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# RETHINKING *HOMO AFRICANUS* IN THE CONTEXT OF SOCIO-POLITICAL CHANGE: SOME PASTORAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES FROM THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

## ABSTRACT

The article grapples with an appropriate African pastoral anthropology against the background of the socio-political changes that occurred in South of Africa since the dawn of the new democracy during the mid-nineties. It argues that together with the ever-growing process of globalisation, the way that Africans, think, live and believe did not remain untouched. Consequently, pastoral caregivers must question the traditional or romantic view of African believers that still forms the anthropological premise in many pastoral theories. In the light of this, it identifies some of the major socio-political changes that took place in the South African context, which exerted influence on the identity of Africans. It suggests that Africans find themselves amid a realisation of disappointment, loss, anger and feelings of despair. Current day *Homo africanus* hence calls for a pastoral care of hope to better meet the spiritual needs of African believers, against the background of socio-political change.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

One of the dynamic forces at work during the counselling process is the anthropological views a counsellor, knowing or unknowingly, maintains about the counselee. These anthropological views refer to the hermeneutic framework that enables the counsellor to come to understand another person, who and what someone is, and what can be anticipated from him or her. This hermeneutic framework can be informed in any number of ways, which can include the counsellor's background, training, perceptions, social constructs and such.

In the field of pastoral work, it would be more accurate to refer to this framework as a *pastoral* anthropology. A pastoral anthropology denotes a Christian understanding of another person within the pastoral context; who and what someone is in the light of God's covenant love, through the redemption of Christ and the renewing work of the Holy Spirit. Such a pastoral anthropology is informed by the Christian text. According to Louw (2000:123), pastoral caregiving without a pastoral anthropology presents an anomaly, as pastoral work without a clearly outlined theological anthropology runs the risk of becoming "docetic"— and eventually "alien to life".

However important a pastoral anthropology is for the pastoral process, the idea of entering into the pastoral process with a fixed framework of the other is not without its challenges; especially if pastoral caregivers maintain a static and solidified pastoral anthropology. Solidified anthropologies not only run the risk of disregarding the unique nature of the individual, but also the reciprocal relationship between humans and their changing contexts. Who and what people are, is in constant flux as time moves forward and contexts evolve. It is consequently argued that pastoral anthropology cannot be viewed as a static concept, but should rather be viewed as a fluid element in the pastoral process which is highly susceptible to external influences. As such, a reverse notion of the so-called Anthropocene<sup>1</sup> serves as premise to sensitise the pastoral process for the effects the context has on humans, which include socio-political changes.

The focus on the influence of the context on humans and how this should be accommodated in a pastoral anthropology, rests on the idea of an embodied

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1 The Anthropocene refers to the current time where more than seven and a half billion humans are dependent on the earth, transforming the earth's biosphere with such geological impact that geologists are of the opinion that we find ourselves in a new geological era (Steiner 2018:8). A reverse notion of the Anthropocene is curious about the influence of the current environment on its inhabitants.

anthropology. An embodied anthropology contests the traditional Cartesian and dualistic dichotomy of body and soul by recognising that faith is indeed embodied (Van den Berg 2008:120). Who and what people are, should not only be sought in the Christian text alone, but also by contemplating the living human document – and especially the context that continually influences a person as living human document.

This argument is directed at *Homo africanus*, as this research seeks to contribute to the discourse surrounding the contextualisation of practical theology and pastoral care within the African context. In his reflection on pastoral care in Africa, Magezi (2016a:143) suggests that modern Africa is still an “unchartered theological territory” as current debates still largely revolve around the cultural African identity, whereas not much scholarly work on current day, contextual (historical) issues is eminent. Hence, a pastoral vacuum ensues in which this research is interested; specifically, some of the notions that govern current pastoral anthropological perceptions about African people, which may influence the way pastoral caregivers approach counselees. By investigating some of the major changes that swept the African continent over the last decades, it is contended that it has important implications for an African pastoral anthropology, which have to be considered for pastoral care within the current African context. While the research primarily has the South African context in mind, some of the socio-political changes discussed in this article will also be familiar in the rest of Africa and the effects of these changes will also resonate with being human in other parts of Africa. In this research, South Africa is understood as an African context<sup>2</sup>, as the vast majority of people living in South Africa is of African descent. Therefore the article is mainly interested in how the current wave of socio-political changes are impacting the way in which African believers should be understood and perceived in pastoral contexts.

