fertility rituals are very, very amongst Southern African people. Queen Mudjadji of Lovedu people was known throughout Southern Africa as the rain queen, and if people in their areas lacked rain and the local rainmakers failed to make rain, people would send delegations to Mudjadji so that Mudjadji can help them to make rain. Such rituals indicate people's uncertainty about what nature could do. The aim is to ask nature to be kind to them, thereby creating a situation where there is harmony between people and nature, which is a critical realisation that humanity depends on nature for survival. So some of these rituals are performed by people, in a way trying align or create harmony between themselves and nature. So these rituals are grossly misunderstood and the media just takes up whenever the media wants to take up.

The celebration of Nomkhubulwane and *ukweshwama* were some of the ways in which AmaZulu demonstrated their dependence on nature. Nomkhubulwane is the only daughter of Mvelinqangi, who is the supreme deity among the Zulu. She is the Zulu divinity in female form. Eileen Krige described Nomkhubulwane as '*Inkosazana*', personification of nature, was symbolised as standing on the threshold of summer like a girl at her puberty ceremony, ready for marriage and procreation' So Nomkhubulwane is divinity in female form among the Zulu. In Zulu cosmology Nomkhubulwane is associated with light, rain, and fertility. Fertility is an all-encompassing term which includes the land, animals and humans. For the woman, fertility was important as her womanhood was pegged

on her ability to reproduce; keeping her pure and celebrating Nomkhubulwane meant that once married, the woman would be able to reproduce. In the past Nomkhubulwane was celebrated locally by a group of girls who would cultivate a field in her honour. Such a field was not tended and no one was allowed to harvest anything from it. The celebration of Nomkhubulwane disappeared during the colonial period and, when it was re-introduced, it was made into a national spectacle, which was led and directed by *izangomali*, sacred specialist, if you like. As part of the spectacle the facilitators included virginity testing. The reasons for the re-introduction of the celebration were twofold: One, it was re-assert an African cultural identity; and, secondly, to respond to calls for moral regeneration and increased HIV and AIDS awareness.

Virginity testing is meant encourage girls to abstain from sexual activity until they are married. It serves to keep them pure while at the same time protecting them from HIV and AIDS. The practice received a barrage of criticism from various sectors of the South African population. The Commission on Gender Equality has been the fiercest critic of the practice. Interestingly, the practice not only got support from traditional establishment but also received the backing of Kwasizabantu Mission. In a media statement on 9 February 2000 Reverend Stegen made it clear that the practice promoted the same values of purity as they did and, as such, they could not condemn it.

Another thing that I want us to highlight today is the whole idea about gender issues in African thought. President Jacob Zuma's rape trial and the fact that he had a child with a woman to whom he was not married, created an opening for debate on gender relations in African communities. The dominant view is that African Traditional Religion has many elements which deny women their human rights and dignity. The idea of purity, especially as promoted by the advocates of virginity testing, is burdensome to women. In the case of virginity testing, it is the sole responsibility of the girl to remain so until she is married but the same demands are not made of men. Now the Zuma trial created the opening but politics got on the way because politics prevented us from getting into serious issues and talking about the gender relations in African thought. Deidre Badejo argues that African oral tradition and myths placed women at the centre of production. Furthermore, power and femininity are intertwined rather than antithetical. Now what happened here? What created a scenario where power and femininity are antithetical? What happened to the power of femininity? Do the powerful take such oral traditions seriously? What needs to be done to place such aspects of oral tradition at the centre of public discourse and practice? Badejo alludes to the fact that western sexism played a critical role in distorting African gender relations. Celebrations like Nomkhubulwane have the potential to open up the debate on gender inequality. Zulu cosmology has an in-built principle of complementarity.

An interesting story broke out during celebrations of Nomkhubulwane in 2009 where male sangomas went into the room expecting female sangomas to serve them food. And female sangomas just went in, they dished up food for themselves and they went and sat down. And male sangomas, looking at what was going on, decided to go and dish up for themselves because the office of a sangoma is not gender-based, it's a gender-neutral office – whether you're a man or a woman, you're supposed to do what you are supposed to do and not expect that because you are female you should be subservient to your male colleagues. So you already see here that the idea of gender equality can be explored; there are avenues, there are places, there are opportunities that one can exploit to deal with some of these issues to create debate around these issues.

So what I've been trying to do today is to say African traditional rituals have received very bad press in South Africa because of a lack of understanding and also because there has been this continued attack on African practices, this continued attack on whatever is African, and as such those things that are coming up and are done by Africans are never taken seriously. And I think the book that has come out is one of the few attempts to try and get the message across about what these traditions are about and what they are trying to do. There are many opportunities about the environment, about gender equality and even about polygamy – there are opportunities here for us to start the debate and talk about these things. My next project is on 'Why does he hate me so much'. That was a statement that the president made about Mosiuoa Lekota – but it's a project that I'm pursuing at the moment – but I'm not going to talk about it here. [laughter] [applause].

