

University of the Free State

Colloquium on Ecological Consciousness

31st October 2025

Department of Religions Studies, Bloemfontein

Theme: **Decolonising Ecology Using African Spirituality**

Venue: HMS 10 UFS main campus

Programme Schedule

Time	Activity	Presenter / Facilitator
08:30 – 09:00	Registration and Arrival Tea	Secretariat
09:00 – 09:15	Opening and Welcome Remarks	Dean
09:15 – 09:30	Opening Reflection: Ecological Consciousness as Sacred Praxis	Dr. Mogomotsi Jaba – Department of Religion Studies, UFS
09:30 – 10:15	Keynote Address: Decolonising Ecology Using African Spirituality	Prof. Zoro Dube – UFS
10:15 – 10:30	Tea Break	
10:30 – 11:15	Paper 1: Ecological Consciousness and Its Intersection with Spirituality: Lessons from the uQamata Series	Ms. Nompumelelo Ngcobo & Mr. Tulani Ngwenya
11:15 – 12:00	Paper 2: We Do Not Walk Alone: African Knowledge and African Spirituality as Tools for Returning Home to Ourselves	Ms. Abongile Sonkosi

12:00 – 12:45	Paper 3: Earth and Ubuntu: Telling the Story of Meraka through an African Ecology	Dr. Busisiwe Ntsele & Dr. Nombulelo Shange
12:45 – 13:30	Lunch Break	
13:30 – 14:15	Paper 4: Cultural and Philosophical Interconnections Between Indigenous Knowledge Systems and African Spirituality	Dr. Mwansa Claude Kimpinde
14:15 – 15:00	Paper 5: An Exploration of Spiritual Desert and Influence of African Indigenous Knowledge	Mr. Mzamo Hlengwa
15:00 – 15:45	Paper 6: Remembering Stories as the Currency of Human Conduct with Nature	Dr. Bernard Pindukai Humbe
15:45 – 16:30	Paper 7: Spiral Dynamics of Sabbath Rest in African Eco-Spirituality	Dr. Mogomotsi Jaba
16:30 – 17:15	Paper 8: Theology and Ecology in African Narratives: Sacred Land, Trees, and Water	Dr. Moagi [TBD]
17:15 – 17:45	Paper 9: Negotiating Faith and Identity: An Autoethnography of African Spirituality and Christian Traditions	Mr. Zanoxolo Mkhize
17:45 – 18:00	Closing Reflections & Vote of Thanks	Ms. Nompumelelo Ngcobo

Synopsis of Abstracts

Theme: Decolonising Ecology Using African Spirituality

Prof. Zoro Dube (University of the Free State)

- Title: Decolonising Ecology using African Spirituality

For long within academia, the discussions regarding environment and or ecology has been dominated by western voices and interventions excluding local voices which are mostly labelled as irrelevant or archaic. This document explores the potential of African spirituality to decolonise ecological thought and practice. It argues that dominant Western ecological paradigms often perpetuate colonial power dynamics by marginalising Indigenous knowledge systems and imposing universal solutions that fail to account for diverse cultural and ecological contexts. By centering African spiritual perspectives, this document seeks to foster a more just, equitable, and effective approach to environmental conservation and sustainability.

Ms. Nompumelelo Ngcobo & Mr. Tulani Ngwenya

- Title: Ecological Consciousness and Its Intersection with Spirituality: Lessons from the uQamata Series

Explores African philosophy and spirituality in ecological consciousness through the uQamata Series, critiquing Western paradigms and advancing decolonial conscientization through African cosmologies.

Ms. Abongile Sonkosi

- Title: We Do Not Walk Alone: African Knowledge and African Spirituality as Tools for Returning Home to Ourselves

Reflects on African knowledge as embodied and lived experience, reclaiming African epistemologies through feminist and narrative methodologies that integrate spirituality and scholarship.

Dr. Busisiwe Ntsele & Dr. Nombulelo Shange

- Title: Earth and Ubuntu: Telling the Story of Meraka through an African Ecology

Uses storytelling and ethnography to explore Ubuntu as ecological philosophy within Meraka Cultural Village, highlighting Indigenous practices as ecological and theological engagement.

Dr. Mwansa Claude Kimpinde

- Title: Cultural and Philosophical Interconnections Between Indigenous Knowledge Systems and African Spirituality

Examines epistemological and ontological intersections of IKS and African spirituality, offering decolonial insights into relational ontologies and holistic ecological thought.

Mr. Mzamo Hlengwa

- Title: An Exploration of Spiritual Desert and Influence of African Indigenous Knowledge

Autoethnographic reflection on reconciling dual spirituality Christian and African revealing Indigenous spirituality as a coherent, empowering framework for decolonial self-understanding.

Dr. Bernard Pindukai Humbe

- Title: Remembering Stories as the Currency of Human Conduct with Nature

Highlights storytelling as an ecological preservation tool in African oral cultures, demonstrating how folktales and proverbs encode environmental wisdom and ethics.

Dr. Mogomotsi Jaba

- Title: Spiral Dynamics of Sabbath Rest in African Eco-Spirituality

Reinterprets Sabbath rest through Afrocentric eco-spirituality, situating rest as communion with nature and as a paradigm for environmental healing and decolonial praxis.

Dr. Moagi [TBD]

- Title: Theology and Ecology in African Narratives: Sacred Land, Trees, and Water

Explores storytelling as theological ecology, presenting nature as sacred and advocating African eco-theology for sustainability and moral stewardship.

Mr. Zanoxolo Mkhize

- Title: Negotiating Faith and Identity: An Autoethnography of African Spirituality and Christian Traditions

Reflects on the intersection of African spirituality and Christianity through autoethnography, offering a decolonial approach to reconciling spiritual identity and belief systems.