As the All Africa Conference of Churches is moving towards its 10th General Assembly and 50th Anniversary in 2013 we would like to recall some of the history of the AACC by first looking at the conference in Ibadan, Nigeria in January 1958, the very inception of the AACC.

The theme of the conference was “The Church in Changing Africa”. Representatives of church bodies in 25 African countries met on questions dealing with the Church, youth and the family, the Church and economic life, the Church and citizenship, the Church and culture, as well as the growing Church.

The conference report included a Message to the Churches of Africa which was full of enthusiasm and thankfulness to God for the way that the Gospel was received in so many countries and transformed so many men and women in Africa. During the conference, the experience of unity was rich and deep, however the many divisions which prevent Christians from witnessing to the unity in Him was also acknowledged. The message continues:

“We rejoice in the advance of Christian countries toward self-government and in the liberation of African energies and talents, praying that they may be used for the service of Him whom we acknowledge to be the Lord of all mankind.”

“The continent of Africa will see unparalleled events and changes during the rest of this century, welcomed by some, feared by others. We pray that the Christian Church of Africa will play its role as champion, teacher, counsellor and shepherd during these crucial years. We are humbly aware of our responsibilities to God and to this continent, and dedicate ourselves anew to their performance, trusting that we shall be led and supported by our fellow Christians throughout Africa and the world.”

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On this first All Africa Church Conference the immense value of fellowship and understanding between the churches on the vast African continent was recognized. A committee was named to consult with the Christian Councils of Africa, church bodies as well as other agencies concerned with the witness for Christ in Africa for the implementation of the resolutions of the Ibadan conference. The committee was also to appoint a Continuation Committee and possible structures for the new organization. The AACC was indeed conceived in Ibadan, Nigeria, and born in 1963, in Kampala, Uganda.

AACC PARTNERS’ CONSULTATION 2012

ACC partners from Africa, Europe and Australia met at the Desmond Tutu Conference Centre in Nairobi on 12-14 March 2012. Since last year the number of representatives from African partners has more than doubled which was very much appreciated.

Key note speaker was Rev Dr Johnson Mbillah, General Advisor of the Programme for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa (PROCUMRA) who lectured on Peaceful coexistence between Christians and Muslims in Africa and in the world. Dr Mbillah inspired an intense discussion and fruitful group work.

Updates on the AACC programmatic activities were given. Partners had many questions and suggestions regarding the AACC programmes and budget. Both in plenum and in group works lively discussions took place and the partners could give their views, among others on the forthcoming Assembly in June 2013. The consultation was carried out in an atmosphere of honesty, frankness and amicability.

Some of the partners that attended the meeting; Photo: AACC
The Ecumenical Special Envoy to Sudan, Rev. Dr. Samuel Kobia, convened a meeting for Sudanese Church Leaders on 8 - 9 March 2012, with attendance from those in Juba and Khartoum who together agreed on the way to become better organized in order to play the role of the Church as the Salt and Light of Sudan. During this meeting, Kenyan Church Leaders took time to fellowship, share their experiences, and encourage their Sudanese counterparts.

We thank God for the active participation of Church leaders from these two nations, which need a Church speaking with one voice.
In 2004, the Jirani Pamoja group started teaching sanitation, food security, and other simple methods and techniques to women of various age groups drawn from disadvantaged economic backgrounds in Nairobi. The group also teaches the women animal husbandry, tree growing, embroidery, baking, and fireless cooking. Women have a chance to learn from one another and from older members of the group. Peace building activities, informal lessons to the women on breast feeding, family planning and other life skills are some of the activities carried out by the Jirani Pamoja group. Their main challenge is lack of funds to carry out their various projects with a vision for a society that respects, conserves and utilizes the environment sustainably to the glory of God. Over 50 local women have found refuge in this group. On 17 March 2012 the Jirani Pamoja group of Kiambu county was visited by a study group from ACT for Peace Australia, the international aid agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia. Since 1948 Act for Peace has been working to reduce poverty, protect refugees, prevent conflicts and empower communities in the Horn of Africa including South Sudan, as well as others such as Zimbabwe. Act for Peace is one of the partners of the AACC.
Persons with disabilities are still faced with problems of discrimination, stigma and ejection starting from the home, school, community and even the Church. They experience lack of access to physical facilities including churches. Many theological institutions do not admit disabled students. This was the key message from the Theological Workshop on Disability Discourse for the Association of Theological Institutions in East Africa (ATIEA) on 27 February – 2 March 2012 in Nairobi. The workshop brought together representatives from ATIEA and the Ecumenical Disability Advocates Network (EDAN).

For long, the church has lagged behind the secular world in acknowledging disabled people in her midst and has sometimes shut out and discouraged disabled people from being an integral part of the Body of Christ.

Since 2006, efforts have continued to open up theological institutions to introduce disability into their curricula. The workshop received reports of EDAN’s efforts to introduce disability discourse in the institutions and discuss the best approach to bring about the inclusion of persons with disabilities (PWDs) in the academic and social lives of theological institutions under the auspice of ATIEA.

As a way forward it was agreed that EDAN and ATIEA should continue to dialogue with Church Leaders in order to create sensitization with a view of having them accept to ordain disabled graduates of theological institutions. On their part, theological institutions should introduce short disability courses as soon as possible and plan on fully integrating it into the curriculum in the long run.
God of Life lead Africa to Peace, Justice and Dignity

You and your friends can contribute to it

AACC Campaign for African Dignity

- We are seen as poor, yet making others rich - seen as having nothing, yet possessing everything

2 Cor. 6:10

- Little drops of water make a mighty ocean

AACC Theological Education Fund

- Kidogo Kidogo Hujaza Kibaba

- Joining Hands for the Training of African Theological Leadership

- Joindre les mains pour la formation des leaders chrétiens pour l’Afrique

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