## 2. MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION, AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH METHOD

The main research question of this contribution relates to how changes sweeping the African context will influence an African pastoral anthropology. Researching this question has as main aim to articulate how contextual changes exert influence upon popular notions of *Homo africanus* within a pastoral context. In service of this articulation, at least the following

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2 In mid-2018, the gross population of South Africa was estimated at 57, 7 million people. Of this number, 46, 7 million were of African descent, which accounts for 80, 9 % of the total populace. This currently renders South Africa a mainly African context (Business Tech 2018).

objectives are set: The research firstly engages pastoral anthropology in order to explicate the concept within the focus of this research. Following on this objective, some popular notions of *Homo africanus* within pastoral contexts are visited. Subsequently, some of the changes that swept the African continent and Southern Africa over the last decades are discussed and lastly, an attempt is made to indicate how these changes affect current notions of *Homo africanus* and how this should be taken into consideration in pastoral caregiving in an African context. Methodologically, the research is executed by means of a comparative literature study.

### 3. FROM THE GENERAL TO THE SPECIFIC: THEOLOGICAL AND PASTORAL ANTHROPOLOGY

The study of God (Theology) was since its earliest days also interested in the study of God's creation, specifically the human, hence anthropology – a word (*logos*) about man (*anthropos*). As being human is, however, expressed in a myriad of relationships, anthropology over the ages had to express itself in plural ways, thus many branches of anthropology, such as cultural, social and economic anthropology ensued. In this spectrum, theological anthropology also found a place as a field of anthropology interested in humans in relationship to God.

The roots of theological anthropology reach back into early Judaism that showed particular interest in the narratives of Adam and Eve in the Hebrew Bible (Gen. 1-3). This led to a number of pseudepigraphic writings, which served as an “etiology of human travails” during antiquity (Henze 2018:30). Most of the anthropological texts from Early Judaism are found outside of the Hebrew Bible, although it was modelled on the Biblical paradigm. As Early Judaism was a time of many changes, Jewish thinkers not only pondered the eternal theological themes like creation, sin, death and the afterlife, but also sociological issues that emanated from changes in their *sitz im leben* (cf. Henze 2018:32, 37, 39, 42).

According to Grant (2018:5), Old Testament anthropology could be regarded as wisdom anthropology as it continued to pursue the foundational issue regarding the essence of man, i.e. “what is man?” One of the central themes brought to the surface by the Old Testament anthropological quest for the essence of the human was the apparent frustrations they experienced that essentially related to the divine sovereignty, human finitude and mortality (Grant 2018:7). This qualified Old Testament wisdom anthropology as an anthropology of frustration, which did very little to “alleviate the tensions and trauma” of lived human experience (Grant 2018:24).

As one would anticipate, New Testament or Christian anthropology ushered in a broadened perspective on the human question in the light of God's incarnation in Jesus, the expansion of faith communities and the finalisation of the Christian canon. The Gospels and apostolic letters have indeed driven this impetus resulting in such contributions as a familial anthropology based on Matthew (Richter 2018), a Johannine relational anthropology (Reynolds 2018) and Paul's Christological anthropology (Maston 2018), to name a few.

