

OBJECTIONS, RAISED AGAINST CHRISTIANS BY AFRICAN SPIRITUALISTS, ANSWERED



WRITTEN BY AHLUMA LUBAMBO

Objections, raised against Christians by African Spiritualists, answered; the impact Reformed theology has had in my theological formation and my steadfast rootedness to the Bible and the great tradition and my desire for it to be appropriated by African theologians while also providing the great tradition with our own distinctives which Jehovah our God has blessed us with, defended.

This paper is a collection of essays I have written at different times all dealing with objections raised against my unyielding allegiance to Christ and Christianity, my glad appropriation of other Christian traditions all following the Great Tradition of Christendom, and a polemical dialogue between myself and an imagined African Spiritualist man. All of this is done to keep my mind sharp; to critically think through the worldview offered by Africanism – its nature, what we can critically appropriate and so be better equipped to share the Gospel to a village I seek to plant a church in Alice.

ABSTRACT: This journal was written by Ahluma Lubambo on the 17th of November 2022, a few weeks before his initiation phase into manhood or the brotherhood. In it he is denouncing the need to consult a spiritualist for protection (from evil spirit) and gives reasons to his uncle's objections. He further explains his longing for a reformed Xhosa people. One who are born again, join the great tradition while not forsaking their own beautiful and diverse distinctive.

In a few days, I am set to start my traditional transition from boyhood to manhood through the instrument of ulwaluko; and the fight for the Reformation's cry of *solus* : only! are ringing true even in a different century, culture, continent, language and people group – and I am seeking for a way to join the reformers' cry and to contextualize that ancient message of the exclusive God-centered worldview of the Christian tradition, even among Africans.

Today, I went to the doctor for a vaccine and within 15 minutes of arriving at home, my uncle called me aside to “chat about the regulars”. In our conversation, I was told that I would have to go to a sangoma (spiritualist) for ukuqiniswa (for protection); and I wish I can say I was brave enough to say NO! but I was not. Although I did not say, “yes”, I still was not firm in the oracles God has trusted me and all Christians with in His Word. And that makes me guilty nonetheless.

I wasn't hoping for this paper to be a narrative essay. I wanted it to be more about engaging with objections raised against a young Christian man who refuses to consult a sangoma for ukuqiniswa.

OBJECTION 1: *You are not van de Meer (meaning; you are not Afrikaans. You cannot/ should not embrace his culture and way of life. You are Ahluma Lubambo – a Xhosa young man.*

RESPONSE: I'll be the first to affirm that. I am not a Boer man, nor an English man, nor a Chinese man. I am an African man – a Xhosa man to be exact. A descendent of Lubambo, who is a descendent of uRhadebe. I can fully affirm that my ancestor, whose name I bear as my surname, was a Mfengu who sought for freedom from Shaka's tyranny and soon assimilated with the Xhosas, who treated him as a slave – which was the common custom of the day.

Furthermore, I can fully affirm that I'm also a descendent of amaTolo who gave birth to Matyholo. Hleze uthandabuze ubuXhosa bam, vuma ndizibike: ndinguRhadebe, uMthimkhulu, uLanga, uMafuzafulele njengelifu lemvula, umashwabade owashwabadela inkomo neempondo zazo, ingele-ngele.

Andiphelele apho. Ndikwanguye noTolo, umzukulwana wamaChenge, uZulu, uDlangamandla, uvumba lempongo liyanuka, iimfengu elimnyama. Ndiyazazi ukuba ndingumni waphi.

I hope I drew for you a clear and vivid picture of my lineage. So yes, I am not a Boer man, nor an English man, nor a Chinese man. I am a Mfengu-Xhosa man. But, I am not in bondage of not seeing in other cultures the true, the good and the beautiful and adopt them for their consummate end: the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. If I did not do that, I would not only be guilty of blaspheming the name of the Christ, but ultimately a racist – one who thinks his culture (the one I was born into) has everything sorted thus making it superior, consequentially, and other cultures inferior. That thought is cruel and evil.

