



The African Christian Pulse

A Bulletin of the All Africa Conference of Churches

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This temple of the Lesotho Evangelical Church is a national monument in Maseru.



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THE AACC SECOND THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE



The young theologians who attended the AACC second Theological Institute together with their facilitators.

The AACC Second Theological Institute met in Nairobi from 29th November to 5th December 2009. Thirty-three young theologians from different parts of Africa and seven facilitators interacted on “*The Crisis of Stewardship in Resource Management: A Theological Answer from Africa.*”

The Institute met a year after eighty-five young theologians met in Maputo, prior and parallel to the AACC 9th General Assembly, 2-12 December 2008. In Maputo, eight facilitators were instrumental in presenting, making contributions and bringing in other ecumenical

personalities to enrich the learning and sharing.

The Second Theological Institute was officially opened by the AACC Deputy General Secretary, Mr. Bight Mawudor, on behalf of the General Secretary who was away on official business.

Prior to the Institute, the students had been requested to write a 5000-word paper on the theme and submit the abstract before the institute commenced. During the first two days of the Institute, each student was given 20 minutes to present their paper and thereafter facilitate a discussion in a panel of five other

colleagues, while the rest of the group listened. The experience aimed at enhancing the leadership, listening, precision and communication skills of the participants. The papers presented were based on local experiences and recounted stories of resilience and resistance among communities trying to cope with the financial crisis. They underscored the role of the church and ecumenical organizations in capacitating individuals from local congregations to handle the crisis.

Among other presentations, Dr. Tharcisse Gatwa (Rwanda) introduced the theme by looking at “A Christian Ethics

answer from Africa in crisis of Stewardship and Resource Management in the Church and in the Financial Systems.” Rev. Dr. Pricille Djomhoue (Cameroon) presented a Biblical reflection on “The Crisis of Stewardship: a Feminist perspective.”

Mr. Bright Mawudor presented on “The Origin of the Ongoing Financial Crisis and its Impact on Africa”, and then interacted with students on resource mobilization. As part of exposure, participants visited Churches in Kenya that have been successful in resource

mobilization. Prof. Esther Mombo, the Deputy Vice Chancellor of St. Paul's University (Kenya), made a presentation on “Self-reliance and Accountability in the church.”

Rev. Dr. Simon Dossou (Benin), the Director of Theology, Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations at AACC, interacted with students on “Social and Economic Innovations from Local Congregations.” Rev. Dr. Silas Ncozana (Malawi) gave a presentation on “Church Management and

Accountability.” As he joined the Institute back from abroad, the AACC General Secretary, Rev. Dr. André Karamaga, gave a presentation on “AACC and the Ecumenical Movement in Africa from a perspective of good stewardship in our Churches and Continent.”

The Institute is sending out a message to African churches, that they should first clean their houses and affirm their identity before talking of self-reliance and accountability ■

IN SOLIDARITY WITH SUDAN

In August 2009, AACC attended the General Assembly of the Sudan Council of Churches (SCC) where the SCC issued a strong call to the global ecumenical family summarized in the words: “Let Us Join Together to Rescue the Peace for Our People”. The situation in the Sudan is once again very tense, with severe problems with the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between the North and the South of Sudan, with violence and insecurity in many parts of the country and a lot of frustration about lack of development. As a response to this call, the AACC spearheaded an Ecumenical High-level Peace Mission to Khartoum on 3rd-6th of



The ecumenical delegation together with Church leaders from Sudan.

November 2009 with the aim to be in solidarity with the Sudanese Churches and the peoples of the Sudan in this time of distress and tension; to express concern and listen to the different stakeholders that

have power and responsibility to protect civilians from further suffering and to work for a lasting peace in the Sudan (including the President Omar al-Bashir) and to recommit the Ecumenical Movement in

Africa to engage for peace, justice and life for the Sudan.

Members of the ecumenical high-level delegation were: His Holiness Abune Paulos, Patriarch of the Ethiopia Orthodox Tewahedo Church; Rt. Rev. Joseph Kanuku, Bishop of Machakos, Anglican Church of Kenya; Dr. Agnes Abuom, AACC Ecumenical Accompanier and Mr. Niklas Eklov, Program Manager, AACC Secretariat, Nairobi, Kenya.