From the above it can be seen that the question about who and what the human is in relationship to God has been diligently dealt with for ages. Merely investigating these questions through the different millennia and through numerous lenses, however, does not complete the quest, as according to Radner (2018:243), the answers to all these quests have to be integrated "within a larger cohesive vision, somehow consistent with the truth of God". This torch has been carried forth by theologians from all Christian denominations, who over the years brought more insights and integrated the findings of theological anthropology into the theological frameworks of their own traditions, leading to what is popularly known as the human doctrine of that particular strand of theology (McKim 1996:13). Hence one finds rich anthropological contributions in the confessions of churches and the writings of a tradition's champions, for example, John Calvin as exponent of the Reformed tradition (cf. Lategan 1998; Conradie 2012).

Succinctly, this idea of theological anthropology as a form of doctrine is also the very issue that raises suspicion about its appropriateness in the postmodern age. Carrying within itself the seed of a fixed frame of reference that supposedly contains all the answers to the human condition, have called it into doubt. According to Dabny (2013:428), this doubt is currently at a deep end as the classic theological quest for man has indeed run its course as the so-called "contemporary crisis of the self" dispelled any certainties about being human.

Today, therefore, we live not in *possession*, but rather in *want* of self; and as a consequence, our identity has become not just a question that intrigues, but a crisis that bedevils us (Dabny 2013:430).

In this regard Radner (2018:244) suggests that theological anthropology requires a form of

natural theology... in the sense of making the very form of human experience part of the content of truthful theological discourse.

The imperative of aligning anthropological thinking within the broad theological paradigm also has implications for the different subdivisions

of theology. Ethicists and practical theologians alike will, for example, glean from the broader field of theological anthropology what is needed to relate their disciplines to humans. In his seminal pastoral trilogy, Daniël Louw (2000; 2008; 2014) arguably, developed, one of the most comprehensive pastoral anthropologies, where the general tenets of theological anthropology are specified within the particular framework of pastoral caregiving.

As the width and depth of Louw's pastoral anthropology transcends the confines of this article, only a brief synopsis of some of the implications of making theological anthropology specific within a pastoral context is provided. To use Louw's (2000:121-122) own summation of the core argument of his pastoral anthropology, such a contextualisation at least reveals the following tenets:

- Salvation in Christ transforms humans into eschatological beings with certain responsibilities and charismatic gifts.
- The indwelling Holy Spirit enables growth and development.
- Christology is not the ideal in pastoral anthropology as this will lead to a moral reductionism; rather the Holy Spirit stands between the person and Christ in order to lead the person on the road to sanctification to become more like Christ.
- Pastoral anthropology incorporates psychology, as it enhances an understanding of man, but is not dependent on psychology for the attainment of a mature faith.
- Pastoral anthropology is framed by eschatology, which opens the possibility for a meaningful life in the face of realities, such as sin, guilt and death; hence a pastoral anthropology of hope.
- A pastoral anthropology is not meant to be a (static) scriptural doctrine of man, but a dynamic framework about humans in their relationship to God that continually reflects on cultural and historical contexts.

It can thus be suggested that theological anthropology through the ages stood central in the quest for answers on who and what humans are in relationship to God. Its findings need to be aligned within different theological traditions as well as within specific theological sub-disciplines. In this regard, pastoral anthropology proves to be a designated anthropology, focused on the eschatological possibilities of Christians within the framework of Christian hope. Most importantly, theological anthropology in the broad sense of the word, as well as pastoral

anthropology in the specific sense of the word, should remain preliminary in its summations of who and what humans are.

In this way pastoral anthropological formation creates space for the ongoing quest for the meaning of being human, *coram Deo*, within evolving cultural and historical contexts.

#### 4. AFRICAN PASTORAL ANTHROPOLOGY IN THE LIGHT OF CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL CONTEXTS

It would be safe to suggest that there is currently an upswing in practical theological and pastoral interest in Africa. Over the last years, fresh conceptual and practical writings emerged that attest to this. Scholars such as Lartey (2013), Masango (2013), Dames (2014) and Brunsdon (2017a) conceptually engaged with an African practical theology, while there is a steady flow of pastoral publications aimed at phenomena such as HIV/AIDS and poverty, reminiscent of the African context (cf. Magezi 2007; Magezi & Myambo 2011; Motsi & Masango 2012).