Secondly, I am a Xhosa man, not an African Spiritualist. One thing that most modern Africans cannot differentiate between is culture and rituals. Culture refers to customs of a given people i.e. ulwaluko (initiation into manhood), ukutshata (marriage), coming of age for women, and many more. This is more of a horizontal relationship and responsibility – among your fellow man. A ritual, however, is more of a spiritual wing of a culture. This is the communication of the ancestors, the mediatory relationship of sangomas between the divine and the common man. This is more of a vertical relationship and responsibility – from man to the supposed divine of the culture and vice versa.

If that is true, as I believe it is, that culture primarily refers to customs of a given people. If it is true that "Culture in the broadest sense [...] includes all the labours which human power extends on nature. And if it is true that "this nature is two-fold; it including not only the whole visible world of phenomena which is outside man but also, in a wider sense, man himself; not his body alone, but his soul also". If it is true that "To the first belong all those activities of man for the production and distribution of material goods, such as agriculture, cattle rearing, industry, and trade. And the second circle include all that

labour whereby man realizes objectively his ideals of the true, the good and the beautiful, by means of literature and science, justice and statecraft, works of beauty and art, and at the same time works out his own development and civilization". If what I say be true: that culture is primarily concerned about the horizontal, the customs of man, his activities of production and distribution; and the labours of the pursuit of the objective truth, goodness and beauty, then "No body (and no less an African Spiritualist) therefore can declare that culture as such is in contrast with religion". If that be true, then the question which the wise Dr. H. Bavinck asked his kindred when faced with modernism and a denial of God stands still for South Africans (be they Zulu or Xhosa or whatever) in the 21st century:

"The assertion that the [African] culture is in conflict with Christianity is thus a meaningless phrase. Who ventures to assert that marriage and family, state and society, art and science, trade and industry [and we would add custom and *ulwaluko*] as such are condemned and opposed by Christianity?"

It is also worthy to note that there are certain places where these two lines meet. They meet where a certain group of a culture are very religious. An example is marriage. Some families merely give the new bride *utsiki* (a specific part of cow meat) where other families (usually those infested with *sangomas*), would go to the *kraal* (the ancestors' courts) and vocally introduce the new bride to the ancestors. With that said, however, the exception does not change the general rule. Generally, cultures create customs from a horizontal point of view and rituals from a vertical point of view. In rare instances, the culture tries to infuse the divine being (vertical point) into the customs (horizontal point) – mostly in polytheist religions where there is no clear Creator-creature distinction.

So, my refusal to consult *sangomas* for protection from evil spirit that may come and attack me is not a denial of my cultural identification (*the horizontal*) with the Xhosa people more than it is a religious/ritualistic dissent (*vertical relationship*). And my dissenting is not because I am trying to be a pain in people's butt as an end. I'm seeking to create this awkwardness so as to make my people aware of the false presupposition they were building their lives upon. So, this "awkwardness" is more a means to an end. The end being their salvations and their engraftment into Christ by faith.

In conclusion, I am a *Mfengu-Xhosa* man who disagrees with the spiritual wing of the above-mentioned people, therefore who can affirm the necessity of young boys transitioning to manhood through the instrument of *ulwaluko*, while rejecting the supposed need to consult *izangoma* for *ukuqiniswa*.

OBJECTION 2: Because there are certain things you cannot avoid and skip kwaNtu, you have to bend your Christian convictions.

ANSWER: Sure, I grant you that premise. There are, indeed, certain things you cannot skip or avoid in the Bantu tribes, which will force you to bend some of your Christian convictions. But, where I will differ from you in this point: those people bend their Christian convictions because they were first Xhosa or, more likely, African Spiritualists before they were Christians. Those “Christians” proved themselves the goat and not the true sheep for whom Christ died. If Christ does not become the paper upon which we write our priorities, then we are prone to put his name second on the list, which does not satisfy Him for in so doing, we are defaming His name and think of Him as a peasant whom we can call upon anytime of our liking. Furthermore, if Christ becomes the paper upon which we write the priorities of our identities, we shall soon realize He does not permit us to write ‘African Spiritualist’ – the ink simply won’t come out – even if we were to put it on the end of our list of identity priorities for it goes against His revelation and character. When we soon realize that, we will see that Christianity and God’s Word, which is the Spirit’s sword, becomes the double-edge sword which discerns our hearts and finds them wanting.

