

"THEOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN THE ALL AFRICA CONFERENCE
OF CHURCHES" - 1958 - 1978

BY

LUCKIO O. OTIENO
B.A.(Hon.)(Nairobi), Dip.Ed.(U.K).

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the major themes discussed by African church leaders at the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACCC) between 1958 and 1978. It deals with the discussions at the assemblies which were held in 1958, 1963, 1969 and 1974 in the context of THEOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN THE ALL AFRICA CONFERENCE OF CHURCHES. The research covered the following areas: the historical background of the AACCC, Christian mission in the AACCC, African cultural developments in the AACCC, and the prophetic ministry of the churches in Africa.

The objectives of the study were first, to establish the theological developments that have taken place in each of the themes discussed by examining the contents of each topic; secondly, to find out the context in which the subject was discussed; and finally, to determine conclusions that were reached in each case. In the course of analysis we also found out what aspects of the themes have been implemented by the African churches, and what aspects were re-discussed from one particular assembly to another.

In order to achieve the above objectives we analysed and compared the available documentations in the archives of the AACCC and interviewed certain personalities involved in the activities of the AACCC. In our study we paid particular attention to the messages sent out to all

churches by the delegates of the different assemblies because we considered these messages, resolutions and recommendations to be the essence of the theological developments in the AAOC.

The study has been presented in six chapters. Chapter one is the introduction. Chapter two is the historical background of the AAOC from 1958 to 1978. Chapter three examines the theme of Christian mission in the AAOC context. Chapter four studies African cultural developments in the AAOC. Chapter five deals with the subject of the "Prophetic Ministry of the Churches in Africa". Chapter six gives a summary, comments and conclusions on the whole thesis.

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ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE THESIS

- AAIC - All Africa Conference of Churches
- Ed(s) - Editor or Editors
- INT - International Missionary Council
- Ibid - Ibidem
- NJK - National Council of Churches of Kenya
- N.D. - No Date
- Op. Cit. - Opus Citatur
- OAU - Organization for African Unity
- Rev. - Reverend
- USA - United States of America
- WCC - World Council of Churches
- _____ - For Words Underlined - see Glossary
- EACC - East Asian Christian Conference
- EPEAA - Ecumenical Programme for Emergency Action in
Africa
- CEA - Conference of European Churches
- COLA - Committee on Cooperation in Latin America
- NCC - National Christian Council
- YWCA - Young Women's Christian Association
- YMCA - Young Men's Christian Association
- WSCF - World Students Christian Federation

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The subject of Theology has been one of great interest and an important study in most of the Christian churches, Bible schools and colleges of theology. The subject has never been static. New insights expressed in different social, cultural and political contexts continue to emerge. The best examples of theological developments in Africa are those given by church leaders and scholars within the context of the AACQ. In this study, we examine some of these theological issues which include amongst others Christian mission. In Africa, African cultural developments and the prophetic ministry of the churches in Africa.

OBJECTIVES

The following are the main objectives of this study:

1. To establish what theological developments can be identified in each of the themes discussed.
2. To examine the contents of each theme, the context in which it was discussed and the outcome of the discussions.
3. To examine the recommendations, resolutions and the messages sent out to the churches in Africa for information and further discussion.

The study concludes by finding out what aspects of each subject has been implemented by the African churches, what issues were re-discussed, or omitted from one particular assembly to another.

METHOD OF STUDY

In this research our method of study has been expositive, analytic, comparative and synthetic. Before we go any further to explain what we mean by these terms, let us add on to say that with these guidelines of approach used in mind, we started by studying the reports of the last three AAJC general assemblies including the report of the very first All African Church Conference which was held in 1958, bringing together church leaders for the first time from all over Africa and making way for the beginning of the AAJC.

We also examined some of the relevant AAJC publications such as "News Bulletins" and "Newsletters" which come out quarterly and monthly respectively. Other relevant publications by theological scholars in Africa on the work of AAJC were also examined. All these studies have been useful in helping us to establish the theological developments in the AAJC.

By following the expositive method we were able to dig out the facts from our general survey of the materials available, we carefully examined and exposed what actually were the contents of the relevant aspects of theology discussed in the

assemblies.

By carefully analysing the available documents in the archives of the AAJC and interviewing some personalities involved, we clearly brought out the political and ecclesiastical context in which these themes were debated upon and what merited particular themes to be discussed by different assemblies.

Finally, by comparing ideas from different AAJC assemblies, we can now tell what developments have taken place in each case noting similarities, aspects that have been either added or omitted from particular themes.

By a synthesis of our findings, from different assemblies and other sources together, we can now give a clear meaning and understanding of the theological developments that have taken place in the AAJC. This has also helped us to see what contributions the AAJC has made to the life of the churches in Africa, and in the search for an African Christian Theology. The study has been divided into six chapters. Chapter one is the introduction, followed by chapter two on the historical background of the AAJC from 1958 to 1978. This historical background is necessary if one has to understand clearly, not only the theological developments that have taken place but also the AAJC historical context as an ecumenical body and its

functions as well.

Chapter three examines the theme of Christian mission in the AAJC context. Here we discuss the definition and the objectives of mission in general and also in the AAJC context. We also examine situations in Africa for mission and the changing concepts of mission from one assembly to the other.

Chapter four studies African cultural developments in the AAJC. We start by defining what culture is in relation to Africa and its significance in church life today and in finding the African authenticity and identity, especially in the AAJC context.

Chapter five will deal with the subject of the 'Prophetic Ministry of the Churches in Africa'. We start by defining the theme then we discuss its developments in the AAJC from 1958 to 1978.

To conclude, in Chapter six, we give a summary, comments and conclusions on the whole thesis.

Following the conclusion, we have a glossary of some of the terms used in the thesis, bibliography and appendices.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The interviews conducted during this study were informally carried out with the people mentioned in the Appendix (VI), during the AAJC symposium on "The Bible and Evangelisation of Africa", held at Limuru, Kenya, on 12th to 18th November, 1978. The subjects discussed were mainly those related to the themes discussed in this thesis.

During the course of the research, the writer was not allowed by the AAJC Headquarters to study the minutes of the assemblies which no doubt carry the details of each assembly deliberation. Hence, the investigation was confined to the assembly reports and the relevant books discussing the issues related to the theological developments in the context of AAJC.

CHAPTER II

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE ALL AFRICA CONFERENCE OF CHURCHES

The All Africa Conference of Churches commonly referred to as the AACCC is the largest Christian ecumenical movement based in the Africa region. To discuss theological developments which have taken place within the movement between 1958 and 1978. It is helpful to begin by examining the historical background of the organisation. This is important because the AACCC theological reflections are embedded right in its origins, objectives and the mission for which it was formed.

A study of the AACCC's historical background cannot be done in isolation from other world ecumenical movements, especially the international movements such as the World Council of Churches, International Missionary Council, World Students' Christian Federation, The Young Women's Christian Association and the Young Men's Christian Association. It is from these international Christian organisations that some of the National Christian Councils are regional ecumenical movements found in Asia, Middle East, Europe, Latin America and Africa actually found their roots. Hence in a study of the theological developments in the AACCC as a regional ecumenical body in Africa, we find a number of theological ideas and reflections, as

we shall later see, that are similar, in one way or the other, to what the International Missionary Council and World Council of Churches stood for in the past and even today. This clearly confirms that all the regional ecumenical Christian organisations are an offshoot of these bodies particularly the World Council of Churches.

At this stage it will be necessary to clarify the term 'ecumenical' as used in this thesis.

"Like the word 'church' the term 'ecumenical' points to a reality which must be seen to be both universal and particular. These are two inseparable aspects of a single whole. In so far as institutions can embody the life of the church or the ecumenical movement, they need to be both local and world-wide. Each is dependent on the other and necessary to the other." (1)

The word 'ecumenical' is derived from the Greek word 'OIKOUMENE', it means 'the whole inhabited world'. However, Goodall makes it much easier to understand especially where he says the word should be seen to be "universal and particular", this brings to mind the idea of either a large or small society held together under common loyalties and standards. In our case, ecumenism may be used to refer to the world-wide scope of churches' fellowship such as the World

Council of Churches, The word could also be used to refer, simply, to more than one church organisation working together in cooperation such as we find in both National Christian Councils throughout the world and in regional Christian organisations such as the AACJ in the continent of Africa or The East Asia Christian Conference (EACC) in Asia.

WHAT IS THE HISTORY OF ECUMENICAL MOVEMENTS IN WORLD TODAY?

As already said, to be able to identify how and where the regional ecumenical movements, including the AACJ, germinated, it is necessary to start by briefly examining how the major world ecumenical movements started and what their objectives were.

A study of the Protestant churches ecumenical history on which our research is based (excluding the Roman Catholic Church) shows that efforts to reunite separated Protestant churches have had a history that would date as far back as the 16th century. However, for our study purposes, we shall concentrate on the developments that took place more in the twentieth century. Yri supports this approach where he says the following:

"For a variety of complex reasons whose exploration lies beyond the scope of this study, the twentieth century witnessed a sudden upsurge in the coming together of the churches. Out of this the ecumenical movement was born. In a memorable address delivered in 1942 on the occasion

of his elevation to the office of Archbishop of Canterbury, William Temple described the ecumenical movement as the 'great new fact of our era' despite its being an incidental and unplanned result of 150 years of the modern Protestant missionary enterprise" (2)

It is not surprising that both Yri and Archbishop Temple should respectively describe the coming together of the Protestant churches in Europe, America and in Africa as a "sudden upsurge" and "great new fact of our era". This is because, although the Christian churches had a common aim of reaching the unreached with God's message, right from the beginning different Protestant groups were quite hostile to each other. The Third World countries were the major battle-fields. For Africa the historians well described the period as one for: "the scramble for Africa." And as the colonialists went on tearing Africa apart for their political interests, their brother missionaries also went ahead scrambling for converts for their different denominations. Between the 16th and 20th century: "Neither the missionaries, nor those who sent them out, were aiming at the creation of a world-wide fellowship inter-penetrating the nations, bridging the gulfs between them, and supplying the promise of a check to their rivalries. The aim for nearly the whole period was to preach the Gospel to as many individuals as could be reached so

that those who were won to discipleship should be put in the way of eternal salvation. Almost incidentally, the great world fellowship has arisen; it is the great new fact of our era (1942:2)" (3)

Although both at Regional and International levels a number of churches have agreed to work together at carrying out their Christian mission, rivalry and hostility between churches in some countries has not totally stopped. However, lack of co-operation from such church groups has not affected much the development of and support for the WCC and the different regional ecumenical movements.

1910 EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL ECUMENICAL MISSIONARY CONFERENCE

The first international ecumenical missionary conference was held in 1910 at Edinburgh. This conference was called the World Missionary Conference. Yri has this to say about it:

"Edinburgh 1910 pressed on the Christian movement a new undefined priority, the unity of the people of God must be expressed as the missionary task is carried forward. The maintenance of the confessional differences of the separate churches and their mission no longer had pride of place. It came to be regarded as of secondary importance." (4)

Two major concerns of the churches are clearly spelt out here by Yri. First and foremost is that the churches

must agree to work together in co-operation in order to carry out the call for a world-wide Christian mission. Secondly, for this unity of the churches to be achieved, each church group should be prepared to disregard their 'confessional differences' and unite with others in order to carry out their missionary work.

1910 Edinburgh is a significant date in the history of ecumenical movements throughout the world. This is because it was from this conference that the churches somehow achieved a genuine inter-mission co-operation in the years that followed.

Following 1910, the International Missionary Council was officially constituted in 1921 at a conference held at Lake Mohonk in the U.S.A. The first conference of the International Missionary Council (IMC) was held in 1928 at Jerusalem in Israel.

The major concern of the IMC was to find ways and means of furthering the co-operation of church missions in order to help the different missions to work together in unity and to carry out their mission work more effectively both in Europe/America and overseas. At their first assembly held in Jerusalem, one of their concerns was to examine the most urgent problems confronting the whole missionary enterprise. In 1957/8 the IMC held its second assembly in the continent of Africa in Accra, Ghana.

Following the formation of IMC in 1921, the second world important ecumenical movement was the World Council of

Churches. This was formally constituted at its first international assembly held at Amsterdam in 1948. Fey has this to say about the formation of the WCC:

"At the Amsterdam Assembly of 1948, the number of representatives of the younger churches was so limited that they 'were swamped in a sea of delegates from older churches' and that 'their opinions on many issues were not clearly heard' " (5)

This is to say that the churches from the so-called Third World countries were not well represented at this international Christian conference. It was partly this kind of imbalanced representation to international Christian assemblies that early brought into light the need for the formation of National Christian Councils and more important, regional ecumenical Christian organisations, so that each continent or regions such as Africa, Asia, Latin America, Middle East, Europe and North America could be able to send sufficient representatives of their choice to such meetings.

In 1954, the WCC held its second assembly at Evanston in Illinois. In 1961 it had its third assembly at New Delhi in India. The third assembly remains significant because it was at this assembly that the International Missionary Council and the World Council of Churches officially integrated leaving the World Council of Churches as the largest international Christian organisation.

Talks to merge the two bodies (IMC and WJC) started as far back as 1950, but then it did not become a reality until 1961 at the WJC third assembly.

Under the political, economical and social circumstances prevailing in the world at that time, some of which are listed below, it was important for the Christian ecumenical movements operating at international levels to work together in order to form a strong force against any kind of estrangement that might face the churches.

Factors that explain the merger of the International Missionary Council with the World Council of Churches could well be summarized as follows:

1. The unity of the nations of the world (UNO) which resulted in a greater interdependence between countries; the development of science, technology and better economic situations undermined the position of Christianity. Hence, for the churches to play an effective and significant role that would be felt by the world, they had to co-operate at all levels and work in unity.
2. The western world position of Christianity which had been a position of privilege was

severely shaken by the rise of secularization and new ideologies such as Marxism.

3. As a whole, the church and the world faced the process of estrangement which came with political, economical, technical and social changes.

Apart from the World Council of Churches, which became well-known after its merger with IMC, there were also other important international bodies, such as the Young Men's Christian Association, the Young Women's Christian Association and the World Students' Christian Federation. It was mainly through these smaller Christian organizations that Christian leaders in Asia, Africa and Latin America were able to make contact with Christians in other countries. However, at the international level, the WCC became a more recognized bridge between the churches even though it did not give an entirely satisfactory linkage at this early stage. This is why Fey says that:-

"At the beginning of our 1958-68 period, the status of younger churches in the ecumenical movement was still ambiguous and uncertain. Only twenty-four of these churches had joined the World Council. So they represented a small minority. And within their different regions they had little contact with each other. Most younger churches knew a great deal more about the churches in the country from which their missionaries had come than about the churches in their

own part of the world. " (6)

At the beginning of the 1958-1968 period the status of most churches, mainly from the Third World countries was unclear. Hence, their representation in the international Christian meetings was still far too small. The major reason for this could also be the fact that at this time most Third World countries were still under colonial rule and therefore the churches in the same regions were still being led by missionaries from abroad who were part and parcel of western churches. Moreover, in these regions there were no regional organizations that could help bring church leaders together to arrange to be represented in such assemblies. In each region, there were still many barriers which would not allow churches to get together at local levels. Some of these were; poor communication systems, language barriers and even denominational differences. From these examples, we conclude that the churches needed to come together at both local and regional levels in order to be able to fulfil the following:-

1. Their ecumenical calling which would involve, above all things, their Christian mission to their own regions and to the world.
2. Create opportunities for the church leaders to learn from each other by reflecting on their different activities, by sharing their experiences.

4. To be allowed to share their spiritual insights at the international ecumenical conferences such as at the WJC assembly without having to be represented by foreign missionaries.

In 1949, the churches in Asia led the way in forming the "East Asia Christian Conference" and they were followed later by Africa, Latin America and the Pacific Islands. Let us now examine how such regional ecumenical movement was formed.

REGIONAL ECUMENISM

Regional ecumenism came in answer to the need for churches within each continent or region to get together in order to fulfil their ecumenical calling right at the grass-root level. Harold Fey describes what took place as follows:-

"This development of a regional ecumenism was in no way a withdrawal from the world-wide movement. On the one hand it was an effort to formulate more clearly what were the concerns of each region and what contribution it could make to the whole. At the same time it was realized that the great question was how to bring the Christian message to the people of Asia or Africa in a manner truly comprehensible in the indigenous cultural situations, but with full loyalty to the essential content of the gospel, was a question which could best be answered by the churches together continent by continent." (7)

Right from the beginning of the twentieth century, regional ecumenical movements, such as the All Africa Conference

of Churches, had the full support of the World Council of Churches. It was well understood that such organisations would give the churches in each region the opportunity of getting together in order to share experiences and ideas and in that way be able to learn and encourage each other and also be able to undertake common tasks such as Christian missions in their own regions.

For most of the Third World countries which were struggling for political independence during this period, the call for the unity of churches as a means of fulfilling both political and church missions in their own regions was timely. This is because the ecumenical movements organized by the churches had a role to play in taking the lead to practically show the people the importance of working together. This was significant because for once the barriers that existed between the different churches were broken down, the people would be free to work together not only on religious matters but also on other social issues. Where there is unity people work together against all kinds of forces of evil that threaten and are able to destroy human-kind and creation.

On the whole, the purpose of regional ecumenical movements can be summarized as what would help to fulfil the following:

1. Each regional ecumenical organisation when formed, would have a concern for a specific regional area and recognition of common problems and tasks within that region which could be shared by all churches and

the National Christian Council in each country especially where such National Councils have been formed. Working in collaboration with the local churches, it was hoped that the new ecumenical movements would create, among the churches, a new relationship of knowledge and service.

2. Regional ecumenical movements would bring together Christians from different church backgrounds who otherwise would never have met.
3. Each movement was seen to be of great help for the purpose of mission or evangelism.
4. They could have a concern for the political, economic, industrial and social issues of each region and for the relation of the Christian gospel to the arising issues. This is the major area that has resulted in the need to interpret and apply the Christian theology in the context of the people's traditional heritage, culture and social life.
5. The regional ecumenical movements ended up in being, to some extent, a kind of arm of the WCC in which they became a means by which the inter-church aid could be brought to needy people in each region. A good example of

the aid given by the WJC is financial assistance to help refugees in different parts of the world.

The AACJ working together with the WJC have set up a department known as the Ecumenical Programme for Emergency (E.P.E.A.A.) to carry out the refugee programme.

The fact that there are many different regions throughout the world has made the formation of Christian regional organisations significant. With political changes that were taking place in most Third World countries, some church leaders must have been quite happy with a change in the church systems as well. On the other hand some must have found the idea of forming regional organisations hard to accept. However, despite the difficulties involved in each region, these first regional organisations were formed. The first regional organisation to be formed was the EAJC and in the next section we examine the process of its formation.

THE EAST ASIA CHRISTIAN CONFERENCE

In 1949 the churches in Asia joined together to form a regional ecumenical movement which came to be known as the East Asia Christian Conference (EAJC). Like all other regional ecumenical movements that we shall briefly discuss, the E.A.C.C. movement was not a withdrawal from the world-wide movements such as the WJC.

The major reasons for forming the E.A.J.C. were twofold. First, it was to create a platform for the Asian churches to get together and identify their common problems which they could jointly try to solve. The second, and the most important reason was that they wanted to find ways and means of jointly bringing the Christian message effectively to the people of Asia in the context of their spiritual situation.

The formation of the E.A.J.C. was largely inspired by the World Council of Churches' central committee meetings which were held in 1952 at Lucknow and in 1965 at Enugu, followed by the third WCC assembly held in 1961 at New Delhi, India. All these WCC assemblies expressed the need for a regional organization that would help share the churches' problems at the same level.

THE AFRICA REGION

This was the second largest regional ecumenical assembly and was formed in Africa in 1963. It was named "The All Africa Conference of Churches (AACCC)". Although AACCC was officially constituted at Kampala, Uganda in 1963, it is important to note that the idea of forming a regional Christian assembly in Africa can be traced as far back as the beginning of the 20th century. One missionary by the name of William Carey, first called for the formation of such a regional body in one of the earliest interdenominational

missionary conference held in Johannesburg in 1904. (8)
It was unfortunate that no one took Carey seriously on the matter of forming a regional Christian organisation. Hence, Africa was nowhere in the history of the international ecumenism until 1922 when a son of Africa by the name of Willis King (who later became a bishop of the Methodist Church in Liberia) represented it in the ecumenical gathering in Asia at the World Students' Christian Federation in Peking.

The second African representation in an ecumenical meeting was again in Asia held in 1931 at Tambaram. Here Africa was well represented. In 1955 there was a similar Asia-African conference held in Bandung in Indonesia. This Christian conference greatly strengthened both the African political and church leaders in their quest for a free Africa as well as a quest for selfhood among the African churches. By 1955, there were National Christian Councils in fourteen African territories and only three were affiliated to the International Missionary Council. The three were, the Belgian Congo, Sierra Leone and South Africa. Between 1955 and 1961, eighteen African nations became independent. This made the need for interdenominational co-operation among the African churches one of great concern.

In 1955, the first All Africa Lutheran Church Conference was held on the slopes of Mount Kilimanjaro at Marangu in Tanzania. Although this conference was meant to bring the members of the Lutheran churches and missions in Africa together, it helped a great deal to give the other

African Church leaders a chance to see clearly the need for forming a united Christian organization within the continent. At the end of the Lutheran Conference the delegates made recommendations calling for the African churches to unite. This assembly involved leading Lutheran African church officials such as Josiah Kibira who is now the Bishop of his church and President (1982) of the Lutheran World Federation. In one of the Lutheran conferences, Bishop Kibira made a call for an African united church in which he made a key-note address as follows:-

"Theologically, there is lack of freedom of mind with the exception of a few cases, we can hardly think independently. We depend mostly on advisors from Europe and America. Our theological boards are very inadequate as long as they reflect American, Swedish or German Lutheran theologies rather than African theologies And yet we must stress the universality of Christ's Church. We must guard ourselves against an African church and against what we mean by a 'Confession African.' Yet the question is this: How long must we depend on the European churches to do our thinking in the very thing we wish to do?" (9)

Bishop Kibira attempted to bring out what would correctly be seen as the basis of and purpose for the formation of regional ecumenical movements. Although Bishop Kibira was a Lutheran, in this speech, he certainly was not calling for what would boost his own church alone,

but what would strengthen the church life and Christian witness in Africa as a whole. He was calling for a church structure in which the Africans would have more freedom of worship, and be able to share their insights not only amongst themselves but also with the world at the international Christian meetings. This is the church structure that ended up to be for Africa, "The All Africa Conference of Churches." Before we go into the details of how the AACJ came into being and to what extent it has developed, let us briefly examine how other regional bodies were formed.

BEAR EAST (or Middle East)

This region is well known as the seat of other faiths such as Judaism and Islam. However, it is important to know that Christianity also exists here even though it remains the minority group. Furthermore, few as they are, the Christians are divided among various ancient Eastern churches. There are members of the Roman Catholic Church and numerous Orthodox and Protestant Church organizations. These divisions among the Christians make co-operation and common worship extremely difficult. Another problem that exists is the various political divisions and conflicts which have resulted in the problem of refugees in this region.

In 1927, the first Christian Council which became known as the "Far East Christian Council" was formed. This

council stands in-between national councils and the regional body. The NECC was started mainly by foreign missionaries, hence it remained exclusively Protestant in an area where the ancient orthodox churches form the majority. Following its formation, it became more concerned with:-

1. What would be their approach to Christian and Muslim relationship?
2. Having to learn the art of being able to exist as a minority among other faiths.
3. Co-ordinating the printing and distribution of Christian literature which, to a large extent, was their major method of spreading the Christian message in the region.

Another area of concern for the Christians in this region was to identify what would be their mission to each country in the region. Both Protestants and Orthodox Christians jointly agreed to take it as their responsibility to carry out Christian witness to the people in each part of the region, particularly to those of other faiths.

In 1955, an ecumenical Youth Leaders' Consultation was held in Beirut jointly sponsored by the World Students' Christian Federation and the World Christian Council.

In 1964, the title "Near East Christian Council"

was changed to become the "Near East Council of Churches." Its constitution was also revised, spelling out the aims of the organisation which reads in part as follows:-

"The aims of the Near East Council of Churches are to aid the churches in the Near East in her proclamation to all men of the gospel of salvation through Jesus Christ; to give expression to the unity of churches in this task; and to relate the gospel to the many problems which confront men and nations in the Near East." (10)

The major objective of this organisation was to help both Protestant and Orthodox churches to co-operate and work together in carrying out their Christian mission among the people in this region.

The Christian missionaries from other countries became greatly instrumental in promoting fellowship between the Protestant and Orthodox Christians in the area. It took time also for the different religious leaders, including Christians, Muslims and Jews^t to establish a proper dialogue.

EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA

These two regions, excluding Canada, have many things in common in their ecumenical history, so they will be discussed as a region. The first thing they have in

common is that both Europe and North America have similar characteristic, church life and mission work in their thought forms and procedures. Secondly, the people in these two regions generally speak the same language. They also have the same regional meeting place which in this case is the World Council of Churches' centre at Geneva in Switzerland and for the Roman Catholic Church we have the Vatican headquarters in Rome.

Until now North America is the only area which has no distinct regional Christian ecumenical organisation. Instead, it has National Christian Councils similar to what is in Canada. The American council is known as the "New York National Christian Council" - it covers the whole continent of America, both councils in Canada and North America work together and are able to link their member churches with the World Council of Churches at Geneva.

The European regional organisation is known as the Conference of European Churches (C.E.C.). It was formed in 1959 at Nyborg in Denmark. It has a membership of eighteen European churches. It is basically an assembly of bishops, church presidents, pastors and a few lay participants. Other Christian groups and movements in Europe work alongside the Conference of European Churches.

The North American and European ecumenical movements have been involved in activities such as :

1. Creating fellowships of Christians by maintaining contacts between the churches and with the W.C.C. at Geneva.
2. Encouraging various church revival movements.
3. Organising inter-church aid especially in the post-war Europe after 1914 - 1918 and 1939 - 1945.
4. Organizing inter-church aid and service to refugees.
5. Assisting in giving and receiving aid, hence helping to create a greater unity among European churches.
6. The churches in Europe were also able to organise a committee of Christian responsibility for European co-operation.

