



THE AFRICAN PULSE

Voice of the African Ecumenical Movement



A publication of The All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC)

Ecumenical Movement keeps sharp eye on peace and security



“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God,” Mathew 5:9

IN THIS ISSUE

- 3** From The General Secretary
Africa in a new Debt Crisis: Can churches remain silent?
- 5** Youth Focus
Africa's Youth Will Define The Trajectory Of A Rising Africa
- 7** Peace and Security
Role of Churches In enhancing voter Confidence
- 9** Addis Ababa African Union Office and Advocacy
AACC-COMESA Co-operation to deepen
- 13** Spotlight
Strengthening Ecumenical Diplomacy For Peace In Africa
- 18** Gender
Male Champions



EDITORIAL

ALL AFRICA CONFERENCE OF CHURCHES

Publisher

All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC)

The African Pulse Working Group

Rev. Prof. Bosela Eale

Evelyn Okunda

Minoo Kyalo

Geoffrey Alemba

Patrick Mwangi

Editorial Consultant

Patrick Mwangi

Design & Layout

Apollo Obiero

Distribution

All Africa Conference of Churches

Contacts

ALL AFRICA CONFERENCE OF CHURCHES

General Secretariat, Waiyaki Way,

Opposite Safaricom House

P. O. Box 14205 - 00800, Westlands, Nairobi

Tel: +254 20 4441483, 44441338

Email: secretariat@aacc-ceta.org

Website: www.aacc-ceta.org

The African Pulse is published quarterly by the All Africa Conference of Churches as an information, educational and advocacy platform for the ecumenical movement in Africa. The Editor welcomes articles for publication without any obligation whatsoever. Scripts must bear author's full names, occupation email address and daytime telephone contact. Articles may be edited for clarity and space.

To send articles or feedback, use the following email address -: secretariat@aacc-ceta.org

AACC is a continental ecumenical body that accounts for over 140 million Christians across the continent. AACC is the largest association of Protestant, Anglican, Orthodox and Indigenous churches in Africa and is a member of the worldwide ecumenical network. AACC is a fellowship of 204 members comprising of Churches, National Councils of Churches (NCCs), theological and lay training institutions and other Christian organizations in 42 African countries.



Africa in a new Debt trap: Can churches remain silent?



By Rev. Dr Fidon Mwombeki

In September 2021, AACC held a “Consultation on Public Debt, Corruption and Illicit Financial Flows” in Zambia. We heard mind-blowing statistics on the situation in many African countries. We are already in a new debt crisis. Can the churches remain silent? Silence is complicity.

Some remember the remarkable “Jubilee 2000 Campaign” which led to the cancellation and restructuring of debts of many so called “Highly Indebted Poor Countries,” most of which were African. This was followed by the ill-conceived “Structural Adjustment Programs” which never brought expected results. Twenty years later, most African countries are even more indebted. And churches are mostly silent about it.

My own country Tanzania, for example, has borrowed 3.9 billion USD in one year from July 2020. The people are being told that “the debt is sustainable,” according to criteria of the lending agencies. It has been promised and given even more loans by IMF and others, to finance all kinds of wonderful projects. Tanzanians are being told, “we are building these things with our own money.” While technically correct, they do not tell that this money is actually borrowed from our great and great grandchildren, who though not yet born, will have to pay the loans.

We hear of many countries scrambling to get more and more money to build this and that, even to pay for their recurrent expenditure and financing the previous loans. Some countries are using more than 50% of their income to pay debts. It is worse than what we campaigned against in the Jubilee 2000.

Some countries have debts up to 175% of their Gross Domestic Product. What this means is that everything which is produced by all people in the country in one year, without using any of it, these countries cannot pay their debts. And, they are told, it is sustainable.

The high debt burden is exacerbated by rampant corruption and illicit financial flows. Our corrupt officials seek huge debts which are beyond the needed funds for expenditure. A big chunk of it is lost through corruption. We do not know how much actually ends into public projects.

We saw this during the scramble to address Covid-19 related disruptions and interventions. Many fake things were bought. Fake companies were created. A lot of money simply not be accounted for. And we are all going to pay it back. It is the same in infrastructure projects, which end up costing more than their actual value.

The other aspect is about the abundant wealth we talk about in Africa in terms of natural resources. How do we understand that some of the most highly indebted countries—e.g. Angola, DRC, Zambia, are those which are resource richest? How come that Angola has the highest debt to China, more than 20 billion USD?