In conclusion, our Christian convictions cannot be bent by African Spirituality because Christ is superior and has far more authority than what our culture and rituals demand of us. Furthermore, those who do bend and badge themselves with the name of Christ, prove themselves unbelievers and ought to be put under church discipline. Even though they might have betrayed Christ in front of Ceaser, Christ – the Supreme King – still offers His nail pieced hands for rebellious citizens, wayward and ignorant sinners in forgiveness and salvation.

OBJECTION 3: We do not expect you to forsake your Christian convictions, we are just saying that you need to realize that you can pray to Jesus and seek for assistance from sangomas.

ANSWER: Here we are met not only with a heresy, an underlining false presupposition that says our “Christian conviction” does not demand of us to contend for the faith once delivered for all to the saints; and to keep close watch of our life and doctrine, but also a denial of Christ’s sufficiency and sovereignty.

For centuries, Christians have been asked to just mix their Christ with the Roman gods; the Roman Catholic Church’s false doctrines; with the universal Christ of the New Ager; and in this case, Christ with ancestor and the mediatory work of sangomas. And Christians, for centuries, have kindly declined that offer with their own bloods. But their enemies truly forgot that the blood of the martyrs are the seed of the church and I am but a fruit of that fruitful tree! The Christian cry, since the ascension of Christ has been: Christ and Christ ALONE! For centuries we have sung:

***He (Christ, that is) is the image of the invisible God,
the first born of all creation.***

***For by Him all things were created... all
things were created through Him
and for Him. (Colossians 1:15-20)***

So, because He is so pervasive and sovereign, we decide to trust Him and Him ALONE.

Secondly, the false presupposition white-washes or diminishes our convictions. We are the people of the Book, and we take heed to what it says. What this statement fails to recognize is that our convictions are not neutral – at the mercy of our interpretation. The Book is clear as the bright morning star. Listen to what it has to say to us:

Hear o Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is ONE. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children. (Deuteronomy 6:4-9)

Do you see? The Lord has spoken. You are to love Him and Him alone and therefore obey His commands, and do not only stop there but teach them diligently to your children. What is it that we tell our children but our “Christian convictions”? And what are our Christian convictions but Christ, and Christ alone? For he is the sum of the Old and New Testament. Because our Lord has eternally saved us for Himself, He has given us laws to abide by, and among many is one that African Spiritualists have to struggle with:

“You shall have no other gods before me!” (Exodus 20:3)

And on this talk about “the mediatory work of sangomas”, our Lord has told us not to trust any mediator other than Him: “I am the way, the truth, and the life. **No one goes to the Father but through me**”. As if that was not enough, Paul, revealing to us the Christian consensus on this issue, exclaims: “There is but one mediator between God and man. The man Christ Jesus” (1 Timothy 2:5).

The bulk of all of this issue is found in this heresy: the denial of Christ’s sufficiency and mediatory work. It’s a denial of Christ’s earthy ministry and the work of the cross in satisfying the laws demands as our Prophet, Priest and King and satisfying our hearts with His love. It’s also a denial of his heavenly ministry: sympathizing with us in our weaknesses and frailty and praying for His bride. If people would but learn the love and sufficiency of Christ: both in his earthy and heavenly ministry, there would be no talk about getting help from sangomas and ancestors – that talk would be shut! Full stop!

A thought-provoking experiment: African Spiritualists, especially that pluralistic type which tries to badge the name “Christian”, have continuously told us that sangomas are not worshiping ancestors but that they are merely instruments at God’s disposal to speak truth and heal the sick. Sure. If that’s what you believe in. But, and this is a big but, why is it that they get angry when Christians urge men to go straight to God instead of through ancestors? Are we not going to the same God? Why are they angered by the fact that Christians decide to make their requests known to God, instead of the

mediator's (sangomas) mediators (ancestors)? Christians "get angry", as we are always characterized by them, because we realize that we worship different gods and this has eternal consequences.