The linguistic differences, cultural and political barriers have to some extent been a handicap in the attempts to bring churches together in Europe and North America. However, despite these handicaps, the churches in Europe and America were still able to carry

out their Christian mission both in their own regions and in other countries especially the Third World countries.

LATIN AMERICA REGION

The ecumenical movement in Latin America region originated in North America. This was partly because the Latin American region is predominantly Roman Catholic, hence, the inclusion of the few Protestant organisations from this area into the World Council of Churches took a long time before it could be approved by the members of the WCC. However, later the region became a big mission field for Anglo-Saxon North American Missionary societies. Some Protestant groups in this region such as the Pentecostal movements and evangelical faith missions, were not prepared to collaborate with the ecumenical world bodies. For that reason, the region continued, for a long time, to lack a well-organised regional ecumenical movement comparable to those of Asia, Africa or the Pacific Islands.

In 1916, the first ecumenical conference was held in Panama in Latin America under the leadership of John E. Mott, a key name in the whole story of ecumenical movements, especially before 1910. Following this conference, a movement was formed and it was named "The Congress on Christian Work in Latin America." The members of the

Roman Catholic Church were invited to this congress but none of them attended. It was at this meeting where the "Committee on Co-operation in Latin America" (CCLA) was constituted to start working towards a well organised regional ecumenical movement.

The Committee on Co-operation in Latin America was instrumental in creating National Christian Councils in the following nations (except Puerto Rico's which was founded in 1905.)

1928 Mexico

1934 Brazil

1939 Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay
and Jamaica

1940 Peru

1941 Chile and Cuba

All these National Christian Councils worked together with the CCLA despite the opposition from the anti-ecumenical faith missions such as the Pentecostal movements (which became stronger mainly after 1961). Fey has this to say about this region:

"Nowhere else is there more mistrust of, and mal-information concerning the ecumenical movement than in Latin America. In particular those groups in which the leadership is still in the hands of

conservative evangelical missionaries are against a common worship, service and witness. Nowhere else does the present 'aggiornamento' of the Roman Catholic Church affect evangelicals more than in Latin America." (11)

However, despite these oppositions, after the war, in 1939, the Committee on Co-operation in Latin America became an area committee but had some connection with the National Christian Council of the United States of America. Through the Committee on Co-operation in Latin America and several ecumenical bodies such as the World Council of Churches, and the World Students' Christian Federation, a number of young Latin American evangelicals got into contact with other ecumenical movements. Hence in 1964, a provisional committee on Christian Unity in the Latin American region was formed and Mr. Emilio Jastro was appointed its part-time secretary. All these developments led to the establishment of a more organised Latin American regional ecumenical body.

THE PACIFIC ISLANDS

The churches in the Pacific Islands region were for a long time isolated from each other. But in 1959 a number of churches and missions in this area asked the

International Missionary Council to organise a regional conference for them. Since then, new challenges forced the churches to work together in co-operation. At the end of the 1959 conference a continuation committee was formed to prepare the way for a later inaugural assembly. Mr. Vavae Toma from Samoa Island was then appointed secretary to the continuation committee. By the end of 1965 plans for the inauguration of the Pacific ecumenical conference of churches were finalised. The first regional assembly was held at Thapanche on the island of Lifou. At this assembly a number of National Christian Councils came into being.

In conclusion, one would say that there is now a well organised link between churches from nearly all corners of the world with the World Council of Churches which has its headquarters in Geneva. This is either in the form of National Christian Councils or continental ecumenical movements. The question still to be answered is, what is the significance of these regional ecumenical movements in the life of the individual churches?

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF REGIONAL ECUMENICAL MOVEMENTS

Generally speaking, the regional ecumenical bodies have a good number of things to offer to individual churches and to the National Christian Councils in different regions.

A brief summary of the advantages is given below:

1. Regional ecumenical bodies allow different church groups in one area to get together regardless of their differences, identify their common problems and jointly try to solve them.
2. Churches in one region are able to meet, share their insights and experiences and therefore learn from each other.
3. Churches have a chance to fellowship with each other, reflect on their past activities and make better plans for the future.
4. The churches from one region are able to bring their specific contributions to other ecumenical movements especially during international meetings.
5. They are able to organise regional meetings in which they can work out a Christian theology that can be well understood by the people in their areas. A good example is the

African Christian theology which is something that has been carried out in the African context.

6. The churches working together are able to reflect on their regional problems and to have a concern for issues involving politics, economics, industrial problems and many other social matters that face their regions.
7. The regional ecumenical movements have been responsible, in some cases, for the inter-church aid in their different regions. For example, the AACC has set up its own special agency to carry out the ecumenical programme for emergency action in Africa (EPEAA).
8. . In the face of many different non-religious ideologies, such as Marxism, which are aimed at replacing Christianity, the churches working together are able to respond actively
9. The Third World churches needed a strong united force to stand against all kinds

of estrangements that were arising in many different countries due to political, economical and social changes in most countries.

10. The ecumenical movements in the Third World served a purpose which Fey describes as follows:

"They have helped the churches to realize that the position of Christianity in the world is that of a minority the future of which depends on its missionary energy." (12)

Certainly, the ecumenical movements have helped the churches in Africa and other Third World countries to realize that they too had to be a giving church in terms of reaching others with material help as well as preaching the gospel rather than continue to receive from other countries especially from overseas missionaries.

The church leaders had to learn in a special way that the unity of the churches and missions are both essential aspects of the church mission. To conclude this discussion the words of Fey's are very appropriate:

"The reasons for establishing regional

conferences or councils (NCC) of churches are essentially the same in all continents although the special characteristics of the churches and the society in each region mark both the specific form and tempo of each regional development." (13)

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE REGIONAL ECUMENICAL MOVEMENTS AND THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

We have already seen that right from the very outset, the WCC has fostered relations with both National Christian Councils and the regional ecumenical organisations. The WCC has encouraged the formation of these bodies and in many ways materially supported them. These regional ecumenical movements have now become a link between most of the WCC member churches and Geneva. To a large extent the regional organisations now have a great influence on the central operation of the WCC.

It is important to note that the regional Christian organisations also have their own regional assemblies where the member churches in a region get together and reflect on their regional activities. Then there is the international WCC General Assembly which is

held once in a while and in which each regional assembly is normally well represented. It is evident from what we have discussed that the regional ecumenical movements serve an important purpose both in the life of the church in their own regions as well as in the relationship with the W.C.C. However, it is worth noting that all was promising for the regional movements and the W.C.C. In these wonderful arrangements of operation, there were also 'problems created.' Let us now mention a few of these:

PROBLEMS BETWEEN THE REGIONAL ECUMENICAL MOVEMENTS AND THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

There are possibilities that problems could arise from a regional level and perhaps at a National Christian Council level also. A strong and well organised regional ecumenical movement could very easily become either a continental ecclesiastical power block or what you might call an administrative outpost of ecumenical world organisation in which case they could reach a point in which no one would be able to control their activities be they for the good of the life of the church in that region or evil. In such a case the relationship between the regional body with the W.C.C. is bound to be strained. Besides that, a regional organisation would become a hindrance to the fulfilment of some of the objectives for which they were formed rather than foster them. If this would be the case, then neither the National Christian Councils formed in different states nor the regional

ecumenical movements in every continent should be over-stressed, particularly the regional movements.

THE AFRICA CHURCH CONFERENCE HELD ON 10-19TH JANUARY, 1958
AT IBADAN, NIGERIA

Having discussed at length how Christian ecumenical movements were formed in the different regions or continents of the world, it is now appropriate to examine in more detail both the historical background and the theological developments that followed the formation of the All Africa Conference of Churches, since this organization is the base for our study of theological developments in Africa.

In the foregoing pages of this study, under the topic of "Africa Region", we noted that the call for an ecumenical movement in which Protestant churches from different religious sects could unite and work together in co-operation was made by leading African church officials at the first All Africa Lutheran Church (14) Conference held in 1955 at Marangu in Tanzania. Following this call, there were also other important events that took place in the continent of Africa which led to the formation of the AAC. One of these important events was a Christian Conference held in 1957/8 in Ghana organized by the International Missionary Council. This was the first international Christian conference to be held in Africa. Soon after this conference there followed on 10th to 19th January, 1958 also the first All Africa Church Conference held at Ibadan, Nigeria. This conference

was held under the auspices of the Christian Council of Nigeria with the help of the International Missionary Council.

The theme for this conference was, "The Church in Changing Africa." The following were the sub-themes discussed during this conference:

1. The Church, Youth and Family
2. The Church and Economic Life
3. The Church and Citizenship
4. The Church and Culture
5. The Growing Church

There was a total number of 195 delegates at this conference, out of which 96 represented 25 African countries and churches (see Appendix III). It was at this conference that the African church leaders started to think more seriously on the formation of a regional ecumenical body. One church leader from Uganda by the name of Jean Lubikulu challenged the delegates at the assembly saying:

"We have lived to ourselves in isolation,
We need to know each other. We need to become
in fact one fellowship, one body in Christ." (15)

It was clear at this conference that a regional ecumenical organisation was necessary. The delegates felt that such a body would create a platform for the different church leaders to come together within the continent, share experiences, reflect on the past and make better plans for

their Christian mission throughout the continent and also be able to learn new things from each other. The relationship between the people at the conference and the general feelings of the delegates, was such that the IMJ in their report of the conference describe them as follows:

"It was most heartening to see the African churchmen and churchwomen themselves come forward one after the other, speaking capably, confidently and effectively; and to watch the growing sense of personal responsibility, initiative and commitment with which they dealt with the issues before them." (16)

There is no doubt that during this conference, in which the majority of the delegates were Africans, there was real freedom hence each participant felt free to say what was on their minds. At the end of the conference the delegates decided to set up a provisional committee under the leadership of Dr. Donald M'Timkulu from South Africa. The committee was given the responsibility to organise and arrange for the inauguration of the All Africa Conference of Churches which in the end became a reality in 1963 at Kampala, Uganda. Besides this decision, they also sent out a joint message which was to be read during Easter Sunday in all the churches throughout the continent of Africa. The following is the

text of the message they sent:

MESSAGE TO THE CHURCHES OF AFRICA

"We, the delegates of the first All Africa Church Conference that has ever been held in Africa, rejoice that God has called us together and in His name we send greetings from Ibadan in Nigeria to all the churches of Africa.

"We come from the countries of Sierra Leone, Gambia, Nigeria, of French West Africa (now the Central African Republic), the Belgian Congo, Angola, Zambia, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Mozambique, Egypt, Ethiopia and Malagasy, as well as other countries of Africa and other parts of the world. But although our languages are many, our reason for coming here is the same, that we love the Lord Jesus Christ and are witnesses to His Gospel, that in Him we are one people whether we speak Ibo, Yoruba, Douala, English, Afrikaans, Zulu, Sesuto, Portuguese, French, kikuyu or any other language that is spoken by the people who live in Africa. We are one in Him who was born a Jew in Bethlehem, fled from Herod

into Egypt, grew up in Nazareth, died in Jerusalem, arose there and lives today in Ibadan and in every other city and village in the world that His Father created. Of this oneness in Christ we have been given such a rich experience at this conference that not one of us is likely to forget it.

"To be here is to have abundant cause to thank God for the way that the Gospel has been brought to so many countries, and to be filled with astonished joy that it has transformed the lives of so many men and women of Africa.

"In a continent where such massive events lie ahead, we thank God that the Christian Church has taken such a deep root. We know there are millions who have not heard the Gospel and we accept the challenge of the evangelizing of our countries, especially in the face of the dangers of materialism and secularism.

"While this experience of unity has been rich and deep, we acknowledge with penitence our many divisions which have prevented us from witnessing to our unity in Him, but this we still purpose to do with His assistance.

We believe that Christ challenges us to overcome these divisions in the Church and to work for the removal of all injustices based on racial discrimination which we believe to be contrary to the will of God.

"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.

"In the name of the Father of all men, in the

name of the Son who saved us all, in the name of the Holy Spirit who inspires us, we declare ourselves to be one in Christ Amen. " (17)

The Ibadan message was the most important outcome in this first All Africa Church Conference. In this message we note several theological issues that call for a much deeper investigation. First and foremost, we see the beginning of an ecumenical movement for the African region. The delegates openly expressed the desire to carry out their Christian mission to their own people. There was also a clear awareness of the many church divisions which had hindered the African churches from witnessing to the unity the Christians have in the person of Jesus Christ. The delegates were all convinced that Christ was challenging them to overcome their divisions and work together in order to meet the needs that have arisen with the changing situations in Africa. In the assembly messages such as the one that was sent out to other churches by the Ibadan 1958 Assembly together with other resolutions and recommendations, lies the major part of Christian theological developments in the context of the AACJ.

THE AACJ FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT KAMPALA, UGANDA - 1963

The provisional committee which had been appointed at the Ibadan AACJ Assembly in 1958, worked hard in making

consultations with churches across Africa in preparation for the Kampala AAJC first general assembly. Dr. M'Timkulu, who had been appointed the first General Secretary, was able to travel widely in Africa and to bring together the ideas and planning of many church leaders. With many African countries having attained their political independence, it was clear that there was need for unity and co-operation among the African churches which would help in the development of the new nations at their formative stage and ensure that they grow into true Christian communities. Many Christians also felt that this was the time Africa needed a theological approach that would meet the different needs of the people. Just a short while before the 1963 AAJC Assembly, the following consultations were held at different places in Africa with the help of the WJC together with different National Christian Councils:

- 1961 - At Mindolo, Zambia, a conference to discuss "Christian Literature and Mass Communications"
- 1963 - Again at Mindolo, a seminar on "The Christian Family Life"
- 1962 - In Nairobi, met the first All Africa Youth Conference
- 1963 - In Harara (Salisbury), Zimbabwe, "The Christian Education Conference"

From all these conferences came new ideas and recommendations that have since been part of the theological developments in the AAJC.

When the general assembly at Kampala materialized, it not only opened a new chapter in the history of churches in Africa but it also put new life into the African Christian churches.

On the 20th April, 1963, the All Africa Conference of Churches was officially constituted at Kampala, Uganda. Five hundred people from forty different countries representing 100 churches across the continent of Africa were present to witness the occasion.

During this assembly, a planning committee to draft the AAJC constitution and to set up the working machinery of the AAJC was also appointed. It was in this assembly that the idea of a permanent working group of the AAJC was established. At this conference Mr. S. H. Amisshah, who was a retiring principal of Wesley College, Kumasi, Ghana, succeeded Dr. Donald M'Timkulu as the General Secretary of the AAJC while the Rev. James Lawson, who was stationed in the republic of Togo, became the associate AAJC General Secretary with particular responsibility for French-speaking Africa. At first the AAJC headquarters was located in the Ecumenical Centre at Mindolo, Kitwe, in Zambia, but later it was moved to Nairobi, Kenya which was thought to be more central.

THE AAJJ STRUCTURE

The planning committee at this conference recommended the establishment of four sections to form the structure of the AAJJ. These sections were later re-named as commissions. They were the following:

1. Life of the church, dealing with forms of worship, evangelization, and the training of ministers and laity.
2. Social, National and International responsibility of the church, including especially the search for a true Christian family life in Africa.
3. Christian Education and Youth, to continue the work began in Nairobi (All Africa Christian Youth Assembly at Nairobi, December, 1962).
4. Formal Education; this is a sub-division of Christian Education.

All these commissions were meant to be the working teams of the AAJJ. Each section had an appointed director, secretary, plus a group of consultants. At the moment these commissions are called programmes. Some of these that were set up in 1963 have now been dropped and new programmes set up. For example, some of the commissions we have already discussed now fall under the programme of

'development and service' as follows:-

1. Youth Programme
2. Church, Family and Society
3. Education Programme
4. Refugee Services
5. The AAJJ Research Service
6. Urban, Industrial, Rural Mission
7. The Sahel; responsible for the development and conscientization programme in the Sahelian countries such as Chad, Niger and Mali. Some of the other present programmes in the AAJJ area:
 1. Faith and Selfhood of the Church, also known as the "Theological Department"
 2. Human Rights and Liberation; also known as the Department of Social and International Affairs.
 3. The Information Department responsible for the reporting, interpretation and promotion of the work of the AAJJ.
 4. The AAJJ Communication Training Centre; runs courses on Radio Production and Audio-Visual.

The heads of these programmes (sometimes referred to as departments) form the leadership of the AAJJ at the Head office level. Above the programme heads, beginning from the top is the

principal authority of the organization. The AACC Assembly is made up of all the heads of member churches and National Christian Councils. The General Assembly which meets once every five years, is presided over by a president. Then there is the General Committee which is made up of twenty to twenty-five members heading by a chairman. It meets more often than the General Assembly - at least once a year. Within the General Committee there is an Executive Committee which is made up of six members including the AACC General Secretary and two Associate General Secretaries who also sit in this Committee as ex-officio members. The General Secretary, together with his Associate Secretaries, provide the top leadership of the AACC. They are responsible, as far as the daily running of the organisation is concerned.

At the end of the Kampala General Assembly, the AACC constitution was formulated (see Appendix IV). Once again the delegates at this very first AACC assembly sent out a message with the essence of what they had discussed and came out in the form of recommendations to be passed on to all the churches in Africa. In this message to the Protestant churches across Africa, issues of theological importance relevant to the African situation then were highlighted. The most important of these was a call for the unity of the African churches throughout the continent. The significance of such co-operation was pointed out as a means by which churches in Africa would be able to break

up whatever disunity existed between them in the past and be able to learn ifrom each other.

At the Kampala Assembly three officials from the Roman Catholic Church attended the meeting as observers although the Catholic Church is not a member of the AACJ. The organisation sees itself as an instrument of God in promoting the unity and co-operation among the African churches despite their historical and doctrinal differences. After the first assembly at Kampala, the next one was held in 1969 at Abidjan in Ivory Coast.

THE SECOND AACJ ASSEMBLY AT ABIJAN, IVORY COAST, 1969

By 1969 the AACJ, officially constituted at Kampala, Uganda in 1963, now had a sense of direction. It had a constitution which clearly stated its convictions and vision for the African churches. It was now the duty of the appointed leaders to steer the African churches to carry out their mission in obedience to the Lord's commission. While the theme at Kampala was "Freedom and Unity in Christ", at Abidjan it was "With Christ at work in Africa To-day." This assembly embarked specially on the structuring, examining and reflecting on what was to be the role of the churches in Africa. Looking back at some of the ideas that had been put forward by the church leaders at Ibadan in 1958 and at Kampala in 1963, the delegates at Abidjan, in 1969 asked themselves the following questions:

"Looking back on these years, has the church played her role as champion, counsellor and shepherd? This is the question Abidjan 1969 is called upon to examine and for the church to re-dedicate herself fully to all that is happening in all areas of life in Africa today. By this total involvement the church is simply being obedient to the call of her master who is at work in Africa to-day. The task is great, and calls upon the whole people of God." (20)

These questions that the delegates asked themselves at Abidjan were certainly of great importance to the life of the church in Africa. This assembly was attended by thirty different denominations and National Christian Councils from 42 different countries of Africa. A few African independent churches such as the African Brotherhood Church from Kenya were also represented.

As the leaders of the different churches in Africa put their heads together, they tried to identify the challenges and opportunities for Christian mission offered by their different countries. They tried to reflect on matters that affect the lives of men, women and children in Africa. They were convinced beyond doubt that the African Christian mission must be made relevant to every situation if it is to be genuine and acceptable to the African nationals. In situations of conflicts, the gospel of love, mercy, forgiveness and

reconciliation must be proclaimed not only by word but by deed also.

Following the discussions on different topics concerning Africa, the delegates at Abidjan decided to carry out a practical evangelism at the city of Abidjan:-

"The first Sunday of the Assembly (7th September, 1969) was set aside for an open-air ecumenical service at the Houphouet Boigny Stadium ...

The presence of so many Roman Catholics shows the greater desire for unity among the African Christians." (21)

This open-air Sunday service was one of the most ecumenical services ever held in Abidjan. It brought together both Protestants and Catholics. In this meeting money was collected as a sign of solidarity and witness among churches. This money was then set aside for church work among refugees in the city of Abidjan. At the end of the general assembly, the delegates once again sent out a special message to all the Protestant churches in the continent of Africa.

In their message to the churches, the delegates expressed a deep concern for the witness of Christ's church on the continent. They called upon the church leaders in Africa to make the Christian witness one that can provide for better co-operation, consultation and fellowship between all Christians. They urged the churches to pray for new

vision for the Christian people of Africa.

Another area of concern among the delegates was the provision of finance for the work of the A.A.J.J. The following was recommended at this assembly by the finance committee of the A.A.J.J. for the period following 1969.

"For the next period the annual subscription of member churches will be based on the number of communicants and non-communicant members. The figure works out at 2d or 51.F.A. (40 cents) for each member." (22)

This method of collecting subscriptions from the member churches of the A.A.J.J. was adopted from an address given by Rev. S.N. Masau, a leader of the "African Brotherhood Church of Kenya", (this is one of the African Independent Churches) who in explaining his church's sources of income said that in his church every member is expected to pay K.shs. 7.50 if a man and K.shs. 3.50 if a woman, K.shs. 1.20 if a young person and -/60 cents if a child (1969 - this system must have changed by now).

At the moment the A.A.J.J. gets very inadequate financial support from inside Africa. This support comes through the affiliation fees of member churches, National Christian Council, Mission Boards, various Christian organisations, individual donations of people who have registered as friends of the A.A.J.J. all over the world. Until now (1978) a large portion of the A.A.J.J. finance comes from overseas countries given by Christian organisations such as the World Council of Churches and different

churches and Christian Councils in Europe, Canada and the United States of America. There are also special donations by churches from in and outside Africa which are given especially for different church conferences, seminars and consultations organised by the AAJJ in different regions of Africa and on different subjects of interest to the churches. The financial support from the African churches alone remains low partly because a large number of the African churches themselves are not yet self-reliant. However, it is right to say that the African support to the AAJJ needs to be greatly stepped up.

AAJJ needs money to be able to support the staff budget, programmes, conferences, seminars, consultations and even the general assemblies. By having its financial support coming from within Africa, the member churches and National Christian Councils would demonstrate the faith they have in the AAJJ and the appreciation of its services. Let us now move on to discuss the third AAJJ general assembly which was held in 1974.

THE THIRD AAJJ GENERAL ASSEMBLY HELD ON 12TH TO 24TH MAY, 1974,
AT LUSAKA IN ZAMBIA, AFRICA

The Lusaka AAJJ General Assembly was another milestone in the history of the organisation. While the Abidjan conference in 1969 had been an assembly of churches attempting mainly to define the structure and what the role of the AAJJ should be, the Lusaka Assembly went further into the real needs of the African churches. The theme of this assembly became, "Living for Christ and No Longer for Ourselves." In his introduction

to the assembly report which was written later, the then AAJJ General Secretary, Canon Burgess Jarr (1974) described the assembly as follows:-

"There was little theorising or theologising in the abstract. The venue of the Assembly lent itself generously to facing the real facts of life, in Africa to-day. It is not surprising therefore, that the churches discovered that living for Christ and no longer for themselves, meant identification with the complex of liberation struggles that are going on in Africa. But the most startling discovery was the awareness of their own need for liberation. As such, Lusaka will be remembered as the moment in history when the churches in Africa recognised their need to be set free by Christ in order to share in His liberating and renewing activity in Africa." (23)

In the words of Canon Burgess Jarr, we see the emphasis on the development of a theology which demands practical action rather than empty words. It also calls upon the churches in Africa to re-examine themselves and be able to identify all that keeps them in any kind of spiritual bondage. It is within the background of the realization of what the people of Africa need which calls for 'liberation theology.' The kind of liberation that one would hope to set mankind free from all

that oppresses him. This call forms one major aspect of all the theological developments that have taken place in the context of AAJJ. It also forms the core of the message to the churches in Africa, that was sent out from the AAJJ third general assembly.

There were about 500 participants at the Lusaka assembly. It was the largest gathering ever recorded in the history of the AAJJ. Delegates came from 112 churches and 31 countries. There were also large numbers of guests, observers, consultants, visitors and pressmen. The nature and mission of the African churches was very well brought out at this AAJJ general assembly as one that should have a total concern for all aspects of human life. During the assembly, major theological issues related to the Christian mission in the African situation carried out in its cultural context and the urgent biblical prophetic ministry of the churches were discussed at length in small and large groups and final resolutions and recommendations were made for the information of the African churches and practical action where necessary.

Before the Lusaka AAJJ general assembly came to an end, there was an election in which different people were elected to different posts. Finally, the assembly ended with a long message to all the churches in Africa. In one part the message reads as follows:

"We saw that before we can achieve for Africa what is expected of us, before we can become a society which lives wholly and exclusively for others, we must call upon the churches in Africa to allow Christ to set them free." (24)

The delegates sent out a message to the churches which demanded freedom in all aspects of human life. It called for both the freedom of an individual Christian as well as the church as a social institution. To many of the delegates it was clear that this was the very heart of the matter and the best way the churches in Africa could reflect fully on the teaching of Christ who frees and unites as presented in the gospels. It is needless to speak of Christian unity where man and women are still in bondage of sin and continue to be oppressed by others. One thinks that this kind of freedom can be best achieved by having both the Christian leaders and the members of the Christian church being taught and helped to understand the right Christian theology that would speak to the African soul in his social and cultural situation unlike in the past when the Christian missionaries from Europe and America brought the gospel to Africa all wrapped in the Western standards of life-style and culture. The Christian message should not only be one that points to the final goal of mankind; which is the salvation of man granted by God through his Son Jesus Christ, but it should be a message that also reveals to man the need for his commitment to the present world shown in his relationship to man. One is

impressed by John Gatu's views on the concept of salvation especially where in his address to the Lusaka assembly he said:

"It is in this spirit that we need to challenge the narrow conservative theology that seems to suggest that all that is necessary in man's salvation is his soul, forgetting that other material needs are part and parcel of this same person.

The opposite is also false, when we think that all that is necessary is the material benefit without reconciliation of the person to God through the living Christ.

Liberation, or if you wish, salvation, must be total, not partial, to be meaningful.