**[Questions from the floor, including by people dressed in traditional attire in adherence of Traditional African Religion]**

**Alan Rycroft:** I don't know about you but I don't think it's fair for Dr Masondo to end on such a thought [indistinct] a research project. Our next speaker is a really unusual combination of academic: a traditional healer, a diviner, and a person who's had the courage to start out an institute that [indistinct] an understanding in Traditional African Religion – Dr Mndende. [applause].

**Nokuzola Mndende:** [greeting in Xhosa] Programme Director, Professor Bennett, all the organisers, thank you for inviting me to this debate. I am very happy and I was listening carefully. And before I just talk about my paper, Professor Bennett mentioned rightfully saying the adherence of [indistinct] the region are very much realised and they seem to accept that or to tolerate it, whenever. I just want to say it's not that they tolerate it, it's because they swallow it bitter because they don't have any other option. And we are also having challenges; I was listening to my colleague, Dr Masondo. You know, I have got a problem of language – when I say we are inviting ancestors – we don't have

that power to invite them because if you go to the cattle kraal, you are talking to them, you believe that they are there. So that's the problem of language. And, secondly, we are talking about ritual slaughter. Now my question: when it's African Religion it's ritual slaughter. Muslims do slaughter, it's their ritual, but it's never called a ritual slaughter. Jews do slaughter but it's never called ritual slaughter. Why when it's us it's called ritual slaughter? That's the question. So before I talk about religion and the law, because I said to the Programme Director, you must tell me where I stand with minutes and what else because I know I can talk for the whole night.

Before talking about Traditional African Religion and the law in South Africa, I felt that it is important that before let us show the boundaries in our discussion – and deliberately used Traditional African Religion, in singular, and not religions, because in reality there is one indigenous or traditional religion here in South Africa. All these other religions that claim to be African have a history of origin outside Africa. That is why – so sometimes I struggle to believe that Christianity is an African Religion. It has got a history, it is using the text from that other side of the ocean; and even Islam is using the text from that other side of the ocean – so these religions they came here by ship at a certain point in time. So there's only one African Religion – others are African by default either through enculturation or through indoctrination – that's the truth. And, secondly, when I am talking about African Religion, it would be clear and sufficient for now if one doesn't begin by rewinding the watch – we must first rewind the watch because people don't understand what is African Religion is all about, so let us rewind the watch and take this journey from the past to the present dispensation. African Traditional Religion has travelled a long journey from suppression and marginalisation to democracy; a journey from exclusion to an inclusive participation. The foundation of this destination, which is democracy and inclusive participation is in the country's Constitution which talks about the Bill of Rights. The Bill of Rights talks about Equality, which you will find in Section 9; Freedom of Religion, Section 15, and Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities, which is Section 31. Therefore it will be important to check if these rights are implemented or they are just like the flashing lights, they are there on paper. Are they implemented? Or it will be important to know how these rights are interpreted, as in most cases the clause on rights is used as a right to dominate. Now it will also be important for the law experts; I'm very happy that we have got law experts here to explain the legal meaning of equality as far as religious rights are concerned. I'm still struggling to understand that from an African Traditional Religion perspective, that is myself, the present meaning of religious rights from the status quo – it's like telling the hens that they are equal to the hounds; and also trying to convince the hens that their

liberation and their solution for healing will come from the hounds. [isiXhosa]. So these are the things that we must first [unpaint - sounds like] and find out.

I said I can talk for a lot of time, so for me I felt it is better that I use the PowerPoint. Now when we are talking about African Traditional Religion and the law, I've already said that there was white. Now, Professor Bennett, again, rightly spoke about the census and he has also included 2001. I included 1981 and 1991. You can see now in the census there was no category for African Traditional Religion. I said something about the Bill of Rights. Now who are the culprits? Now if we look there, there is Christianity and there is African Religion and there is African Christianity. So there isn't African Religion – it seems to be powerless – it's because of this whom I call the subset, because these because of their colour and because they threaten some of the rituals, now they claim to represent African Religion. So you will find that these people are voiceless – I'm talking about the new dispensation.

And the name 'African Religion', as Dr Masondo was saying, it was not our name, it's an academic name by scholars of African Religion because they were employed in the Department of Religious Studies. And these were not African Religion theologians, these were Christian theologians who started African Religion – and now they were talking from a total Christian perspective. And as a result, if you read their literature, there in my paper I have not mentioned that. If you read their paper, when talking about ATR they always speak in the third-person: 'They, they'. They claim to be the representative but they are saying 'they'. You see, so that's a problem, they always refer to the religion as 'this worldly'. [isiXhosa] That's the problem. So they say it's worldly, 'This is a worldly religion and it doesn't go beyond the grave'. I don't know why are we talking about ancestors if this is worldly.