We applaud the government which has started to follow the money stolen from Angola repatriated. We remember the campaign of President Obasanjo of Nigeria to repatriate stolen funds. We hear stories of boxes of cash confiscated abroad. And now, the Pandora papers after the Panama papers. Africans are in there! We are asking: Are African countries really serious about this?

We do not want to bequeath to our children and grandchildren mountains of debt. We must live within our means. We must borrow sustainably. Development needs financing. But financing must be used responsibly.

The time is overdue for churches to be agitated about the matter and they must demand transparency. Our consultation in Zambia made specific suggestions to churches in our countries to take up the matter as a question of our national stewardship. We must be agents of transformation. Transformation starts with information.

It is time, once again, for the African churches to put the issue of public debt on the agenda of the churches. We should take responsibility to demand from our parliaments the government correct information. We may realise that some of them actually do not understand the enormity of the situation.

And this time, let us focus more on our own governments. They should assess realistically and be transparent about our situation. They should borrow responsibly, and manage the debts and our resources with utmost transparency.

Churches may no longer remain ignorant about this. They cannot remain silent. We are called to work for justice, not only to ourselves but also for the next generations.

Rev. Dr Fidon Mwombeki is the General Secretary of the All Africa Conference of Churches. He can be reached at secretariat@aacc-ceta.org

Government Wild Borrowing Worry the Church

*Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves for the rights of all who are destitute.
Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy. Proverbs 31: 8 – 9 (NIV)*

Churches are sounding the alarm bells. Africa's debt is going out of control. Governments on the continent have gone on a borrowing spree. This has put the continent at risk. The situation worsened during the Covid crisis, where countries took even more debt.

The alarm bells can be heard. Several countries have either defaulted, or are in serious risk of defaulting.

Worse, the debt repayment obligations are wiping out resources on the continent. It leaves nothing for social and development programmes.

It is this situation that led the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) to convene a high-level consultation on the challenges of "Public Debt, Corruption & Illicit financial flows in Africa." It took place in Lusaka, Zambia from 20 – 24 September, 2021. It was hosted by the Council of Churches in Zambia.

The consultation brought together church leaders, women and youth leaders from member churches and Councils from Angola, Congo Brazzaville, DRC Congo, Egypt, Eritrea, Eswatini (Swaziland) and Ethiopia. Others were Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

There were expert presentations from African Network on Debt and Development (AFRODAD), Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) Scholars, Transparency International (TI) Zambia, Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR), Consumer Unit Trust International (CUTS) and



the University of Zambia. A goodwill message was received from African Union Economic, Social and Cultural Council (AU-ECOSOCC) Head of Secretariat.

In a passionate address, the General Secretary of AACC, Rev. Dr. Fidon Mwombeki, noted that, twenty years ago, many African countries were given debt relief and cancellation by the rich countries after a massive Global Jubilee 2000 Campaign.

"Today, almost all those countries have larger debts than then."

Rev. Mwombeki was emphatic that the time had come for churches in Africa to agitate and restart the campaign against irresponsible borrowing. It hides corruption. He said that the new campaign must target lenders and African governments.

"We must wake up our parliaments and governments and demand responsibility, transparency, and stop illicit financial flows out of our countries," he stated.

At the end of the Summit, the leaders committed themselves to act to stop irresponsible borrowing. They issued the Lusaka statement on Public Debt, Corruption and Illicit Financial Flows.

They were resolute that the people of Africa must deliberately challenge systems and structures that sustain corruption and illicit financial flows.

“Being silent when corruption and illicit flows are perpetrated, amounts to being accomplices. Therefore, the time to be silent or turn blind eyes is over for a better, peaceful and prosperous Africa,” the statement stated. Their statement had several other resolutions.

Firstly, they committed themselves to:-

1. Proactively play their prophetic role towards influencing policy-makers at country, regional and continental levels on prudent debt management and equitable investment in public services motivated by the theology of responsible stewardship speaking with one voice.
2. Denounce and expose evil in the society, expose issues of bad governance and abuse of human rights, safeguard and protect human rights advocates.
3. Conduct regular research in order to engage duty-bearers from an informed perspective; and leverage expertise from within the faith communities for realistic national development planning.
4. Encourage mentorship programmes for the youth for active citizenship while remaining within the Christian ethics of public life.
5. Advocate for curriculum review of theological institutions to include economic justice and Include in Catechism and Sunday Schools’ teachings on economic justice and dangers of corruption and illicit financial flows.