Consequently, injustices must never be tolerated." (25)

Yes, the days when the Africans were given what Gatu explains as the "narrow conservative theology" are far gone. Those were the days when the converts to be were told not to worry if they suffered here on earth, for in heaven they would be paid back in much rejoicing. This is the kind of teaching which gives the impression that the earth is a place of misery and suffering for the black-skinned man, and yet in John 10:10 Jesus spells out so

clearly the kind of life he brought to all mankind; "Abundant life" now and even after death. If Christ came for all mankind then all Christian teachers especially those in South Africa where the black man remains the target for aggression and suffering should show by their teaching and action the true concept of love and brotherhood in such a situation.

CONCLUSION

Looking back to 1958 when an All-Africa Church Conference was held on the continent of Africa at Ibadan, Nigeria with a great call for unity and co-operation among the African churches, there still remains a lot to be desired. While it is right to say that a measure of this unity has been achieved in the formation of the AAC, African churches still do not speak with one voice. There are still a number of disagreements and misunderstandings among the churches especially on issues related to politics, economics, culture and African society. The role of the AAC in relationship to the churches is best described as follows:-

"It had no over-riding authority to legislate for the individual member churches. It can only make recommendations for serious study and implementation. But even so, the mandate of the AAC is clear and positive, which is to keep before the churches and National Christian

Councils the demands of the gospel pertaining to their life and mission, for evangelism, for witness in society, for service and for unity, and to this end promote consultation and action among the churches and councils." (26)

It is a pity that the AACJ Constitution does not allow the organisation even a small degree of a mandate over the churches that would give it some extent of authority to impress on the member churches what is crucial that would need action from the member churches. One wants to say that this portrays the AACJ as a place for mere discussions where the churches come together to air their views and end there. If the AACJ has to be really what it was meant to be, "an instrument for the use of the African churches" then its role should go beyond what it is now. Besides giving the churches the awareness of the situations on the continent today there should be some arrangements in which some aspects of the Christian mission to the world can be demonstrated rather than simply being reflected upon. The Refugee aspect is certainly a good example of this demonstration that AACJ has carried out to some extent. They have helped to give the African Governments the causes of refugee problems by organising conferences, seminars and consultations to which church leaders and government representatives have been invited to present and exchange ideas on how to solve these problems.

In this chapter, we have attempted to give the historical background to the formation of regional ecumenical movements. It is clear that the idea of forming regional ecumenical organisations did not come from any one particular region. The need was first felt at the different international churches' meetings where delegates from the different regions felt they would participate more effectively at these meetings if they came united and with one voice from their regions. The political developments prevailing at this time, especially after the First World War when nations sought to form the United Nations, also contributed to the idea of churches being able to unite and work together.

The formation of the AACJ was also partly influenced by the political developments prevailing in Africa then. There was need for Africans to work together in order to fight the common social and political evils prevailing in Africa at that time. The churches in Africa also saw the need to unite and work together in carrying out Christian mission and service to the continent. Since its formation, the AACJ has continued to provide a platform for the churches to plan together for the future. The AACJ has also become a major link between the churches in Africa as well as a link with the World Council of Churches and other international Christian

organisation. Through the AAJJ the churches in Africa are able to speak with one voice and to share their theological insights among others and with the other churches of the world.

Although the AAJJ has proved successful in many ways it has also had many difficulties in trying to bring the churches together. Some of these are language and political differences existing in Africa. The membership of the African independent churches with the AAJJ remains small as many of these churches have not been exposed enough to the organisation. However, looking at the historical development of the AAJJ, it is clear that the membership has continued to increase. It is interesting to note that the AAJJ was not formed in isolation from other regional ecumenical movements of the world. Hence, its mission to Africa and theological expressions have many similarities to these other ecumenical movements of the world.

Let me conclude this chapter by giving a summary of what have been the themes and sub-themes of the past assemblies so that we may see what has been of greatest concern, some of which we shall discuss further in our next chapters.

JANUARY 1958, IBADAN, NIGERIA .- All-Africa Church Conference

- Major Themes - The Church in Changing Africa
- Sub-Themes - The Church, Youth and the Family
- The Church and Economic Life
 - The Church and Citizenship
 - The Church and Culture
 - The Growing Church

First Assembly of the All Africa Conference of Churches
held at Kampala, Uganda, 20th to 30th April, 1963

Theme: - Freedom and Unity in Christ

- Sub-Themes:
1. The Bible Speaks: Freedom and Unity
in Christ
 2. Freedom and Unity in the Family
 3. Freedom and Unity in the Church
 4. Freedom and Unity in Society
 5. Freedom and Unity in the Nation

The Second AAJC Assembly held at Abidjan in the Ivory Coast
in September, 1969

Theme: With Christ at Work in Africa Today

- Sub-Themes:
1. The Contemporary Social, Economic and
Political situation
 2. The Cultural Revolution
 3. Church Renewal
 4. Organisation of the Assembly and
Plans for the Future

The Third AAJC Assembly held at Lusaka, Zambia, from
12th to 24th May, 1974.

Theme: Living No Longer for Ourselves ... But for Christ

- Sub-Themes:
1. Evangelism and Selfhood of the Church in Africa

2. The Church and Cultural Renewal
in Africa
3. The Prophetic and Serving Church
4. Church Union or Church CoOperation

Looking at all the major and sub-themes from all the past AACJ general assemblies held since its foundation, my conclusion is that one of the main areas of the AACJ theological development since its formation has been on "The Churches Christian Mission in Africa." Hence this topic will now be discussed in the following chapter.

THE CHRONOLOGICAL EVENTS OF THE AACS HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

<u>DATE</u>	<u>EVENT</u>
1904	The first inter-denominational mission conference was held in Johannesburg in Africa.
1905	The National Christian Council of Puerto-Rico was formed.
1910	The first International Ecumenical Missionary Conference was held in Edinburgh. (This conference was called the World Missionary Conference).
1914-18	World War One.
1916	The first Ecumenical Conference was held in Latin America under the leadership of John E. Mott.
1921	The World Students Christian Federation Conference was held in Peking. The African churches were represented in this meeting by Willis King from Liberia.
1927	The first Christian Council called "Near East Christian Council" was formed in the Middle East.
1928	- The National Christian Council of Mexico in Latin America was formed. - The first International Missionary Council Conference was held at Jerusalem, Israel.
1931	The International Missionary Council Conference held at Tambaram, Africa was again represented at this Conference.

DATE

EVENT

1934 The National Christian Council of Breuzi was formed.

1939 The National Christian Councils of the following countries were formed:

1. Argentina

2. Uruguay

3. Paraguay

4. Jamaica

1940 The National Christian Council of Peru was formed.

1941 The National Christian Council of Chile and Cuba was formed.

1942 William Temple became Archbishop of Canterbury.

1948 The first World Council of Churches was held at Amsterdam.

1949 The East Asia Christian Conference was formed.

1950 Talks to merge the World Council of Churches with the International Missionary Council started.

1954 The second World Council of Churches was held at Evanston in Illinois.

1955 The Asia-African Conference was held in Bandung in Indonesia.

1955 - The first All Africa Lutheran Church Conference was held at Marangu in Tanzania.

- An Ecumenical Youth Leaders Consultation was held in Beirut jointly sponsored by WJC and WSCF.

<u>DATE</u>	<u>EVENT</u>
1957/8	The International Missionary Council held their second assembly in Accra, Ghana.
1958	The first All-Africa Church Conference was held at Ibadan, Nigeria.
1959	- The Conference of European Churches was formed at Nyborg in Denmark. - The churches in the Pacific Islands region asked the International Missionary Council to organize a regional conference for them.
1961	- The third World Council of Churches was held at New Delhi in India. - The International Missionary Council and the World Council of Churches officially integrated leaving the WJC as the only International Christian organisation. - The Christian Literature and Mass Communications meeting was held at Mindolo, Zambia.
1962	All-Africa Christian Youth Assembly was held in Nairobi, Kenya.
1963	The All Africa Conference of Churches was formed at its first assembly in Kampala, Uganda. - A seminar on The Christian Family Life was held at Mindolo, Zambia. - Christian Education Conference was held at Harare, Zimbabwe.

DATE

EVENT

- 1964 The title 'Near East Christian Council' changed its name to "Near East Council of Churches."
- 1966 The first regional assembly of the Pacific Ecumenical Conference of Churches was held at Nhapaneke on the Island of Lifou.
- 1969 The second All Africa Conference of Churches general assembly was held at Abidjan, Ivory Coast.
- 1974 The third All Africa Conference of Churches general assembly held at Lusaka, Zambia.

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- Engagement

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CHAPTER 111

CHRISTIAN MISSION IN THE AADJ CONTEXT

The theology of Christian mission is a very new outcrop of theological studies in general. For that reason it has not been highly developed. However, it is interesting to note that the theology of Christian mission in many parts of the world goes as far back as the eighteenth century. In this chapter, we would like to highlight in general terms first what is meant by the phrase 'theology of Christian mission,' secondly its past concept in the African context, its present understanding in the AADJ context, new developments and what is likely to be the future of mission in the context of Africa.

DEFINITION OF MISSION

From the Biblical point of view, mission simply means the sending of men and women for the purpose of spreading the gospel. A good example is what happened among Christians in Europe when many churches sent out missionaries to other continents such as America, Asia and Africa. The Roman Empire Christians are said to have sent many missionaries to North Africa and to some parts of Europe. All this was done as a fulfilment of the New Testament great commission of, 'Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of

the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you (Matthew 28:19-20). The theology of Christian mission is one which reflects on the task of Christian missionaries. The AACO believes that in Christian mission the churches should be able to take the Biblical theology and apply it to the situations in which they are found so that it can bring new life to that particular society. It is worth noting that Christian mission has been described by different terminologies such as, evangelization, witness, word, sign and service. Terms such as evangelization, witness and service could be said to be very close to the idea of mission. However, to some extent, they are not only limiting but they dilute the whole concept of Christian mission as taken from the New Testament examples. Take for example the word 'service', it could be used to mean many different things such as; public service, social service or health service. These are concepts which are somehow different from what is meant by Christian mission. Let us now examine the past concept of Christian mission in the continent of Africa context.

THE PAST CONCEPT OF CHRISTIAN MISSION IN AFRICA

Following the Second World War, which greatly affected in many ways a number of European countries, there was a great influx of missionaries in Africa, Asia

and South America; men and women of different religious backgrounds came out of Europe as a result of their own convictions that God was calling them to other countries. These people came in order to carry out different missionary activities; the main one being to propagate the Christian faith. Kendall describes what was behind all these daring experiences of missionaries into the new lands as follows:-

"Christians have believed, and do believe, that they are called by God to go as missionaries either to particular places or wherever their denomination appoints them. A sense of call is entirely in harmony with both the Old Testament and the New Testament. Perhaps the vocational factor has been stronger in the world of overseas mission than in other areas of Christian service. It is a term used very loosely, embracing the Christian who feels that in following a particular course he is fulfilling the will of God, to the individual with a sense of being singled out to a special task, such as being a medical worker in Central America or devoting his life to international evangelistic campaigns." (1)

It is true that during this century, Christian mission to other countries became a fundamental aspect of

church life which is best seen as a fulfilment of the will of God. However, it is not possible to say that some of the missionaries who came out from overseas to countries other than their own, such as Africa, may have done so as a result of their own individual frustrations following the Second World War. Some African critics have in many cases associated the coming of missionaries with colonization. Hence, they use the same criticism they have given to colonialism to the Christian missionaries ignoring a number of the good works done by them. Some of these critics even go further to say that the missionary founded churches were in alliance with the bureaucratic commercial middle class elite whose members acted as the agents of foreign rule in Africa. They say that while the colonialists were busy with the process of robbing the nationals of their land and independence, the churches were also busy undermining the will of the people to resist.

These criticisms which both historians and theologians continue to direct at the European missionaries in Africa, arise from different factors in the history of Africa. One major factor is that the arrival of missionaries in Africa, in many cases coincided with the arrival of the colonial powers. While in some cases it may be true, the church cannot today allow the criticisms to overshadow the fact that a large number of missionaries came prepared to face the different hardships in Africa under the conviction that God had called them out of Europe to come and serve Him

in Africa. Most of the missionary activities that meet with great criticism must have been committed either unconsciously or consciously.

However, it is right to say that some of the missionaries who came to Africa during this period of time did not endeavour to convert Africans to Christianity, but they also carried out many helpful tasks such as opening up health centres and schools as part of their missionary work. To be able to carry out their mission work successfully, in new and difficult environments they had to work closely with the newly set up governments by the colonialists who at that time happened to be Europeans as well. We cannot ignore the fact that most of these Christian missionaries came to Africa with a vision that was somehow different from that of the white settlers. The missionaries' major objective was no other than to spread the good news of Jesus Christ to the Africans so that they too could receive the new faith. This is what Kendall describes as follows:-

"Traditional Christian missionaries from the West has been regarded as concerning itself with two things. The first of these is the founding of churches, equipped with the Bible in their own language. The second is the individual encounter with Jesus Christ and commitment to discipleship." (2)

In the process of carrying out their missionary work,

they created a particular type of Christianity in which spiritual change and development of the people was given the first priority regardless of other aspects of their social well-being. Since the eighteenth century, this has remained to be seen by many Protestant Christians as the most important role of the church. However, time has now come in which spiritual change or conversion to the Christian faith alone cannot be elevated far above other aspects of human needs which naturally also call for equal attention by every social institution including the Christian churches. The interpretation of Christian mission in which the conversion of people to Christianity, is seen as the sole objective of the church is what the AAOC, since its formation in 1963, has endeavoured to investigate and reflect upon. Hence, it has become one important aspect of theological discussions in the AAOC context. Kendall once again provides us with the background behind the reflections in the AAOC context.

"Modern thinking on mission, especially from younger churches, include dealing with evil not only in people but in social organization, not only the transformation of the community. Salvation is seen as something more than an individual experience, but as an experience which includes the release from all that dehumanizes and oppresses." (3)

This is to say that the early churches' missionary approach used in Africa did not spread out enough to be able to give answers to major social issues that dehumanize and oppress people in a society. While some churches in Africa continue to advocate for the same old approach to mission, others consider such methods to be narrow and one-sided. The AAO call to the African churches is that this narrow and imbalanced approach used in the Christian ministry to society should now change to one that aims at developing and having a concern for both the physical and the spiritual needs of a person.

Another area of neglect by Western missionary work in Africa, is that in the process of their work, they did not take into consideration African cultural values and religious heritage. Contemporary African theologians, continue to accuse them of having brought Christianity into Africa wrapped in the Western culture and civilization. The gospel was also not presented in the African cultural context hence to a large extent it has not been able to speak effectively to the African soul. These criticisms have been used as good reasons why the African churches should do all they can to develop and support 'African Christian Theology.' A theology that would be able to interpret and make the gospel relevant to the African situation. A good example of this attempt is certainly the 'African Liberation Theology' now quite popular in the countries of southern Africa where there are still political liberation struggles.

CHRISTIAN MISSION IN THE AACQ CONTEXT

Some of the criticisms by theologians and African nationalists from different countries is what has contributed to helping the African churches to re-evaluate their missionary strategies. The African churches' vision for Christian mission in the AACQ context is therefore much broader than that which the eighteenth and nineteenth century missionaries had. The AACQ theology of mission aims at both witness and service to the society. This is the basic AACQ understanding of mission. Witness is what covers the preaching and teaching of the word of God. While service to the society involves participation in all activities that help to enrich human life in whatever society he is found.

The AACQ general reaction to the past Western Christian mission to Africa has resulted in different crises among the churches in Africa. A good example of a negative look at Christianity is the fact that some African nationals have lost confidence in mission work. New ideas in mission theory also reveal new and brighter missionary challenge which has also led to conflicts in interpreting Christian mission. There are indications that some African church leaders working in the AACQ context are prepared to face the challenges, especially those of creativity out of which hopefully there might come up a new sense of Christian mission among the African Christians.

It is agreed that for a long time the Church in Africa and the world conceived itself more or less as a kind of sacred vessel or receptacle possessing saving resources not available or at least not readily available, beyond its visible circumference. The AAJC call to the African churches is that the mission of the Church must now extend its unique riches to all men by labouring to contain all men. The Church in Africa and its mission, should now point beyond itself and to have its impact outside itself. Kendall has this to say on the new African vision for mission:

"The continent of Africa is at the end of the long colonial period and, through the policies of independent nations, is fashioning its own mode of life. It is rapidly becoming a different continent." (4)

There is no doubt that the current thinking about the nature of Christian mission in Africa has been both influenced by the political changes now taking place in Africa and the rise of African theologians making their reflections in the AAJC context especially during the regional theological consultations arranged by the AAJC theological department and also during the general assembly discussions. These new patterns of mission thinking in Africa, as we have seen, also include thinkers from abroad, and it is possible that where they would be considered a top priority, a number of these ideas could very well contribute to the well-being

of the Church in Africa and man in a changing society. Let us now examine further the historical developments related to this subject.

THEOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN THE CHRISTIAN MISSION IN THE AAOJ CONTEXT

We have already touched on the fact that the task of Christian mission in Africa has stirred up much discussion in all the AAOJ general assemblies. The same concern goes back to the 'All-Africa Church Conference' held at Ibadan, Nigeria, in 1958. During this church leaders' conference, the delegates who were of different denominations sent out a special 'message to the churches of Africa,' (see Appendix II). In the opening address of this message, the church leaders expressed their acceptance of Christ as the Lord of the Church in Africa of whom they were witnesses. Then they pointed out the need for the churches in the continent to unite and work together. This became the beginning of the call for a regional ecumenical Christian organisation that would help bring the churches together within Africa in order to allow frequent consultations and discussions on African church affairs and also be able to make joint plans for mission within the continent. The message expresses the fact that there was a spirit of determination among the church leaders to remove all the divisions that were keeping the churches apart and therefore hindering effective mission work.

The church leaders expressed their appreciation for the coming of the Christian missionaries who brought the gospel to Africa. They, too, accepted the responsibility of carrying the same gospel to the people of Africa who had not been reached by the churches. There is a clear vision of what the African church leaders are calling each other to do in this message.

In their mission work, the churches are called upon to remove all the injustices based on racial discrimination since this is not the will of God. The delegates define their role in mission as being champion, teacher, counsellor and shepherd to their own countries. They also realize that as a Church they have a responsibility to God and the continent. They call upon Christians within Africa and the world to support their mission work.

The fulfilment of the desire to have a uniting Christian organisation came into being in 1963 when the AAOC was officially constituted as the first regional Christian body in the continent of Africa.

THE FIRST ASSEMBLY OF THE ALL AFRICA CONFERENCE OF CHURCHES
HELD AT KAMPALA, UGANDA, APRIL 20 - 30, 1963

This was the first constitutional assembly held by the AAJC church leaders of different Protestant churches in Africa. This gathering which was held at Kampala, the capital city of Uganda in 1963 became a fulfilment of what the African churches conceived at the All-Africa Church Conference held at

Ibadan, Nigeria in 1958. The assembly served the main purpose for which it was formed, which was none other than to create a platform for the African church leaders to meet and reflect on the life of the Church in the continent and to lay down better strategies for Christian mission in Africa.

The political context in which the 1963 AAJJ assembly was held was one of post-independence. It was a period in the history of Africa when many of the African countries were already politically independent. This view is confirmed in the final report of the assembly which reads in part as follows:

"At the beginning of 1958, Ghana, Ethiopia and Liberia, were the only fully independent countries south of the Sahara. By the end of 1961, barely three years later, there were twenty-two independent nations in Africa, with a total population of over 150 million out of an estimated 190 million." (5)

This was a period of time when the independent African countries were like little babies beginning to walk. While there was the joy of political freedom from colonialism, the new political leaders were also busy finding their position in their government systems with a vision to guide their own people to develop their countries in the right direction. It was a time of building the countries' foundations in all aspects of life.

This was the prevailing circumstance in which the church leaders felt Christian mission was also needed. Many

of the church leaders both at the Ibadan conference in 1958 and at the Kampala AACC assembly in 1963 felt that the churches should play a part in the building and shaping of the spiritual life of the newly independent nations right from their formative stage. The churches made it their responsibility to ensure that the African nations led and ruled by their fellow men should develop into Christian nations.

While the churches' proposal and concern for their own countries in Africa sounds quite good, the implementation aspect of it did not turn out to be so easy. The example of this is a country such as Kenya where there had been a bitter struggle for independence. During the period of struggle, the churches did not take any active part to help either by word or deed in bringing independence. In some cases, the churches were known to have joined hands with the colonialists in order to betray the cause of the struggle for independence. For this reason, the churches did not find themselves easily accepted by all the nations in this early period after the attainment of independence. Some churches had to go a long way in changing their approach to mission in order to be heard.

THE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT SURROUNDED CHANGES WITHIN THE CHURCHES IN AFRICA

During this period of change the churches viewed their main task as being to carry out their Christian mission more effectively across the continent. Many of the church leaders of the different churches felt that they needed to

co-operate in order to organize themselves and plan for mission in the AAOC context. Hence, the major theme at the 1963 AAOC assembly at Kampala was: 'Freedom and Unity in Christ.' Although the need for political freedom and unity within the churches was said to be an important necessity, it did not imply that people can only be spiritually free in an atmosphere of political freedom.

During this period, there were also discussions among the African theologians of the need for an authentic African Christian theology based on the Bible but developed in the context of the African cultural heritage and traditional religion. This is an issue which has continued to be encouraged a great deal by the AAOC department of theology.

At the 1963 assembly, the following topics were discussed partly due to the fact that in some way they form the major areas of concern for Christian mission in Africa. The topics were as follows:-

1. The Selfhood of the Church in Africa.
2. The Church and Churches.
3. The Christian concern for the Family.
4. The Christian concern in the Community.
5. Economic development and Christian Responsibility.
6. Towards a Theology of Nationalism. (6)

Looking closely at these themes as forming the

major aspect of Christian mission in Africa, it is clear that right from this time, the AACO was already moving away from (if not adding to) some of the major past objectives of missionary outreach. There was a clear concern for spiritual, social, cultural, economical and political matters of the continent of Africa.

In order to meet these needs constructively, the AACO assembly had to work out a constitution as well as make plans for permanent working groups with a staff which would be stationed at the AACO headquarters wherever it would be and would make sure that the objectives were fulfilled as far as possible in the AACO context. The following titles were proposed to the AACO staff by the assembly delegates:-

1. Life of the Church.
2. Social, National and International responsibility of the Church.
3. Christian Education and Youth.
4. Formal Education.
5. Literature and Mass Media. (7)

These were the first foundations laid down by the AACO for effective Christian mission in Africa as well as an advancement in the search for African Christian theology and mission.

At the very end of the 1963 AACO assembly, the

different church leaders jointly wrote a summary of their assembly reflections which they set out to be read by the churches of Africa. This message reads as follows:-

(ii) "THE MESSAGE OF KAMPALA TO THE CHURCHES IN AFRICA"

"We, three hundred and forty delegates and participants in the historic inaugural assembly of the All Africa Conference of Churches in Kampala, Uganda, send you affectionate greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church.

"We came here from one hundred churches in forty countries, and we found in the Cathedral on Namirembe Hill, that we being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members of one of another. On the Lord's day of April 21, 1963, most of us, the Lord's people, gathered at the Lord's table. We passed the peace, we ate the bread, we drank the wine, and when we came out of the Lord's house, we said to ourselves: 'Why did we have to come across Africa to discover this thing? Now we ask you all the same questions. Why, in Capetown and Dakar, in Doula and Nairobi, on the plains and by the rivers of this land, must we continue in those divisions which crucify the Lord until he comes?

"Lots of us here represent the Protestant churches in Africa. One morning we shared in the ancient worship of the Orthodox Church of Ethiopia,

led by our brother delegates from the Orthodox Christians in Africa, and we said, 'This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.' We were further blessed by having among us three official Roman Catholic observers.

"We are deeply grateful to God that, at this assembly, the All Africa Conference of Churches has been duly constituted as a fellowship of the universal church. What was conceived at Ibadan in 1958 has become a reality at Kampala in 1963. We are confident that God will use the All African Conference of Churches as an instrument of His purpose to quicken the life of His Church in Africa.

"We have rejoiced that since Ibadan many new independent nations have been born in Africa. We identify ourselves with the aspirations of our peoples towards development of dignity and mature personality in Christ and we exhort the churches on this continent to participate wholeheartedly in the building of the African nation. We affirm that there is a larger freedom which God offers through His son, so that men are liberated from the slavery of sin and fear, to live the rich free, abundant life of the children of God. This is the Good News. Here in Kampala at the tombs of the first Baganda martyrs, we have been reminded of all the saints who died for His cause in this continent. We share the

the burden of all on this continent who suffer persecution, oppression and injustice in any form and from whomsoever. We have been made conscious that the faithful proclamation of Christ as the only Saviour of the world may, even in our day, have to be tried out by a cross and martyrdom. But remembering that 'The servant is not greater than the Master,' and aware of His abiding presence who said, 'Behold I am with you always,' we do not flinch.

We came to Kampala to discuss many problems which face the churches and in the reports of this conference we shall share with you all the things we talked about, we have learned from the Bible studies that it is only in the searching of the scriptures that we can find Him, who is the Way, the Truth and the Life. We beg you in the churches, as you face all your problems, to turn again to the study of the Holy Scriptures.

God is calling us to His Church, the instrument of His will in a new age with its problems and opportunities. We have glimpsed the possibility of renewed churches more sensitive through obedience to the leading of the Holy Spirit, more responsive to His abiding and awakened concern for the needs of men, women and youth in the new Africa. He is faithful who calls us and can do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think. He will match us to the opportunities and responsibilities of our time. May His grace be with you. Amen." (8)

This message together with others which came up after every AACJ general assembly is what would be considered as carrying the major vision and the essence of the African Christian theology and mission. The message opens up by reminding the African churches that Christ is the Head of the Church in Africa. This is to say that the AACJ having been formed as a regional ecumenical organization, all the member churches within the organization remain part and parcel of the Universal Church whose head is Jesus Christ.

The AACJ having been formed supports and approves the unity of churches despite their differences. The breaking of bread remains a living symbol of this unity. Hence, the immediate AACJ vision is for the churches to co-operate and work together in carrying out their mission in the continent of Africa.

The sharing in ancient worship of the Orthodox Church of Ethiopia brings into memory the African cultural heritage which for a long time has been watered down and in some cases submerged by the Western cultural values which came together with Christianity. Hence, the AACJ call for the African Christian theology to be developed in the context of the African cultural heritage.

