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# Transforming Africa: Some missiological perspectives from the Belhar Confession



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#### Dates:

Received: 30 Mar. 2022 Accepted: 28 July 2022 Published: 26 Aug. 2022

#### How to cite this article:

Knoetze, J.J., 2022, 'Transforming Africa: Some missiological perspectives from the Belhar Confession', HTS Teologiese Studies/ Theological Studies 78(4), a7584. https://doi. org/10.4102/hts.v78i4.7584

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© 2022. The Author. Licensee: AOSIS. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution License. In the strategic document of the African Union approved in 2013 and spanning over 50 years, known as Agenda 2063, we find a blueprint for transforming Africa into a global powerhouse of the future. Many of the themes mentioned in Agenda 2063 are also mentioned in the New Testament, such as slavery, unity, poverty, women, children, discrimination and diversity. It is therefore clear that Christianity has something to contribute to Agenda 2063. Another word used throughout the Agenda 2063 document is 'transformation'. Concepts such as 'transformative leadership' and 'radical transformation at all levels and in all spheres' are mentioned. This contribution draws on the Agenda 2063 document to engage the missiological themes of unity, reconciliation and justice through the lens of the Belhar Confession. Deeply aware of the pain and disruption colonial Christianity has caused in many instances in Africa, the author contends that the Good News, particularly the New Testament themes of unity, reconciliation and justice, present a potentially transformative approach towards developing Africa. The research question that this article attends to is: how can the churches in Africa contribute to the aspirations of Agenda 2063 from the themes of unity, justice and reconciliation as declared in the Belhar Confession? By interrogating these key concepts of Agenda 2063 through the Confession of Belhar, the author concludes that the Belhar Confession can be regarded as a key African document, which could be explored further to facilitate unity, reconciliation and justice on the continent.

**Contribution:** This article indicates the important relationship between church and state and the need for a partnership for the benefit of both. The need for a transforming state and a transforming church to participate in a transformed Africa is argued. The article promotes multi-, inter- and transdisciplinary aspects of studies as part of a mission praxis and application.

**Keywords:** Agenda 2063; unity; transformation; reconciliation; justice; Belhar; theological education.

## **Background**

The research question that this article attends to is: how can the churches in Africa contribute to the aspirations of Agenda 2063 from the themes of unity, justice, and reconciliation as declared in the Belhar Confession?

It is true that African theologies have transformed the mission thinking of the colonial era, more specifically, and are still influencing and transforming missiology today. It is also true that the colonial mission has transformed Africa in many instances, in both negative and positive ways. However, transforming is not a one-way action, as Bosch (2011:xxi) clearly indicates in the title of his book Transforming mission: Paradigm shifts in theology of mission. 'Transforming' can either be read as an adjective, in which case it is mission that transforms reality, or 'Transforming' can be read as a present participle, where 'mission' is the object that is being transformed. The author discusses the question of whether the enhancement of theological education in African churches will lead to transforming mission and transforming Africa, as described here. This is asked in a context where about 85% of all church leaders and pastors in Africa have no official theological education. But then Paas (2015:106), who quoted Greenway, announces: 'We must be careful not to educate our pastors away from the poor'. Paas further contended that as long as our idea and concept of who and what a minister is or should be is shaped by habit and not by the contemporary context, it is difficult to respond to changing circumstances and paradigm shifts taking place. Knoetze (2020:4) argued that the goal of transforming theological education is to change or transform worldviews and not simply to learn new beliefs and behaviours, which corresponds

Note: Special Collection: Agenda 2063 – The Africa We Want – Religious Perspectives, sub-edited by Jerry Pillay (University of Pretoria).

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with the assertion of Paas. Thus, theological education must be education *in* transformation and *for* transformation. When referring to the Belhar Confession, Beukes and Plaatjies van Huffel (2016:225) described the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa (URCSA) as one of the leaders in the ongoing struggle for socio-economic justice in South Africa. Can the churches on the African continent be leaders in the struggle for justice and human rights, and can Belhar play a role?

The tremendous growth of Christianity in Africa is a well-known fact (Tarantal 2020:1). But it is exactly this fact that raises some serious questions: What is the transformational impact of the growth of Christianity on the African society, if any? Does Christianity or the church bring any hope to Africa? Tarantal (2020:2) postulated that a failure of leadership created the Africa we are currently experiencing. In line with Agenda 2063, which also places a lot of emphasis on education to transform Africa, the questions that come to the fore are: how will theological education serve the church and the transformation of the African continent? Will theological education enhance the growth of Christianity, and will it have a higher transformational impact on African societies? Will it bring hope to Africa? Will it create the leaders needed? To be honest, this is the author's presupposition.