African Spiritualists may argue that it is because we are too unclean to approach God. Well, isn't that what Christ came for to give us access to the throne of grace (Hebrews 4:16)? Didn't he die the death we deserved so that He might bring us back to God (1st Peter 3:18)? "Well", they might fight back, "we are too dumb to listen to God's word, we need someone who has lived our lives to be able to sympathize with us and break down the mystery of the Divine in the language we know". To that I say, that's true, but we already have that and His name is Jesus – and because He is both God and man, he alone is fit for such a job. Is Christ not God's Word incarnate? Was he not clothed in flesh, live among us, and communicate, in our own human language, to us the message God had for us through everything He did? And, was not his message: Repent for the Kingdom of God is at hand? Still adamant about his claims, the Spiritualist might contend and say, "well, we are but clay, and we have no right to enter the King's Palace". Again, that claim is true, but it misses this: Christ died for us to purchase that worth. He died that we might be afforded the privilege of entering the King's Palace, and not only that but to be adopted as His sons and daughters through the death of His begotten Son. For, isn't Christ the captain of all who come to believe? Isn't he the priest who sympathizes with us (indeed, even wears our frail frame) without sin? What a mystery!

Concluding from our thought experiment. If you were to sit down and think about this, this is the conclusion you'd come to: all the Spiritualist's objections are answered in Christ's earthly and heavenly ministry as **Prophet** (He who reveals to us, in our lame human language, the grand truths about God. He is indeed the Word of God in flesh); **Priest** (He who cleanses us of our sin, guilt and unworthiness through His holy blood because indeed "without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sin – and African Spiritualists know this); and **King** (He who lifts us from our lowly and slavish frame and makes us fellow heirs and fellow rulers who rule and reign with Him, though we have committed treason).

In conclusion to this thought experiment, if you would boil down the Spiritualist's objections, you will soon realize we do not worship the same God. The Christian man worships the true God and the African Spiritualist, though sad it is to say, worships demons that seeks to diminish the work of Christ in redemption.

OBJECTION 4: Christians call their ancestors demons. If that's the case, you came from a demon which make you a demon.

ANSWER: Ah! A classic line which has long been destroyed by our ancestors in the 1800s. When Christians say communicating with the dead is demonic, we do not mean our family members, upon death, become demons. No! That is NOT the message of the Bible. What we mean is: spirits that disguise themselves as our late family members are evil, and because they are evil, they are demonic – instruments at the hands of Satan. So no, our ancestors are not demonic. It's the fallen angels that present themselves as our ancestors that are evil. I say disguise because our ancestors are in one of two places (depending whether or not they believed the message of Christ): heaven or hell. We see this in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. Lazarus being in heaven with Abraham, and the rich man in hell and there being a great chasm between the two – and not only that but the rich ruler not being granted communication with his living family members, though he begged to **“warn [his brothers] lest they also come to this place of torment”** Luke 16.

“Ah”, you might protest, “you are using a parable as your defense? Don't you know that parables are made to make belief that were employed by Jesus to drive through a message? Don't you know that message has nothing to do with ancestral worship but a confrontation of a wicked man not helping a poor servant of God?’ To that I say: though that be the case, the fact the Jesus is the one who is making up the characters and situations indicates a few things for us. Firstly, in the mind of Jesus there are two different locations for people who have passed away: hades(hell) and Abraham's bosom (heaven). This goes against the African notion that once a person passes away, they go to be with their ancestors in another universe with no sense of reward or punishment for sins committed on earth. Secondly, the dead are given no access to talk or interact with the living in visions, dreams or prophecies. For those who have died have no share with the living. This goes against African Spirituality that is built upon the interaction of the dead with the living.

Jesus assumes this, he takes it as a given that everyone should know, because he has read Ecclesiastes 9:5-6 which says “the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing, and they have no more reward, for the memory of them is forgotten”.

In conclusion, no, Christians do not believe ancestors are demons. We believe that they are either in heaven or hell. And because we do not believe that creatures (be that heavenly or physical) can be in two places at the same time, the spirits that disguise themselves as our ancestors are demons (and our ancestors being either in heaven or hell) and we should be ashamed of ourselves if we deceive ourselves to believe demons to be our late family members. We claim to love these people but we cannot discern their true disposition and spirit from that of demons. How cruel and evil of us!