Another area of vision for mission which is also brought up in this message is a call to the churches to be involved in nation building by helping pupils in their communities to work against sin and all kinds of social ills that affect men and hinder him from being free in order to live

abundant life as children of God. The scope of the church leaders' vision becomes even wider where the Christians are asked to be prepared to suffer for their faith in Christ and to help those who suffer persecution, oppression and injustice in any form to be free. The AACJ member churches must accept to follow the example of the past African martyrs such as the ones whose tombs can still be seen in Namugongo near Kampala, Uganda. In so doing they will also be following the example of Christ who Himself suffered death on the cross and martyrdom for the salvation of mankind. In the same message, the churches are also reminded that they are the instruments of God with a mission to obey and do God's will among men. Therefore, the churches have to be concerned with the needs of men, women and the youth in the new Africa in obedience to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Finally the delegates in their message also reminded the churches of the importance of the Bible in teaching and in the theological development within the churches. This could be considered as another symbol of unity of the Christian churches throughout the world.

In this message we see what was the early AACJ vision for mission in Africa and the background to what has now become the AACJ theological expression. One thing that comes up repeatedly is the churches' strong determination to co-operate and work together. This is the period which Kendall describes in the following statements:-

"Missionary societies have fulfilled a vital role in restoring the essential element mission to sometime static churches, but now in our new understanding that mission belongs essentially to the church and not to particular groups of missionary societies. The churches of the world 'together' have the task clearly upon them of 'together' continuing the mission of Christ." (9)

This is not to say that the AACJ as a Christian organisation was going to carry out mission work on its own in isolation from the other Christian churches or mission bodies in other regions of the world. The delegates naturally saw its formation as a regional ecumenical body that would change the past patterns and approaches to mission in Africa to something new. It would also be able to provide a forum for the African church leaders to meet, reflect on their past activities and plan out things together. The fact that the constitution (see Appendix III) never gave the AACJ headquarters the powers to force churches to implement whatever was discussed and agreed upon at the assembly limits its own powers. After each AACJ general assembly, it has left it upon individual church groups to put into action or ignore whatever was passed by the leaders.

THE SECOND AACJ GENERAL ASSEMBLY HELD AT ABIDJAN, IVORY COAST
1969

In the second AACJ general assembly at Abidjan, Ivory Coast, the subject of Christian mission to the continent of Africa, once again found great prominence. During this assembly, the delegates spent more time discussing the areas in Africa that had not been reached with the gospel of Christ hence more needy. They also tried to plan out possible strategies and what mission approaches would be more profitable and preferable to be used in these places. These discussions were of great interest to the delegates because a large number of the African countries were now going through a post-independent period. Right in the assembly, most of the church leaders had come from newly politically independent countries. These church leaders were now learning (from reality) what it was to be a church in a situation created by the aftermath of independence. The politically new nations were now to tackle the task of nation building which the churches were being challenged to do in most countries by the open chances of mission. There was a great desire among church leaders to bring the gospel into grips with the setting of the people among whom the churches existed. The churches working under the AACJ context had to re-examine the issues within their sovereign countries of which they were part, understand how these issues affect the lives of their people and then discuss and plan out how best the people's needs could be met. As the

assembly delegates made their reflections on these issues, the guiding theme of the assembly was: "With Christ at Work in Africa To-day." It became clear to the church leaders at the assembly that right from the early stages of each country's transition period from colonial rule to independence, there was already a great abuse and misuse of political power by several governments. This became one of the great areas of need to which the church leaders had to address themselves in order to find ways and means of solving the problems from the church's standpoint. It was reported that in some countries, these abuses of power had resulted in absurd consequences. The following message again sent out to the churches at the end of the Abidjan assembly, aptly expresses the feelings of the delegates at this stage:

(i) "MESSAGE OF THE 2ND AACJ ASSEMBLY
'ABIDJAN '69'

"We, the second assembly of the All Africa Conference of Churches, extend affectionate greetings to you in the name of Jesus Christ. Having been called by Him to the city of Abidjan, we Christians of over 30 denominations, representing more than 130 churches and Christian Councils in 42 countries, call upon you, the Church of Christ, to a renewal of our common obedience in the work with Christ in Africa today.

Together we have worshipped at this assembly, studied His prophetic word, discussed the involvement and the witness of His Church in the political, economic, social and cultural development of our continent, thought through new and possible structures which can provide for better co-operation, consultation and fellowship.

The people of Africa have seen some achievements but there is much more to be accomplished. While millions of our people are free and independent, ethnic discrimination endanger our security and cause dissension; social injustices prevail, authentic cultural enrichment is threatened; political mal-practices occur; poverty and ignorance exist and thousands of our brothers and sisters flee their homes as refugees. It is within this context that we are called to work with Christ in Africa today.

We humbly confess that, as individuals, as churches and as an ecumenical fellowship, we have not always responded to the need of the hour. At times we have shamefully succumbed to temptations and have refused to face boldly

the difficult issues of our day, thereby putting into question the faith we proclaim.

The Church of Africa is part of God's universal church, the one church whose Lord is Jesus Christ. This oneness cuts across confessional and independent movements or old established ones. It embraces within the one body youth and adults, men and women, the clergy and the laity. The full participation of all these groups are vital to the life and role of the Church in our world. The Lord of the Church commissions us to 'go' into all the world and free His people, to reject and combat injustices and to reconcile ALL to Him and to their fellow men. He also calls each of us today to be the new man in the fullness of Jesus Christ within the framework of our culture and our heritage.

We rejoice in the Lord that we are His people, a people of Christian heritage and of hope, a people called to serve and to love. We urge all members of our churches to pray for a new vision for the Church and the people of Africa. May we all be committed anew through the Holy Spirit to the stark

realities of our times, and may God's will prevail in our land through the grace of His son, our lord Amen." (10)

From the text of the 1969 AACJ message we make the following observations. First, that the attendance at this assembly covered different Protestant church groups from different countries of Africa (see Appendix III). There were also representatives of National Christian Councils who are also members of the AACJ. Hence we can rightly say that the message carried the views of a good number of African Christian churches. Second, the delegates reflected on new and possible strategies of witnessing which would allow the different churches to involve themselves in political, economic, social and cultural development of their nations and at the same time be able to provide a better co-operation in carrying out their mission work. The question that comes to mind immediately is 'how can a church carry out this mission especially that of spreading the good news to a people who are stricken by famine, political injustices, exploitation and oppression? Would it really be satisfactory for the church to tell people to look to God for answers? This is one aspect of Departure of Christian mission in the AACJ context as we shall see later.

Examining the context in which the churches were called upon to carry out their activities, the delegates at Abidjan 1969 showed to some extent a concern for the political

liberation of the African countries that were still under colonial rule. They felt that for the churches to achieve their mission effectively they have to work together in unity despite their many differences. One of the church leaders, Pastor John Kotto from the Cameroon had this to say on the need for unity:-

"By this total involvement the Church is simply being obedient to the call of her Master who is at work in Africa today. The task is great, and calls upon the whole people of God." (11)

It had to be a united Christian involvement that cuts across all the barriers between different religious groups. It had also to broaden its ecumenism by bringing into the AACCC membership new independent movements that were acceptable to the AACCC. In their message to the churches the assembly delegates said the following:-

"The Lord of the Church commissions us to 'go into all the world' and free His people, to reject and combat injustices and reconcile ALL to Him and to their fellow men. He also calls each of us today to be the new man in the fulness of Jesus Christ within the framework of our culture and our heritage." (12)

There is no doubt that following what Pastor John Kotto said which was agreed by the church leaders who also expressed their concern on the issues of injustices and the abuse of power of some governments in Africa, the churches could not just sit back and watch. The leaders' call to the churches of Africa to reject and find ways and means to stop these evil activities correctly falls within the mission of the Christian churches. The most important question that the AACCC member churches and National Christian Councils should find a practical answer to, is how to carry out these demands on the churches.

A close answer to this important question can be found in what Leslie Newbigin describes as follows:-

"And when the risen Lord commissions the disciples to go on the same mission that he received from the Father, he shows them the scars of his passion to remind them the way the mission must take them. Only as the Church goes that way, not submitting to or compromising with the powers that enslave people, but challenging them in deed and word and paying the price of that challenge in its own life, will it be in the power of the spirit." (13)

The answer on how to solve many of the social problems that involve governments according to Newbigin, lies in the

example of Jesus himself. He is the one who has commissioned the churches to carry out Christian mission. He took an active position against sin and evil, by word and deed. The African churches in their mission must be prepared to suffer whatever persecution they are likely to encounter as they take a stand against sin and all public wrongs. The AACJ still has a lot to do in order to help the churches achieve these goals in their mission by continuing to create a platform for them at regional and continental level in order to reflect on these issues and find concrete solutions to them.

We can correctly say that during the 1969 AACJ general assembly, most church leaders must have got a new vision of what is expected of them as leaders of their different churches in carrying out their own Christian mission. The leaders being helped to see more clearly the importance of having a regional ecumenical Christian organization such as the AACJ. It is the significance of such co-operation that led to what the then AACJ General Secretary, Samuel H. Amisah (1970) described as follows:-

"Believing that the purpose of God for the churches in Africa is life together, in a common obedience to Him for the doing of His will in the world, the churches and the

National Christian Councils of Africa subscribing hereto, have constituted the All Africa Conference of Churches as a fellowship of the universal Church. " (14)

It is true to say that if the churches worked together in unity, especially in the AACCC context, they could certainly be able to achieve something in denouncing the prevailing public evils in some countries within Africa. Speaking in one voice, whatever they said could be heard by the whole world. The AACCC could also become a great instrument for motivating and inspiring the African churches in carrying out more effectively their Christian mission in different parts of Africa and the world at large. Already, the AACCC, working on behalf of the member churches and National Christian Councils, has been able to help make, to some extent, the African governments aware of the bad government systems that result in the refugee problem. This has been successfully done by the AACCC having to organise heads of churches to visit certain government leaders and discuss these problems; and also by organising consultations in which both church and government representatives have come together to discuss the issue of refugees amongst others, and tried to find solutions to these issues. This shows that the church's efforts in this matter are in the right direction.

At the Abidjan AACCC assembly, the delegates also noted with great concern that the continent of Africa was going through

a period in which many countries were looking for political unity in order to establish solidarity within the continent and achieve economic co-operation. A good example of this that could be pointed out then was the formation of the Organization for African Unity (OAU) formed in 1963. The church leaders felt that they too were challenged to set the example of working together in Africa, bearing in mind the historical facts that Africa was a continent which had been broken up into English, French and Portuguese speaking colonies and also many competing confessional church bodies. The establishment of the AACOC in 1963 obviously became a visible demonstration if not the beginning of the oneness Christians have in Christ throughout the continent despite the diversities of doctrines and church groups. This act of co-operation was seen by the assembly delegates as one important aspect of Christian witness among the secular nations.

At the Abidjan 1969 AACOC assembly, the delegates once again expressed the feeling that, one aspect of their mission activities should be to contribute to their own countries by participating fully as citizens in the search for new political, economic and social structures; always applying the teaching of Christ in all areas of human life. The delegates expressed their views on political issues as follows:-

"Whilst the Church as an institution should not involve herself in the political structures of a nation, she has the task of preparing Christians to participate fully in the political life of their own country." (15)

The churches' role on development is highly appreciated by many governments in Africa. However, no government is prepared to tolerate aggressive political interference by the churches. Individual Christians are, however, free to take part as citizens in party politics, applying the principles of tolerance, restraint and reconciliation. The task of reconciliation was seen as one major role of the churches in Christian mission to their own communities. A good example of the churches' efforts to reconcile people in the AACJ context came about when at the Abidjan AACJ assembly the delegates decided on September 11, 1969, to send a mission of reconciliation and goodwill to the Nigerian people who were then having a civil war between them. It was hoped that by the church leaders having a face-to-face dialogue with the different parties involved in the war, there would be a greater understanding of the whole problem and hence bring about the possibility of reconciliation and peace.

The efforts the AACJ took to help bring peace in Nigeria in 1969 was an excellent contribution by the churches

to the welfare of the people in Africa. Hence, the question that sometimes arises from politicians and Christians in some countries that the churches should keep away from any kind of political involvement leaves a lot to be desired from such speakers. How could the Church contribute to problems facing a nation if they remain unaware of whatever goes on in their own countries and Africa at large? How can the churches contribute to matters of development and people's welfare if they stand aloof from the people's social life and visible problems most of which today do not exclude politics? The AASSC viewpoint is that the Christian churches should be allowed by their own governments to be involved in the countries' affairs and also be free to have a say in matters that affect people's lives in a country and the world. One of the working groups at Abidjan had this to say on the subject of national development and the churches' role:-

"The involvement of the Church and of Christians in development must have clear significance in order to allow each one to give valid witness to the work of Christ in the contemporary, social and economic situation. The different motivations for involvement in all areas must therefore be clearly underlined." (16)

The main motivation of the churches' involvement in national development is certainly one which is based on the biblical teaching in which we find that 'Man' should be the focus for all kinds of development; for God's concern as

highlighted in the Bible is obviously the 'totality of man'.

If churches in a country have to be involved in the national development projects such as in agricultural development, trade and etc., in order to win or impress the people, then we think the Church will have missed the whole point of Christian mission in this aspect. It is right that where necessary the churches should help in the betterment of people's lives. However, it should be from the results of church activities in the society in which it is found that the witness of Christ should be seen and accepted by the people themselves of their own accord.

One of the objectives of the churches' involvement in national development plans should be to help stamp out a one-sided national development in which only a class of people or a particular ethnic group or race is well catered for above others. The Christians should demand in such cases that there is an equal distribution of all kinds of national wealth and development. The AACJ has not, however, tackled the question of how this is to be implemented.

Development in every nation is usually affected by the moral and spiritual atmosphere of the society. This is sometimes tied up with long traditions of egotism and exploitation. Hence, it could be helpful if the AACJ would help the member churches and National Christian Councils to

find a new ethic for national development based on the Christian concept of the authority of God over all that man possesses. One of the ways the Church could avoid turning into a kind of government social service wing is to educate people on these social matters that could cause havoc or evil to the spiritual aspect of people's lives. Such training could help to make people more responsible in their own affairs as human beings. This means that where possible, a church group should have as part of its outreach to the community, several departments of social services, education and development. These departments could liaise with the government officials where necessary.

THE THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE ALL AFRICA CONFERENCE OF CHURCHES HELD AT LUSAKA, ZAMBIA, 12TH - 24TH MAY, 1974

At the third AACJ general assembly in 1974, the theological discussions and the ideas on the approach to Christian mission took a completely new turn. While at the Abidjan assembly in 1969, the centre of discussion was more of laying strategies for mission, with the ecclesiastic interest being that of the need to incorporate some of the African cultural values into the African Church life, at Lusaka the major centre of discussion was on both the need for moratorium or self-reliance and liberation of Africa from all that still kept her in bondage,

politically, economically, socially, culturally and spiritually.

The Lusaka assembly was convened in 1974, at a time when the main political talk was on the liberation struggles of the African countries in the southern hemisphere that were still under colonial rule such as: South Africa, Namibia, Mozambique, Angola and Zimbabwe (Rhodesia). The last three have now attained their political independence.

This particular situation in the continent of Africa greatly influenced the discussions at the third AACJ assembly. Delegates felt that the churches in Africa, in their missionary work, had a part to play in these political struggles. Hence they outrightly decided they would identify themselves with these complex political issues. They argued that both spiritual and political liberation were part and parcel of the churches' Christian mission to the continent of Africa. The then AACJ General Secretary, Janon Burgess Carr, strongly supported the idea of the African churches having to get themselves involved in the issue of liberation. He supports his view as follows:

"It is not surprising therefore that the churches discovered that 'living for Christ and no longer for themselves,' meant identification with the complex liberation struggles that are going on in Africa. But the most startling discovery was the awareness of their own need for liberation. As such, Lusaka will be remembered as the moment in history when the churches in Africa recognised their need to be set free by

Christ in order to share in His liberating and renewing activity in Africa." (17)

This is to say that the church leaders felt that they should identify with those who suffer oppression, injustices and exploitation from the hands of others or as a result of colonialism. In doing so they would be following the example of Christ who Himself suffered for others. The realization of this aspect of Christian mission must have come to some delegates as something of a surprise at the time. This is probably what Canon Burgess Carr means when he says that the church leaders at the Lusaka assembly became aware of their own need for liberation in order to be able to liberate others. It is right to say that much of the discussions held at this assembly were focused on liberation struggles in Africa. It was under this same mood of the assembly that all the resolutions, recommendations for Christian mission in Africa were made. Let us now examine the following assembly message which was sent out by the church leaders to all churches in Africa.

'MESSAGE TO THE CHURCHES' - The Struggle Continues:

"We, Christian men and women, black and white, representing different age-groups and professions and coming from the many churches in Africa, meeting at this Third Assembly of the All Africa Conference of Churches at

Lusaka, Zambia, would like to declare with the writer of the First Epistle of John: "That which we have heard, which we have seen, which we have looked upon and touched with our hands we saw it, and proclaim to you, ' that what the African Christian men and women are crying for and struggling to achieve is to be freed.

"We came together to listen to God speak to us, to teach us, and to equip us for His mission in Africa today. We realize, painfully, that only a free church can free Africa from its superstitions, false conception of development, political and social injustices, oppression of the black by the white and oppression of black by the black, from elitism and indiscriminate importation and imitation of foreign cultures through literature and films.

"As we grappled with the problems of evangelism and selfhood of the churches in Africa, the Church and cultural renewal in Africa, the prophetic and serving Church and the Church Union and Co-operation, it

became increasingly clear to us that it is only as we live no longer for ourselves but for Christ that the Church in Africa can speak with a free voice to its people.

"We were painfully aware that there are areas in Africa that are still victims of oppression and suffering of all kinds; for example, our black brethren in South Africa and Rhodesia are under the yoke of a white minority government and are going under the system of apartheid. Also those in Namibia, Guinea Bissau, Mozambique and Angola are under foreign and imposed rule. They need to be freed. The white needs to be freed from his fear of the black which drives him to oppression, and from his greed which drives him to exploitation. The rest of Africa is still living in bondage and the grip of evil needs to be freed and brought to the light of the Gospel. And we saw that before we can achieve for Africa what is expected of us, before we can become a society which lives wholly and exclusively for others, we must call upon the churches in Africa to allow Christ to set them free:

1. From theological conservatism,
so that we can understand, interpret

apply and experience the message
of the Gospel afresh.

2. From denominationalism and out-
moded church structures, and
rigidity and timidity in changing
them, so that we may be led by the
Holy Spirit to reality of oneness
in Him.
3. From fear to proclaim the new
message of redemption and denounce
evil boldly.
4. From hypocrisy that leads to
denouncing evil abroad and condoning
it at home.
5. From selfishness to sharing with one
another our resources of manpower,
skills, time and finance, so that
God may lead us into a re-discovery of
our missionary role in the use of
these resources.
6. From easy dependence upon foreign money
and men without making the efforts to
educate ourselves for self-reliance.

“ This is the message we have to proclaim to all
churches in Africa. It is a message of hope, knowing God is

willing and ready to use the immense spiritual and moral capacity of the Christians in Africa to free Africa, so that we, together with all the Christians of the world, shall 'no longer live for ourselves but for Christ.' " (18)

In this message which was sent out jointly by the African church leaders coming from different backgrounds, men and women of different races, ages and languages, we see the following points. First it is to be noted that the delegates' main desire was that people in Africa should be 'free' both politically and from all kinds of evil that affect man. There is no doubt that at this assembly the delegates realised that even the churches need to be free from outside powers that could influence their decisions in all matters. The delegates also felt that the churches needed to be free from a number of things which they enumerated as can be seen from their message. Let us examine these areas in more detail.

1. Freedom from Theological Conservatism

The AACU calls upon the churches in Africa to free themselves from the kind of theology which limits the Church into one area of belief in mission. A good example are the churches that limit the mission activities to the building of churches and converting people to the Christian faith alone. They do not believe that being involved in other social

activities such as building of schools and hospitals have anything to do with Christian mission. In Kenya examples of these kinds of churches include the Pentecostal churches and other Fundamentalist church groups. Looking at the biblical examples of Christian expression, one can only conclude that a useful Christian theology should be one that can be applied in all aspects of social living.

2. Freedom from Denominationalism

This has been a problem which goes as far back as the coming of missionaries to Africa. There was once a time when different Protestant churches could not work together in any way. Each denomination kept to itself and was not prepared to share whatever it had in terms of resources with other churches or to receive anything from others. No doubt this is what the assembly delegates meant when they called upon the African churches to be free from denominationalism. The churches working in the AACO context have to develop the spirit of ecumenism in order to be free to work with Christians of other denominations without fear or putting barriers between them. In some countries these barriers are beginning to break down. In Kenya, one step that some churches have taken towards this direction is to agree to use one theological college - the St. Paul's United Theological College now being shared by the following:-

1. The Reformed Church of East Africa.
2. The Methodist Church in Kenya.
3. The Church of the Province of Kenya (Anglican)
4. The Presbyterian Church of East Africa.

3. Freedom from Fear

At the second AACC general assembly, held in 1969 at Abidjan, the delegates in their message to other Churches, called upon the AACC member churches to 'be bold' in denouncing what is evil and unjust within the society. A similar call was repeated at the Lusaka assembly which confirms that some churches in Africa are afraid to speak out on behalf of the oppressed, the exploited and the suffering. It is right to say that the Holy Spirit gives Christians the spirit of courage and love. Hence the churches in Africa should be bold enough in carrying out their mission work of spreading the gospel and denouncing whatever is evil and unjust regardless of where it exists. Churches must never allow themselves to fall into temptations of the kind that would make them compromising. In some countries, churches have been known to support government systems in order to gain favouritism from certain government leaders. This kind of church - government relationship is what leads to fear and compromise. Churches should free themselves from such fear.

Selfishness: The churches should avoid being selfish in their relationship to other churches. They should be willing to share whatever resources they have in terms of manpower, skills and finance.

Self-Reliance: It is hoped to discuss this issue in more detail later. However, what the delegates called upon the churches in Africa to do is to start moving toward self-reliance

rather than continue to depend on foreign aid in terms of finance and personnel.

These were the areas the delegates felt the African countries should free themselves from in order to carry out effectively the mission activities. Out of this message, the call to the churches to move toward self-reliance in which the churches would have to cut down aid from overseas agencies in terms of both personnel and finance may have been received with a lot of mixed feelings here in Africa and abroad. The question of 'moratorium' has generated a lot of discussion in the churches.

While it is true to say that at the Lusaka AACJ assembly, a number of the African church leaders may have felt embarrassed before their supporting agencies, some of which were represented at this assembly, this was not the first time African church leaders had spoken of the need for 'moratorium' in Africa. As early as 1971, the Rev. John Gatu of Kenya, a leader of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa was probably the first African church leader to speak on the issue of 'moratorium'. In his address at a mission festival held at Milwaukee in the United States of America where he was a guest speaker, he said:-

"The continuation of the present missionary movement is a hindrance to the selfhood of the church..... The time has come for the withdrawal of foreign

missionaries from many parts of the
Third World." (19)

This was a point blank call for self-reliance among the African churches. However, knowing how under-developed most African countries still are, some African and European Church leaders have not taken both the Rev. John Gatu and the AACJ seriously on this issue. But at the Lusaka AACJ 1974 general assembly, it was a hot debate. The delegates argued that if the Christian mission has to be carried out effectively in Africa, then the African churches should make every effort to be self-reliant in matters of finance and personnel in order to start on new church working structures. The assembly delegates confirmed this view in what they described as follows:-

"The Church has a divine commission to let the earth hear the voice of God. Even though Christianity is experiencing an unprecedented growth rate in Africa, yet there are still large areas in the continent where the Good News has not been heard at all. On the other hand the surging tide of rapid social change which is sweeping across Africa today is creating new problems which are concomitant to urbanisation and industrialisation. These call for new strategies in witnessing, in structure and in administration." (20)

The subject of political, liberation came up repeatedly for discussion at this general assembly. There is no doubt that it must have been considered very important by some church leaders as an aspect of Christian mission that needed a better planning and new missionary approach. The delegates continued to say;

"For the Church to effectively carry through her task of evangelisation, she must discover her 'selfhood' as well as her potentials, and learn to bear the burden that autonomy imposes on her. To continuously look elsewhere for massive support is a blind look at the sun and this merely postpones the evil day." (21)

Looking at this statement, it is rather difficult to say exactly what was in the minds of the AACJ delegates at this point. One possible interpretation of this view is that, the delegates meant to say that since it was Europeans who colonized the African countries who were now the major cause of social injustices and oppression of the blacks especially in southern Africa, and yet a large number of the churches in Africa still have links with Europe, to be able to fully liberate the African countries that are still under the colonial rule, the first step to be taken by the African churches in order to help liberate the Africans still in

bondage, is for the African churches to start by breaking the links with their European agencies and the mother churches abroad. This would help the African churches to be in a better position to condemn colonialism in Africa.

It is a matter of surprise that despite the lengthy discussions that were held at the Lusaka AACJ general assembly the church leaders ended up having not fully agreed on several issues including the question of moratorium. Neither did they say if such proposals were wrong. The idea of creating a church with a new vision for mission was quite encouraged. This is the kind of Church that the delegates describes as follows:-

"Out of Africa should emerge a new Church!
Not a Church in servitude; but a dynamic serving
Church - 'self-governing, self-propagating and
self-supporting' which can make a positive
contribution to the universal fellowship." (22)

This is the kind of Church that the AACJ member churches and National Christian Councils are asking for. It is helpful to know that it would not be a Church isolated from churches in other countries, but one that would seek to contribute both to its own people and to the world at large. In spite of the different demands that were placed upon the Church in Africa at the 1974 Lusaka AACJ general assembly as its task of mission to the continent, it was important that in carrying out the

different tasks, the churches would still keep their spiritual standards across the whole continent. The discussions that were held at Lusaka sound valuable and to a large extent most challenging to the churches. However, the questions which still remain to be answered in the AACJ context are how the churches can effectively carry out their mission to meet both the spiritual and social needs of man.