In line with Louw's earlier observations, some of these writings seem silent in terms of a clearly articulated African pastoral anthropology. The few that do attempt to articulate a more defined anthropology appear to do so on the grounds of a static sort of anthropology or maybe even a romantic view of *Homo africanus* that mainly revolves around the cultural and philosophical identity of Africans, rather than the contextual issues that influence them. Magezi (2016b:9) denotes this by saying that many African scholars have remained "entangled" in the cultural contextualisation debate at the cost of systematic reflection on more prevalent issues.

These elements (cultural and philosophical identity—author's insertion) are important for pastoral care as they form the foundation for the African people, but they are deficient in addressing emerging challenges in modern and technologically advanced Africa (Magezi 2016a:142-143).

Looking at some of the elements that Magezi mentions unveils that *Homo africanus* is usually encapsulated by the following traits: sanctity of life; a systemic relation between illness, misfortune and sin; the recognition of spirits and ancestors in daily life; as well as a (w)holistic view on reality which places all of life in a systemic relationship. Several more elements can be added to this list. Looking, for example, at Masango's (2013) typology of Africans: mutual care, *ubuntu*, respect for elders, which includes ancestors; and an affinity for the notion of the village are amongst some of these elements.

The question at stake here, however, is whether a true current day African pastoral anthropology should not look further than viewing Africans in a cultural light, only measuring Africans against the, often romanticized, framework of the “village” and all that is “pastorally serene”. The answer suggested here is “yes”, the proposal being that an African pastoral anthropology should also be serious about the *historical* context of Africans, as the most recent historical context of Africa has been one of many socio-political changes that became engraved in the essence of *Homo africanus*. Who and what Africans are cannot be ascertained comprehensively by our pastoral anthropological constructions alone, nor by adding cultural coordinates. Care should be taken to broaden the horizon to accommodate the historical, socio-political context, if we want to draw closer to a more appropriate pastoral anthropology.

## 5. THE (SOUTH) AFRICAN CONTEXT OF SOCIO-POLITICAL CHANGE

A historical engagement with the African continent, specifically South Africa, spanning the last two to three decades, bring about the realisation that it would be easy to fall into the trap of over-simplifications and even euphemisms when trying to frame the socio-political changes that have taken place. Just stating that the last two to three decades was a time of change in Africa would be misleading. It was indeed a time of rapid and overwhelming change that carried new challenges, as well as the intensification of known challenges, into the lives of African people. Unfortunately, very little of these changes were to the benefit of Africans in general, to the point that the majority of Africans find themselves amid a realisation of disappointment, loss, anger and feelings of despair.

To appreciate the above statement, the recent South African – and broader African history – need to be seen against the background of the socio-political optimism that characterised the early nineties. The release of Mr Nelson Mandela from prison in 1990 and the birth of the new democracy in 1994 were perceived as prophetic and symbolic milestones of positive change that resonated throughout the whole of Africa. Now, two and a half decades later, it appears that there is little of this optimism left.

A useful perspective on recent South African history, which especially charts some of the changes that took place in Africa, is found in the book entitled *Africa since 1990*, a product of the South African History Project and edited by Yonah Seleti (2005). The background to the deployment of this volume is the democratisation of Africa, which also provided the greater context for the fall of *apartheid* in South Africa and the dawn of the

first truly representative democracy that ushered in a new historical epoch in Southern Africa (Seleti 2005:xi-xii). On a continent that is historically marred by marginalisation, colonialism and oppression the promise of democracy speaks for itself, as it brought hopeful visions of freedom with it. In this particular rendition of recent history, several South African and African historians frankly engage with some of the pivotal changes, showing that there were indeed many and rapid changes since the dawn of democracy, but that not all were to the benefit of Africans. In fact, there are currently more challenges than solutions.