They include witchcraft as one of the aspects of ATR as if witchcraft is not a universal phenomenon. We find witches everywhere; we don't only find witches in ATR, they are all over the world – but if you read their books, when it's Christianity they will be very nice and when it's Islam, Hinduism – but when it comes to us they will talk about witchcraft. So what do we mean by rights, Prof?

Now they confine God to the Abrahamic doctrine, because if you are not Christian they say [indistinct] don't know God, as if God is a Christian. But God is not a Christian because he's God – he created all of us irrespective of which religion you belong to. They classify African spirituality under culture. I am talking about our theologians. Hence, again, they speak in singular – I mean, there's a problem, is it African Religions or African Religion? I've already said it's African Religion; these others

are not African Religion – they came here by ship. And they there's Xhosa religion, Sotho religion, Venda religion – but it's so strange, we have never heard of an Indian Christianity, a Jewish Christianity, a German Christianity, and so on, and so on and so on. To them, they look at the commonalities, believe in God, the Father and the Holy Spirit and the Bible; they look at the commonalities, not at the differences. But when it comes to us, they look at the differences, not at the similarities. So that's the problem – what do we mean by rights?

And they always speak in the past tense: 'They used to be, they used to be.' We are doing it now, it's not in the past tense. [chuckles from the floor] They have a problem of local versus global – no, because African Religion is local. Other religions are global, they are international because they lead from Arabia to South Africa, and so on and so on. We have got Africans who are in America, all over the world, but it's never said that our religion is global, it's always confined. What is the problem?

Oral and sacred texts, they have a problem that African Religion is not documented. Judaism was never documented first. Even the Bible, the Bible, a collection of books – they were collected at a later stage, otherwise before they were oral. Why is it a problem as if it's something new when it's us?

And then these people can't recognise spirituality – it's supernatural or secular. That's their problem, not our problem. And exclusive African culture with no knowledge of God, they say is ancestor worship, we don't know God – I wonder who created this hand because it's not my father and my mother. My father and my mother, they carried together with the ingredients that are already there – and then I was there. So who created, who created this world? It's not an ancestor – it's just because it's looked down.

Primitive or archaic, *sangomas*, we have got a problem to think that African Religion is *sangoma* or a herbalist – that's why, Prof, I was worried about those bones, I was worried about those bones. Foreign terms are applied by these scholars – they use all these foreign terms: divinities. We don't have divinities [isiXhosa] – the ancestor, the ancestor, that's all. We don't have divinities, deities, and so on – they use all these terms. And sacred knowledge is sacred. I don't what that means, Dr Masondo, because if we are talking about the rite of passage, if you are a boy, the rite of passage we know that they have got three stages: that first stage of getting in, the seclusion and then the passing out. That is universal. So you can't, when somebody is in seclusion – when a boy is there in the mountain, it's only circumcised men must teach him about how to be a man; he cannot be taught by women because we are not circumcised, he cannot be taught by boys. That is not a sacred knowledge. That's the problem.

Conflicts of laws, wanted to come to that. Now there's a problem here of the conflict of laws because we are using the foreign law versus the indigenous law. You know, when we got our liberation, the [indistinct] thought that they would come out of the spiritual cocoon, as Dr Masondo was saying, we're practicing this at home, where they were forcefully driven into by colonialism and apartheid. We thought that they would declare it, our beliefs, because now [indistinct] and there's a name that I don't like but I can't because I'm old now, can't do it away, which is called [indistinct] I don't even know what [indistinct] means. [chuckles from the floor] So then we thought that we'll do away with all those things. And my mother told me that when she was baptising me I was given it by somebody else because they wanted a Christian name because my mother gave me a heathen name. Then you find that let us come out of the cocoon. And then we thought that we'll be free to define ourselves and not to be defined by people of other faiths. We thought that we'll be free to represent ourselves and not to be represented by people of other faiths. This is what is happening now: these learned professors from the universities, how they speak about us. And that we would be free from indoctrination, spiritual denial, spiritual coercion and harassment.

Now I talk of the right to dominate. Now when I see those rights from the Constitution, to me it means they've got a right to dominate. You look at the government – the government supports the advantaged religions. You will see why I say that: ATR is left to swim or to sink, because they say we are equal. And the other wall is a thousand kilometres away from this one – there you are equal so you must swim or sink. So there is this term of the imposed majority versus selective minority. The reason I'm talking about selective minority, you will find that it is said in South Africa Christianity is majority and then others are minority. But look at the way Judaism and Hinduism is treated here in South Africa – it's treated very well, whilst a minority. That's why I'm saying it's selective. But when it comes to us – uh-uh, we are in trouble. [chuckles from the floor] There is a perpetuation of colonial stereotypes.