THE FUTURE OF CHRISTIAN MISSION IN THE AACJ CONTEXT

The anticipated changes in approach to mission in the AACJ context

It is true to say that the 1974 Lusaka AACJ general assembly which emphatically called upon the African churches to adopt the idea of self-reliance, first met with mixed reactions from many churches in Africa and abroad. However, the same issue continues to be discussed by African church leaders and in some ways it is beginning to influence the approach to Christian mission in Africa.

In some African countries, such as Kenya and Tanzania, the number of European missionaries is now getting smaller and smaller in some particular Protestant church groups. For example, the Anglican Church in Kenya, now known as the Church of the Province of Kenya, has no European bishop in any of its seven dioceses. In the Diocese of Nairobi there is not a single European priest caring for any of its churches. Furthermore, young Africans are being

called upon now by both politicians and church leaders to join church work and already in a good number of church groups or denominations, more and more young people are responding positively to the call to fulltime church ministry.

Another area of Christian mission that is also influencing some change in the churches, comes from the contemporary African Christian theologians who are now writing books most of which are calling for change in many areas in the approach to mission and worship in the churches. Most of these writers such as - K.E. Ankara, K.Y. Best, Appia-Kubi, A. Boesak, K.A. Dickson, J.S. Mbiti (see Bibliography for their book titles at the end of the thesis) are in some way associated with the AACJ or in one way they are supportive of the AACJ theological cause. There are also radical church leaders such as Canon Burgess Carr and Bishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa who have lately come up with theological insights which to a large extent are now forming the basis of the African Christian theological developments in some aspects of the African church life in the AACJ context. There are already new departures and concepts of Christian mission some of which we have already mentioned. These include mission theories which reveal also new missionary approaches. Some of these ideas have led to controversies among the churches in Africa.

"Traditional Christian mission from the West has been regarded as concerning itself with

two things. The first of these is the founding of churches, equipped with the Bible in their own language. The second is the individual encounter with Jesus Christ and commitment to discipleship." (23)

The post Christian mission work is now seen to have been more limited to what could rightly be described as the "spiritual and sacred" aspects of church mission. It is these rigid barriers between what people have termed as sacred and secular that are now breaking down and resulting in change in the African church. Religious attitudes and values in the AACCC context are being modified with the hope of stimulating Christians to greater respect for and participation in secular orders as an aspect of Christian mission. This means the churches in Africa have now to redefine their stand and role in mission work in order to fit well in the present society. The AACCC call is that the mission of the Church should now extend its unique ministry to all men by labouring to contain all men and in this way it is hoped that the Church will be able to develop a more optimistic attitude towards the society and the world at large.

As far as the AACCC member churches and National Christian Councils are concerned, salvation has now to be seen as more than an individual experience. It must be an experience which includes the release of man from all that dehumanizes and oppresses him.

THE ECUMENICAL SHARING OF MISSION PROGRAMME

In his address to the 1974 Lusaka AACCC general assembly

the then AACJ General Secretary, Canon Burgess Carr, had this to say on the subject of ecumenical sharing of Christian programmes in the world:-

"We must take up the challenge to regenerate Africa, not by 'commerce and Christianity' but by making fresh commitments to radically renew the form and content of our faith so as to enable it to provide a true spiritual anchor in our continuing struggle for cultural authenticity and integration, human development, dignity, justice and peace.'" (24)

The acceptance of moratorium by the AACJ member churches and different National Christian Councils in Africa is not a total rejection of what has gone on before in the missionary field as seen from the background of African Christian thinking today, but it is more of an attempt by the churches to seek for what would be better described as a self-discovery expression, determination and development in their own Christian mission in the continent of Africa. To explain further what the delegates at the AACJ assembly meant by moratorium, the delegates later sent out an illustrated brochure to all churches in Africa saying the following:-

"What should be the result of moratorium?"

1. To discover an authentic African

form of Christianity which can in turn enrich all the Christian churches of the world.

2. To encourage African churches to leave the dependent attitudes many of us have adopted.
3. To help African churches to establish their own priorities in their work for Christ and to become fully missionary churches themselves.
4. To enable the traditionally missionary sending churches in other lands to re-examine the nature of their mission and their future partnership with other churches." (25)

This is to say that mission agencies abroad still have a role to play in the life of the Church in Africa, however, they must now accept to move towards a new working relationship in which Christians in Africa are also given a chance to take leading responsibilities in the churches. It would be absolutely wrong for one to think that by the churches seeking to be self-reliant in the AACOC context, they would mean to totally isolate themselves from Christians in other continents or from being able to share their Christian insights with others within the universal Church. Africa clearly cherishes its relationship with Christians in other

continents and consciously draws on their experiences. However, there is a place where Christian mission has to be planned and carried out at a global level. It would be absurd if the African Church would be left out in such a universal effort. And for the African Church to contribute to such activities effectively, it needs a regional ecumenical body that would provide a forum for consultation and a means of the churches in Africa to plan a joint action. This is what has remained the AACOC major role ever since its formation in 1963. In supporting this view Kendall reflects back into the African Church history as follows:-

"Missionary societies have fulfilled a vital role in restoring the essential elements of universal mission to the sometime static churches, but now in our new understanding, the mission and not the particular groups of missionary societies. The churches of the world 'together' have the task clearly upon them of 'together' continuing the mission of Christ." (26)

This is what might be seen as what would be the outcome of ecumenical sharing Christian mission programmes. The same feelings of ecumenical sharing of mission work in the world also found strong support at the Bangkok World Conference in January 1973, and also at one of the assemblies of the WOC commission of World Mission and evangelism. The idea of self-reliance now advocated for by some of the African

churches in the AACCC context is simply a change in mission that if well worked out by the AACCC could lead to valuable developments into new patterns of working relationship between the Western and the Third World countries.

The AACCC is an ecumenical regional Christian organisation stands to provide an awareness of belonging to the African churches amidst a world fellowship of Christian churches and awakens Christians across the continent of Africa to the immense task of mission lying before them. Although smaller churches in Africa may not be aware of the existence, influence and relevance of the AACCC particularly the newly established African independent churches, the AACCC remains a symbol of growth of the African Church towards maturity. They are also able to share mission work with other Christians within Africa and overseas.

CONCLUSION

In all the past three AACCC general assemblies held in 1963, 1969 and 1974, there have been new developments in the Christian theology of mission from one assembly to another. These assemblies have discussed the following subjects:

1. Need for the unity of the African churches.
2. Planning for mission nationally and regionally.
3. Need for the churches in Africa to be self-reliant in their approach to mission work.

In all these cases the AAJJ's main objective has been to develop the whole man no matter in what context of society he is placed. The churches in Africa have to use every opportunity that is available for Christian mission in order to witness for Christ and serve the people in their communities in both word and deed, following the example of Jesus and the early disciples, many of whom were persecuted and some martyred for the cause of the gospel.

Even though the AAJJ remains the first regional ecumenical Christian organisation founded mainly by the African church leaders themselves, in many cases its theological expressions have been greatly misunderstood both within Africa and abroad. Its insistence in combining evangelism and service to the society has been one major source of controversy. However, the AAJJ argues in response to this criticism, that religion which divorces spirituality from service is a one-sided operation. Despite many of these views, some churches in Africa, especially the evangelical churches such as the Pentecostal churches, continue to insist that unless the AAJJ devises new approaches to Christian mission which would allow a separation between witness and service, it is likely to turn out to be merely a 'socio-political force in society.'

It is true to say that at the moment the AAJJ is somehow lacking a clearly planned out continental programme

for Christian witness which it could put forward to its member churches and National Christian Councils to adopt as a model of Christian mission to their own communities. The only continental programme the AACCC has shown to the world is its refugee programme, which appears to have been quite successful. With more consultation with the member churches and National Christian Councils, no doubt the AACCC could still do much more in mission.

It is clear that the developments of the theology of Christian mission has for many reasons become a subject of controversy among the Protestant Christians, particularly on the issue of 'moratorium'. It is right to say that the churches were not ripe for the proceedings of the 1974 AACCC assembly which included discussion on the issue of 'moratorium'. Besides, the speakers on this subject did not spell out to the delegates exactly what process the churches should have followed in implementing the idea. Hence, the whole issue ended up creating strained relationships between some of the African churches and their agencies abroad.

Furthermore, the social activities that Christian mission in Africa should incorporate still remain a matter of great discussion and it seems that it may be long before a uniform way of interpreting Christian mission in Africa, especially in the AACCC context is found.

Some of the discouraging examples of service to the society as an aspect of mission that have been given are organisations such as the Young Women's Christian Association and the Young Men's Christian Association. These international Christian organisations, amongst others, were the earliest missionary initiatives among the Protestant churches. They were communal efforts aimed at reaching people of different nations with the gospel message. It is right to say that in most countries they have made good attempts and to some extent served a good purpose for which they were formed. However, it is also true to say that in most cases there has been little relating to pastoral or mission outreach as such in these organisations. In many countries such as Kenya, they have turned out to be more of commercial entities or social clubs than the names suggest.

Hence, one is tempted to say that unless the AACCC re-examines what in mission would be its programmes for Christian witness and social services, it would not be surprising if some of its ideas for Christian outreach turn out to be unpracticable.

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER II

1. E. Kendall - The End of an Era, Africa and the Missionary. (London: SPJK, 1978) p. 10.
2. Ibid., P. 7.
3. Ibid., p. 8.
4. Ibid., p. 5
5. AAJJ - Drumbeats from Kampala. Report of the First Assembly of the AAJJ held at Kampala, April 20 to 30, 1963. (London: Lutterworth Press, 1963) p. 7.
6. Ibid., p. 11.
7. Ibid., p. 12.
8. Ibid., pp. 15 - 16.
9. E. Kendall - The End of an Era p. 13.
10. AAJJ - Engagement - Report of the Second AAJJ Assembly held at Abidjan, 1969 AACJ Press, 1959, p. 72.
11. Ibid., p. 76.
12. Ibid., p. 72.
13. Gerald H. Anderson and Norman A. Horner (Eds), International Bulletin of Missionary Research. Vol., 6, No. 4. October, 1982. Article by Leslie Newbigin, 'Cross-currents in Ecumenical and Evangelical Understandings of Mission.'

New Jersey: Overseas Ministries Study Centre.

1982, p. 148.

14. AACC - Engagement - Op. Cit., p. 85.
15. Ibid., p. 108.
16. Ibid., p. 107.
17. AAJC - The Struggle Continues. An official report of the Third Assembly of the AAJC, held at Lusaka, Zambia, May, 1974, Nairobi: AAJC Press, 1975, p. 7.
18. Ibid., pp. 13 - 14.
19. E. Kendall - The End of an Era p. 87.
20. AAJC - The Struggle Continues. Op. Cit., p. 31.
21. Ibid., p. 31.
22. Ibid., p. 32.
23. E. Kendall - The End of an Era. P.7.
24. Ibid., p. 94.
25. Ibid., p. 98.
26. Ibid., p. 133.

CHAPTER IV

AFRICAN CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE AACC

In all the deliberations of the AACC general assemblies, the subject of the position of 'African Cultural Heritage' in relationship to Christianity, its practices and worship has always been one of great interest. In many ways, this subject is also associated with the development of African Christian theology hence discussions in the AACC context have been focussed mainly on the African cultural values that could be used to form part of the African Christian theology and worship in the African churches. The main reason for this was that many of the Church leaders strongly felt that Christian mission and the development of African Christian theology should be conducted in the context of the African situation rather than continue to promote elements of western culture which came with the European missionaries in Africa. The significance of this subject is also seen in the 'Confession of Alexandria.' (1)

This was a statement that was made by the AACC general committee meeting held in Cairo, Egypt on 18th to 20th February, 1976 and then published and distributed to all the AACC member churches and National Christian Councils in Africa. This report goes further to explain how greatly

the delegates who made a visit to Egypt were impressed by the examples they saw of rich cultural heritage and the authenticity maintained by the Coptic Orthodox Churches of Egypt which dates as far back as the fourth century.

In this chapter, we discuss the meaning of African culture and the contributions it could make to enrich the life of the Christian church in the AACO context.

DEFINITION OF 'CULTURE'

For many people culture means music, art, dress and good manners. In one of his articles, Professor J.S. Mbiti aptly defines culture as

"... a pattern of human life generated by man's response to his environment. This pattern is not static; it is always in a process of renewal, change, decay, interaction and modification. Part of it is inherited and part of it is created anew by each generation or group of society." (2)

Culture, therefore, is something human beings acquire by learning from the society in which they are placed. For example, in the past, traditionally, behaviour, language, art and dress were mainly an aspect of culture which people in a society either inherited or imitated from other societies. This is what resulted in patterns of life which were expressed in both physical and abstract forms. All the forms of culture

which form the patterns of life in society or a nation can be found in different parts of Africa as well, like in all other cultures. No cultural heritage in a society can remain static. Most aspects of culture are subject to change and decay, modification and renewal.

The central thing in the formation of any culture is people. No doubt the AAJC definition of culture would to some extent be similar. There is no society without its own culture. Africa is a big society made up of several ethnic groups with many kinds of cultural expressions. Some of these expressions continue to be observed in some parts of Africa even today. A good example is the rite of initiation, conducted by the circumcision of men. It remains a traditional practice among the Bantus throughout the continent of Africa. Different aspects of the African cultural heritage have survived from generation to generation in spite of other cultural influences and interferences. It is this very culture which has not been fully incorporated into the life of the Christian churches in Africa. Some of the church leaders in Africa feel it should be renewed and important values brought into the life of the Church in Africa.

DISCUSSIONS ON AFRICAN CULTURAL DEVELOPMENTS HELD AT IBADAN, NIGERIA. ALL-AFRICA CHURCH LEADERS' CONFERENCE, 1958

At the Ibadan All-Africa Church Leaders' Conference held in 1958, the topic of 'Church and Culture' was one of the major subjects for discussion by the delegates. It is

interesting to note that even that early, this issue did not bypass the church leaders in this conference. At this stage, the subject was mainly tackled in relation to worship in church. Some of the delegates expressed the feeling that valuable elements of the African cultural heritage should be put into use in churches. However, at this stage of the African church life, a few of the delegates took a negative position. They argued that to introduce African cultural elements into Christian worship would be a return to African traditional religion something from which they said, they had been converted. They said that it would be better to hold on to western ways of church worship which they considered to be not only superior to the African traditional worship but also a product of many years of Christian development.

The camp that was for change certainly spoke for the AACCC for it is this trend of thought that the AACCC has continued to develop from 1958 till now. This group which was for the incorporation of valuable African cultural elements into the African church life had this to say:-

"If churches in Africa are to grow as African churches and not as extensions of Western parishes and bishoprics they must be allowed to take root in the soil of African culture so that they may grow in stature as indigenous institutions." (3)

They also went further to argue as follows:-

"Why should African art forms be forever condemned as unworthy or incapable of being re-created and made a fitting vehicle of worship in the African's own country? Why should the African be forever condemned to worship only in the Western idiom?" (4)

What we see in the first quotation is the argument that as long as Christian worship and teaching in the African churches still reflect much of western civilization, it cannot be considered to be authentic of Africa. If the churches in Africa have to be identified with the African people, then it naturally calls for a consideration of how to incorporate, where possible, valuable African cultural heritage into the life of the Church in Africa.

In the second quotation, we see that the more we keep suitable aspects of the African cultural heritage out of the African Church life, the more the African Christians are likely to feel that the African culture is still being looked down upon. However, it may be right to say that many of these issues still need a lot of research and discussions by church leaders.

One of the speakers at the Ibadan All-Africa Church Conference, called Nketia from Ghana, who addressed the delegates concluded his speech, which was on the topic of

'Contribution of African Culture to Christian Worship' as follows:-

"Ultimately the question whether Christian worship shall become indigenous rests with those African Christians who have a deep understanding of the Christian faith and of their own culture, as well as a sympathetic understanding of the problems of worship in their changing society." (5)

It is true to say that during this period very few church leaders knew much of how African culture could be incorporated into the life of the African churches. However, the discussions held on this subject during this conference no doubt paved way for future discussions at the AACJ general assemblies that followed later. This was the beginning of a demand for cultural revolution in Africa; not only in churches, but also in the secular circles.

DISCUSSIONS ON AFRICAN CULTURAL DEVELOPMENTS HELD AT THE FIRST AACJ GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN 1963 AT KAMPALA, UGANDA

The Kampala AACJ assembly served an important purpose by creating a platform for not only a formation of the AACJ as a regional ecumenical Christian movement, but it also gave the African church leaders a good opportunity to reflect on matters affecting the life of the church in the continent of Africa. This assembly which was held during the period when several African countries had attained their political independence

came at a time when most of these nations and churches had a renewed interest in the development of African culture in both the secular sector and in the ecclesiastical circles. For example, many of the African states after achieving their independence were keen on changing the former names given to them by colonial masters, which they felt sounded foreign to them, to more acceptable African names. This was one of the signs of the people's interest in what would be socially and religiously authentic for Africa.

From the church point of view, the issue of cultural renewal within the churches did not have a great prominence at this assembly. However, in discussing the topic of 'Selfhood of the Church in Africa' some of the delegates expressed the feeling that African cultural renewal in the churches is what partly would lead the African churches to 'selfhood' - a stage in which the churches would become autonomous and self-directing rather than being a function of some foreign Christian organisation. To attain a total selfhood in the life of the African churches, the delegates considered it important to work towards incorporating some of the useful African cultural values into the church life. The delegates argued that it was this selfhood that was lacking in the African churches that had led to chaos and anarchy within some of the African churches, which partly contributed to the multiplicity of independent churches.

Some of the leaders also expressed a feeling that Christianity remained a foreign religion to many Africans because most of the churches are still strictly associated with the Western cultures and strongly linked with Europe and America in matters such as liturgies used in worship. Addressing the delegates on the subject of 'selfhood of the churches in Africa,' Bolaji Idowu from Nigeria said:-

"There are certain emotional depths in the African which those liturgies can never reach. And their unsuitability is due principally to the fact that they did not grow out of the life of a living church in Africa. They are not a result of the yearning of the Church's soul for the living God, not a natural means of communion between Christ and His Church." (6)

Bolaji Idowu's speech may have provoked the thoughts of many of the church leaders at the Kampala assembly. However, it is surprising that the subject of 'culture' was not discussed in depth as such at this assembly. Whatever was said in relation to this subject was very brief. In fact the delegates' message to the churches that can be found in Chapter Two under the title of 'The Message from Kampala to the churches in Africa' made no mention of African culture

except in one place where the delegates expressed their appreciation for the ancient worship of the Orthodox Church of Ethiopia. This may be seen as an indicator of some of the church leaders having an interest in what would be considered authentic and has some African cultural bearing.

There are all signs that at this assembly, there was more emphasis on the need for the African churches to base their Christian life and teaching on the Bible rather than on any other foundation. They said:-

"We have learned from the Bible studies that it is only in the search of the scriptures that we can find Him, who is the Way, the Truth and the Life. We beg you in the churches, as you face all your problems to turn again to the study of the Holy Scriptures." (7)

The churches are here reminded of the importance of the Bible, as a resource book for converting people to the Christian faith, and where all the answers to church problems and Christian teachings can be found.

At the end of the assembly, there were also resolutions and recommendations on different aspects of African Church life which included amongst others the need for cultural developments in the churches. However, no concrete African cultural values were mentioned for immediate action

by the churches in the AAJC context, even though the subject of African culture came up afresh for discussions at the general assembly that followed in 1969.

DISCUSSIONS ON AFRICAN CULTURAL DEVELOPMENTS HELD AT ABIDJAN
IVORY COAST, 1969

The second AAJC general assembly at Abidjan, in 1969, was held when Africa was far into the post-independent era. For this reason, most Church leaders considered the assembly as the rallying point for effective engagement in the demands of all aspects of development in the life of the African churches across the continent of Africa. The Church leaders felt it was time they went into action in implementing some of their plans which included amongst others, a consideration of the incorporation of the African Cultural Heritage into the life of the Church in the AAJC context. The delegates at this assembly had this to say:-

"That is now required is a concerned and deliberate effort by each state to search for and develop a truly African culture, taking into account the good elements of African traditional culture. This calls for selectivity and not simply the glorification of traditional culture." (8)

The delegates outlined a suitable approach of action in incorporating the African cultural value into the life of the Church in Africa. To these church leaders this was to be an exercise that was to involve both the secular state and the

churches. The people were all called upon to select, out of the many elements of the African culture, only values that were considered important and acceptable to the churches and society. The glorification of certain African cultural elements for the sake of it was to be avoided.

It is interesting that in asking the churches to make an effort in bringing African culture into their churches, the delegates did not ignore the secular sector. They also made it clear that care must be taken in whatever African cultural elements had to be considered for incorporation because not all aspects of any culture would be in keeping with the modern trends of change in both church and social life to-day.

African cultural development in the churches especially on Christian worship and liturgy was seen, at Abidjan, as a way of self-expression and style of life that was indispensable for the effectiveness of the Christian witness as well as the contribution to the development of African Christian theology. Following discussions on African culture in relation to African Christian theology, the church leaders made several recommendations to guide future research and debate on this topic. The following is partly what they had to say:-

"A sound knowledge of African culture is necessary. The theologians must make a

deeper analysis of indigenous worship and prayer in order to evolve a more meaningful Christian liturgical practice. The content of hymn-books ought to be examined. It is time, use was made of the wealth of African music and poetry." (9)

This is to say that those given the responsibility by their churches to select valuable aspects of the African cultural heritage should be people with a sound knowledge of the subject of culture. They should take time to study and understand areas of church life that would need change in order to formulate a more meaningful Christian theology for their churches. On the issue of African Christian theology, the delegates gave the following recommendations:-

"The section the small group selected during the assembly to discuss the subject recommends that the assembly provides a place for full-time staff in the structure of the AA33 to do research in the field of African theology to stimulate African theological thinkers and to spread in our churches and abroad the result of study and research in this area." (10)

These recommendations which were given to the

assembly by the working groups on different themes have now been implemented by the AACJ. There is now a full-time staff working within the AACJ structure in the Department of 'Faith and Selfhood of the Church' sometimes referred to as the 'Department of Theology'. The responsibilities of the department is best summarized as follows:-

"This programme is designed to help the Church in Africa in her search for an authentic expression of African Christianity. It assists the Church to cope with current problems of evangelism and determine how she responds to the new challenges for renewal, such as more relevant patterns of evangelism, the nature of Christian community and the kind of ministry required to serve that community, as well as new directions in theological training." (11)

The establishment of the programme of 'Faith and Selfhood of the Church' in the AACJ is a good beginning in bringing cultural renewal into the African church life. In the 1969 AACJ assembly message to the churches, we note that the delegates had the following to say on the subject of cultures:-

"He (God) also calls each of us today

to be the new man in the fulness of
Jesus Christ within the framework of
our culture and heritage." (12)

This leaves us without any doubt that the church leaders had discussed among other issues, the subject of African cultural development within the AACJ context. The topic was given more prominence at this assembly than it was at the 1963 Kampala first AACJ assembly.

However, there was still need for more research on this subject in order to be able to come up with what would be identified as valuable cultural elements that could be incorporated into African Church life and in the development of African Christian theology.

DISCUSSIONS ON AFRICAN CULTURAL DEVELOPMENTS HELD AT
LUSAKA IN 1974

The third AACJ assembly at Lusaka, will be remembered for a long time by the African churches for its emphasis on the practical involvement of the African churches in all aspects of church life and mission. The key-note among the delegates was the great desire to be freed from all kinds of bondage in order to allow the African churches to carry out their mission work more effectively. There was also the call to be free from unnecessary foreign cultural elements which the delegates said were being brought to Africa through things like literature and films. The

topic for discussion on this subject during the assembly was, 'The Church and Cultural Renewal in Africa.' Under this theme, several aspects of church life that needed cultural change, such as African Christian theology, marriage issues, place of ancestors in worship, witchcraft, secret societies, African medicine and healing, were discussed. At the end of these discussions, the delegates sent out a mandate to all AACJ member churches and National Christian Councils which reads in part as follows:-

"The place of 'Culture' in the Church is crucial for the future of Christianity in Africa. If we believe in the universal lordship of Christ and proclaim it, then we must make him relevant to every given situation, including the African context. There are still some perennial questions arising from the African cultural background, and the answers we give to these questions are of decisive importance to the impact of Christianity in Africa." (13)

Most of the AACJ delegates at Lusaka felt that the subject of African culture in relation to the African churches was a crucial matter, in the sense that there were still important theological as well as social issues arising mainly from the African cultural background which remained unanswered.

These questions needed to be answered in order to help create a new Christian impact in Africa. Some of the questions which were brought up by the delegates include marriage customs and Christianity, the place of the ancestors in worship and witchcraft. Let us examine some of these questions that were discussed at the 1974 AACJ assembly in more detail.

1. Marriage in the African Society

This issue is one that has created a great deal of controversy, especially in the African churches. It includes aspects such as bride wealth and polygamy. Three questions have usually been posed by African Christians in relation to this subject. In the Lusaka AACJ general assembly the major questions for discussions may be summarized as follows:-

- (1) Should African traditional marriage be accepted by Christians as genuine marriage or not?
- (2) Should bride wealth be continued among Christians or not?
- (3) Is polygamy right or wrong?

These questions call for not only the incorporation of African cultural values in the churches but also for an authentic African Christian theological investigation which would examine each aspect of these African cultural issues to be brought into the churches in the light of the scriptures

and then give the right answers. Up to now such studies have not been fully done in the AAJC context. At the general assembly, the following were some of the comments given by the delegates in response to each of these questions. On the subject of marriage, they said:-

"Marriage is also understood as a communal affair - a contract between two families. One of the greatest African contributions to the world is towards the universal concept of marriage. In Africa marriage involves the family - and this stems from traditional and historical African life. In African traditional culture no couple can live in isolation; they belong to the community; they are born in and to the community; they play a part in the community and the community has great interest in them.

Thus in Africa marriage takes place with an awareness of the role played by both family and society towards establishing a stable marriage life in the community." (14)

What the African church leaders said at Lusaka shows us that marriage in the African context is not confined

to the two individuals instead it is an institution that is regarded as the business of the whole society. Hence, after marriage a man and a woman are usually expected to contribute towards the well-being of that society in which they live. Their first role is to see that they have a stable marriage.