A word to encouragement. To fellow Christians who are Black, remember your identity is found in Christ and none other – not from man, family or culture but from Him who created and sustains your being. Therefore, do not fear man, but fear God. Let Christ's

sobering words sober you up from spiritual drunkenness, “What shall it profit a man to gain the whole world yet lose his soul” and sobering of all, “If you deny me among men, I too will deny you before my Father”. Aware of these passages, dear Christian, rest on Christ’s sweet sovereignty, stand firm on the teachings of the bible, do not waver but sing with Martin Luther:

*Let goods and kindred go
this mortal life also
this body they may kill
God’s truth abideth still*

...

His kingdom is forever!

Having now sufficiently answered my uncle’s objections to my rejection to the use of imithi and consultation of ancestors through sangomas for ukuqiniswa ehlathini, let us briefly unpack the rationale behind my refusal. Why do I refuse to consult a sangoma? Why I am so adamant about this substantiated claim. The reason I refuse is because of the compelling nature of Reformed theology with its cry to return to holy scripture for matters of godliness and salvation. Now, to be able to understand and appreciate the impact that Reformed theology has had in my life, I think it is important that I give a short summary of what my life was before.

I was born and raised in a nominal Presbyterian church and home. Though it has forsaken its roots theologically as well as in its living, God preserved for the preparation of my salvation its hymnal in which was contained the church’s hymns, liturgy and prayers. It was through singing hymns such as Yesu Wena unguMhlobo, Unabantu Bakho Thixo, and Wakrazulwa ngengxa yami that I began to be fascinated by the idea that though the Creator and Lord be transcendent, above us all, and above all of our imaginations; was nevertheless concerned for His creation and has never been so busy as to shut us away whenever we prayed and brought to Him our insignificant prayers and concerns. And though the Lord was working in my heart through these Presbyterian hymns, I was nevertheless, like most Africans today, conflicted.

I was conflicted on two accounts: in one service I would sing about the beauty and exclusivity of Christ as the sole mediator between God and man. Secondly, within the same service, I would hear elders, deacons and every congregant talk about praising their ancestors mediating between them and God; and how their ancestors would usher into their lives, divine mercies. The most atrocious of this was found on one mother’s day Sunday service when an elder of the once glorious Presbyterian Church of Africa exclaimed, “I would like to evoke the spirits of my mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother’s spirits to bless all the women in this congregation, in Jesus’ name.” To show the confusion with which this was met, you had people responding shouting, “Amen”; while others shouted “Camagu” which is an African Spiritualists’ equivalent for the Christian amen; others still shouting both Amen and Camagu.

And like any good Christian, I left that church and joined 'a gospel-centered community on mission with Jesus', right? Right? Well, no! I left that church to join one which was even worse – one might even call it cultic. I joined the ZCC which sought to baptize African spirituality into Christianity by simple substituting words such as “idlozi or izinyanya” for “lingelosi”; “imithi” for “iindayela”; “izangoma” for “prophets who prophecy within the Lekganyane lineage evoking, in particular, the three patriarchs of the organization: Engenasi, Edward, and Barnabas (Ramarumo) Lekgakane. Looking back, I have come up to this conclusion about the ZCC: It is a lazy innovation which seeks to give unchristian – indeed antichristian- ideas, Christian names, and its danger is found in its subtlety.

And though they are almost always subtle, they are not always. I say this because the organization essentially deifies the bishop or the bishopric to such an extent as to call, whoever occupies it, the fourth person of the trinity!

We might be easily tempted to push this away as foolish and stupid, yet this is what most South Africans find themselves in. This is the predicament most South Africans who flock annually to Moria live in – and dear reader, these are your countrymen, your kinsmen according to the flesh, your friends, colleagues, employees, employers and neighbours who, without Christ, though be religious, are nonetheless heading to eternal damnation! Dear reader, wake up! These men and women are not living in some poverty-stricken country up in central Africa – they are right at your corner, indeed right by your doorstep. It is my belief that you see at least 10 of them in a week wearing their star on top a black round cloth which is on top of a rectangular green cloth on the left of their chest – you yourself might be that person beloved reader. My beloved reader, I am writing this so that you might be moved towards compassion towards these people. Let compassion move you towards prayer and evangelism and living missionally in their neighbourhoods and get to know their rhythm of life and share with them the beauty of the Gospel with your words and deeds! I want you to be compassionate towards them because there is a lot at stake for them. Not only do they stand a chance of being abandoned by their family, but stand a chance also of losing their families: husbands, wives, children; their livelihoods, their sanity and including their lives from being tormented by these blood-thirsty spirits that claim to be their ancestors that aren't truly their ancestors! We need to be able to acknowledge such hard truths and allow to be moved in compassion by the Holy Spirit into prayer and evangelism and missional living! And my dear beloved reader, I would hate it for you to think that these blood-thirsty cruel spirits who are demonic in nature are your ancestors! It is clear, from the testimony of holy scripture that you, our, my ancestors are in one of two places: heaven or hell – and the reason I have thus burdened myself is so that you might save yourself from the wrath to come and entrust yourself in the loving hands of Christ who still bleeds for sinners like you!