Now look at the South African Broadcasting Corporation. Now while in 1996 they were allocating time – Christianity, 70; Hinduism 5; Islam [8 - unclear]; Judaism [2 - unclear]. And then I said, which criteria have you used here? And they say ATR is the minority and others are -. I mean, Christianity is majority. And then I asked a question: if ATR is a the minority here; I agree Hinduism is a minority here because in India it's a majority. Islam is a minority here because in the Arabic countries it's a majority. And Judaism is minority here because in Israel it's majority. And if ATR is a minority in its own place of birth, where is it a majority? There, that's a problem. So there's a problem with this 'equality' that we find there because it promotes dominance.

Municipal bylaws – I'm told that even Cape Town, you are suggesting that people must be cremated. *Hay'bo*, we don't cremate [indistinct] because when we talk to the ancestors we talk to the bones, we are not talking to ashes. Did they invite us? No, they didn't. They imposed or you bury someone over. Just imagine when a 'Smith' is buried over 'Mndende' [laughter from the floor] when the children are coming, who is going to respond to that? [laughter and applause from the floor]. So then we've got a problem – the legal experts must save us.

Now in Butterworth there is this – I'm talking about the dominance now, the right to dominate. In Butterworth, King Phalo died in 1775, he was not even a Christian, but King Phalo, you can see the crosses of Jesus [indistinct]. But this man was never a Christian. Can they do this in the grave of the late Dullah Omar? No, they would never do with these three crosses, but *hay suka* man, they will take for granted. [laughter from the floor]. Now we look at the Department of Health – the Department of Health, there are churches there – they are using the government departments now as churches, you'll find the church, hallelujah, in a government department. Even my department, I received an invitation: 'You are hereby reminded of our Friday lunch, our prayer meeting at 12h45 today in the IT boardroom, third floor, East Win, Pencardia 1. Everybody is welcome to join in and pray as we exalt the name of Jesus Christ our Lord Saviour!' Just imagine, I am also invited. That's the problem.

National calendar – now if you look at the national calendar: Happy Easter, Happy Christmas, Happy Diwali, Happy Eid. With us, 18 year, Happy What? Nothing. [laughter and applause from the floor].

Now look at the Department of Education. You can see now, this is taught to our children because there is that policy on religion education. Do you see our symbol here? No, it's not there. I don't even know others. Now look at the clergy, there's Reverend Ndungane, the Dalai Lama and the Pope. I don't know what that lady is. [referring to picture of Margaret Thatcher] [laughter from the floor]. And then when it comes to ATR, look at that young girl. Is [isiXhosa]? That young girl has not even come inside the divination process. Nothing, she's just at the entry point, at outside the door. And there is the clergy – who told them that this is our clergy? They just do it for the sake of doing it. Now we look at [indistinct] rituals in the cities – hey, they tell us that this animal must not spend 24 hours [isiXhosa], it can't be like that; they must just hear from us because the animal must sleep here before it's slaughtered tomorrow. So we are not even consulted.

And African Traditional Religion – well, I'll just summarise, I'm about to finish. It's indigenous religion of Africa south of the Sahara – that's what Domapu and others are saying. It is traditional

because it is indigenous. It was never shipped into this country. The problem: is it a unified religion? Yes, it is to us. We are having a national structure. We have got Venda colleagues, and so on, it's not a problem because the basic beliefs are the same. What are the basic beliefs? [Creator - unclear], our ancestors, communal way of life, the clan has a structure, [indistinct], performance of rituals. And then now coming to the conclusion: Until ATR speaks on itself – no freedom of religion. Government should be neutral and not privilege one religion. Promotion of ATR should be central in order to talk about equality. And then I wanted to talk about AC Jordan; he was giving us an analysis of what – I think he was foreseeing something where this Chief Zwelinzima, he said, now Majola has got twins, and those twins, the one he gave them the suit, that is the convert; the other was a blanket, but Majola [indistinct] this one, and he is saying we are all your children. [isiXhosa]. Thank you so much. [applause].

**Alan Rycroft:** What I'm going to suggest is for the panel to stay seated up here so that we can take question time easily. Can I ask, if you would like to ask a question or make a short comment, no long comments please, so just by saying who you are and introducing yourself to the audience. We do have a roving mic as well.

**From the floor:** [isiXhosa].

**Alan Rycroft:** Thank you. So who would like to summarise what that comment was?

**Nokuzola Mndende:** In fact what he is asking briefly is if Jesus Christ is [indistinct], so is there anybody who is above Jesus Christ as a creator.