In articulating the mentioned atmosphere of disappointment, loss, anger and despair, an eclectic excursion is made to the themes regarded as the minimum considerations within an African pastoral anthropology that is sensitive to contextual change. These include statehood and citizenship, security, education, globalisation, migration and poverty as well as racial tension and the matter of collective identity.

## 5.1 Statehood and citizenship (Political instability)

Statehood and citizenship are the terms Siphso Buthelezi uses to assess whether democracy has succeeded in bringing about a better dispensation for Africa compared to the colonial period. While statehood would denote how well a particular state has established itself in terms of a specific form or model of governance, like democracy, citizenship refers to the “rights” and “duties” of citizens of that state (Buthelezi 2005:14) of which equality is the most important.

In order to make the comparison, Buthelezi (2005:2) summarises colonialism as a “special public power, separate from the colonised mass of African people.” He then goes on to observe that democratisation in Africa in general merely brought about a new political *form* of governance, but no new *content*. Instead,

[R]epression, violence corruption, socio-economic decay and the concentration of wealth and privilege among the few came to characterise this period for such states (Buthelezi 2005:2).

In terms of citizenship within the new democracy, the principle of citizenship did not guarantee equality, but rather led to a situation where the position of the marginalised in Africa worsened as privilege is still conferred “on the state rather than on society” (Buthelezi 2005:15).

Other factors that are currently shattering the ideals of democracy in Africa include financial dependency, monetary policy of global institutions such as the World Bank and economic enslavement as a result of

globalisation. Hence, the African continent in general and the South African context in particular, became home to decomposing order and resulted in enduring political unrest, as seen on micro- and macro levels of the society.

In South Africa, politically-based unrest became part of the daily landscape in the form of vast numbers of service delivery strikes, “#mustfall” campaigns and labour mass-action that have taken place on a continuing basis over the last years. This is symptomatic of the stark reality that for the majority of the populace daily living conditions changed for the worst and that inequality is as rife, if not worse, than decades ago. In terms of statehood and citizenship, it would be no less than fair to submit that Africans are disillusioned, disappointed, and angry.

## 5.2 Security

Security in Africa, as elsewhere, is a multi-faceted and important contributor to the well-being of a state and its citizens. Although it first and foremost conjures up images of interstate military peace, violence-free and stable communities, it also pertains to issues, such as the economy, health, food and water. In post-colonial Africa the continent is not doing well on any of these terrains, except for peace between the majorities of African countries. In this section, the focus mainly falls on security in terms of physical peace, security and stability.

In this regard, Seleti (2005:30) reminds that the

entire sub region’s community lives under the threat of the activities of gun-toting gangsters: car hijacking, murder – including that of old and frail people and even – house breaking, cash-in-transit heists and broad-daylight muggings in city streets.

In terms of this form of security, South Africa begs mentioning, as crime statistics and violence in South Africa is amongst the highest in the world (Business Tech 2017; StatsSA 2017). As if this is not disturbing in itself, much of the recorded violence is against women and children, hinting at the deep-rooted dysfunctional gender views harboured by society (StatsSA 2018). Another subsection of crime-statistics relates to “farm-murders”, which continues unabated despite efforts to deter them and policies and public outcry that condemn them. As a result of this horrific phenomenon, it is estimated that more than 2 000 people on farms have been murdered since 1994 (Holmes 2018).

Yet, another aspect of the security situation that deserves mention – which directly relates to the general spirit of lawlessness in broader Africa – is the so-called violence economies that are steadily growing in Africa.

Violence economies refer to money generated by the use of violence in “a thoroughly purposeful and rational way to serve...political and economic interests” (Seleti 2005:36). At least four groups, which appear to be functioning in a symbiotic relationship, contribute to these violence economies. They include rebels, warlords, organised crime syndicates and international terrorist groups that deal in the worst currencies, such as human organs and trafficking, slave and illegal arms trade (Seleti 2005:36), which contribute much to the fear of living in Africa.