Working with this presupposition, it is not only the African Union (AU)¹ that needs the church but also the church that needs the AU, as well as Agenda 2063, to make theological education more accessible through the proposed pan-African e-university and pan-African virtual university. Engaging the churches also relates to the aspiration of people-driven development. With this short background, let us familiarise ourselves with some of the relevant content of Agenda 2063 for this article.

Before attending to some of the content of Agenda 2063 and later the Belhar Confession, it is necessary to note Koopman's (2008a:39) observation that false hopes are created by modern communication media and propagated, especially amongst young people. Agenda 2063 and the Belhar Confession is different from modern media. The modern media proclaims the hope of democratic processes that will enhance individual self-actualisation and 'hope of the market that transforms humans into valued consumers' (Koopman 2008a:39). Although Agenda 2063 and Belhar proclaim hope, we must be realistic and not create false hope. We must make sure that Agenda 2063 and Belhar are not viewed and proclaimed as part of 'the global phenomena of the idolatries of power, success and greed' (Tarantal 2020:3).

## **Introduction to Agenda 2063**

According to the author of this research, the Agenda 2063 document, which the AU already approved in 2013, is still 'a very new document' to the African church community. This AU declaration, known as Agenda 2063, clearly indicates the rededication of the AU towards reaching the pan-African

vision of 'An integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens, representing a dynamic force in the international arena...' Only a few church meetings have acknowledged this document, although it is in many instances aligned with the Millennial Development Goals (MDGs) and, in that sense, is not strange to church meeting agendas. From the content of Agenda 2063, it seems as if the AU does not recognise the churches in Africa as important partners to reach their transformational goals. There is no specific reference to the church; they only refer to faith-based organisations (FBOs) as partners or stakeholders, amongst others (Ndizera & Muzee 2018:146), whilst Christianity is vastly growing across Africa. The transformational catchphrase on the front page of Agenda 2063 reads:

A shared strategic framework for inclusive growth and sustainable Development & a global strategy to optimize the use of Africa's Resources for the benefit of all Africans. (African Union Commission [AUC] 2015:n.p.)

The guiding vision for this article is emphasised as 'to build an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven and managed by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the international arena' (AUC 2015:2). It might thus be stated that Agenda 2063 is a blueprint for transforming Africa into a global powerhouse of the future. Africa wants to take its rightful place in the international arena in the next 50 years. 'It is a continuation of the pan-African drive over centuries, for unity, self-determination, freedom, progress and collective prosperity pursued under *Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance*' (AUC 2015:2, italics are added).

To reach the pan-African drive, Agenda 2063 has identified the following seven aspirations (AUC 2015:6–7, italics are added):

- Aspiration 1: A *prosperous Africa* based on inclusive growth and sustainable development.
- Aspiration 2: An integrated continent, politically united based on the ideals of pan-Africanism and the vision of Africa's renaissance.
- Aspiration 3: An *Africa of good governance*, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law.
- Aspiration 4: A peaceful and secure Africa.
- Aspiration 5: An Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, values and ethics.
- Aspiration 6: An Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth and caring for children.
- Aspiration 7: Africa as a strong, united, resilient and influential global player and partner.

In the ensuing discussions, we will again attend to some of these aspirations, what the possible role of the church may be and how the aspirations (possibly) relate to the themes of unity, justice and reconciliation as declared in the Belhar Confession. However, for now, just a brief remark on the two flagship projects identified to reach these aspirations will be made, although the projects will not be discussed further. Of particular interest to this article is the two flagship projects

 <sup>1.</sup>The African Union is a continental union consisting of 55 member states located on the continent of Africa.

related to education, namely the pan-African e-university and the pan-African virtual university, as these may directly or indirectly impact theological education in Africa.

However, Agenda 2063 does not only mention aspirations but also challenges that need attention (AUC 2015:18–19). These are:

- · conflict, instability and insecurity
- social and economic inequalities
- · organised crime, drug trade and illicit financial flows
- poor management of diversities: religious extremism, ethnicism and corruption
- · failure to harness the demographic dividend
- escalation of Africa's disease burden
- · climate risks and natural disasters
- external shocks caused by global market forces.