**Alan Rycroft:** Would any of you like to comment on that, or was it just a comment?

**Nokuzola Mndende:** It's a question. [isiXhosa].

**From the floor:** [isiXhosa] [laughter from the floor].

**Nokuzola Mndende:** Thank you very much. It's a pity, I did theology in this same university, the Department of Religious Studies, and Dr [indistinct] was teaching me one course we were together on the Christology of the Fourth Gospel. And the way he was analysing Christology of the Fourth Gospel – the problem from a theological perspective – are they correct, Dr Masondo, is to think that God is Christian or to think that Jesus Christ is God. Because from us, we believed in the Creator, what is God, but we talk to God through our ancestors. That is a Christian doctrine [which didn't survive - unclear] – I cannot answer it – I think Dr Masondo, we'll ask him – because the problem is to ask a question from a Christian perspective and impose it on ATR – that's the problem of that

subset I was talking about. And even the name, [Chico - sounds like], you must understand that that name [Chico - sounds like] has got a history – that was the name that was imposed to AmaXhosa by missionary van der Kerk, because missionary van der Kerk married a Khoe woman and because when he was asking AmaXhosa who is your God, AmaXhosa said, our God is [Kamata - sounds like] and who is Kamata, because they could not speak English. They said, we, [umvoya - sounds like] – because they could not explain. And then he asked the Khoe – hey, how do you call God, who were already converts – and they said it's Tiko. And that tiko was changed into Chico. And then that chico was imposed to us to say, hey, stop calling God the creator [amada], because your God, that amada is with a small letter 'g' – I am bringing you the true God with a capital letter 'G'. I think that is the missionary indoctrination. I cannot approve it. [applause].

**Alan Rycroft:** Okay. Let's move on, our next question is in the third row here.

**From the floor:** My name is Jennifer Joli. I'm a researcher at the South African Law Reform Commission. I'm very delighted to be here tonight because I'm a researcher who's been assigned to do an investigation on the review of those [indistinct]. I am delighted to see people like Dr Masondo because I've been referred to speak to you by a couple of people that have spoken to you. I think what is interesting for me – I'm at a very like preliminary state of my investigation because we've got two sponsors actually of the investigation, which is the South African Pagans Association and the co-sponsor which is the Traditional Healers Association. The pagan association is saying to us as the South African Law Reform Commission that witchcraft or the practice of witchcraft, they are proud withes – they say we practice this and this is our religion; we want it protected under Section 15 of the Constitution and therefore we do not want any interference by government in terms of the law. If other people are allowed to practice their religion, we should be allowed to be witches and practice witchcraft. On the other hand you've got a very strong voice from the Traditional Healers Association, who are saying to us, the practice of witchcraft amongst indigenous communities is very dangerous, we see *muthi* killings, we see ritual killings – we want government or we want to Law Reform Commission to recommend to government we have a law that actually criminalises witchcraft. Now I'm at a point where I'm saying: What is religion? How and who determines what religion is? I hear you strongly here together with Dr Masondo saying that that's rituals, that's religious practices. I'm at a point where I'm saying at what point does a ritual become a religion, and who recognises this as a religion? So I would like to have those preliminary questions answered.

**Alan Rycroft:** Thank you; an interesting question. Who would like to tackle it. Dr Masondo.

**Sibusiso Masondo:** The whole problem about terminology as well, it's terminological because among indigenous people, when you say 'witchcraft', that is an anti-social behaviour. And then among European [indistinct], witchcraft is something good, something that people do and are proud of doing that. So the problem is terminology. I think in our law when they talk about witchcraft, they are referring to the anti-social behaviour and the very law that you are talking about is the law that was meant to stop people from smelling out witches, smelling out witches – in other words, identifying people as witches, that is criminalised, it's criminal, you can't identify somebody as a witch.

So, as for where to start in defining what is religion and what is not religion, for me the people who are important here are the practitioners of a particular religion – they are the ones who'll define what a religion is; they are the ones who would come up with an agenda and say, this is what we do as people. As I said, referring to the definition of ATR by Chirevo Kwenda, when he said it is what African people, when nobody is looking at them then they don't care – he says, what about it? So they are the ones who define it for you. And where do you find them? Well, these days I think we a luxury of having two institutes in the country that are identifiable. It's Icamagu Institute as well as the [indistinct] Institute. These two institutes are beginning the process of putting together information about what African Religion is – because we are losing a lot of information due to the deaths of old people; old people are dying with knowledge – and now this knowledge is recorded and is going to be organised. And as time goes on there will be attacks, but it's going to be a while there is attacks – and it will be easier then to talk about African Religion – but I'll let Dr Mndende finish it up – she is itching to say something.

