UKZN alumnus and Student Governance and Leadership Development Officer, Mr Mandla Ndaba, has penned Why Are They Called amaZulu? - a book about reconnecting history and religion in search for the origins of identity.

Launched in Heritage month, Ndaba said the book traced the origins of amaZulu as ‘biblical beings and their practices as direct descendants of Moses in the bible.

‘The book maps out how isiZulu words are designed from the bible thus deriving their meaning and distortions which have come about through integration. It also deals with how practices of amaZulu link directly to the bible, ceremonies that are biblically inspired and the dangers caused by language without meaning,’ said Ndaba.

Ndaba said he was inspired to write the book ‘as our stories are not told but other people’s stories are told through us – Africanism as opposed to Afrism’.

Director of the Department of Science and Technology-National Research Foundation Centre in Indigenous Knowledge Systems, Professor Hassan Kaya, said: ‘The book uses the case of the amaZulu as an African cultural community and isiZulu as an African indigenous language, to highlight the diversity of cultural relationships and interpretations of the one God worshipped across cultures.’

The book launch on the Howard College campus included inspiring addresses by UKZN’s Ms Gugu Mkhize; and the co-ordinator of the Reed Ceremony, Ms Nonkanyiso Conco.
Entertainment was provided by Sedaven High Singers – Prelude; the poet Outy Yomzulu, and Zama Mkhize.

Ndaba paid tribute to his 14-year-old daughter, Snethemba, who he says served as an inspiration and life-coach throughout the process of the book being written ‘Without a doubt, besides thanking God Almighty, I am so grateful to my daughter for being such a strength in my life at all times. She has inspired me from the first day I started on the book, asking questions and discussing some of its areas with me.’

He has authored four books and, like many writers, has faced challenges in getting them published.

Ndaba, who hails from Madadeni, Newcastle, studied at the Madadeni College of Education and read for a BA at the then University of Durban-Westville. He is pursuing his Masters in Social Policy at UKZN and finds time for reading, music and watching soccer in-between being a doting dad to his four sons and daughter.

While he enjoys working closely with students at the University, he plans to be a full-time author in the not too distant future.

The books are available at Adams bookshop or email: ndabap@ukzn.ac.za or phone: 072 292 4849.

Raylene Captain-Hasthibeer