In terms of physical security then, Africa has become one of the most insecure and dangerous places in the global village. Louw (2017:124) appropriately quotes the South African poet, Louis Esterhuysen’s answer to the question on how current living conditions in South Africa are: “alarming and frightening, terrible and frightening, estranging and dividing.” Fear, it seems, has subsequently become part of the human experience in Africa.

### 5.3 Education

One of the promises of any democracy extends to equality in education. Equality in education refers to matters such as availability, accessibility, affordability and standards and that these should be extended to all members of a particular society. It is in this spirit that Kanduzi (2005:80) observes most of postcolonial Africa was wholly committed to the

expansion of elementary education, the provision of improved secondary schools and teacher training colleges, and the establishment of African universities.

As funding proved to be one of the main challenges to realising the planned reforms and expansion, international organisations such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) partnered with African countries. The “Millennium Development Goals”, for example, set as main goal to provide primary schooling across Africa for all children, as at the dawn of the new millennium as little as 57% of African children were enrolled in primary schools (Wikipedia 2018). In February 2018, UNESCO reported that “there has been no progress in reducing the global number of out-of-school children, adolescents and youth” (UNESCO Institute for Statistics 2018:1). In terms of the most basic right of education, Africa’s children are currently not yet on equal footing with their peers elsewhere. Adding cause for sincere concern, is the gender bias within this challenge, as most observers also note that the majority of young children that are denied access to education are female. In this regard, Gallagher (2018) estimates that

[N]ine million girls between the ages of about 6 and 11 in Africa will never go to school at all, compared to six million boys.

The challenges that stem from this are for the most part obvious in terms of enduring illiteracy in Africa, dwindling readiness for higher and tertiary education as well as long term self-sustainability of the un-educated.

In terms of higher and tertiary education in post-colonial Africa, there are at present also more challenges than solutions. While in South Africa equal access to tertiary education remains one of the biggest achievements of the new democracy, higher education in South Africa has found itself in turmoil with several violent protests that resulted in the burning of public universities and even loss of life during the past five years. Linked to the so-called “#must-fall” campaigns, the root causes for these protests run deeper than issues of funding, but also reach into epistemological issues like decolonisation (Brunsdon 2017a). Most South African universities have since then engaged in active projects regarding decolonisation and Africanisation, however, unrest in terms of tertiary education has left higher education most vulnerable and at risk. An assessment of education in Africa and to the south of Africa renders the African youth as well as future job and economic security in a shroud of uncertainty.

## 5.4 Globalisation, poverty and migration

At first glance it may seem foreign to use globalisation, poverty and migration in tandem. The question arises if globalisation is not a positive phenomenon as it shrunk the globe, making the world smaller and more connected. This is indeed so, says Buthelezi (2005:3), if globalisation is only measured in terms of the exchange of knowledge and ideas that became possible as a result of the growth of information technology, mass communication and social media. From an African-economic and migration perspective, these advances not only shrunk the world, it also expanded the distance between the richest and the poorest members of the global village and forced many Africans to seek a better life elsewhere.

Taking part in the trade made possible by globalisation requires capital, technology and industries, which Africa does not have. Unfortunately, capital sponsored from the outside – and trade in raw materials with global partners – lead to a form of neo-colonialism, as donor and buyer countries eventually govern the economies of African partners in this way.

In many African countries, such as the former Zaire and present day, Uganda, Washington bureaucrats run the ministries of finance and economic planning (Buthelezi 2005:6).

In his latest rendition of globalisation, Nobel Prize winner and economist Joseph Stiglitz (2018) thus agrees that globalisation has left many losers in its wake, especially developing countries. In the process of globalisation, Africa has remained the

dark continent...a place to be pitied, a continent of failure, which needs to be helped and guided by wiser, richer and more stable societies (Nicolson 2016:2).