Theologically well-equipped or educated churches and church leaders will enhance the participation of Christianity in more meaningful ways in addressing the challenges to transform the continent of Africa, according to the aspirations stated in Agenda 2063. It is in this regard that the author believes the Belhar Confession may help us.

## The All-Africa Conference of Churches acknowledged Agenda 2063

In the same way that Agenda 2063 put a transformational catchphrase on the front page, the consultation of the African theological and Christian networks<sup>2</sup> (AACC) opened with a statement also focusing on transformation:

Do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will. (Rm 12:2)

The consultation continues to express appreciation and support:

[*T*]owards an integrative and practical theological education in promoting relevant contextual theological engagements and discourses with theologians within and outside member churches and institutions towards the dignity and design of Africa into the Africa that we want; Africa that God desires. (AACC 2021:n.p.)

However, it must be observed that although the two documents seek the same goal, their departures are different. In a sense, one could say Agenda 2063 is following the trades of the continents that are viewed as successful and prosperous, whilst the African theological and Christian networks choose a different route – not to conform to this world.

To show support and appreciation for Agenda 2063, the consultation commits to the following objectives (AACC 2021:n.p.):

2.The African theological and Christian networks report was captured by the AACC that's why the reference is AACC.

- to engage the seven aspirations of Agenda 2063 into their core curricula (of theological education)
- to promote networking at different levels through, for example, conferences offering space to study and discuss Agenda 2063
- to sound transformative theological and biblical education in a curriculum that is contextual, integrative and relevant at regaining the lost dignity of continental Africa
- to produce academic and popular publications at institutional and church levels to articulate the vision of Agenda 2063.

From this short summary of the consultation representing almost every church organisation in Africa,<sup>3</sup> it is clear that the church is committed to partnering with the AU and working towards a transformed Africa. It is also clear that the church has already accomplished some of the important goals of Agenda 2063, such as networks, for example, the consultation of the African theological and Christian networks (AACC) and Network for African Congregational Theology (NetACT).

The question that needs to be answered is whether we all want the same Africa. When Agenda 2063, an AU document, talks about 'the Africa we want', who is the 'we' that it is referring to? Is it the politicians? The African businesspeople? Or the ordinary population of Africa? From these two documents, it is clear that both the AU and the church agree that we want a transformed Africa, but are we able to transform Africa or must we become transformed first?

## Politics from the nation-state versus politics of the church

If we accept that churches have an important role to play in the implementation of Agenda 2063, then we need to look at the different possible understandings of transformation between church and state. Katongole is one of the African theologians who conceptualises transformation as conversion. His understanding of conversion is a clear break with the past, which implies a distinct Christian identity. However, according to Ngong (2019:368), studies on conversion show that the latter is rather a process that holds different perspectives and behaviours in tension instead of a clean break. The understanding of Katongole on conversion or transformation is clearly different from the understanding of Agenda 2063, although Ndizera and Muzee (2018) maintained that Agenda 2063 will not be reached if it is business as usual. In the same way, Katongole (in Ngong 2019) proclaims:

State efficiency in Africa is not efficiency in the provision of needed means of sustenance for citizens but is rather manifested in the efficient slaughter of people, as was the case in Rwanda 1994. (p. 371)

<sup>3.</sup>The consultation included almost all different church denominations and organisations: '[7]he AACC in collaboration with the Council of Anglican Provinces in Africa, Organization of Africa Instituted Churches, Association for Pentecostal Theological Education in Africa, Association of Theological Institutions in Southern and Central Africa, Associations for Christian Theological Education in Africa, Network for African Congregational Theology, Overseas Council International, Africa Baptist Theological Education Network, Association of Theological Institutions in East Africa, Le Conseil des Institutions Theologiques d'Afrique Francophone, West Africa Association of Theological Institutions, Associations Theologiques and Tearfund' (AACC 2021:2).

Tarantal (2020) argued that 50 years after African independence, the political leaders:

Are no longer instruments capable of serving the public good. Indeed, far from being able to provide aid and protection to their citizens, African governments and the vampire-like politicians who run them, are regarded by the populations they rule as yet another burden to bear the struggle for survival. (pp. 2–3)

Ngong then pleads for African Christians to present an alternative that needs to be found in the narrative of the church. 'What Africa needs, ... is a different form of conversion situated within the church as a political community rather than in the nation-state' (Ngong 2019:371). It appears then that in addition to being the cause of most of Africa's problems, the nation-state is also ill-equipped to address these issues. For this reason, 'a radical conversion that exorcises the demons of the nation-state needs to take place' (Ngong 2019:371). To be fair, it must be mentioned that many churches in Africa are also not attending to or equipped to address some of Africa's challenges, and they too may be part of the problem. In this regard, the church also needs to convert or transform; as such, the church can only be a servant leader.

