

ANNUAL THEOLOGICAL SYMPOSIUM CONCEPT NOTE

THEME: AFRICAN CHURCHES ON ISRAEL AND PALESTINE.

DATES: - 6TH - 10TH OCTOBER 2025

VENUE: NAIROBI, KENYA. DTCC

- 1. Background / Context:** - The All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC -CETA), through its Theology and Interfaith Relations unit is committed to providing a platform for constructive conversations about addressing contextual misleading theologies in Africa. AACC has been holding annual theological symposia. The 1st symposium was held in from 23rd – 27th October 2019 where critical areas of misleading theologies were identified for further engagements in future symposia. A series of symposia took place annually addressing thematic areas of Complexities of Theologies of Wealth and Prosperity (on 23rd-27th November, 2020), Controversies about Theologies of Health and Healing (on 22nd -24th November, 2021), Addressing Contextual Theologies of Power and Authority in African Churches (on 19th – 23rd September 2022) and The Role of Governments' Regulation on Churches and Religious Institutions (RIs held on October 28th -1st November 2025. This year's annual theological symposium will be held from 6th -10th October 2026 at Desmond Tutu Conference Center (DTCC) with the theme: **AFRICAN CHURCHES ON ISRAEL AND PALESTINE.**
- 2. Rationale:** - The rapid growth of African Christianity both the main-stream churches as well as Pentecostal-evangelical movements is resulting to a closer relationship with Israel and Palestine. The relationship is growing as various churches in Africa as well as individual Christians strongly associate themselves with the fulfillments of Abrahamic covenant, biblical prophecies, eschatological and prosperity gospel¹, creating a geopolitical situation of pro-Israel and/or Pro- Palestine supporters within the continent. Consequently, the multi-dimensional aspect of the relationship promotes AACC to host 6th annual theological symposium, inviting theologians, church leaders, scholars and pilgrims into a conversation that will explore African Churches relationship and understanding of Israel and Palestine.

Key questions this symposium will seek to answer are;

- a) What are the factors contributing to the growing relationship between African churches, Israel and Palestine?

¹ Genesis 12:3 God promised Abraham, "I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed"

- b) What are the biblical hermeneutical approaches authenticating African Christianity connection to Israel and Palestine?
- c) What are the theological perspectives of African Christian pilgrimage to the holy sites?
- d) What are the ecclesial authenticities and identities emanating from the relationship between African Christians, Israel and Palestine?
- e) What are the geopolitical, theological and spiritual implications of today's African relations to countries of Israel and Palestine to the African Christianity.
- f) What are the Middle East Christians' expectations from the churches in Africa.

2.1. **Objectives**

- To provide a platform for constructive conversations on African Churches Theological Perspectives on Israel and Palestine.
- To bring together up to 100 participants including theologians, church leaders, scholars' and frequent pilgrims to explore different aspects of relations between African Churches, Israel and Palestine.
- To Publish the symposium papers/articles in to a book series addressing contextual theologies in Africa today.

2.2. **Thematic Focus Topics**

- a) Historical and Biblical relationship between African churches, Israel and Palestine.
- b) Biblical hermeneutic approaches Informing different perspectives.
- c) Theological perspectives on Christian pilgrimage to the holy sites.
- d) Ecclesial authenticities and identities on relationship between African Christians, Israel and Palestine.
- e) Geopolitical Interests, Theological and Spiritual implications on relations to countries of Israel and Palestine.
- f) Middle East Christians' expectations from the African churches.

2.3. **Target:** - This symposium will target 100 participants composed of church leaders, leading theologians and frequent pilgrims, theologians from middle east and Africans in diaspora who may be interested. A few partners will be invited as well as representatives from Israel and Palestine.

2.4. **Methodology:** - The methodology to be used will include paper presentation, panel discussions, plenary discussions, group discussions, case studies and sharing of perspectives. Sharing with be in person or/and short videos/clips.

2.5. **Immediate and Short-Term Expected Outcomes**

- Consensus building on African churches' relationship with Israel and Palestine.

- Development of biblical hermeneutical approaches to Zionism and pilgrimage for use by member churches.
 - Theological response to gaps causing the misinterpretation of ecclesial authenticities and identities and the impact on African churches.
 - Development of theological approaches addressing geopolitical interests, theological and spiritual implications of today's African churches.
 - Development of a framework on addressing middle east churches expectations.
 - Publication of the symposium papers/articles in to a book series addressing contextual theologies in Africa in which the link to the publications will be circulated widely within the AACC networks.
- 2.6. Speakers:** - Speakers will be identified and selected from the list of applicants who will have submitted abstracts as per the symposium requirements (*requirements will be published together with the symposium advert at: www.aacc-ceta.org*). We intend to benefit from the expertise of church leaders, professional, theologians and lecturers in theological schools across Africa and beyond. Speakers will be selected from their areas of theological expertise and experiences. They will be notified on time preferably during the 1st week of the month of June.
- 2.7. Dates And Venue:** - This symposium is planned to take place for **3 days in October 2025** with the arrivals on **6th October 2025** and departures **on 10th October 2025** in Nairobi, Kenya at the Desmond Tutu Hotel and Conference Centre.
- 2.8. Costs:** - Interested participants are encouraged to contribute towards the Symposium through travel costs and conference fees (accommodation and meals).
- 2.9. Application Timelines** - The deadline for submission of the Application form is **15th May 2025**. The form can be filled online through the following link: www.aacc-ceta.org (*Application forms to be uploaded in due time*). PDF or MS-Word version of the application can be sent upon request. **Due to limited space, final decision on applications will be communicated on or before 30th May 2025.**
- 2.10. Selection Process**
For maximized participation, the criteria for selection will include the following among others:
- Church leaders and non-church leaders
 - Theologians and Theology/Religious Studies experts
 - Age mix intergeneration balance
 - Regional balances
 - Financial possibilities
 - Gender equity