Secondly, to call upon African governments to:-

1. Ensure transparency, accountability and prudent management of debt and ensure access to

information on signed contracts and investment treaties as a demonstration of accountable stewardship.

2. Enforce laws that empower the parliament to scrutinise financial agreements before any credit facilities are acquired, and operationalise the financial intelligence unit.
3. Ensure meaningful participation of all stakeholders in the budget-making processes.
4. Empower local initiatives and support medium and small-scale businesses for local economic development/growth e.g. local smaller miners to sell their mineral resources as a way of controlling illegal mining.
5. Protect and ensure the space of civil society organizations and faith actors engaged in budget monitoring and public reforms.
6. Combat corruption and illicit financial flows by adhering to international conventions and treaties.

And thirdly, call upon international financial institutions to:

1. Ensure access to information of signed contracts and investment treaties.
2. Ensure that awarded contracts are consistently monitored and evaluated to completion within their timeframe.
3. Ensure that there is transparency, accountability and prudent management of debt and refrain from encouraging acquisition of additional debt.
4. Support in strengthening the national capacities of Civil Society to monitor debts acquired.
5. Grant debt cancellation or debt relief in the midst of COVID-19 pandemic.
6. Ensure that their Corporate Social Responsibility responds to the needs of the community.
7. Adhere to safeguarding principles in financing investment projects

Meet Your New Leaders



Rev. Dr Israel Akanji,
President, Nigeria Baptist Convention,
Nigeria



Rev. Dr. Billy Gama,
General Secretary, Church of Central Africa
Presbyterian (CCAP) Biantyre Synod,
Malawi



Rev. Dr. IRAKO ANDRIAMAHAZOSOA Ammi
President of the National Bureau and
President of the FJKM, for the year 2021 - 2025,
Madagascar



Rt. Rev. Kenneth Sibanda,
Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran
Church of Zimbabwe,
Zimbabwe

General Secretary leads AACC visit to Nigeria

Agenda 2063 Youth Leadership Training Events

Participants at the Agenda 2063 Youth Leadership Training and staff of the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) arrived in Nigeria on August 23, 2021. Bishop Aloysius Agbo was at hand to welcome the AACC General Secretary, Rev. Dr. Fidon Mwombeki.

On arrival, Mwombeki was escorted to St Mathias house, the Anglican Church headquarters, to briefly meet the Primate of the Church of Nigeria, Archbishop Henry Ndukuba. He was accompanied by members of the AACC team. He held brief discussions with Archbishop Ndukuba.

The Primate gave a keynote address where he expressed his joy for hosting the AACC youth event. He expressed his interest in the work of young people in the Church. The AACC General Secretary gave a vote of thanks and expressed his gratitude to the Church of Nigeria for their commitment and hospitality.

After three days of an exciting conference for the youth, Archbishop Ndukuba hosted a special dinner at his residence for all the participants. This was the closing ceremony of the event. The event had cultural performances lined up to entertain the guests.

All the participants received gifts from the wife of the Primate during the event. The Primate also celebrated the birthday of Rev. Mwombeki.



The Primate of the Church of Nigeria, AACC GS, Bishops in the Church of Nigeria, AACC Staff and youth participants

AACC Organising Team Gears Up For Eventful 2023



Paying a courtesy visit to the president of CAN, H.E. Rev. Dr. Samson Ayokunle, (seated left), at his office. Standing from left is Evelyne Okunda, Executive Assistant to the General Secretary, and AACC Director of Programmes, Rev. Dr Lesmore Gibson Ezekiel.

The AACC holds its General Assembly every five years. The General Assembly is the highest legislative body of the organization.

Delegates meet to revisit the mandate and vision of the organization and orient its programmatic activities and strategies in order to respond ecumenically to emerging challenges and dynamics on the continent and beyond. It is at the General Assembly that the president, vice president, general committee members and the general secretary are elected.

The forthcoming 12th General Assembly, which will also marks the 60 years anniversary of the AACC, will be held in Nigeria in 2023. Nigeria is very significant

as it is the home of the historic Ibadan Conference, which conceived this continental body.

On August 25, 2021, the AACC team met with members of the local organizing committee of the 12th General Assembly. The meeting was chaired by the Rt. Rev. Ini Ukpuho, who was holding brief for the substantive chairman, His Eminence Rev. Dr. Israel Akanji.

The Rt. Rev. Ukpuho informed the meeting that the Nigerian Churches were prepared to host a successful event.