The church must be, as Katongole's ecclesiology describes, a 'demonstration plot' of a *new life* in Africa. Therefore, instead of using the word 'conversion', he uses associated words and concepts such as 'transformation, renewing of the mind, new creation, amongst others, and relates experiences that seems to demonstrate the kind of radical change he advocates' (Ngong 2019:372). Thus he translates Romans 12:2 as follows:

Do not be naïve about the politics of your nations; do not just fit in within the forms of belonging as defined by your race, ethnicity, nationality, or class, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you learn to negotiate what is perfect, true and good. (Ngong 2019:373)

Although conversion is a personal matter, it is never a private matter and will always result in belonging to a church, 'which leads people to become "members of a people, with collective and public consequences" (Ngong 2019:373). Wright (2006:182) described Paul's mission as more than 'evangelism and church planting'; he indicated that Paul was concerned with building 'mature communities of believers who would think biblically through the ethical issues they faced in the ambient religious culture'. As such, conversion is not only a change of mind but also a change of belonging. Thus, instead of being Xhosa or Zulu, Afrikaans or Sotho, one becomes a Christian who belongs to the community of the church. Katongole's (2005) understanding is a church:

[*T*]hat has learned to suspect the politics of racial, tribal, and national identity, searching for a new identity, for a new way of being church beyond a western, African, tribal, or national Identity. (p. 205)

The question is this: what is my *first* identity? Osmer (2021:50) also argued that who we really are is who we are in Christ. Ngong (2019:387) concluded that Christians do not have a single, clear Christian identity but that the theology of inculturation helps us to realise the complexity of our identity

(Knoetze 2017:2). He then hints that this complex identity is the meaning of what Katongole calls the 'confused identity of Christians'. Christians still live in Africa with all its challenges, but if they want to contribute to the transformation of Africa, they need to live with a new identity in Christ (2 Cor 5:17–21). It is within this new identity in Christ that we find unity within diversity. This unity in diversity is displayed in the being of the Triune God.

The following section focuses on the Belhar Confession to provide the church in Africa with a clearer ecclesiological understanding of the implications of this new identity within the context of Africa and help relate it to Agenda 2063.

## The road to Belhar

The reason for choosing the Belhar Confession to clarify what the African church should be and do is because it was born from the circumstances of Africa - more specifically, the inequalities, injustices and dehumanisation of people within the South African context. It was born from opposing nation-state politics, which became the politics of some of the churches in South Africa. Some might also argue it was (Afrikaans) church politics which became nation-state politics. Here the author specifically refers to how a theologically well-educated church, like the Dutch Reformed Church, participated in the development and maintenance of the apartheid system. However, it was some of the African churches (e.g. the Dutch Reformed Missions Church, later known as URCSA), born from the mission work of the Dutch Reformed Church, that believed that with apartheid the essence of the gospel was at stake, and therefore they needed to confess because they did not have any other choice. The Belhar Confession is nothing less than a call for the conversion of the church, the transformation of the nation-state politics and the transformation of society in general. In the accompanying letter to the Belhar Confession, paragraph two states: 'An act of confession may only be made by the Church for the sake of its purity and credibility and that of its message'. And then paragraph three: 'We proclaim it against a false doctrine, against an ideological distortion which threatens the gospel itself in our church and our country'.

In this regard, one needs to ask whether Agenda 2063 should not have used the same 'strong language' of Belhar – 'we proclaim it against' – when it refers to the following challenges:

- conflict, instability and insecurity
- social and economic inequalities
- organised crime, drug trade and illicit financial flows
- poor management of diversities; religious extremism, ethnicism and corruption
- failure to harness the demographic dividend
- escalation of Africa's disease burden
- climate risks and natural disasters
- external shocks, for example, caused by global market forces.

## The Belhar Confession

The Belhar Confession consists of five articles referring to:

- 1. the belief in the Trinitarian God, who called his church
- 2. the belief in the visible unity of the church
- 3. the belief that God has given the message of reconciliation to his church
- 4. the belief that God revealed himself as the One bringing justice and peace amongst people
- 5. the belief that the church is called to be obedient to her master Jesus Christ.