The following was also said on the issue of bride wealth:-

"Bride wealth or dowry is understood generally to be money or gift in kind given by the bridegroom to the family of the bride. It is a custom considered essential to marriage in Africa for it is symbolic of the care that the husband will give to his wife. In some cases where the word 'buy' or 'price' is used, it needs to be emphasized that the word is used figuratively. But the custom of bride wealth should not be commercialised if it is to retain its original meaning." (15)

For a marriage, in Africa, to be considered genuine and valid in most societies, there must be the payment of the bride wealth which could be money, animal gift or both; plus other kinds of gifts in some cases. This is given by the bridegroom to the family of the bride. It is not a

business deal in a commercial sense, hence to speak of buying or selling is rather inappropriate in this case. In a sense, this practice is also seen as a proof that the husband is one who is capable of taking care of his own family. However, the main purpose of the matter is that it is a 'gift of love', expressing the groom's appreciation towards the in-laws in accepting him into their family through marriage.

On polygamy, the A.A.S. delegates also had this to say:-

"It was agreed that the New Testament teaching by Christ on this issue is very clearly spelt out in regard to loving one another. Furthermore, traditional and cultural values should not be allowed to sacrifice Christian principles (Mark 10:7-8). It is however, recommended that the churches undertake a teaching ministry towards their members in view of helping them discover the significance, meaning and value of marriage as God willed and instituted it." (16)

The church leaders at the A.A.S. general assembly at Lusaka having raised several questions on the issue of marriage, bride wealth and polygamy, such as whether they were Christian or not, came up in the end with the foregoing resolutions as

we have quoted. The general feeling among the African church leaders in this conference was that traditional and cultural values touching on the issues of marriage should not be allowed to suppress in any way the scriptural Christian principles. Hence, it is not clear whether they approved or disapproved of any of these cultural elements. It may be right to say here that as far as the AACJ answers to these important questions arising from the subject of African marriage is concerned, there is nothing completed yet. However, discussions on all the questions are still going on among the AACJ member churches and National Christian Councils.

These questions remain 'perennial' in the AACJ context. This is probably because issues of marriage have traditional roots that are still practised in many parts of Africa despite the social and economic changes that have taken place. Another barrier that makes it difficult for the churches to find solutions to the problem is certainly the different Christian churches found among the groups or sects who approve of Polygamous marriages. Some of these religious sects argue that practises such as polygamy are in no way unchristian. In attempting to answer further the question of 'why bring in African culture into the African churches,' let us now examine some past events that have taken place in the life of the African churches that have led to this need.

THE PAST CHURCH LIFE AND AFRICAN CULTURE

The history of the Christian churches in the continent indicates that the African cultural values and traditional religions were given very little room by the early missionaries to Africa. Their attitude on matters concerning African culture were generally negative. Hence, the African Christian converts were led to interpret Christianity from the western point of view rather than from their own. The Christian theology brought to Africa by the European missionaries was based on their own western culture. It is these foreign elements that still exist in many aspects of the Anglican Church life, that have now resulted in calls for change. The AACC Church leaders at Lusaka, 1974, felt that the African Christians should not be encouraged to see the gospel message from his own cultural background. It is probably true to say that among the early missionaries, some did not even bother to understand the nature of African culture in whatever society they came to serve. Hence, these European missionaries spoke only from their own cultural point of view. Therefore it is right to say that both the churches and Christianity in Africa largely grew out of a foreign cultural foundation.

The influence of the early missionaries upon some of the African Christians, led to a rejection of the African cultural heritage and its possible use in churches.

In some cases the Africans even went further to look at their own traditions and culture as something that places them in a position of second-class citizens. J.S. Mbiti describes some of the early African Christians as follows:-

"The majority of African converts, however, accepted what missionaries taught and expected of them, and publicly behaved accordingly, but secretly retained their traditional religious world view and sometimes performed some of their religious practices. Some of these eventually relapsed into apostasy, though being re-converted later in some cases, while others gave up most of their Christianity." (17)

This means, although a good number of Africans accepted Christian teachings as brought to them by the missionaries, others did not fully give up their own African traditional religions and culture. Later on, when some of the converts felt that Christianity was not satisfying their needs, they gave it up and returned fully to their old ways of living. Some Christians, however, have continued with their faith to this day. One of the explanations that can be given for those Christians who relapsed into traditional African ways of living is that the gospel message did not find root in their lives, since it all took place outside their own cultural context. Among those Africans who have continued with their Christian faith, there are those who could be described as having a superficial kind of Christianity. This is again what J.S. Mbiti means when he says:-

"The situation exists today in which many people have 'Christian names' that they once acquired or which were given by their parents, but they themselves have little or nothing to do with the basic tenets of the Christian faith. They still, however, hold on to something of their traditional world views, something modified by a Christian outlook, and use it whenever it is convenient or, whenever it gives them a meaningful point of reference as they respond to various situations of life." (18)

All this reflects back on how the gospel message was brought and presented to the African people by the Western missionaries. It reveals that during all the years of missionary work in Africa, the gospel message was not firmly planted. It looked an authentic cultural base on which it could be established. The African churches have now to say no to cultural westernization, but still yes, to Christianity, provided it is presented in the African cultural context. This is what the AAJJ delegates at Lusaka meant when they called for the incorporation of the important African cultural values into the life of the African churches.

The fact that the early African Christians did not hold firmly to their new faith cannot totally be explained in

terms of the lack of the incorporation of the African cultural values. However, it would be fair if African Christians brought into their churches their own traditional talents and insights in composing songs with the African rhythms, the use of the many African musical instruments, symbolic languages and dance. If these could be re-framed to fit into African Christian worship and expressions rather than be ignored and left to be forgotten, Christianity would be more meaningful to the Africans.

CONCLUSION

The African cultural development in the AACJ context has remained a major topic for discussion among the African churches. In our study of the discussions on the topic, we note that a good foundation for the development of the subject was made at the first All-Africa Church Conference held at Ibadan, in 1958. All that was said at this conference has continued to influence the trends of thinking among the African Christians including the AACJ assemblies held in 1963, 1969 and 1974. The subject of African culture has also become a major aspect in the development of the African Christian theology which continues to be supported by the AACJ.

It is interesting to look back and see the changes that have taken place in the AACJ assembly discussions during the last two decades. We note that in the very early continental

meeting of the African church leaders, they had an open conflict as to whether African culture should be incorporated into the African churches or not. Those who were for changes emerged as having greater support than those against. The best evidence is the positive continuation of concern on this subject even well after the AACJ had been officially established.

We also note that in most of the AACJ general assembly debates that have been held on this subject, the major focus has been centred around worship as being the immediate area of church life that needs the incorporation of the African cultural elements. This also include issues such as liturgy, songs, and hymns in churches.

We also note that while at the beginning, African culture was mainly spoken of within ecclesiastical circles, after the achievement of political independence by many African countries there has been an interest in the secular sectors as well in bringing cultural changes in the African societies which is somehow linked with the search for nationalism.

At the 1974 AACJ general assembly held at Lusaka, Zambia, there was another new development in the discussions on African cultural developments in the AACJ. These issues had only been lightly discussed in some of the past assemblies. However, at this assembly at Lusaka, issues such as African traditional marriages, bride wealth and polygamy were debated upon at great length even though no definite conclusions were reached in most

cases. Only some guiding suggestions were given for further consideration by the African churches.

In all these deliberations during the AAJC general assemblies and special regional consultations, very few of the resolutions and recommendations for cultural changes in the AAJC context have been wholly implemented by the AAJC member churches. The African Christian theology which is closely linked with African culture for the purpose of authenticity continues to be an ongoing research among the African theologians.

It is not surprising that the African churches including the AAJC member churches find difficulties in implementing most of the assembly recommendations. There is an African saying that, 'When a Hen has been tied for too long, she cannot just stand up and walk when she becomes untied.' So, one cannot expect the African churches which have been brought up under the Western cultural influence for over two hundred years to start incorporating certain African cultural values all at once. This is not to say that the incorporation of the African cultural values have no future in the life of the African churches. Although all seem to be taking a slow process, already there are good signs of change in some areas such as in music.

Changes in the composition of church songs, using African tunes and instruments are already more visible, mainly

in the African Independent Churches. The majority of churches, especially those founded by missionaries, are still not quite open to some of these changes - even the use of African musical instruments. However, in some church groups instruments like drums, flutes, etc., are becoming very popular.

To encourage and inspire the churches in Africa, it is interesting to note that the AAJJ Headquarters is already doing something in composing and collecting African songs, sung to African tunes, from different parts of Africa. At present a music book has already been published by the AAJJ following the collection of songs from all over Africa. This was done by organizing consultations for African musicians in order to write a song-book in the context of the African culture. In one of the AAJJ executive committee meetings held at Kigali, Rwanda, from the 14th to the 20th October, 1973, a report describing the nature of the songs to be produced by the AAJJ was given as follows:-

"The hymnal will comprise authentic African tunes - words and music - from all over Africa, including the AAJJ song. The Chairman, the Rt. Rev. John Gatu of Kenya, said that the hymn-book should be 'an important contribution to church music not only in Africa but to the whole church throughout the world.' The book should 'capture the spirit of God in Africa', he asserted." (19)

The AAJC action will be a big challenge to most of the African churches to accept African cultural changes. It is interesting to note that the AAJC anticipates that the music they will compose is likely to be of interest to churches throughout the world. This may not be all that easy. Most of the African songs have rhythms which demand the accompaniment of instruments, dance, and need the clapping of hands when being sung. To some extent this is largely acceptable only to the young Christians all over the world. Among some of the churches in Kenya for example, in the historical churches, such as the Lutheran, Anglican, Presbyterian, Methodist and Church of God, songs which go with dance and the clapping of hands together with certain African musical instruments do not appeal to them at all. Some churches do not consider such compositions to be inspired by the Holy Spirit or sacred for that matter. However, the AAJC continues to appeal to the member churches, some of which are included in the above list, to incorporate selected cultural values of all kinds including music. There is still hope that whatever aspect of African culture is accepted into the African churches, should, not only give the churches their authenticity but at the same time allow the churches to form an integral part of the universal Church. While it remains a fact that not all the AAJC ideas on cultural changes have been readily accepted into the African church life, one major contribution that the AAJC has made to the African churches is the awareness of the need to incorporate the important African cultural values into their churches. It is now up to individual churches to do some investigation on the African cultural heritage

and see what elements would be readily accepted for incorporation into the life of their churches.

FOORNOTES FOR CHAPTER III

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8. Ibid., p. 16
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CHAPTER V

THE PROPHETIC MINISTRY OF THE AFRICAN CHURCHES IN
THE ALL AFRICA CONFERENCE OF CHURCHES CONTEXT

One of the major areas of debate that came up at the AACJ general assemblies held at Lusaka, Zambia in 1974 was the topic of the 'Prophetic Ministry of the Churches' in Africa. Some aspects of the same topic were also discussed at the All-Africa Church Leaders' Conference held in 1958 at Ibadan and in 1969 at Abidjan. The following are some of the sub-topics that we shall examine in this chapter under the same theme: National Development and Society, Liberation of Man and Society, and Social Justice and Reconciliation in Africa. Before we discuss each of these sub-topics, let us begin by defining the phrase, 'The Prophetic Ministry of the Churches' in the AACJ context.

WHAT IS THE PROPHETIC MINISTRY OF THE CHURCHES IN AFRICA IN
THE AACJ CONTEXT?

The AACJ general assembly at Lusaka, Zambia, in 1974, defined the prophetic ministry of the churches in Africa as follows :-

"The mission of the church is
prophetic, and in serving it can accomplish

its prophetic mission by being engaged, involved and sensitive to the well-being of the society. The Church must be alive in the present in order to better live in the future. It must be informed; by this it receives the message and announces it in order for it to be contextualized. This information leads the Church to a discernment thus enabling it to denounce the evils of society, and the state be they political, social, economic, moral and spiritual." (1)

Pro-phemi from which the word 'prophetic' comes means; to speak in the name of God. The above quotation can correctly be accepted as one kind of definition of the prophetic ministry of the churches that is agreeable to the AAJC. At Lusaka, AACU Church leaders defined the topic of the prophetic ministry of the churches as being an aspect of Christian mission in whatever society or country the Christian Church is placed. It is the involvement of churches in all matters that affect human life in society with an aim to meet the needs of people in their own context. Such a Church should be one that is capable of discerning prevailing issues and is able to denounce what is evil within a country be they on matters relating to

politics, economics, development, moral or social issues. The prophetic Church is therefore one that acts as a 'National Watchdog.' It is a Church that is always on the lookout for whatever issue that might bring disharmony or retard the development of man and society.

The objectives of a prophetic Church in all aspects of its mission is to build a society or a nation with a Christian foundation in which every citizen has something to contribute by participating fully in a search for new social structures in the continent of Africa, that is based on the teaching of Christ which finds support in both the Old and New Testament teachings. This is a Church ministry that calls upon all people in the society to be involved in nation building. The following is a study of some of the contributions the AACO has made to help the churches in Africa to develop this kind of ministry.

THE IBADAN ALL-AFRICA CHURCH LEADERS' CONFERENCE IN 1958

The need for the prophetic ministry of churches in the continent of Africa is something that cannot be spoken of as being a totally new thing. The delegates at the very first African continental Church conference held at Ibadan, Nigeria in 1958, in their conference message to all churches in Africa said the following:-

"We accept the challenges of evangelizing our countries, 'Christ challenges us ... to work for the removal of all injustices based on racial discrimination.' We are humbly aware of our responsibility ... and dedicate ourselves anew to their performance." (2)

It is interesting to note that among the Church leaders at this conference, there were representatives from countries in Africa (see Appendix III) where issues such as injustices based on tribal or racial discrimination were going on at that time. However, the delegates were not afraid to denounce and say openly what they knew was wrong and not according to the Christian ethos. Although the Church leaders did not describe what they were doing at this stage as being one aspect of the prophetic ministry, they were certainly playing the same role.

To work for social changes of some kind obviously calls for a prophetic ministry of the churches. This means the time was coming where the vision for mission in Africa would be widened to cover issues other than the conversion of people to the Christian faith alone.

Looking at the major themes of debate at the Ibadan Conference in 1958, it was clear that the Church leaders were greatly concerned not only with the welfare of the churches in Africa as Christian institutions, but also with the well-being

of the people of the whole continent of Africa. In their discussions, the delegates tackled issues such as youth and family, economy of the African nations, they spoke of political matters that were raising questions then, such as the political independence of the African countries that were still under colonial rule. They again considered other issues such as:- the economic life of their nations, culture, political freedom, youth and family in relationship to the churches' prophetic role as being of vital importance to the life of the churches in Africa. Hence, they decided they would send a written message on what they had discussed throughout the conference to all the churches in Africa. (See Appendix II).

Although this message to the churches in Africa does not discuss directly the concept of the prophetic ministry of the churches in Africa, it however, shows that the Church leaders then were well aware of their role as churches on social issues that affect human life. Hence, it is right to say that the Ibadan All-Africa Conference became the very foundation of the new awareness of the prophetic ministry of the churches in the AACC context.

THE AACC CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE PROPHETIC MINISTRY OF THE AFRICAN CHURCHES AT KAMPALA, UGANDA IN 1963

At the first AACC general assembly held at Kampala, Uganda in 1963, issues directly related to the prophetic

ministry of the churches in Africa were discussed amongst many others. One other major concern of the Church leaders at this time was to help the newly independent nations in their formative stage, so that they could develop into what the Church leaders called 'true Christian communities' - which means nations built on the Christian faith.

Turning to the political involvements of the churches, the concern was the need for 'freedom' both from social evils and colonial rule for those countries which were not yet independent. The question of freedom was a major concern of the AACCC general assembly at Kampala, this is also implied in the theme of the assembly which was, 'Freedom and Unity in Christ.' The delegates argued that it is after freedom that we can have a more lasting unity of the churches in Christ.

The Kampala AACCC message to all the churches in Africa says much on the subject of the prophetic ministry among the African churches. It reads as follows:-

"We share the burden of all on this continent who suffer persecution, oppression, and injustices in any form and from whomsoever. We have been made conscious that the faithful proclamation of Christ as the only Saviour of the world, may, even in our day, have to be tried out by a cross of martyrdom. But, remembering that 'The servant is not greater than the Master,' and aware of His abiding presence who said, 'Behold, I am with you always,' we do not flinch." (3)

This is a sign of a Church that has a concern for the political, economic and social well-being of its people. This is what makes a prophetic ministry of the churches in the AAJJ context; a case in which human beings become the focus of the mission of the churches. What was left to be seen among the African churches was what was to be the methods of action to be taken by the churches against the odds that continue to face the continent of Africa and the extent to which the churches would carry out their ministry. The Kampala AAJJ assembly also recommended to the churches in Africa that to establish a relationship with each of their states in such a way that they would be able to retain their authority to speak to the states prophetically when the need arose was also important. The individual Christians were also encouraged to participate in nation building and party politics as much as possible. In their recommendation to the churches they said:-

"Christians should be encouraged to take part in all aspects of national life. Thus they should become active members of secular movements involved in social and political advance, and maintaining good standards of private and public life." (4)

The Christian involvement in all aspects of nation building is an important aspect of the churches' prophetic ministry to the community in which they are placed. It is in this way that the members of churches find a chance to witness to the

divine demands of the truth. A witness which arises from one's own life and example of God's love and peace to mankind. The discussion on the subject of the prophetic ministry which is a vital aspect of Christian ministry in the continent of Africa continued to be held in the second AAJC general assembly.

THE AAJC CONTRIBUTION TO THE PROPHETIC MINISTRY AT ABIDJAN, IVORY COAST, 1969

The second AAJC general assembly held at Abidjan in 1969, gave the subject of the prophetic ministry of the churches in Africa another wide chance for reflection and the planning of new strategies. This was partly because the general assembly was held during the post-independent period, when the churches wanted to have a full involvement in their mission work in Africa. Many of the African Church leaders were to a large extent now well aware of their prophetic role and service to their nations. In their message to the churches at the end of the assembly, they described the situation in which they were to carry out their ministry as follows:-

"The people of Africa have seen some achievements but there is much more to be accomplished. While millions of our people are free and independent, millions are still oppressed. Racial, tribal and ethnic discrimination endanger our security and cause dissension; social injustices prevail,

Authentic culture enrichment is threatened; political malpractices occur, poverty and ignorance exist and thousands of our brothers and sisters flee homes as refugees. It is within this context that we are called to work with Christ in Africa today." (5)

This is a situation which called for nothing less than the prophetic ministry of the churches in Africa. The Abidjan message to the churches in the continent was a great development of the prophetic ministry because the Church leaders in this assembly tried to identify the important areas for which the churches are called to carry out their ministry. Some of these were among people who experience oppression, social discrimination and injustices. They declared to the churches in the continent that they have to obey the Lord's voice saying ... 'Go into all the world' and free His people, to reflect and combat injustices and reconcile ALL to Him and to their fellow men." (6)

For this to be effectively done, the churches had to be prophetic in all manner of their ministry.

As the delegates at Abidjan reflected back on what had been discussed at both the Ibadan All-Africa Church leaders' Conference in 1958 and at the first AACJ general assembly held at Kampala in 1963, they asked themselves the following questions:-

"Looking back on these years has the Church played her role as champion, counsellor and shepherd? This is the question Abidjan 1969 is called upon to examine and for the Church to re-dedicate herself fully to all that is happening in all areas of life in Africa today. By this total involvement the Church is simply being obedient to the call of her Master who is at work in Africa today. The task is great, and calls upon the whole people of God," (7)

It was this question on what has to be the role of the churches in Africa that led the delegates to re-examine with great concern their mission across the continent then. They were all moved to re-dedicate themselves fully to their services. This meant that the churches had to adopt the prophetic ministry which would lead them to work for what the assembly described as follows:-

"The Church is thus called especially to work for justice, for the liberation of the whole man from both physical and spiritual forces. What other great task can the Church have but to preach the good news so that man may come to know and

accept Christ as Lord and Saviour?" (8)

Again this kind of ministry calls for a Church with the prophetic voice. At this stage of post-independence in Africa, it was known to the Church leaders that there was already in various countries of Africa examples of great misuse and abuse of power by some governments and individual leaders resulting in all sorts of absurd consequences affecting human lives and causing a great deal of suffering to innocent citizens of the different nations. In such situations the delegates recommended that the churches should take it as their major priority to preach the gospel of love, mercy, forgiveness and reconciliation by both word and deed. Of all these ministries, the churches were called upon to play a greater part in the task of not only reconciliation, but also involve themselves in national development, education, help create a just and stable society and be able to accomplish God's purpose in the world. This is what the Church leaders at Abidjan saw as being the prophetic ministry of the African churches in the AAJJ context. Let us now examine what was discussed at the third AAJJ general assembly at Lusaka, Zambia in 1974.

THE AAJJ CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE PROPHETIC MINISTRY OF CHURCHES
AT THE ASSEMBLY HELD AT LUSAKA, ZAMBIA, 1974

At the Lusaka, AAJJ third general assembly, the re-

examination of the role of the African churches in the prophetic ministry went further than it had been in all the past AACJ assemblies. The topic of the prophetic ministry became one of the main subjects of debate.

(At this assembly the topic was framed to read as 'The Prophetic and Serving Church'). The Church leaders assembled at Lusaka were convinced that Africa had reached a political, economic, technological and social situation in which the need for churches that would serve as the conscience of their different nations was vital. Whatever resolutions, recommendations and decisions that were made at this general assembly were all aimed at inspiring the African Church leaders to continue with the prophetic ministry in their own countries. The delegates at the assembly did not just theorise on issues at this meeting, they even went further and demonstrated what they meant as far as the liberation struggle going on in the southern parts of Africa was concerned. The delegates at the assembly made a special financial collection to aid the liberation struggles in the countries involved. In this case a practical example was set to the churches in the AACJ context.

This however was not to be the last effort made by the AACJ in this kind of practical ministry of the Church. Later in 1976, the AACJ general committee (see Appendix IV)

meeting held at Lome, Togo, the refugee department of the AACJ had this to report on their activities:-

"The refugee secretary reported that the AACJ spent more than \$ 1.2 million in assistance to refugees in 17 countries during 1977. In this period 255 refugees were aided with university education, 830 for secondary education, 15,000 for primary education. Emergency assistance was given to 5,000 refugees and air tickets were issued to over 45. Some 115 refugees were assisted with small loans to set up business and out of this number 110 have become self-sufficient. Counselling and pastoral service have also been provided for many." (9)

From this report we learn the kind of help the AACJ provides for refugees in Africa whose number now stands at about four million (1978). This means the AACJ tries to find financial help from African governments and interested organisations abroad. With this money they try to meet the different needs of refugees in different countries of Africa. The AACJ member churches and National Christian Councils also conduct their prophetic role by giving the African governments the awareness of the refugee

situation in Africa. This is a great demonstration of a practical aspect of church mission and the prophetic ministry in the AACJ context.

Besides the issue of refugees, the AACJ acting as a voice of the member churches and National Christian Councils throughout Africa, has on many occasions condemned through media, social injustices and oppressions wherever they are in the continent knowing well that it is such practices by governments that have led to the refugee problems amongst other sufferings. The AACJ has also been active in bringing to the notice of its member churches and National Christian Councils the news and information of some of the un-Christian events in Africa by some governments. The AACJ main system of communication besides national media such as local newspapers in Kenya where the Headquarters is situated, has been the quarterly Bulletin and the monthly Newsletters. All these AACJ involvements are a true example of the prophetic ministry which the member churches have been encouraged to follow. At the 1974 AACJ general assembly, the delegates held discussions on several aspects of the prophetic ministry of the African churches. Let us now examine what was said on the topic of national development.

THE AFRICAN CHURCHES' PROPHETIC ROLE, NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIETY

The subject of National Development in every country

or the continent as a whole is one area where the prophetic role of the churches could be quite helpful. It is an area that has been greatly abused by some African governments, mainly by failing to have a well balanced National Development plan. Hence, such planning and implementation call for the involvement of every important institution in a country including the Christian churches. Already there is a special department in the AACJ structure known as the "Department of Development and Service." This department is permanently set up to help churches in all matters closely related to the development of nations. This is therefore another area of concern which was there in the minds of the African Church leaders at the Ibadan Conference in 1958 well before the formation of the AACJ in 1963. At the third AACJ assembly held at Lusaka, Zambia in 1974 the assembly delegates had this to say:-

"Developments must be seen as an awareness and realisation of the potency of being fully man, and flowing on to a sense of human equality of all men. This development consequently must lead to a harmony of living in conditions of social justice." (10)

It is the awareness aspect that calls for the churches' prophetic voice. The Christian churches have a duty to denounce any imbalanced share of their country's wealth and to draw the attention of the citizens to their human rights and social justice, so that they know what to

expect from their governments both as individuals as well as communities.

The Church leaders at the AACJ general assembly at Lusaka, 1974, saw man as being central in all kinds of national development. Hence, they felt that any development programmes in African countries should not be allowed to favour any group of people since all men are equal before God. Preference should however, be given to those who are not yet participating fully in the development of their society for reasons which are not of their own making, such as the case of refugees scattered all over Africa from one country to the other. The product of development in every country should be justice, equal share of the country's wealth and resources that would lead to a harmonious living. The African churches' involvement to achieve this happy state of living is what it partly entails for a church to be called prophetic.

Kodwo Esuman Ankrah in one of his articles has this to say on National Development:-

"God destined man to live in society, to live among other human beings, who organize themselves to serve one another's needs. However, in living in such a society man has some rights and obligations which

help to run the society for the benefit of all. It is when these human rights are misused that man begins to be oppressed and his development retarded." (11)

Ankrah's argument says that when God created people and placed them in a place on earth, He knew there would be inter-dependence between them for their own good and happiness despite their differences. Besides, there would also be certain rights and obligations that would be accepted as being common to all in society. It is the violation of these rights by some members of a community or governments that leads to oppression and a draw-back to a country's balanced development. Hence, in carrying out their prophetic ministry, the churches should be clear about God's purpose for creating man and his destiny. The churches should then be able to speak out against whatever is not in harmony with acceptable social ethics and a country's objectives for development.