The General Secretary stated that the AACC was thinking about appointing a General Assembly Co-ordinator who will be based in Nigeria. The Co-ordinator would be appointed by the AACC on the recommendation of the local organising committee (LOC).

The LOC has identified four possible venues, and the team visited the facilities for an assessment tour. The four venues are:- the Transcop Hilton Hotel; the International Conference Centre, the ECOWAS Parliament; and the Christian Ecumenical Centre.

The LOC and the AACC staff later visited the headquarters of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), which neighbours the Christian Ecumenical Centre, to pay a courtesy visit to the president, H.E. Rev. Dr. Samson Ayokunle.

Visit To The Lutheran Church Of Christ In Nigeria (LCCN)



AACC Delegation with LCCN Archbishop Most Rev. Dr. Musa Panti Filibus at Jimeta Cathedral. From left- Collins Shava, Executive Secretary, Youth; Evelyne Okunda, Executive Assistant to the GS; Rev. Filibus; Rev. Mwombeki; Nyaboth Paska, Programme Associate; and Rev. Dr Lesmore Ezekiel Gibson, Director of Programmes.

Rev. Mwombeki led a three-day courtesy visit to the Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria (LCCN) headquarters in Yola, Adamawa State, from August 28-30, 2021. The delegation was received by the Archbishop of LCCN and Chairman of the General Church Council, His Grace Most Rev. Dr. Musa Panti Filibus, and senior leadership of the LCCN.

While in Yola, the team met with LCCN leadership including the Board of Trustee, government officials, Traditional leaders, faith leaders and community representatives of the state and also young seminarians.

On August 28, 2021, the AACC delegation and LCCN leadership met with His Royal Majesty Gladstone Alhamdu Teneke, the King of the Hama Batta, a strong supporter of the LCCN activities. The parties prayed together. AACC shared the objectives of its visit to the state. For his part, His Royal Majesty thanked the AACC team for the visit, and urged for continued collaboration between the faithful and the traditional council of Hama Batta.



AACC delegation, LCCN leadership pose with His Royal Majesty Gladstone Alhamdu Teneke, the King of the Hama Batta

AACC also met with the Hama Bachama, His Royal Majesty Homun Dr Daniel Ismaila Shaga. He is a committed and proud Christian. Rev. Fidon briefed the King about AACC's visit to the state, and commended the coexistence of both christianity and traditions in Adamawa state. His Royal Majesty expressed gratitude towards AACC team and LCCN leadership for including the Hama Bachama in their itinerary.



AACC delegation, LCCN Leadership meet with His Royal Majesty Homun Dr Daniel Ismaila Shaga of Hama Bachama

The AACC team held a bilateral meeting with the Board of Trustee of the LCCN and members of the governance structures. The meeting comprised of bishops from the different dioceses of Adamawa state, and eminent persons from the government institutions who are part of the board.



AACC GS meets with LCCN Board of Trustee

On August 29, 2021, LCCN prepared a special church service which was held at the Jimeta Cathedral. Rev. Mwombeki gave a special sermon. This special service brought together the LCCN and choirs from across Adamawa state, to fellowship in this cathedral.



Rev. Dr. Fidon Mwombeki speaking in Jimeta Cathedral in Yola

And on August 30, 2021, the AACC team together with the LCCN leadership paid a courtesy visit to the Bronnum Lutheran Seminary. The team were welcomed by Provost Rev. Dr. Sekenwa Briska of the Seminary. In his speech, the AACC General Secretary said professionalism was key in guarding against misleading theologies. Rev. Dr. Fidon also shade light on the role of AACC towards the deconstruction of misleading theologies.



AACC General Secretary speaking to the Bronnum Lutheran Seminarians

Rev. Mwombeki Visit To Lagos

Motailatu Church Cherubim and Seraphim Worldwide



Rev. Mwombeki, travelled to Lagos at the invitation of the Nigerian Baptist Convention (NBC), to attend the induction of Rev. Dr. Israel A. Akanji as President of the NBC on the September 3, 2021.

However, he undertook other courtesy visits.

First, he went to Ajah on Lagos island to visit the Motailatu Church Cherubim and Seraphim Worldwide. He was accompanied by a member of the AACC General Committee, Anthony Adebayo Kehinde.

Rev. Mwombeki met the prelate of the church, Dr. Israel Akinadewo and his wife, on September 2, 2021. At the church, Rev. Mwombeki and his team attended a service.