The delegation had fruitful meetings with the Sudanese churches, concerned government officials, Non Governmental Organisations and the United Nations that confirmed the gravity of the situation. The mission also confirmed the urgency to amplify the voice of the Sudanese churches and re-engage internationally for peace in the Sudan. The most pressing concerns include the need to:

1. Fully implement the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA):
2. Support process of voter registration, elections in 2010 and the referendum in 2011:

3. Address the humanitarian situation (plight of Internally Displaced Persons and refugees)
4. Call for the responsibility to protect the lives of innocent people where there is violence and insecurity
5. Support Christian unity and collaboration

The Ecumenical High-level Peace Mission was successful and met the aims of the visit, despite not meeting the President himself. The mission was itself a message of solidarity at a very critical time and much time was given to listen to the different Sudanese stakeholders as well as to express the concern of the ecumenical movement. There is a sense of urgency that more must be done to secure the peace in the Sudan and the intention of the ecumenical movement to step up its engagement in solidarity, assistance and advocacy is very important. The critical issue of voter registration was very much discussed and highlighted by the delegation as a key priority during the registration month of November – that the churches need to “lay down their tools” to ensure that all register. The

dialogue with the SCC leadership was very important and has given the AACC a strong mandate to engage in continental and global advocacy together with the World Council of Churches and partners in the Sudan Ecumenical Forum (SEF) in the issues specified above. The SCC statement presented to AACC and the outcomes from the SEF General Assembly helps to direct the activities in this regard.

The Peace mission confirmed the need to continue to pray together with and for our sisters and brothers in the Sudan. The “Call for Prayers” letter by the AACC sent out to all members and friends of Sudan on November 9, 2009, was a concrete response to this understanding.

An Eminent Persons Peace mission will take place on Dec 7-9, 2009, to listen to the Government of Southern Sudan and to address the concerns of the churches ■

THE DARFUR REGIONAL INITIATIVE

The AACC organised a Darfur Regional Initiative for lasting peace in Sudan, Chad and the Central African Republic (CAR), which ran from 23rd-24th

November in Nairobi, Kenya. The Initiative sought to understand the current situation in the three countries, the linkages between the Darfur crisis and the crises in Chad and

the CAR, and thereafter formulate a way forward.

The participants gave the following feedback in relation to their evaluation of the

Initiative.

1. Tipo Deng Paulino, Tente d'Abraham; Chad



The situation in both my country and the region are unstable. I found this consultation very relevant to my work and I did also find that quite a number of the problems facing the Central Africa/Darfur were addressed. Participants were made much more aware of the latest dynamics in the conflict in the region. This is very important for us as we shape our intervention strategies. I regret we missed the contributions of Foud Hikmat –a delegation from Tchad.

2. Rev. Emmanuel Nathan A Bandi, Sudan Council of Churches; Sudan



The situation in my country can be described by those of us struggling to survive as a situation that is falling apart. I found this consultation very relevant to my work and it addressed a number problems facing Central Africa especially those affecting my people in Darfur. The consultation creates opportunities for people in the region to work with one another and also share their experiences.

3. Moses Monday John Abbas, Sudanese Organization for Non-violence and development (SONAD); Sudan



The situation in my country especially in Darfur requires prayers and action. This is the case because the CPA is collapsing and efforts need to be put together to rescue its implementation. This consultation was very relevant to my work and it addressed critical areas facing our region. We however need support from regional and international organizations to put together local contributions to the peace process in Darfur. This consultation has helped in how we can put this together.

4. Name: Mohammed Seliman Khater, Darfur Organization Network for Education (DONE); Sudan



The situation in my country is acceptable but the situation in the region is deteriorating. This consultation was very relevant to my work and it also addressed issues that face the people in the region though not every one who should have participated was here. The need for continued coordination and follow up on activities would ultimately make such a consultation contribute to lasting peace in the region.

5. Name: Bouboa Victoire, Reformed Church of Central Africa; Central Africa Republic



We are experiencing both economic and political conflict in the region. We really have no

peace in the rebel controlled areas. I commend this consultation as an important step in the long journey for peace in the region. I regret that we did not benefit from a number of critical actors who were not able to make it. We will have made our contribution to lasting peace in the region if the recommendations drawn from this meeting are implemented.