**Nokuzola Mndende:** Thank you so much. You know, programme director, what is happening now if you want to make a comparison between the missionary era and this present dispensation: the missionary era was a better [gap - unclear] than this present dispensation – because this present dispensation – I'm telling you, it will come to roost now. I'm telling you even in the rural areas there is this mushrooming of these Charismatic Churches from Nigeria, from Europe, from America and all of them, those [indistinct], all of them, they see ancestors as demons They are all saying we are witches; I was even accused myself at New York by a church pastor because I built the structure of Icamagu Institute. 'Hey, look at that woman who has built a structure of witches', because I am practicing African Religion which is a belief in God, ancestors and [indistinct] rituals with good morality. But now from an outsider's perspective and from money purposes, because they are mushrooming, they are richer and so on and so on, all these young men who are Christian pastors – because what they are doing, their agenda is to destroy African Religion because they are saying we

are witches. How do you define a witch? That's the problem again is from a Christian perspective – because [isiXhosa], I don't whether in English that is a witch – it's an evil person. So it's not somebody that is [indistinct].

Again, I think when people want to begin to criticise other religions, I think they must come to Dr Masondo, to define what is the theology of religion, because religion, it was in the past when religion was equal to Christianity because South Africa was declared incorrectly as a Christian country and it was not a Christian country – so the problem, religion is [indistinct] and we all have religion but there are different religions. But with the case of witchcraft – I can't allow you to talk from [indistinct], we have got people here [indistinct]. But when you talk about Christian, we start, I'm [indistinct] going to Muslims, going to Christians [isiXhosa]. [laughter from the floor] There are so many witches in the church, why are you coming to us?! That's the problem.

**Alan Rycroft:** Alright, we've got a question at the back there.

**From the floor:** Thanks. I must say it's a fascinating talk. My name is Philip Dexter; I'm a student of [indistinct]. I think there are three things that I wanted to ask. One is, he's using these categories but there's a bigger problem than the categories that's been addressed by the panel. One is the category of religion itself, because we're all taking it for granted that we mean the same thing when we talk about religion, and that in itself is a whole debate, and I'd like the panel to comment on that. The second thing is that I find it interesting that we even accept the term 'Traditional African Religions' because you don't hear people talking about Christianity as a Traditional Palestinian Religion or about Islam as a Traditional Arabic Religion. So I am very worried about the categories because it seems to me when we define it that way we already make it something 'other' than the other religions. So I'd like comment on that. And then the last thing which and I'm so pleased that Nokuzola raised this issue of the contestation between all these religions, if you like, the religious marketplace where the political economy of this, the competition between these new independent Christian churches that are very aggressive. You know, there's claims to authenticity, if you like, by what we're calling traditional religions. It seems to me that there's a silent warfare that's going on, which is not acknowledged by people but which has profound implications for social cohesion and for relationships in the community and I'll comment on that.

**Alan Rycroft:** Let's begin with the first question which was really about how do we define religion.

**Sibusiso Masondo:** It's a very difficult term to define because once you start defining it, you can either have a very broad definition which includes everything, including the playing of God as a

religion. Or you can narrow it down to a belief in spirits, which excludes a lot of other things. So it's a very difficult term to define. We just make the assumption, as you say, that we know what we're talking about because we assume that people believe whatever they believe and they then take that for granted as a religion. So that technically is a very problematic category and I acknowledge that and it's not easy to define.

And the term 'traditional', I initially had a problem with traditional because it has this connotation of somebody [indistinct] something, stepped on something and changing it. But over the years we have redefined what we mean by 'traditional'. We define traditional as that which is handed down from past generations and taken up by present generations. So there is a very fluid relationship between the handing down and the taking up – so everybody has agency: those who receive the tradition have agency; they can change the tradition. And we have seen the tradition change and adapt to new situations. But the term 'traditional' for me is acceptable that way.

And you are correct about the contestation that is going on out there – the new intercostals movement; it is very aggressive and it sees African Religion as its target. And it's not only African Religion but it also sees other Christian churches as a the target – so it doesn't only target African Religion but it target is Christianity or other forms of Christianity and also Judaism and Islam. So the word here is not just about African Religion but it's also about other religions as well.

**Tom Bennett:** Can I just make a comment on your question about the definition of religion. I think in some ways it's misguided just to say how do you find religion, because obviously it's one of those highly contentious words and the definition is going to depend on the purpose for which the definition is made, relative to what and the context – always context. Now if we're talking about definition of religion as this culture – for instance, you know you have a traditional response to that, religion has something of the sacred and spiritual [indistinct] of the mundane and the profane. If you're talking about religion versus something like witchcraft, for instance, then you've got the opposition of religion as something essentially public, public-spirited, good-spirited; witchcraft is something personal by doing bad and doing evil. So there's this relativity that should be taken into account constantly.

