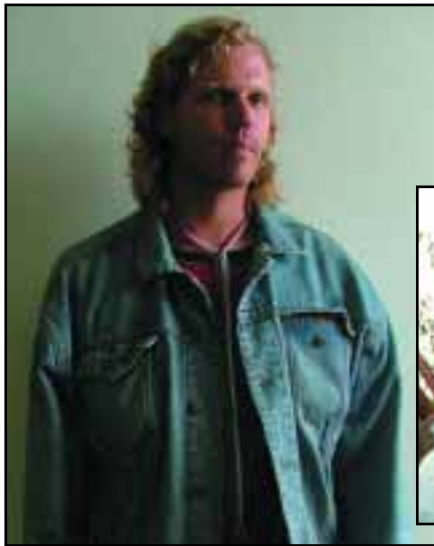


A BRIDGE OF RECONCILIATION

From a childhood in Apartheid South Africa to a calling as a healer between peoples

JOHN LOCKLEY
white sangoma, believes
we must each find our
connection with the spirit world



My name is John Keith Kelly Lockley, my Mother comes from Dublin and my father was born in Zimbabwe, his grandfather came from Brighton, UK. My initiated Xhosa name is Ucingolwendaba, which means the messenger and the bridge or connector between people. I was born in Cape Town with the mark of Sangoma on my face, white birth skin around my eyes.

I was born in a divided, Apartheid South Africa. In 1990 I was in the South African Army as a medic, where I helped rehabilitate soldiers from the war in Angola. During this time I received my sangoma calling through a profound illness that took seventeen years to cure, ending with my final initiation in January 2007 [see previous article].

The illness is what drove me to find a teacher. Because of the fractured nature of South African culture I spent over seven years looking for my teacher. I found her in one of the poorest townships in South Africa, in the Eastern Cape, in 1997.

My journey is about reconciliation between white and black. I have connected with the two groups in South Africa on opposite ends of a gun barrel at that time: 'white' soldiers who were in special forces during Apartheid as well as ordinary African township people. In both groups I have felt a profound sadness and sense of compassion.

One of the elders in our community in the Eastern Cape used to see the white soldiers coming into the township in tanks and he said they were just boys

obeying orders. They were scared and didn't know what they were doing. Part of my job, I believe, is to help heal the past. Connected to this is becoming more conscious through remembering one's dreams. When people are more in touch with their own spirit then there is less of a desire to destroy or put down another.

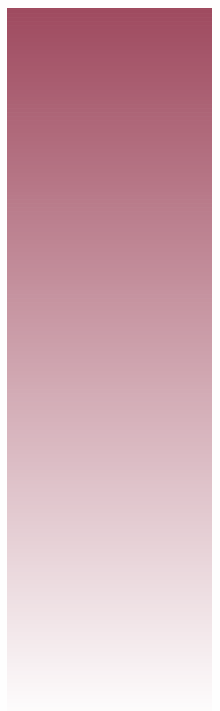
My intention with group and individual work is to bring about a profound 'remembering', where people start to remember their dreams and connect with their heart and with what keeps them alive. I don't intend to bring Xhosa or Southern African shamanic culture to the West as such, but rather to use the essence of this culture, the techniques of prayer and connection to nature, to help people to reconnect with their own ancestors and spiritual traditions. When people can start to remember their own dreams and reconnect with their ancestors/spirit guides and Great Spirit then their life path is clear.

In our culture we focus on 'white' dreams what we call *mhlope* amapupa. These are truth or visionary dreams where Great Spirit and the ancestors show the individual his/her life path and how to work in accordance with nature and the community. We have a whole system of

herbal practices and ceremonies to initiate these sorts of dreams.

In an individual session I do traditional Xhosa divination. This involves me going into a trance state and connecting with my ancestors who work through me and help me to help the client. I am shown where the person is blocked, and how to help them release the blockage. I then give a small mixture of herbs mixed in essential oils to apply externally.

I call my workshops *Ubuntu* workshops, which is the Xhosa word for 'Human-ness'. I lead the group through a traditional Xhosa ceremony where we pay respect to Great Spirit, *Uthixo*, our ancestors, nature, the community, and each other. I use an ancient herbal mixture that is used in ceremony to help open people to the spirit world. I apply this white foam to people's faces. This is normally only used during initiation in South Africa, but I have been given permission to do this in workshops because people are so out of touch with their spirits.



For details of John's individual sessions and workshops email: African.shaman@gmail.com 00353 87 939 8172 (Irish mobile)