**6. Pingama-Modo Noeline,
Association of Women
Jurists of Central Africa;
Central Africa Republic**



Though my country and the

entire Central African region are struggling to have peace, there is no doubt that everyone sees peace as a critical element for prosperity of other development sectors in the region. This has been confirmed by the three countries participating in this consultation. Indeed, I believe that what needs to be done now is to effect the plans that have been agreed upon. However, for this to happen, it will be imperative upon all players and in particular the AACC (and others at the regional level) to be patient and encourage focal points in the various countries in rolling out activities and expectations because the Darfur crisis has many dynamics and therefore, complicated.

**7. Name: Pembu Ndalako
Michel Venceslas,
Commission of Episcopal
Justice and Peace;
Central Africa Republic**

The capital city and its surroundings are somehow peaceful but there continues to



be some lack of peace in the north and in the west. Because of the Darfur crisis - which affects CAR, Sudan and Chad - we still have many armed groups that affect peace in the region. This consultation helped us to analyze the real problems in the region and suggest methods that we can use to tackle them. I regret that the consultation did not benefit from the experiences of some participants who were not able to attend. It is my hope that their inclusion will be considered in the future ■

THIRD ROUND OF CAPACITY BUILDING FOR CHURCHES

This time the AACC received 36 lay leaders who attended the third round of training organized by the AACC's Empowerment and Capacity Building Department. Most of the lay leaders had been

chosen from elders and senior public servants who have one role or another in church management. More interestingly, churches which sent these participants took care of the air tickets and AACC is

now happy to offer such a space and give proper exposure to lay leaders as well.

The Christian Pulse did not give a chance to everyone of them to express their happiness but

everyone left Nairobi with a better understanding of church management and expressed

deep gratitude to the AACC for the opportunity. The course id progressively enhancing the

ownership of AACC by its members ■



Church lay leaders who participated in the capacity building workshop together with some of the AACC staff.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF THEOLOGY, ECUMENICAL AND INTERFAITH RELATIONS

From 24th-25th November 2009, a meeting of the AACC Theology, Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Advisory Committee met in Nairobi and among other things agreed on its mandate for the four coming years. In addition, the Committee advised about the plan of activities to be undertaken by the department during the year 2010.

THE MANDATE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The mandate of the Advisory Committee is to advise the AACC and other Christian organizations and institutions on the best ways:



Members of the Theology, Ecumenical and Interfaith relations advisory committee.

1. To respond to the need of a well contextualized and articulated theology that affects and transforms all dimensions of life within God's creation.
2. To increase joint action on theological education on the African continent in order to serve the Lord by promoting unity of the Church and social cohesion to overcome fragmentation based on denominationalism, ethnocentrism, gender disparity and other divisive forces.
3. To articulate a common vision for the future of religious and theological education which takes place in theological colleges and to develop new strategies for ecumenical cooperation in theological education in Africa.
4. To promote research, production and circulation of

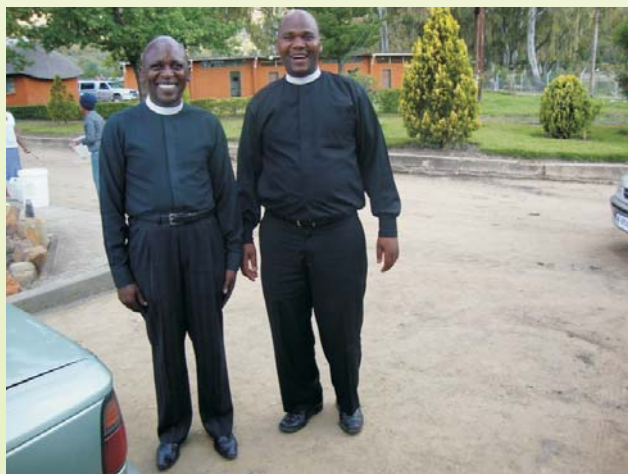
contextual theological literature, textbooks and electronic resources and to enhance library and academic staff development.

5. To enhance the formation of servant leadership among young people for the churches, theological institutions, the ecumenical family and the wider society.
6. To share informed models of inter-religious witness and relations/ dialogue in theological education between different churches and theological institutions in Africa in co-operation with PROCURA.
7. To explore ways and means of reviving sub-regional and regional Associations of Theological Institutions and creating a forum of theological education on the African

continent.