It was through this quest of mine – trying to navigate through the relationship between God and ancestors – that I bumped into Reformed Theology with its Christological emphasis. And to be frank, this is what most churches lack. It is truly out of place to remind ‘Christians’ to be CHRISTians – followers of Christ, let alone to tell churches to be Christian churches! What terrible times we live in! It became clear to me that it was only through Christological eyes, which is what every Christian should have but only found in Reformed Theology, that ancestral worship can ever be banished, fears can ever be eradicated, Gospel assurance ever born, and Gospel holiness ever spring forth! (Re-read that slowly and ponder over and over what that means because I believe the Lord will work in your heart so to see Christ for who He truly is).

It is through understanding Christ’s three-fold ministry as Prophet, Priest and King, that we can truly shout from the rooftops with the Reformers: We are saved from divine justice and thereby from the demonic rule and reign of Satan and all his minions by GRACE ALONE, through FAITH ALONE, in CHRIST ALONE, in accordance with SCRIPTURE ALONE, all for the GLORY OF GOD ALONE!

Prophet: It is through understanding Christ as our sole prophet who tells us – in no angelic, nor merely spiritual language; but in the Divine language itself- all the mysteries that are hidden in God and our engraftment in them because HE, and Him alone, is THE (not a) Word of God who was in the beginning with God; who is Himself God who has now taken flesh and from whom we have seen nothing but truth and grace

Priest: It is through understanding Christ as our Priest who mediates for us – poor and miserable sinners like you and me – a better covenant built on better terms. And because He is both God and man, both Justice and Mercy are met in Him, and again, Him alone!

King: Lastly, it is through understanding Christ as our only ultimate authority and King to whom we give our undivided devotion, our unyielding allegiance and to whom we happily submit – not to some earthly bishop or familiar spirit or leader. No, it is to Christ our King and Christ our King alone!

Truly truly, its only through understanding Christ as our -in fact, make it more personal and real: MY prophet, MY Priest, and MY King – are we freed from the shackles of fear and bondage, and thus enabled to sing, again, with Martin Luther:

**THOUGH THIS WORLD WILL DEVILS FILLED
SHOULD THREATEN TO UNDO US,
WE WILL NOT FEAR
FOR GOD HATH WILLED HIS TRUTH TO TRIUMPH THROUGH US**

**[Therefore] LET GOODS AND KINDRED GO
THIS MORTAL LIFE ALSO
THIS BODY THEY MAY KING
GOD’S TRUTH ABIDETH STILL!**

Dear reader, its only through this understanding that we can sing the good old gospel-filled hymns we grew up on and still love. It is through this understanding of Christ as our Prophet, Priest and King are we enable to sing with our heart-felt emotions, heart transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit and heads fully engaged as true human beings to sing:

1. Yesu Wena unguMhlobo
uMhobo womphefumlo
Ndiza Kuwe undincede
Uncede lentliziyo
2. Themba limbi andinalo
Endingagcina lona;
Nqaba yimbi andinayo
Endingangena kuyo
3. Ndizibika Kuwe Nkosi
Ndiyinto elilolo
Ndithembe umsebenzi Wakho
Lowo wentando Yakho
4. Kristu Wena unguMthombo
UMthombo obubomi
Apho bangasela khona
Bonke abangaboni

My beloved reader, I would count all my labours up to this point to be all in vain if you leave reading this not understanding this: It is through eyes gazed upon Christ that ancestral worship, and any other form of idolatry, can ever be banished; fears ever eradicated; gospel assurance ever born and gospel assurance ever spring forth! Rest now, on all that Christ has done – forsake all your strivings!