The promise of freedom that came with democratisation did not realise the hope of becoming an equal partner to the economic powers of the rest of the world. On the one hand, it increased the economic dependency of Africa on the rest of the globe and on the other hand, it increased the economic disparity between Africa and the rest of the world. Even worse, Africa remained the impoverished continent that it was before democratisation as, according to Sichone (2005:73, 74), the phenomenon of “global apartheid” only reserves the spoils of globalisation for those that are “mobile” and “connected into the global economic system”. Poverty remains the fate of those trapped in isolated parts of the global village.

The consequent dire poverty that still characterises great parts of Africa is, at the same time, one of the biggest drivers of migration. From a migration viewpoint, Africa is currently deemed one of the highest contributors to the world-wide phenomenon of human displacement (UN Refugee Agency 2018) of which labour or economic migration forms a notable part. In this regard, South Africa became a preferred destination of migrants, due to the perceived economic well-being in comparison with the rest of Africa (Sichone 2005:72). Migration, however, mostly brings along further economic challenges – especially in African countries – where local economies can hardly sustain its own populace. It also brought along a new social disease in the form of xenophobia, where migrants are violently attacked and their possessions stolen by locals who are against the presence of aliens in South Africa. Louw (2017:126) typifies xenophobia as the “existential fear and even hatred of the other (the stranger) due to negative practices of discrimination and stigmatising perceptions.”

Although globalisation brought prosperity on to the television screens of the people of Africa, the majority does not share in much of it, leaving them poor and filling them with frustration and fear of anyone who potentially wants to share in what little there is to go around.

## 5.5 Racial tension and collective identity

Linking to the “stigmatising perceptions” related to xenophobia, South Africa in particular saw a worsening change in terms of racial

relations since its new democracy. The initial euphoria and optimism that characterised the early days of the newfound democracy steadily made way for a deep-rooted mistrust amongst the many racial and ethnic members of the proverbial Rainbow Nation. The drive to introduce and foster the collective identity of a Rainbow Nation was seriously undermined by a return to the idea of Africanism spurred on by then president Thabo Mbeki's "I am an African" address, which accompanied the adoption of the new constitution in 1996 and the "South Africa: two nations" address in 1998 (Horáková 2011:115). The Rainbow Nation was now challenged with reconciling the notions of "poor blacks" and "rich whites", which seriously undermined the formation of a positive collective identity formation (Brunsdon 2017b). Measured against the regular reports in the media of racially motivated incidents amongst citizens and hate speech by political parties, South Africa has changed for the worst, in terms of a symbiotic co-existence, and resulted in South Africans living in fear of the "other" along the racial divide. This recently culminated in the approval of a "Hate Speech Bill" by the South African government during March 2018 to criminalise hate speech and racism (IOL News 2018) – a stark expression of the fear of "thy neighbour" which has also become part of who and what South-Africans have become.

## 6. AFRICAN PASTORAL ANTHROPOLOGY AND SOCIO-POLITICAL CHANGE

From the eclectic excursion on some of the changes that occurred against the background of democratisation in South Africa since the mid-nineties, it should be clear that it was a time of substantial socio-political change. Placing these changes in the context of the democratisation and the promise of positive change, it transpired that, although there were many changes, these changes were for the most part not to the benefit of Africans. It was, in fact, backward changes that further disadvantaged most Africans.

Assessing who and what *Homo africanus* have become, against the background of the above changes, relates to the influence that change has on the identity of a person. Identity is a complex concept relating to how a person perceives both him- and herself as well as the world he or she inhabits (Chrysochoou 2003:227). The formation of identity is a dynamic process in which external societal influences play an important role in how individuals and groups of people perceive themselves, hence a "reciprocal relationship between identity and society indeed exists" (Brunsdon 2017b).