8. To explore ways and means of creating a fund for the promotion of Theological Education in Africa supported by contributions from local resources as well as international partners.
9. To ensure and to give advice on the activities of the Theology department, particularly in organising, screening and prioritising regional grants for theological education projects and to give quality accompaniment for the projects.
10. To encourage the churches and theological institutions and all other stakeholders to support the process and to exercise their responsibilities for theological education in Africa ■

SMOOTH TRANSITION IN THE LESOTHO EVANGELICAL CHURCH



Incoming team.



Outgoing team.

The Lesotho Evangelical Church was the first to invite the new AACC General Secretary to visit the

church and the country as soon as possible. This invitation was verbally conveyed in Maputo after the closing ceremony in

which the new leadership had been inducted.

The visit took place between

October 31st - November 3rd 2009, coincided with the Church's celebration of 500 years of John Calvin the protestant reformer of the church. It also coincided with a transitional process in which the president of the Lesotho Evangelical Church, Rev. John

Mokhahlane and his Executive Secretary, Rev. B. M. Kometsi were replaced by a new team which was about to take over the leadership of the church.

It is important to note that the Lesotho Evangelical Church is a vibrant church well respected

in the country and keen to support the Campaign for African Dignity which was expressed through a special offering to support the work of the AACC ■

A GHANAIAN CHURCH HAS WON AN AWARD FOR SUPERB ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

The Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ghana (EP Church) has won an international award for exemplary work in mitigating the negative effects of climate change in Ghana. The UN General Secretary, Mr. Ban Ki-Moon presented the prestigious award from the United Nations to the Rt. Rev Francis Amenu who received it on behalf of the Church at a ceremony held in Windsor City, United Kingdom from 2nd - 4th November, 2009. The ceremony was also attended by other dignitaries including the Duke of Edinburgh, Prince Philip who hosted the event, the president of the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) - Archbishop Valentine Mokiwa and Mr. Arthur Shoo, the AACC Director for Empowerment and Capacity Building.

The EP Church, which is a member of the AACC, has been in the forefront in developing

programmes to assist in environmental conservation through its sponsored institutions, including schools and colleges. The Church has a membership of 150,000 members and it works through 138 districts in the country. Such programmes focus on achieving sustainable development, with special emphasis on poverty reduction among the people.

In receiving the award, the Rt. Rev. Amenu said under EPC's 2010 Agenda, the Church is focusing on developing programmes that encourage sustainable development and has already started projects in three districts in northern Ghana that emphasize on good nutrition, environmental conservation and proper sanitation. Already it has established sanitation clubs in its schools.

The AACC has congratulated the EP Church for winning the

award and recommends other churches to emulate this exemplary effort to conserve the planet earth for future generations.

Climate change has become a critical global issue and is today the greatest challenge to the welfare of all life on earth besides being a threat to the very existence of mankind. Every institution, including faith organizations, has therefore been challenged to contribute in reversing the trend. Religious institutions are uniquely positioned to develop programmes that can shape the behaviour and outlook of the people towards conserving the environment for generations to come. With their unparalleled presence throughout the world penetrating even to the grassroots, the faith entities can help tip the scales in favour of world climate safety and justice for future generations ■

HIGHLIGHTS OF CALENDAR OF EVENTS

UNFCCC on Climate Change in Copenhagen

The AACC will participate in the forthcoming United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change set for 7th -18th December 2009, in Copenhagen, Denmark. The AACC Program Executive for Climate change will be present.

Regional Consultation on CSO Development Effectiveness

A consultation for Civil Society Organizations on Development Effectiveness will be taking place on 27th - 28th January 2010, in Nairobi, Kenya, under the auspices of AACC.

Finance Committee meeting

The AACC Finance Committee meeting will take place in Nairobi, Kenya on 1st and 2nd February 2010.

Executive Committee meeting

The AACC Executive Committee meeting will be held in Kampala, Uganda from 24th - 25th March 2010.



WE INVITE YOU ALL TO SHARE YOUR STORIES AND EXPERIENCES THROUGH THE AFRICAN CHRISTIAN PULSE

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