The author will only focus on articles 2, 3 and 4 of the Belhar Confession, namely the *visible unity, reconciliation* and *justice,* in his discussion of Agenda 2063. However, the discussion must be understood within the frame of articles 1 and 5, the being of the Trinitarian God and the salvation in Jesus Christ, who expects obedience from his disciples.

The further discussion of Belhar articles 2, 3 and 4 is from the conviction that the church has both a theological and sociological role to play in society.

## Unity

Koopman (2008a:32) aptly remarked that since World War II, there has not been one day on Earth without war, whether interstate or civil war. He attributes this crisis to modern ideologies and idols, such as 'the absolutising of economic (market), political (democracy) and technological forces for the sake of progress' (Koopman 2008a:32). It is also true that the African continent has not had one day without war, but in Africa, the crisis has many faces, for example, terrorism, tribal battles, poor governance and corruption, extreme religious groups and socio-economic factors. It is within such a divided Africa that Belhar article 2 confesses unity:

[T]hat this unity of the people of God must be manifested and be active in a variety of ways: in that we love one another; that we experience, practice and pursue community with one another; that we are obligated to give ourselves willingly and joyfully to be of benefit and blessing to one another; that we share one faith, have one calling, are of one soul and one mind; have one God and Father, are filled with one Spirit, are baptised with one baptism, eat of one bread and drink of one cup, confess one Name, are obedient to one Lord, work for one cause, and share one hope; together come to know the height and the breadth and the depth of the love of Christ; together are built up to the stature of Christ, to the new humanity; together know and bear one another's burdens, thereby fulfilling the law of Christ; that we need one another and upbuild one another, admonishing and comforting one another; that we suffer with one another for the sake of righteousness; pray together; together serve God in this world; and together fight against everything that may threaten or hinder this unity ...

The use of unity in the Belhar Confession must be understood as *unity in proximity*, because disunity signifies the continuation of classism and the denial of any responsibility or involvement with the less privileged or those not part of 'us' – however the 'us' may be defined. Unity in proximity

enables people to develop sympathy, empathy and interpathy. Koopman (2008a) defined these terms as follows:

Sympathy is a spontaneous affective reaction to another's feelings experienced on the basis of perceived similarity between observer and observed. Empathy is an intentional affective response to another's feelings experienced on the basis of perceived differences between the observer and observed. Interpathy is an intentional cognitive and affective envisioning of another's thoughts and feelings from another culture, worldview and epistemology. (p. 37)

Unity alone is not enough; we need to create spaces where this threefold pathos is developed amongst people who live in different contexts, who are from different backgrounds, who hold different views and who are strangers to each other

Agenda 2063 is viewed as a continuation of the pan-African drive over centuries for unity, self-determination, freedom, progress and collective prosperity. Reading just Agenda 2063, one might think that self-determination, freedom and progress are the opposites of unity and collective prosperity, whilst unity, as declared in the Belhar Confession, might help Africa, giving us tools and language to discuss how this unity might happen not only as 'a gift but also as an obligation'. It further encourages Africa not only to talk about unity but also to make unity visible. It is in this regard that the church may set some examples.

## Reconciliation

When the Belhar Confession talks about reconciliation, it also refers to the calling of the church to witness by word and deed to the new heaven and the new earth. When (not if) the church takes this witness as being serious enough to convert herself, she will be able to contribute to the transformation of Africa and Agenda 2063, especially considering the challenges mentioned. Belhar article 3 reads:

We believe that God has entrusted the church with the message of reconciliation in and through Jesus Christ; that the church is called to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world, that the church is called blessed because it is a peacemaker, that the church is witness both by word and by deed to the new heaven and the new earth in which righteousness dwells; that God's lifegiving Word and Spirit has conquered the powers of sin and death, and therefore also of irreconciliation and hatred, bitterness and enmity ...