[The following is a dialogue between two imagined Africans debating about the legitimacy of Christianity in the African world. One is an African Spiritualist and believes that one can never be truly African while being a Christian. The other being a Christian argues that to be truly African is to be Christian. The scene is set among the men of the village in a kraal and we come in just after Mfeng' elimnyama (the Christian) has just finished the introduction to his speech before being interrupted by Mhl' ekude (the African Spiritualist).]

Mhl'ekude: Oh Ahluma, nyana ka Mdakana, you who pride yourself in all knowledge – in seeing the true, the good and the beautiful in every culture, including from those vile colonizers and fathers of all malicious intent called the Europeans; and in rejecting everything that isn't true, good and beautiful – including from your own people, the very people who gave birth to uMdakana. You look down upon the traditions of our fathers – the traditions that brought about the rich treasures of the Xhosa and Mfengu people and their prosperity. Here I leave you a question: Are you alone wise?

Are you alone wise, having the ability, of your own accord – without a witness of a tradition – to decide what is true, good and beautiful? Are you alone wise, rejecting all the wisdom of the old sages? Are you alone wise, standing against the entirety of your identity as a black man and the responsibility therein by denying the chief principal of our life-system and worldview: the spiritual realm and the glorious hierarchy therein? Are you alone wise, rejecting the wisdom of wise men, our ancestors – your ancestors – and even nature itself? Are you alone wise, rejecting the wisdom which has been tried and tested for thousands upon thousands of years? Are you alone wise?

See, his guilt will be found in his standing up, taking his cap off and in his opening his mouth! Behold the lone wise man this world has ever produced: Ahluma, Mfengu elimnyama, ka Mdakana!

Mfengu elimnyama: *[Still seated]* Inja yinto endingeyiyo. Andikhonkothi noxa ndithelekiswa. Uzimele geqe ndim. Mathambo' ni la uwabeka phambi kwam – ayingawam, ngawakho, chola ke utye okwezinja.

[Standing up and looking at the men]

The end for which we gather here is found in the plea of being true Mfengus. We here are indebted to our forerunners who fled the tyranny of Shaka and encountered different traditions and learnt from the Xhosa's "Indoda yofa ifunda" and "Ingcwaba lendoda lisecaleni kwendlela". We learnt, from Xhosas and from the Europeans whom this man hates and detests, that the life to be pursued is that of enquiry. Have I now sinned for seeking to live the lives they lived? Gentlemen, I submit to you, the man here who thinks he alone is wise is my interlocker for he detests and hates the very life of our ancestors – the life of contemplation and enquiry that I have gladly inherit from my ancestors. So mnomzane uMhl' ekude, are you alone wise?

Are you alone wise? Are you alone wise, mnomzane Mhl' ekude, hating the tradition that has enabled you to now stand? Fool, when will you learn that you will soon fall? Are you alone wise, degrading the very thing that distinguishes you from wild beasts and dogs – boys are better than you for they long with all excitement they can muster up to join the brotherhood and thus live a life of contemplation, enquiry and reasoning!

Gentlemen, men of reason and contemplation, I would be kind and gentle towards this fool if he simply disagreed with my solutions, enquiry, investigation and contemplation. I really would be kind – even if it were to the damage of his soul. But gentlemen, he has not. He has not gone against my investigation, solutions, enquiry and contemplation. He, in his ever beastly and most barbaric tone and rhetoric, has gone against the very idea of enquiry, investigation, contemplation and solutions themselves. In short, he has gone against our tradition – the only thing that distinguishes men from vile beasts! A fine ought to be given this man!

Gentlemen, it is not because of my “wisdom” that I reject certain aspects of Africanism and African spirituality in particular. I am not the sharpest tool in the shed. Of my own accord – my own reason, investigation, enquiry and contemplation – I am blunt, indeed the bluntest tool in the shed. It is because of my finiteness, limitedness and ignorance, I entrust myself to One who is infinite, ineffable and omniscience that I entrust myself to God. Not some generic sense of God but to the God who has spoken and still speaks through his word: Yaweh is His name!