Christian Council of Nigeria

The AACC team then visited the headquarters of the Christian Council of Nigeria (CCN). They were received by the General Secretary of CCN, The Very Rev. Dr. Evans Onyemara. The AACC and CCN teams proceeded to hold a meeting.



The GS, Interacting with the CCN staff

Nigerian Baptist Convention

The induction of Rev. Akanji took place at the newly built Conference Centre of the Nigeria Baptist Convention (NBC). The induction was conducted by the outgoing President Rev. Dr. Samson Ayonkule. The service was beautiful, with prayers and music. The programme was very well prepared.



The GS, with the newly inducted President of the NBC, Rev. Akanji, and his wife Rev. Victoria.

Youth Aspire To Set Pace And Path of A Rising Africa



By Collins Shava

If Africa's youth are equipped with leadership skills, advocacy and filled with patriotism, they have the can influence change on the continent.

This was the declaration by a group of 50 youth from across Africa that gathered in Abuja for a leadership training on Agenda 2063. The training, organised by AACC, was hosted by Primate Rt. Rev. Henry Ndukuba, of the Church of Nigeria, from August 23 to 27, 2021.



Agenda 2063 is an African Union (AU) shared vision on the continent's development. It is Africa's blueprint and master plan for transforming the continent into the global powerhouse of the future.

The continent's strategic framework aims to deliver on its goal for inclusive and sustainable development. It is a concrete manifestation of the pan-African drive for unity, self-determination, freedom, progress and collective prosperity pursued under Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance.

From the discussions on Agenda 2063, the youth expressed great concern on the slow progress of the implementation of the Agenda 2063 by AU members states and regional bodies. The youth called the AU and African governments to put in place steps towards the efficient implementation of Agenda 2063 and its objectives such as the Silencing the Guns and the free movement of goods and services.

The group observed the need to mobilize other young people to contribute to the realization of Agenda 2063. The youth also acknowledged the fact that the Agenda 2063 document is not popular in the continent.

As a commitment, the youth leaders will work towards popularizing the Agenda 2063 amongst the young people in Africa and Diaspora in the next 5 years. The group also proposed to advocate for the ratification of Africa Continental Free Trade by our own national governments.

The discussions during the training were intense. Some of the topics discussed include, the role of youth in advocacy for Agenda 2063, Africa: My Home. My Future.; transformation leadership among others.

There was a special focus on an emerging and interesting youth topic on Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights. Furthermore, during the training participants had to pray and worship together ecumenically.

AACC has a strategic focus on youth. Youth are leaders of today and tomorrow. Investing in youth leadership can lead to solving the current challenges Africa is facing. AACC believes in nurturing a generation of young people who are patriotic to the continent, are focused to finding solutions for the continent and have the ability to contribute to the implementation of Agenda 2063.

#AfricaMyHomeMyFuture

Collins Shava is the AACC Executive Secretary for Youth. He can be reached at cshava@aacc-ceta.org

Churches Join To Shore Up Voter Confidence In Zambia



By Rev. Charles Berahino

Clergy At Polling Stations A Sign of Solidarity

The Republic of Zambia held its general elections on 12 August 2021, the seventh since the reintroduction of multiparty politics in 1991. It is also worth mentioning that Zambia remained relatively stable since attaining independence in 1964.

As part of its mandate to deepen democratic governance in Africa and maintain ecumenical pastoral presence for reconciliation and peace in difficult situations, the All Africa Conference of Churches planned to accompany the Council of Churches in Zambia (CCZ).

As part of its election monitoring work, the CCZ had already planned to monitor the elections in collaboration with the Zambia Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia, and the Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection. They deployed 1,500 monitors.

The AACC deployed a team of five international observers (2 AACC staff and 3 church leaders). They worked along the monitors of the council in the observation of the elections.

The members of the team were:

- 1) Rtd. Bishop Enock Tombe Stephen Loro from South Sudan
- 2) Rev. Teshome Amenu from Ethiopia
- 3) Rev. Dr. Vivian Balasu Addo from Ghana
- 4) Rev. Dr. Lesmore Ezekiel Gibson, Director of Programs at AACC
- 5) Rev. Charles Berahino, Executive secretary, Peace and Diakonia at AACC

The team traveled to Lusaka on Monday, August 9, 2021. To prepare the AACC team upon arrival in Lusaka, the General Secretary of CCZ, Rev. Canon Emmanuel Chikoya briefed the team that evening.

The following day, on August 10, there was a briefing to all election monitors and observers by Election Commission of Zambia. The team was updated by the Electoral commission, which said it had a registration of 7,023,499 voters. Those registered were from 10 provinces, 116 districts, 156 constituencies, 1,858 wards and 12,152 polling stations. There were sixteen presidential candidates.