The Lusaka delegates went on to say that the African churches should also be aware of man's needs and rights. This knowledge is necessary if they have to contribute effectively in the development of their countries. The churches should insist that the violation of human rights be brought to an end in the continent of Africa by pointing out to the specific rights and wrongs within their situations. In their mandates to the churches in Africa, the leaders at the AACJ assembly at

Lusaka had this to say:-

"The Church must challenge the structure of society to realise that genuine development could only be understood in the light of God's plan for man. Man needs to be liberated in his totality from all oppressive and dehumanizing forces which hinder him from truly being what he was meant to be, namely the image of God." (12)

The idea of the Church challenging the state is meant to be done out of love, with the churches acting as the conscience of the nation in order to point out whatever would dehumanize men and as a result retard development. Here we see that the Church leaders saw the main objective of the prophetic ministry of the African churches in the AACJ context as being that of speaking out on behalf of the under-privileged and also helping man to live a full human life which is endowed with freedom and dignity.

Without man, any national economic developments would be valueless for whatever they are, they are made for the use of man. For this reason, the African Church leaders called the AACJ member churches and National Christian Councils to re-define the concept of development in their own social context. The missionary-formed structures of development are obviously out of step with the African needs today. In attempting to throw more light on the role of the churches in their prophetic ministry within the societies in which they are placed, Kodwo Esuman Ankrah has this to say:-

"The Christian faith calls men and the Church to reorganise their inescapable responsibility and concern for all the well-being of the whole society. This concern extends to any and all aspects of man's existence." (13)

A concern for the well-being of the whole society allows the churches to practice their prophetic ministry in whatever situation they are placed. The churches' involvement would have to be practical where possible as well as in the form of contributory ideas. The Lusaka AACO general assembly delegates recommended the following to the member churches:-

"We recommend that the churches become more and more involved in rural development so that the rural man may have a full experience of salvation in such a way as to benefit the whole village community. Village development is the very basis of the process of the community's liberation, allowing man to become the agent of his own development." (14)

To direct development to rural areas of every African country means an effort to meet the majority needs in a nation. This is because most people in Africa still live in the rural areas. Only a few live in the towns. The rural man needs the experience of salvation just as much as the urban man. Hence, a good national development programme as far as the

AAJC is concerned, should cater equally to all areas within a country where people live. Wherever relevant development programmes are initiated, the churches should try to motivate the people to carry on with these programmes so that they would become agents of their own developments. In cases where unfavourable development programmes are being started in a community or state as a whole, the churches should exercise their prophetic ministry by pointing out to the people the dangers of a particular development programme. For example, churches should not accept the kind of development plan whereby the majority of the people are exploited and only a few gain from it. To be quiet in such a state or take part in such a programme, the churches would be failing in their prophetic ministry because such exploitation is what leads to the alienation and suffering of man in his own society. The churches should not be silent and stand aloof while the national resources are being wasted internally or given away to other countries due to poor economic arrangements. There are several aspects of developments in different countries of Africa that the churches are called upon to carry out their prophetic ministry. A good example of such exploitation of the poor found in Kenya are probably the land buying companies in which only the directors have the advantage of the accrued interest on money collected from the members. It is by speaking out against such things that a church can rightly

be called a serving church with a prophetic role.

THE AFRICAN CHURCHES' PROPHETIC ROLE IN LIBERATING MAN AND SOCIETY

The subject of the liberation of man and society as one area of focus of the African churches' prophetic ministry in the AACJ context was one of the most significant themes discussed at great length during the third AACJ general assembly at Lusaka, 1974. The Church leaders at the assembly had this to say:-

"The life of the Church in Africa today is reflecting the rapid social changes of the continent. Therefore the Church must be prepared to face her responsibilities with other agencies for liberation of man and society." (15)

Here the AACJ member churches and National Christian Councils were being asked to keep abreast with the political, cultural, economical, social and moral changes that were going on in the continent of Africa and to take it on themselves as their God-given duty to be involved by word and deed in all aspects of the liberation struggles in the continent of Africa.

The idea of the churches playing a major role in the liberation of man from all that would hinder him

from enjoying an abundant life of peace and happiness, was seen by the AAJC Church leaders at the Lusaka assembly as an act of obedience to the Lord Jesus Himself. To successfully carry out this ministry which is an important aspect of the prophetic role of the churches, means a concern for the society as a whole. From this concept of liberation, a theology has been formed that is now well-known as the 'Liberation Theology'. Our concern in this study is not with the different theological titles that have been formulated by African contemporary theologians, but more of a historical reflection on what has been the theological developments in the AAJC of which the subject of the prophetic ministry of the African Church forms a part. The question we need to ask ourselves here is 'What is liberation theology?' Buthelezi who is one of the leading African theologians from South Africa where 'Liberation Theology' is now given much prominence in the churches, defines the theology as follows:-

"What characterizes 'liberation theology' and sets it apart from 'traditional theology', as we have been made to understand it, is first and foremost, that it is a theological reflection born and bred in the struggle of faith with demonic and oppressive forces." (16)

Liberation theology is a reflection which is inherent

in the life of faith and churches; a Christian faith that calls the community to the service of all man; being one that involves in a new way a struggle against oppressive forces either by white as in the case of South Africa or black by black as in the case of other African countries. Liberation theology does not demand for an intellectual analysis, but people's commitment to the liberation of all men that are still living under political oppression and social injustice. It is also concerned with the liberation of man from sin as a condition of life which hinders communion of all men with God. This is also another area of life in which the African churches were asked to carry out their prophetic ministry.

Both liberation and black theology are very popular among black people in South Africa where the subject of liberation is more of a burning issue than in the rest of Africa. Allan Boesak, another South African theologian in his contributions to the Ecumenical Dialogue of the Third World Theologians, held in Dar es Salaam, in 1976 merged the two theological concepts as follows:-

"Black Theology is thus the critical reflection of Black Christians on their involvement in the black liberation struggle, always keeping in mind that

the oppressor cannot be liberated
unless the oppressed are liberated.

In its focus on the poor and the
oppressed, the theology of liberation
is not a new theology; it is rather
the proclamation of the age-old gospel
now being taken out of the deadly hold
of the mighty and powerful and made
relevant to the situation of the
oppressed, poor blacks. It represents
a new way of theologising, a different
way of believing. (17)

The factors that have resulted in both black and
liberation theology seem to be quite the same. They are the
outcome of the reflections of people who live under political
oppression, exploitation and social injustices and are now
struggling to be free. The churches, in the prophetic
ministry, agree to denounce the act of oppression, exploitation
and social injustices of any kind. The concept of liberation
theology as used in Africa has some similarities with that which
is held by the Latin American theologians despite the situational
differences between the two regions. In each case, however,
there is a common objective which is the liberation of man
from all that robs him of his sense of freedom and human dignity.
For the rest of Africa either the title of African theology or
African Christian theology with its roots in the Bible are
considered to be more relevant and acceptable than Black

or liberation theology.

In carrying out the prophetic ministry with an objective to liberate man and society, the African churches in the AAOC context find a good example in the 'Confession of Alexandria' which reads in part as follows:-

"Our current concern with issues related to:-

- economic justice
- the total liberation of man and women from every form of oppression and exploitation, and peace in Africa, as well as our contemporary search for authentic responses to Christ as Lord over the whole of our lives have led us to a deeper understanding of the heritage delivered to us by the Fathers of the Early Church in North Africa." (18)

Here is a good example of a Church that has endured persecution and martyrdom and still survives with renewed strength until our day. The 'Confession of Alexandria', reveals that the Coptic Orthodox Churches of Egypt have had to put their faith in Jesus in order to survive and yet they remain authentic to the Egyptian cultural identity. The African churches have also to follow the examples of Jesus and His teaching which have

to be interpreted in the African's own cultural and social context. Christ Himself suffered persecution on the cross in order to redeem the world. The African churches in their prophetic ministry should not be afraid of persecution and martyrdom. At the AAJJ general assembly at Lusaka, 1974, the then AAJJ General-Secretary, Janon Burgess Jarr, emphasized this point as follows:-

"In accepting the violence of the cross, God, in Jesus Christ, sanctified violence into a redemptive instrument for bringing into being a fuller human life." (19)

This is to say that because Jesus suffered a violent death on the cross in order to redeem mankind from sin, He gave the example for the Christians to Follow for a good cause such as "bringing into being a fuller human life." Hence, the AAJJ encouraged its member churches and National Christian Councils to support liberation movements in Africa.

At the third AAJJ general assembly held at Lusaka, the African Church leaders highly encouraged the African churches to support liberation movements in the southern parts of Africa by both word and deed as part of their prophetic ministry. A number of recommendations and resolutions to this effect were given and passed by the delegates at the assembly. The most outstanding resolution reads in part as follows:-

"The Third General Assembly of the All Africa Conference of Churches meeting in Lusaka, Zambia, re-affirms its support of all efforts to achieve liberation in South Africa. The Assembly confirms its commitment to combat racism, and its conviction, that the effect of continued foreign investment and white migrations to southern Africa is to strengthen white minority regimes." (20)

The delegates at this assembly gave a joint message to all the churches in Africa to explain what was to be the member churches' stand in relationship to the South African government where there still exists the suffering of many as a result of the system of government. The AACJ delegates re-affirmed that the AACJ member churches would support liberation struggles to South Africa. Both foreign investments and the continuation of white migration from Europe and the U.S.A. to South Africa were also seen as acts that continue to strengthen the apartheid system of government; hence, they expressed an open opposition to this practice. It is not easy to say if all the Church leaders at the AACJ assembly endorsed the recommendations or not as we do not have access to the minutes of the assembly deliberations. However, one

thing that is quite clear is the AAJC position in relation to South Africa's political problems.

SOCIAL JUSTICE AND RECONCILIATION IN AFRICA

These two subjects also came up at the third AAJC assembly as important aspects of the prophetic ministry of the African churches in the AAJC. The assembly delegates felt that it was the duty of the churches in Africa to be engaged in all matters that constitute the well-being of the society. The churches should be prepared to reject the evils within a society or a country. In the assembly message to the AAJC member churches, the Church leaders at Lusaka said :-

"We came together to listen to God speak to us, to teach us, and to equip us for His mission in Africa today. We realised, painfully, that only a free Church can free Africa from its superstitions, false conception of development, political and social injustices, oppression of the black by the white and oppression of the black by the black, from elitism and indiscriminate importation of foreign cultures through literature and films." (21)

The Church leaders at Lusaka were convinced that during the AACJ general assembly, God had not only given them the awareness of the situation in Africa but also commissioned them to go back to their own countries and carry out their missionary duties. In their prophetic ministry, one thing that was going to be central was to free their own churches from all manner of slavery in order to be able to free others. This message indicated more than just one aspect of the prophetic role of the churches.

Need for justice and reconciliation in the continent of Africa was seen as a matter that the churches should not overlook. To meet these needs, the assembly delegates gave the following recommendations to the AACJ committees:-

"The Assembly recommends to the General Committee of the AACJ that involvement in the struggle for liberation, justice and reconciliation in South Africa be given priority in the use of the AACJ's resources of programme, staffing and finance in the next five years." (22)

Although the delegates gave southern African states, that are politically not yet free, the first priority as places that need liberation and reconciliation, the rest of Africa was also put under consideration. In trying to bring social justice and reconciliation to the society, the churches were called upon to act as national consciences

in all matters involving society or state.

It is the involvement of churches in political and social issues that would help to bring justice and reconciliation. The churches should be geared to create a social harmony and a happy living in every community. The first and foremost task of the churches in bringing reconciliation is that of pointing man to the existence of God so that man is no longer alienated from his God. Secondly social justice can be best achieved when men are reconciled to each other in all matters that would create disharmony in a country. Christians being the ambassadors of Christ in this world are therefore charged with the responsibility of initiating a new type of society based on justice for all (John 12:34). This is why at Lusaka, the AAJC was called upon to help member churches and the National Christian Councils throughout the continent of Africa to get involved in the struggle for liberation, justice and reconciliation of man as a major part of their prophetic ministry.

CONCLUSION

The development of the theological concept of the prophetic ministry of the African churches in the AAJC has greatly grown since 1963. The subject has been debated upon from one AAJC general assembly to another, sometimes under different titles. It now forms a major part of

Christian mission in the AACJ context. Let us conclude this chapter by giving a summary of what developments have taken place since the formation of the AACJ in 1963.

First we note that in the Ibadan first continental African Church leaders' conference of 1958, the delegates in their message to all churches in Africa alerted the churches to expect great changes in the continent of Africa. They said that these new situations would need a special ministry of the churches. The churches were told that they would be called upon to play the role of champion, teachers, counsellors and shepherds to their different nations. Although these Church leaders did not name the type of ministry that would be needed, it was obvious that only churches with prophetic ministry would cater effectively for such needs. At this stage, the churches' identification with matters that appeared rather political was almost nil even though the awareness was there in some Church leaders.

At the first AACJ general assembly held at Kampala, Uganda, in 1963, the churches were called upon to focus their prophetic ministry on the demand for political freedom. The theme for the assembly itself was, 'Freedom and Unity in Christ.' Here the awareness of the need for a prophetic ministry of the African countries and churches in the AACJ context was much greater. However, it was still not

clear what nature or to what extent such ministry would go.

Some of the Church leaders felt that individual witness and involvement in National issues and party politics was the best approach to the prophetic ministry of the churches.

Then came the 1969, second AAJC general assembly held at Abidjan, Ivory Coast. This found a large number of the African countries already politically independent. It was here that the Church leaders declared clearly that following the great abuse and misuse of powers by some African governments, the churches should have a prophetic voice to challenge these systems. They saw the prophetic ministry of the churches as an act of obedience to the Lord's commission. Besides denouncing government systems that were causing social problems to their citizens, the African Church leaders also spoke of the need for the liberation of man from both physical and spiritual forms of bondage and evil. The leaders called upon the African churches to preach the gospel of love, mercy, forgiveness, justice and reconciliation. No doubt this was a great development of the theological idea of the prophetic ministry of the churches. However, the climax was yet to come in 1974.

In 1974, the AAJC third general assembly, the subject of the African churches prophetic ministry received a great deal of attention. There was more emphasis on being practical in this ministry than theoretical. To demonstrate this fact,

the delegates raised some money right at the assembly and this was sent to support the liberation movements in Southern Africa. The churches were also called upon to be prophetic in their own countries offering services in both word and deed. During this assembly, the subject of the prophetic ministry of the churches covered aspects such as national development, liberation of man and society; social justice and reconciliation.

The issue of the liberation of man and society as an aspect of the prophetic ministry of the African churches in the AACJ was also discussed at length. The delegates called upon the African churches to openly identify themselves with the liberation movements regardless of the cost involved. They described the nature of the prophetic ministry of the churches as one that is based on the examples of Jesus who was Himself persecuted, and in the end died a violent death in order to redeem mankind.

Another example which has become a great inspiration of the churches in the AACJ context are the early Fathers of the Coptic Church of Egypt. In the 'Confession of Alexandria' we note that they suffered persecution and martyrdom for their faith and by their sacrifice and suffering, the Coptic Church of Egypt remains standing till today.

The African churches in their prophetic ministry

must be prepared to suffer for the gospel's sake.

This is the mission to which the African churches working in the AAJJ context are called to do.

While all these suggestions for the prophetic ministry of the churches sound quite good, one factor that has never been fully clarified is how exactly the churches have to carry out their role without being victimised immediately by their own governments. It is true to say that there has been an abuse and misuse of power in some African government systems. However, how many so-called democratic governments in Africa would accept any kind of criticism by the churches. If any churches dare stand up to denounce the activities of the governments, no matter how unjust they might be, the possibilities are that such a church could be banned and its leaders detained. It would be helpful if the AAJJ could put such likely consequences into consideration rather than merely suggest the churches accept persecution for the sake of carrying out a prophetic ministry. If the AAJJ has the mandate of all the churches which, unfortunately, it does not have at the moment, then it would be right for it to speak on behalf of the churches in such matters. It may be that this approach may also not be absolutely effective. Perhaps it would be helpful if more discussions could be held on this subject. The objectives for a prophetic ministry are good and quite biblical. However, what needs to be spelt out more

clearly is the method the churches should use in the small communities where they are placed, in matters concerning the state and also matters affecting the continent as a whole .

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER IV

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2. G.W. Carpenter - The Way in Africa. (London: Edinburgh House Press, 1960), p. 99.
3. AAJC - The Drumbeats from Kampala. Report of the first assembly of the All Africa Conference of Churches, held at Kampala, Uganda - April 20th to 30th, 1963, London: Lutterworth Press, 1963, p. 16.
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7. Ibid., p. 76
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9. AACJ - Newsletter. Vol. 4. February, 1978, p. 15.
10. AAJC - The Struggle Continues. P. 38.
11. K.Y. Best (Ed.), African Challenge - article by Kodwo Esuman Ankrach. 'The Church and National Development in Africa' (Nairobi: Transafrica Publishers, 1975,) p.35

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER IV (Cont'd)

12. AACJ - The Struggle Continues. Op. Cit. pp. 31 - 32.
13. K.Y. Best (Ed.) Op. Cit. p. 38.
14. AACJ - The Struggle Continues. P. 41.
15. Ibid., p. 43.
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21. Ibid., p. 13
22. Ibid., p. 39

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY, GENERAL COMMENTS AND CONCLUSION

In this thesis, our investigations were on the 'Theological Developments in the AACJ Context' between 1958 and 1978. In our study we examined the historical context of the All Africa Conference of Churches in relationship to other regional ecumenical Christian organizations in the world dating as far back as 1910 when the first ecumenical conference was held at Edinburgh. Turning to the continent of Africa, we have examined the following continental church meetings; the first All-Africa Church Conference held at Ibadan, Nigeria in 1958, the AACJ general assembly at Kampala, 1963, followed by Abidjan 1969, and lastly Lusaka 1974. There is no doubt that all these assemblies will remain an important landmark for the AACJ as well as the Church of Christ in Africa.

Throughout our study, Ibadan 1958 stands out as the foundation stone for the formation of the AACJ which came to be a reality in 1963. It also became a symbolic continental conference as it came soon after Ghana became an independent sovereign state in March 1957 stirring the hearts of many

African countries to accelerate their struggle for independence. It was significant that the message of Ibadan to the churches of Africa struck a prophetic note to the whole continent.

"The continent of Africa will see unparalleled events and changes during the rest of the 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 the crucial years." (1)

The ferment was not only political; within the churches there were deep stirrings as well. The long years of missionary leadership had helped not only to establish the churches in various countries of Africa, but also to produce indigenous leaders, capable of carrying forward the task in a way that would reflect the unique contributions that Africa needed to bring to the heritage of the world-wide Church. There were stirrings for greater opportunities to share in the burden of leadership in order to demonstrate the maturity of the African churches.

In that general climate of great anticipation, it was fitting that the churches should come together, discover one another, share their experiences and hopes, plan their

strategies for mission together and in their togetherness witness to what they have in common in Christ, but also be challenged by their weaknesses due to their many labels, their division and separatedness. This became the beginning of a great effort of the search for a regional ecumenical Christian organization which did not become a reality until Kampala, 1963, when the All-Africa Church Conference was renamed "All Africa Conference of Churches" and duly constituted as an organization whose constitution stated clearly its convictions and intentions:

"Believing that the purpose of God for the churches in Africa is life together, in a common obedience to Him for the doing of His will in the world, the churches and the National Christian Councils of Africa subscribing hereto, have constituted the All Africa Conference of Churches as a fellowship of consultation and co-operation within the wider fellowship of the Universal Church." (2)

The formation of this continental organisation was certainly a great turning point in the life of the African Church. In this thesis we examined among others what became the Christian theology of mission in the

AACC context, mainly at the AACC general assemblies and regional consultations. The following is a summary of some of the theological aspects that we have discussed throughout the thesis:

CHRISTIAN MISSION IN THE AACC CONTEXT

1. The theology of Christian mission is a new aspect of theological thinking in the world today, hence it has not been highly developed even in the AACC context.
2. The theology of Christian mission is one which reflects on the task of Christian missionaries wherever they operate.
3. The AACC believes that in Christian mission, the Church should be able to take the Biblical message, and apply it to the situations in which the Church exists so that the message can bring new life to that particular society or nation.
4. In the past the major purpose for mission was to build churches, equip them with Bibles and to spread the Christian message in order to convert the Africans to the Christian faith.
5. In Africa, contemporary African historians and theologians have in many cases associated the coming of missionaries with colonization, hence

they criticise their past activities as having been part and parcel of the colonization process.

6. The AACJ call to the African churches is that Christian mission should include both 'witness and service' to the society in which it is placed. Witness here includes the conversion of people to the Christian faith, while service to the society involves the churches' participation in secular activities that would help to enrich human life in his own community. It is this second aspect of mission where the AACJ differs to a large extent with both the past missionary activities and some present conservative churches who still do not accept this approach to mission.
7. The AACJ supports and encourages the development of the 'African Christian Theology' with a hope that if well researched and developed, it will help to interpret and make the gospel message relevant to the African people in their different situations.
8. The call for the formation of a regional ecumenical Christian organisation which would help bring the African churches together within the continent in order to allow frequent consultations and to make joint plans at the All Africa Church Conference

held at Ibadan, Nigeria, in 1958. This call for unity came into a reality when the AACJ was officially formed in 1963 at Kampala, Uganda.

9. Right from its formation in 1963, the AACJ has had a continental concern for the total development of man which embraces not only his spiritual life but also his social, cultural, economic and political life.
10. Christian mission in the AACJ context allows the churches to be involved in nation building, to help those who suffer persecution, oppression and injustices in any form to be free and the Church to be prepared to suffer if need be in the process of carrying out its mission work. In so doing the Church will be following the example of Christ who Himself suffered death on the cross and martyrdom for the redemption of mankind.
11. The AACJ viewpoint is that the churches should be granted the freedom by their own governments to be involved in their country's affairs and also be free to have a say in matters that affect people's lives.
12. The AACJ member churches and National Christian Councils have been called upon to become self-reliant rather than continue to depend on foreign

aid in terms of finance and personnel.

AFRICAN CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE AACJ

1. Christian mission in Africa, be conducted in the African cultural context in order to allow Christianity to find a firm root among the Africans.
2. The development of African Christian theology be based on valuable, and acceptable elements of African cultural heritage, to make it the kind of theology that would speak to the African soul.
3. Selected African cultural values that could be acceptable to the African Christians of today, be incorporated into the African Church life, especially in areas of worship, liturgy, hymns, song-tunes and poems.
4. The incorporation of the African cultural values is important in helping the churches in Africa to find their identity and to be authentic of the African philosophy of life.
5. The AACJ views the African cultural renewal in*her Christian churches as one aspect of change that would help the African churches to achieve 'selfhood', a stage in which the churches would become autonomous and self-directing.
6. The AACJ believes that the African knowledge of the

fullness of Jesus Christ can only be best expressed within the framework of the African cultural heritage.

7. The AACJ calls upon its member churches to be free from unnecessary foreign cultural elements which some African Church leaders have said are being brought to Africa through things like foreign literature and films.
8. The AACJ member churches are called upon to learn to interpret the gospel message from the African's own cultural background rather than continue to see it in the western cultural background in which it was brought to Africa more than two hundred years ago.

THE PROPHETIC MINISTRY OF THE AFRICAN CHURCHES

1. The AACJ upholds that the prophetic ministry is an aspect of Christian mission which the African churches should carry out wherever they are placed. In other words, the prophetic ministry is the involvement of churches in matters that affect human life in society with an aim to meet people's needs in their own context.
2. The objectives of a prophetic church in the AACJ context should be to build a society or a nation with a strong Christian foundation in which every citizen has something to contribute by having the

freedom to participate fully in the social structure of that society.

3. In the AAJJ definition of the prophetic ministry, a Church with a prophetic role is one which is prepared to identify itself with the people who suffer persecution, oppression and injustices in any form and from whosoever in the continent following the example of Jesus who Himself denounced evil throughout His ministry and in the end suffered martyrdom on the cross for the redemption of men.
4. The Church in the AAJJ context is called especially to work for social justice, reconciliation, and the liberation of the whole man from both physical and spiritual evil forces.
5. Another aspect of the prophetic ministry of the churches is for them to serve as the national conscience or watchdog for their own states in order to be able to speak out whatever would create disharmony in their countries and as a result retard development.
6. For the prophetic ministry of the churches to be a reality, it must be in both word and deed. Hence, the AAJJ acts as a voice of the member

churches throughout Africa to speak against social injustices related to education, development, culture or economics wherever they exist.

7. The churches involvement in the planning and implementation of national development programmes is a major aspect of their prophetic ministry in the AACJ context.
8. As far as the use of violence for a good cause goes, such as in the liberation of enslaved men, the AACJ takes a positive stand on this. The AACJ supports her viewpoint on this issue by the fact that Christ Himself sanctified violence into a redemptive instrument by accepting to die a violent death on the cross.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Looking at the summary of some of the theological reflections that the AACJ has come up with in the last two decades, there is no doubt that on the one hand, a lot of good work has been done by this organization. However, on the other hand, there is a lot that the Church leaders anticipated to take place following the AACJ formation that has not been fully realised up till now.

Let us examine first the hopes that the churches had right from 1958 which have not been fully realized. Some of these are as follows:-

1. The AAJJ has been forced to pay more attention to its relations with the West than its African constituency. This is true because up till now, the AAJJ still depends largely on financial aids from friends and church organisations from Europe and the United States of America, particularly the WCC. Among many churches in Africa, especially the independent churches, very little about the AAJJ is known, hence, few have become members of the AAJJ.
2. "The challenges and creative possibilities of true ecumenicity in Africa have been little met as yet, for example in relations between English and French speaking sections of the constituency, in relationship with independent church movements, in winning conservative evangelicals to ecumenical understanding." (3)

The major objective for the formation of the AAJJ was to give the churches in Africa the opportunity to work together in unity in carrying out Christian mission in the continent. If this objective has not been fully met as the observers of the 1969 AAJJ general assembly which we

have quoted were led to say, then it is right to say that a lot still needs to be done by the AAJJ in order to achieve this goal.

3. Few distinctively, African programme such as an adult literacy campaign using scriptures yet to be devised for developing effective Christian witness and service in Africa. A lot has been said at the AAJJ general assemblies on Christian witness in Africa. However, the method to be used in fulfilling this objective has not been fully spelt out by the AAJJ. What is needed is a model of a programme for continental witness explaining fully what role each Church should play in its own country. This model should also help to show how the Christians should relate to their own governments on matters of politics.
4. Little study has yet been carried out by the AAJJ of the distinctive contribution which African churches working in the same context have to make to the whole ecumenical movement. Some research should be done in areas that keep the AAJJ member churches and the African conservative churches apart so that a solution could be found to these issues in order to help enhance the ecumenical objectives of the AAJJ in the continent.
5. The AAJJ is powerless in implementing its objectives or important resolutions passed at its general assemblies.