In the light of some of the major societal changes that have been delineated against the promise of democratisation, it is suggested that these changes had a severe impact on how Africans perceive themselves. In terms of awarding existential values to these experiences, it can be said that Africans are at best disillusioned, disappointed and angry; in constant fear for their safety; worried about the future of their children; feeling excluded from the blessings of the global village; and suffering poverty, while fearing the other and experiencing tension as a result of racial tension, and lack of a national identity.

Who and what Africans currently are thus calls for a pastoral anthropological lens that should be widened in order to transcend the (micro) cultural lens many used to ascertain who and what *Homo africanus* is, so that we can respond appropriately within pastoral contexts.

## 7. SOME IMPLICATIONS OF A BROADENED PASTORAL ANTHROPOLOGY OF *HOMO AFRICANUS*

Eventually, pastoral caregivers do not only employ their pastoral anthropology as hermeneutic framework in order to understand who and what counselees are. According to Louw (2000:129), pastoral anthropology also influences the approach pastoral caregivers follow. This calls for a reappraisal of how we understand and deploy pastoral caregiving in current contexts with African people. This reappraisal should result in creative ways of pastoral caregiving that is aimed at more than a restoration of African Christians measured against well-known cultural coordinates, but also aimed at the nurturing hope against the background of disillusionment, disappointment, anger, fear and exclusion.

In this regard, one is reminded of the meaning of pastoral anthropology, mentioned earlier: that pastoral anthropology is “framed by eschatology which opens the possibility for a meaningful life in the face of realities.” Consequently, Louw (2016: 16) sees the goal of pastoral care within the framework of African spirituality as healing that involves the “restoration of wholeness”. The restoration of wholeness relates positively to the notion of an embodied anthropology that does not divide the spiritual and physical in a superficial way, but rather integrates “faith and life, body and soul, salvation and healing, creation and affirmation, divinity and humanity” (Louw 2016:35). Instrumental to the restoration of wholeness lies the nurturing of Christian hope, which effectively renders pastoral care as a form of hope care that firmly believes that God will remain true to His

promises when and where His children hold “steadfast to the hope that they profess” (Heb. 10:23, Good News version).

The context of disheartening and rapid change challenges being human in the widest sense of the word, then also calls for a widening of our understanding of pastoral care as hope care. It cannot be confined to the traditional conversational model of pastoral caregiving, but should also include hope-driven pastoral preaching, liturgies of hope and ministries of hope aimed at children and the young.

## 8. CONCLUSION

This article focused on the notion of an appropriate African pastoral anthropology for pastoral care within the context of socio-political change. It departed from the premise of a reverse notion of the Anthropocene to recognise the influence of contextual changes on humans. In the light of this, the traditional or romantic view of an African pastoral anthropology that only views Africans in terms of cultural identity was challenged and called for a pastoral anthropology that creates space for the historic context as well. It attempted to identify some of the areas where major changes that took place over the last decades in the African and South African context, which exerted influence on the identity of believers and how they think about themselves, their context and others. These included statehood and citizenship, security, education, globalisation, migration and poverty as well as racial tension and the matter of collective identity. It was indicated that changes in these areas led to existential experiences of disillusionment, disappointment, anger, fear and exclusion among African people. It was argued that these existential experiences should motivate pastoral caregivers to reappraise their own pastoral anthropologies so that pastoral caregiving can be aimed at more than a restoration of African Christians measured against well-known cultural coordinates, but also aimed at the nurturing hope against the background of disillusionment, disappointment, anger, fear and exclusion. In this process the goal of pastoral care, within the framework of African spirituality, becomes focused on healing that involves the restoration of wholeness in which the Christian hope takes centre stage. The torch of Christian hope should, however, not only be carried by conversational models of pastoral caregiving, but calls for further reflection on hope-driven pastoral preaching, hope-liturgies and hope-ministries in African contexts.

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## Trefwoorde

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