It is here I hear mnomzana uMhl' ekude object, claiming that I am bringing Africans – Xhosas and Mfengus to worship a foreign God – an unknown God. To that I answer shortly saying: Well, this all depends on what timeline of Xhosa – or African – history you are working from. If you have a deficient view of our history, looking only from a few hundred years ago, you will be hard pressed to come to that false and deficient conclusion. If, however, like me, you operate from a wholistic view of history, you will soon realize we come from the family of Noah and who was Noah but a preacher of righteousness?

Secondly, even if you reject the only true God – Yahweh – for idols, you as a Xhosa should worship only Qamata and not Mvelingqangi, Ramasedi or Molimo because these all are foreign gods to the Xhosa people – and ought to be rejected, even though there seems to be a growing ecumenicism among Africans to worship the African gods. Mfengus find themselves in a worse plight. They fled the Zulus and their god and never found satisfaction with the Xhosa's Qamata because they were oppressed by the Xhosas and their dissatisfaction for Qamata intensified with the Nongqawuse Cattle raiding. Peter's words are true about us:

1Peter 2:10. *Once you were not a people, but now you are God's (Yahweh) people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.*

Having now responded to this fool of a gentleman, I shall continue. Again, I emphasize: because I am the most ignorant man I know, I rely on One who is greater than me and His name is Yahweh! Because He is the One who created all things, from whom we all live, move and have our beings as the Athenians rightly noted, am I not to give to Him my, as previously noted, undivided devotion, unyielding allegiance and happy submission? Well, by knowing His will for my life, and how do I know His will but by reading His written word. And what does His word principally teach us? Christians have always believed:

What do the Scriptures principally teach? The Scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.

Having now established what the holy scriptures principally teach, it's important to now establish what the scriptures teach concerning Africanism and in particular African Spirituality. So, what can we learn concerning our plight as Africans from scripture.

This is what we can learn for the salvation of our souls: Thou shall love the Lord your God [who is none other than Yahweh] with all your heart, mind and strength and love your neighbour as yourself. Another chief article of the Christian faith, of which I am a strong and strict adherent, has already been mentioned in sufficient detail as Christ as our only Prophet, Priest and King – indeed the only One who has been elected of the Father and whose blood provides propitiation for sin and His obedience being our spotless garment we will be dressed in on the judgement day – as we already are.

Am I alone in this trajectory? Am I alone wise? By no means! He who says that shows himself to be a fool! Was I the one who penned this beautiful hymn:

*NguThixo Yedwa Ofanelwe
Yimbeko naluzuko
Masimdumise Yena Yedwa
Thina bantu bomhlaba*

Was I the wise man who wrote this hymn? I certainly would not be able to because again, I am not the sharpest tool in the shed. I am entrusting myself to Yahweh and to those wise men who yielded their lives to Him and Him alone. Listen to this hymn:

*Ma-Afrika ndlu emnyama
Sukelani nonke
UYehovah uluncedo
Dumisani Yena Yedwa*

Gentlemen, it was not me who wrote this majestic hymn – demonstrating the authority of Christ the Son:

*Baqubuda bonke
Kwelika Yesu
Wonk' umlom' uvume
Ah Soluzuko
Yintando ka Yise
Simbize njalo
OwayenguLizwi
Ngonaphakade*

Listen now to His glorious exhortation:

*Nize nimhlalise
Ezintlizweni
Aphelis' ububi
nokumeneza
Menzen' inkokheli
Xa nihendwayo
Niziyekelele kwiNtando yaKhe!*

Gentlemen, the men who wrote these hymns were not Englishmen – they are our own, fellow Black men who have the rite of circumcision according to general custom and have been initiated into the same manhood and brotherhood we all find ourselves in – nangona selengamxhego aselendulele. And, although they were initiated, they took seriously the call from God and from this tradition, we take pride in, to love that which is true, good and beautiful, use it for its telos; namely the glory of Christ and the Reformation of the Xhosa people – and throw away anything that is false, ugly and vile! And what is that but African Spirituality and everything else? And what is the true, the good and the beautiful but Jesus Christ?

Men of stature, these are my findings. You may disagree with them, but do not be foolish as this gentleman and tell me there is no school of thought within our tradition that would point one to the rejection of superstitious spirituality while seeing the value of certain norms being kept and promulgated based upon reason and natural law.