The AACJ simply being a conference of churches has neither a constitutional mandate to implement issues from the Headquarter's level, or to force its member churches to do the same. It would certainly be helpful if the AACJ was invested with some official powers so that it could ensure that member churches carried out whatever recommendations were passed by the Church leaders at the AACJ general assembly level.

These comments may not by any means exhaust the list. We have already spoken of issues such as the AACJ call to the member churches to widen their mission activities by including both Christian witness and service to their own countries. The latter as we said also needs a further definition by the AACJ in the light of the Bible, so that the member churches can have something to adopt for their own countries. Then we also discussed the issue of self-reliance of the churches in Africa. That is 'moratorium'. Here too, the AACJ needs to come up with a more detailed explanation on what process the churches should take in order to implement this recommendation - to simply tell member churches and National Christian Councils to be self-reliant without suggestions of what has to be the alternative is not enough.

The idea of incorporating valuable African cultural elements into the African Church life has been one of great discussion in the AACJ general assemblies and yet not much has been done to bring change. What needs to be done right

away is to set up a team of theologians, existing African traditionalists and culturalists, representatives from African independent churches who are already far ahead in incorporating the African values into the life of their churches, then hold consultations in order to discuss and select valuable cultural elements that could be incorporated into the life of the African Church. How first this will be a reality especially among the established churches is yet to be seen.

Another area in which the AACO has got itself involved is in the support for liberation struggles especially for countries in Africa which are not yet politically independent. This is seen by the AACO as one important aspect of the prophetic ministry of the churches in Africa. Needless to say, this is an area that to a large extent has caused a great deal of division among the African churches, especially on the issue of the support for the use of violence as a means for liberation. To clear this misunderstanding, there is need for more consultations to discuss further in the light of the Bible what it really involves to be a Church with a prophetic ministry especially on issues relating to politics.

Having examined some of the AACO weaknesses one can only hope that the future of the AACO will be more fruitful than it has been in the past. A close look at its past

including 1958, 1963, 1969 and 1974 AAJJ general assemblies may well reveal that the Church leaders of the 1958 conference may have been too optimistic about what the AAJJ was expected to achieve in the first few years of its life; compared with what the churches themselves found difficult to achieve in their long history.

As a whole, the story of the AAJJ is not entirely an unsuccessful one. There are quite a number of events that have been fulfilled by the AAJJ that are worth commending. The first is its effort to bring the churches of Africa together in order to exchange views and experiences on matters affecting the life of the Church in Africa. The exchange of news and views between the member churches through the AAJJ monthly newsletter and quarterly news bulletin, together with the assembly meetings which are held once after a period of about five years has brought a great deal of awareness of the different good and bad situations prevailing in the continent of Africa. This knowledge has also helped the churches to work together in their mission work and to understand each other. The publication of news about Africa which is frequently sent to the member churches have revealed issues relating to politics, economy, social, moral and cultural matters. The AAJJ has acted many times as a voice of the African churches to denounce social evils such as the violation of human rights, cases

of human suffering, oppression, exploitation and social injustices wherever they may exist in Africa. By so doing, the AAJC has demonstrated to its member churches and National Christian Councils what it means to be a Church with a prophetic ministry.

CONCLUSION

Although the AAJC does not claim to have a particular theology of its own, through its general assemblies, it has been able to create platforms for the churches in Africa to reflect and find opportunities of expression for their theological views. It has also supported the churches by defining and expressing more clearly their different theological thinking. This has been done through consultations and by the circulation of its news bulletins and journals. It has also continued to encourage and express the theology of ecumenism among the African churches and National Christian Councils throughout the continent of Africa.

As we think of what the AAJC has meant and can mean in the life of the churches it serves throughout the continent of Africa, I am reminded that the Church is the Lord's; Jesus said, 'I will build my Church' (Matthew 16:18) and later He commissioned His disciples saying:-

"I have been given all the
authority in heaven and on earth. Go,
then, to all peoples everywhere and

make them disciples: baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And remember! I will be with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20)

Many Christians believe therefore that in the turmoil of Africa today, Christ is at work and if His disciples are to be true to their commission, they must discern Him at work, building His Church, and they must work with Him in the new real-life situations of today and tomorrow. Let us hope that the AACJ will continue to be of service to the African churches in order to help them meet their goal in Christian mission in the continent of Africa.

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER V

1. IMC - The Church in Changing Africa. Report of the All-Africa Church Conference held at Ibadan, Nigeria, January 10 - 19, 1958 - New York: International Missionary Council, 1958, p. 16.
2. AACJ - Drumbeats from Kampala. Report of the first assembly of the All Africa Conference of Churches held at Kampala, April 20 to 30, 1963, London: Lutterworth Press, 1963, p. 63.
3. AACJ - Engagement. The second AACJ Assembly held at Abidjan 1969, Nairobi: AACJ Press, 1970, p. 86.

GLOSSARY OF THE TERMS USED IN THIS THESIS

CONSERVATIVE:

Religious outlook characterized by a tendency to preserve or keep unchanged the Christian traditions, principles and fundamentals received from the past; they are usually opposed to any kind of modernism or liberalism. Churches which hold this attitude are known as the "Conservative Churches."

CHURCH:

This term is used in the New Testament to describe a single body of Christian believers or the whole body of Christians all over the world. We also speak of church when we mean a building used for worship.

EVANGELISATION OR EVANGELISM:

It means the proclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ with the intention of winning people to become Christian believers and church workers. Evangelical Churches are those existing primarily to conduct evangelistic or mission work characterized by that purpose.

ECUMENICAL:

Term for contact and reunion between the various separated branches of the Christian Church. We now speak of:

Ecumenical Movements: This means a world-wide movement towards Christian unity among all denominations and National Christian Councils in various localities, countries or regions. A good example is the formation of the World Council of Churches. The AACJ is an example of a Regional Ecumenical movement.

LIBERAL:

This is a term often applied to people in church or politics who hold opinions broader or more advanced than those in accordance with the commonly accepted standards. They put more emphasis on the use of reason, science and contemporary thought in contrast to conservatism.

Religious Liberalism often emphasizes human goodness and progress while Religious Conservatism stresses the human inability to progress or do good works without divine aid.

MISSION:

It means the act of sending or being sent to perform some function or service. In Church circles it is usually seen as carrying out a special task for the Church particularly in witnessing for Christ in word and deed. A missionary is therefore one who is sent out by his/her Church for this purpose.

PROCRATORIUM:

It is legal authorization to a supporting agent

or to suspend or stop supplies or payment to a client. In the AACC context it means a complete suspension of assistance to African churches by the European churches.

INDEPENDENT CHURCHES IN AFRICA:

These are churches founded by Africans for Africans. Some theologians prefer to call them 'Indigenous African Churches'. However, this is not commonly used. Some of these churches have indirect links with particular historical churches. The courses of their emergence are many and they differ from one to another.

HISTORICAL CHURCHES:

These are churches that are directly founded by missionaries from Europe and North America. Hence, they are sometimes referred to as "Missionary established churches". Most of these churches still have links with their overseas mother churches (e.g., Anglican, Methodist, Lutheran, etc.)

LIBERATION:

This is the act of setting free. Sometimes used to mean "salvation". Liberation has wider connotation in the Bible. For example, man's liberation from sin as a condition of a life of communion of all men with God. From a political sense it means liberation of the oppressed people and social classes.

PROPHETIC:

From the word 'prophet' God's messenger or a

revealer of divine will, PROPHETIC ROLE: This is related to the Old Testament prophets whose duty was to denounce the sins of individuals and kingdoms, proclaim the nearness and the nature of God, what God expected from people. This is now the role the churches in Africa have to play in their own environment.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

A SUMMARY LIST OF MEMBER CHURCHES AND NATIONAL CHRISTIAN
COUNCILS: (1977)

	<u>English</u>	<u>French</u>	<u>Portuguese</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>Member Churches</u>	70	31	1	102
<u>Associated Councils</u>	10	2	1	<u>13</u>
		<u>Total Member Bodies</u>		<u>115</u>

North Africa

Egypt	2
Morocco	1

Central Africa

Burundi	3
Cameroon	6
Equatorial Guinea	1

West Africa

Benin	1
Gambia	2
Ghana	6
Ivory Coast	1
Liberia	7
Nigeria	7
Senegal	1

Gabon	1
Malawi	5
Rhodesia	6
Rwanda	3
Zaire	9
Zambia	5

<u>West Africa (cont'd ...)</u>		<u>Eastern Africa</u>	
Togo	1	Ethiopia	2
Sierra Leone	5	Kenya	8
<u>Southern Africa</u>		Madagascar	3
Botswana	1	Sudan	3
Lesotho	1	Tanzania	4
Mozambique	2	T.F.A.I.	1
South Africa	13	Uganda	1
Swaziland	1		

115 Member Bodies in 33 Countries

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APPENDIX II

"MESSAGE TO THE CHURCHES IN AFRICA"

(From the All-Africa Church Conference held at Ibadan, Nigeria, January 10 - 19, 1958).

"We the delegates of the first All-Africa Church Conference that has ever been held in Africa, rejoice that God has called us together and in His name we send greetings from Ibadan in Nigeria to all the churches of Africa.

We come from the countries of Sierra Leone, Gambia, Nigeria, of French West Africa, Liberia and Togo, Cameroun, French Equatorial Africa, Belgian Congo, Angola, Rhodesia, Nyasaland, Madagascar, as well as other countries of Africa and other parts of the world. But although our languages are many, our reason for coming here is the same, that we love the Lord Jesus Christ and are witnesses to His Gospel, that in Him we are one people whether we speak Ibo, Yoruba, Douala, English, Afrikaans, Zulu, Sesuto, Portuguese, French, Kikuyu or any other language that is spoken by the people who live in Africa. We are one in Him who was born a Jew in Bethlehem, fled from Herod into Egypt, grew up in Nazareth,

died in Jerusalem, arose there and lives today in Ibadan and in every other city and village in the world that his Father created. Of this oneness in Christ we have been given such a rich experience at this Conference that not one of us is likely to forget it.

To be here is to have abundant cause to thank God for the way that the Gospel has been brought to so many countries, and to be filled with astonished joy that it has transformed the lives of so many men and women of Africa.

In a continent where such massive events lie ahead, we thank God that the Christian Church has taken such deep root. We know there are millions who have not heard the Gospel and we accept the challenge of the evangelizing of our countries, especially in the face of the dangers of materialism and secularism.

While this experience of unity has been rich and deep, we acknowledge with penitence our many divisions which have prevented us from witnessing to our unity in Him, but

this we still purpose to do with divisions in the Church and to work for the removal of all injustices based on racial discrimination which we believe to be contrary to the will of God.

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 who 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.

In the name of the Father of all men,

in the name of the Son who saved us
all, in the name of the Holy Spirit
who inspires us, we declare ourselves
to be one in Christ. Amen. "

APPENDIX III

AFRICAN COUNTRIES REPRESENTED AT THE AACG GENERAL ASSEMBLIES IN
1958, 1969, AND 1974

<u>IBADAN - 1958</u>	<u>ABIDJAN - 1969</u>	<u>LUSAKA - 1974</u>
Angola	Botswana	Botswana
Lesotho (Basutoland)	Burundi	Burundi
Zaire	Cameroun	Jameroun
Cameroun	Congo (Brazzaville)	Congo (Brazzaville)
Egypt	Dahomey	Dahomey
Ethiopia	Egypt	Egypt
Central Africa Republic	Ethiopia	Ethiopia
Gambia	Gabon	Gabon
Ghana	Gambia	Gambia
Ivory Coast	Ghana	Ghana
Kenya	Ivory Coast	Ivory Coast
Liberia	Kenya	Kenya
Malagasy	Lesotho	Lesotho
Mozambique	Liberia	Liberia
Nigeria	Malagasy	Malagasy
Malawi	Malawi	Malawi
Zambia	Rwanda	Nigeria
Senegal	Rio Muni	Rwanda
Sierra Leone	Senegal	Senegal
South Africa	Sierra Leone	Sierra Leone
Zimbabwe (Rhodesia)	Sudan	Sudan

I BADAN - 1958

ABIDJAN - 1969

LUSAKA - 1974

Sudan

South Africa

South Africa

Tanzania

Tanzania

Swaziland

Togo

Togo

Tanzania

Uganda

Uganda

Togo

Zaire

Uganda

Zambia

Zaire

Zimbabwe (Rhodesia)

Zimbabwe (Rhodesia)

APPENDIX IV

CONSTITUTION OF THE ALL AFRICA CONFERENCE OF CHURCHES

Name: : THE ALL AFRICA CONFERENCE OF CHURCHES

Preamble:

Believing that the purpose of God for the churches in Africa is life together in a common obedience to Him for the doing of His will in the world, the churches and the National Christian Councils of Africa subscribing hereto have constituted the All Africa Conference of Churches as a fellowship of consultation and co-operation within the wider fellowship of the universal Church.

I Basis

The All Africa Conference of Churches is a fellowship of Churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and only Saviour according to the Scriptures and therefore seek to fulfill together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

II Functions

The functions of the All Africa Conference of Churches shall be:

1. To keep before the churches and National Christian Councils the demands of the Gospel pertaining to their life and mission, for evangelism, for witness in society, for

service and for unity, and to this end to promote consultation and action among the churches and Councils.

2. To provide for a common programme of study and research.
3. To encourage closer relationships and mutual sharing of experience among the churches in Africa through visits, consultations and conference and the circulation of information.
4. To assist the churches in finding, sharing, and placing personnel and utilizing other resources for the most effective prosecution of their common task.
5. To assist the churches in their common work of leadership training, lay and clerical, for the task of the churches today.
6. Without prejudice to its own autonomy, to collaborate with the World Council of Churches and other appropriate agencies in such ways as may be mutually agreed.

III

Membership

1. The AACJ shall be composed of those churches in Africa which express a desire to join the AACJ, which accept its basis, and which

satisfy such criteria as the Assembly may prescribe

2. National Christian Councils in Africa which express a desire to join the AACJ, and which accept its basis, may become associate members of AACJ. They may, however, appoint not more than one delegate per Council to the Assembly, with power to vote.

IV Structure

The All Africa Conference of Churches shall discharge its functions through the following organs:

1. The Assembly
2. General Committee
3. Commissions

V The Assembly

1. The Assembly shall be the principal authority of the AACJ. As such it shall take appropriate measures to fulfil the functions set out in Article II above. It shall not legislate for the churches or Councils.
2. The Assembly shall be composed of the official representatives of member churches and National Christian Councils directly appointed by them, in accordance with the By-Laws of the Constitution,

and such consultant non-voting members as the Assembly or General Committee shall invite. Provision shall be made for adequate representation of lay men and women and youth.

3. The Assembly shall normally meet at least once every four years.
4. The Assembly shall elect the General Committee.
5. The Assembly may establish By-Laws by a two-thirds majority of those present and voting.

VI Officers of the Assembly

The Officers of the Assembly shall be a minimum of 4 Presidents elected by the Assembly, due regard being paid in their selection to geographical, linguistic and confessional considerations. They shall be ex-officio members of the General Committee, without power to vote.

VII The General Committee

1. The General Committee shall be composed of voting representatives to the Assembly.
2. The General Committee shall consist of not more than 20 and not less than 15 members due regard being paid to geographical, linguistic and confessional considerations.

For every elected member an alternate shall also be elected. A quorum shall consist of 50 per cent of the voting members.

3. The General Committee shall ordinarily meet once a year.
4. The General Committee shall elect its own officers from among its own members.
5. The General Committee shall appoint the staff of the AAJJ, which shall include a General Secretary and an Associate General Secretary. The General Secretary and the Associate General Secretary shall be responsible to the General Committee for ensuring the detailed implementation of the policies and plans approved by the Assembly or the General Committee, within the framework of the budgets and staffing patterns established by these bodies. The General Secretary or, in his absence, the Associate General Secretary, shall act as Secretary to the General Committee.
6. The General Committee shall appoint an Executive consisting of the General Secretary the Associate General Secretary, the Chairman of the General Committee and 3 other members of the General Committee, with 3 alternates to such members. The Executive shall be

empowered to take decisions in the name and on behalf of the General Committee within the policies, programmes and budget and provisions already established by the Assembly or the General Committee. Only those members of the Executive who are members of the General Committee shall have power to vote. A quorum shall consist of 50 per cent of the voting members.

7. Between meetings of the Assembly the General Committee shall fulfil the functions of the Assembly in accordance with the decisions of the Assembly.
8. The General Committee shall be the Finance Committee of the A.A.S.S., formulating its budget and securing its financial support through membership fees prescribed by the Assembly, received from member churches and Councils, and through funds obtained from other appropriate sources. The General Committee shall prepare an audited financial statement annually to be circulated to member churches and Councils.
9. The General Committee shall be empowered on behalf of the A.A.S.S., to hold, acquire and dispose of property in the name of the A.A.S.S.,

to receive, invest and disburse funds belonging to the AAJC, to appoint Trustees and to negotiate appropriate contracts and agreements on behalf of the AAJC, to sue and be sued on behalf of the AAJC, and generally to conduct such transactions as are necessary for the execution of the functions of the AAJC.

10. Subject to the directions of the preceding Assembly, the General Committee shall convene the following Assembly, and make all necessary preparations for it.

VIII

Commissions

1. The Assembly, or between Assemblies the General Committee, shall establish such Commissions as may be needed to carry out particular functional interests.
2. The General Committee shall be represented in the membership of every Commission by at least two members, shall give general oversight to its work, and shall receive regular reports from it.
3. The General Committee shall determine the

budget of each Commission and shall satisfy itself that a reasonable percentage of the budget of each Commission shall be contributed by member churches and Councils. No Commission shall have power to commit funds of the A.A.S. without consent of the General Committee.

4. Such staff as is deemed necessary to serve the Commissions shall be appointed by the General Committee, in consultation with the Commissions.

IX

Associated Organizations

1. The General Committee is empowered, on behalf of the Assembly, to negotiate agreements for association with A.A.S. with other organizations concerned with fields of work within the sphere of interest of the A.A.S.
2. Such associated organizations shall have the right of non-voting representation in the Assembly and on such Commissions as they may wish and as the General Committee may approve, on the advice of the Commission or Commissions concerned.
3. The General Committee shall periodically review the relationship of the A.A.S. to such

associated organizations.

X Amendments

Amendments may be proposed by a member church, an associate member Council or the General Committee. Amendments proposed by a member church or member Council shall be reviewed by the General Committee. Notice of all amendments shall be sent to all member churches and Councils not less than six months before the meeting of the Assembly. Amendments shall require for adoption a two-thirds majority of those present and voting.

XI Entry into Force of the Constitution

The Constitution shall become effective on adoption by a two-thirds majority of the votes of the representatives present and voting at the first Assembly.

APPENDIX V

ALL AFRICA CONFERENCE OF CHURCHES

GENERAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS (1974)

<u>NAME</u>	<u>CHURCH</u>	<u>COUNTRY</u>
<u>President</u>		
Pastor Dr. R. Andriamanjato	United Church	Madagascar
<u>Vice-Presidents</u>		
Mrs. Esther L. Jaker	Anglican	Sierra Leone
Pastor Harry Y. Henry	Methodist	Benin
Bishop Samuel	Orthodox	Egypt
Rev. S.S. Seana	Methodist	South Africa
<u>Members</u>		
<u>Chairman:</u>		
1. <u>Rev. John G. Gatu</u>	Presbyterian	Kenya
Rev. E. kweka	Lutheran	Tanzania
<u>Vice-Chairlady</u>		
2. <u>Mrs. Sally Motlana</u>	Anglican	South Africa
Miss Dorcas Chinopfukutwa	Methodist	Zimbabwe (Rhodesia)
<u>Vice-Chairman</u>		
3. <u>Pastor Seth Nomenyo</u>	Evangelical	Togo
Mr. Jacques Ndensi	Reformed	Senegal
4. <u>Bishop Cyprian Bamwoze</u>	Anglican	Uganda

<u>NAME</u>	<u>CHURCH</u>	<u>COUNTRY</u>
Bishop Lawi Imathiu	Methodist	Kenya
5. Rev. Joel Chisanja	United Church of Zambia	Zambia
Very Rev. S.L. Solomona	Anglican	Sudan
6. Major Mbakanu/Diakanwa	Salvation Army	Zaire
Col. Joshua Ngugu	Salvation Army	Kenya
7. <u>Mr. Moise Dideh</u>	Methodist	Benin
Mrs. Dorcas Ahui	Methodist	Ivory Coast
8. <u>Rev. Christian Kobla</u> <u>Dovlo</u>	Reformed	Ghana
Mrs. J. Stewart	Lutheran	Liberia
9. <u>Mme Nicola Ebelle-Ekanga</u>	Reformed	Gameroon
Mme M.L. Maganga	Reformed	Congo
10. <u>Rev. David Goweta</u>	Lutheran	South Africa
Rev. W. Mkwakwami	Reformed	Zimbabwe (Rhodesia)
11. <u>Pastor Naasson Hitimana</u>	Reformed	Rwanda
Rev. M. Nseke	Baptist	Gameroon
12. <u>His Pre-Eminence Bolaji</u>	Methodist	Nigeria
Dr. E.A. Dahunsi	Baptist	Nigeria
13. <u>Rev. Dr. Zvomunondita</u> <u>Kurewa</u>	Methodist	Zimbabwe (Rhodesia)
Mrs. P. Khechana	Reformed	Lesotho
14. <u>Mr. Arthur Litu</u>	Quaker	Kenya
Ato Berhe Beyene	Lutheran	Ethiopia
15. <u>Bishop F. Makhetha</u>	Anglican	Lesotho
Rev. John Thorne	Reformed	South Africa

<u>NAME</u>	<u>CHURCH</u>	<u>COUNTRY</u>
17. <u>Very Rev. Dean Hosea Mdziniso</u>	Lutheran	Swaziland
Mr. Gaylord Kamoarami	Methodist	Zimbabwe (Rhodesia)
18. <u>Bishop Timothy Clufosoye</u>	Anglican	Nigeria
Mr. Max Bailor	Methodist	Sierra Leone
19. <u>Bishop Pachomius</u>	Orthodox	Egypt
Sister N.M. Assad	Orthodox	Ethiopia
20. <u>Abba Paulos</u>	Orthodox	Ethiopia
Abba Habte Selassie Tesfa	Orthodox	Ethiopia
21. <u>Pastor M. Rakotomalala</u>	Lutheran	Madagascar
Pastor J.B. Bokagne	Reformed	Cameroun
22. <u>Pastor Emmanuel Sibomana</u>	Baptist	Burundi
Pastor Kayij Mutombo	Methodist	Zaire
23. <u>Citoyen Bena Silu</u>	Kimbanquist	Zaire
Mr. Jean Lumiere Tsaa	Eglise Protestante Africaine	Cameroun
24. <u>Mrs. Eugenia Simpson-Cooper</u>	Methodist	Liberia
Mrs. E. Tetteh	Methodist	Ghana
25. <u>Mr. Cornelius D.Watyoka</u>	Methodist	Zimbabwe (Rhodesia)
Pastor Daniel Ratefy	Reformed	Madagascar

Consultants (Non-voting members of the General Committee)

1. Mr. Kodwo E. Ankrah
Uganda
2. Mr. Isaias Fonzamo
Mozambique

Consultants (Cont'd ...)

<u>NAME</u>	<u>CHURCH</u>	<u>COUNTRY</u>
3. Mrs. Florence Mahoney		Congo
4. Mme. Therese Gaye		Senegal

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
(1974)

A. OFFICERS

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	Pastor Harry Y. Henry	Benin
	Bishop Samuel	Egypt
	Rev. S.S. Seane	South Africa
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<u>Vice-Chairman:</u>	Pastor Seth Nomenyo	Togo
<u>General-Secretary:</u>	Canon Burgess-Jarr	AAJJ

B. MEMBERS

1. <u>Rev. Christian Kobla Dovo</u>	Ghana
Mr. Arthur Litu	Kenya
2. <u>Mme. Nicola Ebelle-Ekanga</u>	Cameroon
Mrs. Eugenia Simpson-Jocper	Liberia
3. <u>Pastor Naassen Hitimana</u>	Rwanda

B. MEMBERS (Cont'd...)

	Pastor Tshimungu Mayela	Zaire
4.	<u>Bishop Timothy Clufesoye</u>	Nigeria
	Mr. Max Bailor	Sierra Leona
5.	<u>Bishop F. Makhetha</u>	Lesotho
	Mr. C.D. Watyoka	Zimbabwe (Rhodesia)
6.	<u>Abba Paulos</u>	Ethiopia
	Abba Habte Selassie Tesfa	Ethiopia

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APPENDIX VI

LIST OF NAMES OF PEOPLE INTERVIEWED 12TH - 18TH NOVEMBER, 1978

LIMURU - KENYA

<u>NAME</u>	<u>COUNTRY</u>	<u>POSITION</u>
Animo, G.	Kenya	Assistant Provost, Church of the Province of Kenya
Best, K.Y.	Liberia	Director of Information, AA33
Isatafanous, S.A.M.	Egypt	General Secretary of the Bible Society in Egypt
Janda J.	Sudan	Associate General Secretary of the AA33
Kodjo, P.	Ghana	Secretary for Africa, World Students' Christian Federation
Kuntembwe, B.G.	Malawi	Moderator, Presbyterian Church of Malawi
Marwam M. (Mrs.)	Tanzania	Production and Circulation Manager, Information Department, AA33
Moseme, A.	Lesotho	Moderator/Secretary of Synod Lesotho Evangelical Church
Nguku, J.T.	Swaziland	General Secretary of United Christian Church of Africa
Rokotendraibe, R.	Madagascar	Executive Secretary, Theology Department, AA33
Rutiba, E.G.	Uganda	Lecturer, Makerere University
Shehata, S.	Egypt	Acting General Secretary of the AA33
Stephanos, F.	Ethiopia	Vice-President of Evangelical Church, Mekana Yesus
Waryoka, J.D.	Zimbabwe	General Secretary, National Christian Council of Zimbabwe