With regard to your third question in particular, this is a problem, I'm afraid it a free-market of beliefs. And the reason is we are now technically in a secular state, and like the free-market in the economy, the state stand back it's everyone for him or herself. And the term of 'traditional' as well, I thoroughly associate myself with what Sibusiso said; but one must also appreciate that certainly public and particularly legal discourse, you find that the predominant language of the law in this

country is English. And so terms are imposed, I'm afraid, and they've become the currency of the common discourse language, and it's very difficult to displace it.

**Nokuzola Mndende:** You know, when you say you are worried about the use of the term 'traditional'. It doesn't worry us as practitioners – so there's no problem to be worried because you don't belong to [indistinct] [laughter from the floor] – so don't worry. Number two, even these names are academic names, that is why you find others saying African traditional and others say religion, others say religions, and so on and so on. That's not the problem because [indistinct]. Number two, coming to the contestation – you know, programme director, there's a race issue. Why do I say that? I want to make an example. We have a [indistinct] today from John, Chapter 4, Verse 16. And you take Ray McCauley, he will unpack that text, he will unpack that text, Ray McCauley. And from the same-same church, you take a black person using the same verse, first thing that [indistinct], I'm not talking about – and, you know, with me and [indistinct], the ancestors [indistinct]. What they will do, they will criticise the ancestors and African culture, and so on and so on – people from the same church because the white person will listen, come to ours, all that, [clicks fingers] heavy axes, and so on and so on and so on. That's the problem that we are having.

And, Prof, you know, that's why this needs to be unpacked: South Africa is a secular state. I wonder if it is really a secular state. Let us take the Truth Commission – who was the chairperson? Bishop Tutu, an Anglican bishop. Who was the deputy? Reverend Doctor Alex Boraine who is also a Christian. If you talk about moral regeneration, who are the chairpersons of these? They are all Christians. So if you look at what the government does, it is a lip-service to say it's secular – otherwise practically, even when they [indistinct] teachers, fortunately there's one amongst us here. When they are talking to politicians gunning for votes, they will say, 'churches and religion institutions'. Is a church not a religious institution? Why separating the church and then other religious institutions? So sometimes in practice it's still a Christian country but in theory it is a secular state.

And, lastly, I'm worried when talking about the content – I'm taking from witchcraft. If it's I can relate to the witchcraft and then there will be circumcision. Jews do circumcise but you won't find that in the school books. Muslims do circumcise but we won't find them regarded in the books. Why is ours there? And in a very scary manner you'll see sharp assegai [indistinct][laughter from the floor]. Why is it like that? So that's the problem.

**Alan Rycroft:** In case people are getting anxious about time; we promised we'd finish around about 7pm. I want to propose that we take about four more questions and the next question is in the back row.

**From the floor:** Thanks very much. It's very exciting. I'm interested to know one aspect that I think we should not lose focus on, and that is a political project. Now because religion by its nature, you cannot be able to separate it from the political project. Now, any political project that I'm looking at at the moment, is that of white supremacy, colonial project. Now everything that we're talking about is directly linked to that hegemony white supremacist project. Now even the missionaries themselves, they carried that ideology that whiteness, the supremacist. Now we need to unpack that whiteness as it dominated in ancient [indistinct]. Now has the question of Christianity becomes a mystery. It's not a mystery. [indistinct]. Now even our political leaders, they support that because it falls within the political project to succeed and to [indistinct]. Now that's my comment, thank you.

**Alan Rycroft:** Thank you. Any response or are we going to take that as a comment? Okay, we'll take it as a comment. Next speaker here.

**From the floor:** I don't know whether it's a comment or whenever. Actually I want to kind of like put my focus on [indistinct]. I think what we need to look into is the notion of assimilation – because if you look into – let's say I'm trying to unpack the history of this country – there were two institutions that I think even today they're still governing how we define a law or how we define ourselves. In those institutions, assimilations were used. First and foremost, I don't think that while we still have such institutions we will actually get the way we want – is freedom which we always want to talk about. Parliament law has been for most; the [isiXhosa]. And there were missionaries and missionaries [isiXhosa] those institutions whereby even the literature of Xhosa people was censored before it actually gets published. For example, we talk about ama-Krige in that context because it's a church – you know, you're talking about witchcraft. That in itself also translated in the [indistinct] of defining who we are or defining our languages, our tradition – I don't want to use the name 'culture' because it's used a lot and I don't know what it means and I'm not interested in what it means. But I wish what I believe in if it must be referred as culture. It must not be degraded as such, I don't know what it is [indistinct]. But that's what I want to talk about. Ja.

**Alan Rycroft:** Okay, an interesting thought. We've got one in the back row and then we'll come down here. And then I think just after that one, just one more.