Reconciliation in the Belhar Confession embraces 'different races, tribes, nationalities, socio-economic groups, genders, sexual orientations, age groups, and "normal" and disabled people' (Koopman 2008a:34). It is important to add to the list 'ecocide' – reconciliation with the environment. It is essential to understand that reconciliation has its origin in the mission of the Triune God and the redemption people receive through the work of Christ in his victory over all cosmic powers. Reconciliation is then understood as transformation in the lives of people and society through the love of the Triune God. The transformation through the love of the Trinitarian God, which the church and Katongole called conversion, has

both vertical and horizontal dimensions and implications. Reconciliation will always lead to transformation and conversion; otherwise, no reconciliation has taken place. Reconciliation also implies accountability towards God and towards one's neighbour about how one lives one's life. Koopman (2008a:35) observed that 'reconciliation and forgiveness imply the honest and truthful facing of past evils, opposition to revenge, empathy for victims and perpetrators of evil and the commitment of victims to resume life alongside evildoers'. There is thus a close resemblance between reconciliation and justice.

## **Justice**

Belhar article 4 confesses:

We believe that God has revealed Godself as the One who wishes to bring about justice and true peace on earth; that in a world full of injustice and enmity God is in a special way the God of the destitute, the poor and the wronged and that God calls the church to follow in this; that God brings justice to the oppressed and gives bread to the hungry; that God frees the prisoners and restores sight to the blind; that God supports the downtrodden, protects the strangers, helps orphans and widows and blocks the path of the ungodly; that for God pure and undefiled religion is to visit the orphans and the widows in their suffering; that God wishes to teach the people of God to do what is good and to seek the right ...

Justice as described in the Belhar Confession is compassionate justice, which includes both sacrificial and forensic justice. Koopman (2008a:33) described justification by faith as restorative justice, which cannot reach the world if there is not a willingness to sacrifice for the sake of the other. This sacrificial element of justice indicates that justice is merciful and does not seek revenge. Justice seeks the healing and restoration of all broken relationships. It may also be described as covenantal justice, which goes beyond seeking retribution and punishment but wishes to restore all relations.

## The Africa we pray for

Throughout the history of Africa and colonialism, Africa has struggled with the issue of human rights. Although colonialism has passed, Africa is still struggling with the issue of human rights, for example, xenophobic attacks, gender issues, religious extremists, etc. Agenda 2063 does not give enough attention to human rights as the foundation for all the aspirations mentioned in the document. It is in this regard that Belhar 'provide[s] the framework for what we can call the discourse on solidarity and cohesion, the discourse on embrace and participation, and the discourse on compassion and human rights' (Koopman 2008b:164). Within the African context of ubuntu, it was witnessed how modernism and the powers of the global market economy led to individualism, consumerism, divisions and fragmentation, breaking down the relations between people and groups. Although it is impossible for Africa not to be influenced and even participate in the globalisation process, the AU must also be aware of the destructive powers of globalism. In many instances we find 'a culture of entitlement

and enrichment' amongst African leaders and African youth (Koopman 2008b:165). In this regard, reconciliation, as understood in the Belhar Confession, encourages us to build an ethos of participation and embracement. As mentioned earlier, when reconciliation takes place, it calls us to justice and human rights, to compassion and identification with the marginalised and to an ethos of service and restoration of dignity.

## Conclusion

Both Agenda 2063 and the Belhar Confession are documents from different bodies, the AU and the church, that create hope and describe transformation for a better Africa. There are many contact points between the two documents, but for either one – of the AU or the church – to be successful, they need each other as partners. The church needs the AU to create an environment and make available resources such as a pan-African e-university and the pan-African virtual university, where the church and other institutions can train leaders to act with integrity in an ever-changing environment to reach the aspirations of Agenda 2063.

However, the AU also needs the church to reach people at the grassroots level and create a safe space for people from every tribe, race and nation in Africa, both the rich and the poor, the marginalised and the leaders – a safe space where everyone is equal in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ because all are saved by his grace; a place where all are reconciled into a unity that works for the justice of all. It is in this regard that theological education – studying the Bible, different confessions and the context – may help the church to contribute to the transformation of Africa. The most important role the church can play is that of a servant, a servant leader, who creates a space where human rights may be recognised and everybody is welcomed. Maybe, in such a space, we will find the Africa that God intended and what we want.

## **Acknowledgements**

#### **Competing interests**

The author declares that he has no financial or personal relationships that may have inappropriately influenced him in writing this article.

#### **Author's contributions**

J.J.K. is the sole author of this article.

### **Ethical considerations**

This article followed all ethical standards of research without direct contact with human or animal subjects.

#### **Funding information**

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial or not-for-profit sectors.

## Data availability

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analysed in this study.

#### Disclaimer

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any affiliated agency of the author.

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