How can we do justice to what people in Africa say concerning the spirit world? This question is my main concern in my recent book The Language of Faith in Southern Africa; Spirit World, Power, Community, Holism and in this presentation.

On the one hand, we will have to acknowledge that the everyday lives of these people often do not differ much from the lives of those who do not speak of the spirit world (or speak of the spirit world differently). On the other hand, these people emphasize that the spirit world is real and others are missing something if they do not see it. How can we give an account of language concerning the spirit world that does justice to both these aspects?

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