**From the floor:** My name is [indistinct]. I'm from [indistinct] Association. I would like her to go a step further and go back and forth because this is not about me as a black man, it's not about you as a Jew – but it is universal and here we are talking about God who has made one son for every man, under the sea, above the sea. And this man, this God, man-God will come up from this world, traditions and whenever our thoughts, whatever throughout the ages. But now as if God has done everything, given laws to everything in life – in the sea, there is a law; above the sea there is a law, whenever, physics or whenever. Hasn't he done a law for the black man or a law for all people? Now if that is God, I think a white man falls from the plane, he'll break his neck. A black man will break his neck. He won't say that this one is black or this one is not. And those are the laws of God. Now if he is God in an African context, will he be still God in [Russia - unclear], we say he's an African Traditional whatever, whatever – that I don't know and there are witches and whenever.

Secondly, if a man comes out and say [isiXhosa] whenever and coming against witches, as a black man, I will come against them because I know as a black man what witches have done in my family. There are people that I can point a finger and say this one was bewitched. This is happening and nobody can deny that; even the *sangomas* cannot deny that. So if I come on and say I don't believe in them, I hate them, no one must point a finger at me. Now what I say is this, that God [indistinct], in the Bible addresses economics, he addresses witchcraft, he addresses science, he addresses politics and all those things addresses – he has a universal answer and nobody can fight that.

**Alan Rycroft:** Alright, thank you very much. I think the next question is there.

**From the floor:** I am Bongile Mose from African [indistinct] and Icamagu Institute. I'm the chairperson in the Eastern Cape [indistinct]. My question will refer to any [indistinct]. I want to be corrected for thinking that the reason for Africans not to have their own text for a script, it is because we don't have an African writing – like other nationalities – as you can maybe see that this is a Chinese writing, this is an Arabic writing, Jewish writing – all those writings. So we don't have actually the African writing whereby we can say from time immemorial our forefathers wrote it down to us and then we have it to read from, from those cultures. I just want to be corrected be corrected [indistinct] think like that.

**Alan Rycroft:** Okay, does anyone want to comment on the connection between literacy and the status of religion?

**Nokuzola Mindende:** Thank you. Before I come to your question on scriptures, I think everybody now has seen the problem which we have, because there are people, when I talk about African Religion

they will start preaching on us, [indistinct]. That's the problem, that's the problem we are facing. And we can't impose one religion's doctrine on the other. If you believe that Jesus is your God, that's your Christian doctrine; you can't impose on us because we don't believe that. That is why with Icamagu we don't see God [isiXhosa] because of Dlamini, for instance, like when I see the pictures of Jesus [indistinct], I don't see any Dlamini there, so I can't say [isiXhosa], so I don't see [indistinct]. That's my belief – that I'm right on my side and I can say you are wrong because that's your belief. So the problem with my black pastors – don't indoctrinate us, we are safe on that side. If you see us not safe, wait for us to say, [indistinct][laughter from the floor]. For now don't worry about us.

Now to the scriptures – don't worry, [isiXhosa], in the years to come our children will benefit because we have started writing. Even those who have got scriptures now, it was a collection of books written by human beings, so that is why they had [indistinct]. So even with us because we are writing now, we will be having our own collection of books, and whenever they call [indistinct], it will be their own [indistinct]. But now that we have started writing in this new democracy, those are our scriptures.

**From the floor:** [indistinct].

**Alan Rycroft:** There are other people who haven't spoken.

**From the floor:** Just one thing, sir, I'm louder, I can speak quickly.

**Alan Rycroft:** Okay, quickly.

**From the floor:** I understand what [indistinct] is talking about, I understand fully that. But in terms of alphabetical order, or in terms of alphabet, the alphabet that we are using, it's a European alphabet. It's a European alphabet which means like as we were colonised by the Europeans, we were taught how to read and write the European way. I understand that those connections are going [indistinct]. Where I want to be corrected is that I'm thinking about this alphabetical thing.

**Alan Rycroft:** Okay, any comments about the connection between the language of -.

**Sibusiso Masondo:** Ja, you are correct that we do not have our own mode of writing. But if we go back in hieroglyphics which was Egyptian script of writing, that's African but now it's no longer in use. And I don't think it will benefit us to try and go back there because we already have what we have now, and what we have now works – we are able to read that, so we may as well benefit and just use it for the benefit of everyone.

**Alan Rycroft:** I think just one more question and I think it's your question there.

**From the floor:** [isiXhosa].

**Sibusiso Masondo:** It's a comment that African have to go back to their roots and not worship Gods that come from outside.

**Alan Rycroft:** I think at this point – this is really a frustrating thing because this is meant to be a dialogue, that's how it was advertised, and there's obviously lots of people who still want to make comments. But I will draw the meeting to a close. I'm our panel will be available for further comments. I'd like to thank them all for a really stimulating evening. [applause].

[END]