That afternoon, the team visited the CCMG (Christian Council Monitoring Group) hosted at Caritas Zambia. The following day, Wednesday, August 11, the team visited the Christian Council of Zambia offices and was handed observation tools including checklists.

On the day of the elections on August 12, 2021, the team went to the field as early as 5:00 a.m. The polling stations opened at 6 am. In all, the AACC team guided by Rev. Canon Chikaya, visited nine polling stations.

Names of voters were loudly announced for checks by polling agents. Our presence at the polling stations as clergy built confidence in voters.

The team made several key recommendations.

- The number of polling stations of 12,152 was probably low compared with the registered voters of 7,023,499 that were expected to cast their votes within a time limit of 12 hours



AACC international observers preparing themselves to move out to observe Zambia elections

from 6:00 am to 6:00 p.m. on 12th August 2021 as planned by ECZ.

- Some 9 polling stations were visited were located within Lusaka city. Therefore, our observations only apply to an urban context.
- By having a Parallel Voting Tabulation (PVT) monitoring system in place, the CCMG as an ecumenical body is probably one of the few church-based election monitoring institutions we have observed.
- There was limited use of the biometrics. If polling stations.
- Covid-19 protocols were not enforced in all the polling stations.

The election was peaceful and well organized. It is clear that the Electoral Commission was well prepared.

The Parallel Voting Tabulation mechanism established by CCMG in 2014 should be shared with other churches in Africa for learning.

It also gives credibility to the Church as an institution with the integrity to tell the truth as it is (John 8:32-33). The AACC team would like to express its profound gratitude for the opportunity given by the Electoral Commission of Zambia, the Christian Council of Zambia and Christian Churches Monitoring Group to

participate in the elections observation during voting on 12 August 2021.

The AACC International Observers at the Electoral Commission of Zambia to be updated on the preparedness, August 10, 2021



AACC international observers at the field during election day, August 12, 2021

Rev. Charles Berahino is the AACC Executive Secretary for Peace and Diakonia. He can be reached at cberahino@aacc-ceta.org

AACC COMESA Co-operation To Deepen

The All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) are exploring ways they can co-operate to further African progress.

And in a bid to strengthen links and explore possibilities for future co-operation, the AACC General Secretary, Rev. Dr Fidon Mwombeki, led a delegation to COMESA headquarters in Lusaka, Zambia, on September 24, 2021, where they paid a courtesy call to COMESA Secretary General, H.E. Chileshe Mpundu Kapwepwe.

In her remarks at the meeting, H.E. Kapwepwe expressed delight that an organization like the AACC was active and committed to the mission of a peaceful, prosperous and integrated Africa.

She noted further that COMESA was open to institutionalising co-operation with the AACC.

In his remarks, Rev. Mwombeki raised pertinent concerns on failure by African governments and multi-lateral organisations in the continent to abide by the agreements they signed.

He gave the example of the pledge by the African Union for a borderless Africa, which was yet to be realized.

He further raised concerns on the ballooning debts of many African countries, dismal industrialization of the continent, and unsustainable population growth.

The AACC delegation included AACC's Director of Programmes, Rev. Dr. Lesmore Gibson Ezekiel, and Rev. Canon Emmanuel Chikoya, the General Secretary of the Council of Churches in Zambia.



From left: Rev. Dr. Lesmore Gibson Ezekiel, AACC Director of Programmes, H.E. Chileshe Mpundu Kapwepwe, Secretary General, COMESA, AACC General Secretary, Rev. Dr Fidon Mwombeki, Rev. Canon Emmanuel Chikoya, General Secretary, Council of Churches of Zambia

Fast Track Vaccines For All Now!



By Gorden Simango

AACC Decries Vaccine Apartheid Denying Majority Doses

The All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) has decried the continuing global inequality in access to life-saving covid vaccines.

We are living through painful times, unprecedented in history. These times call for unprecedented responses including global solidarity.

This was the only way the fight against COVID – 19 could be won. The church, was called upon to speak up for the rights of those whose voices are unheard, to amplify their plight, and protecting the rights of the poor and the needy.

Most of us globally would know someone who has been infected, and perhaps succumbed to COVID – 19. Certainly we all have read or watched news of the pain that humanity continues to endure. We have buried loved and many more continue to suffer.

Science tells the world that vaccines can save lives.

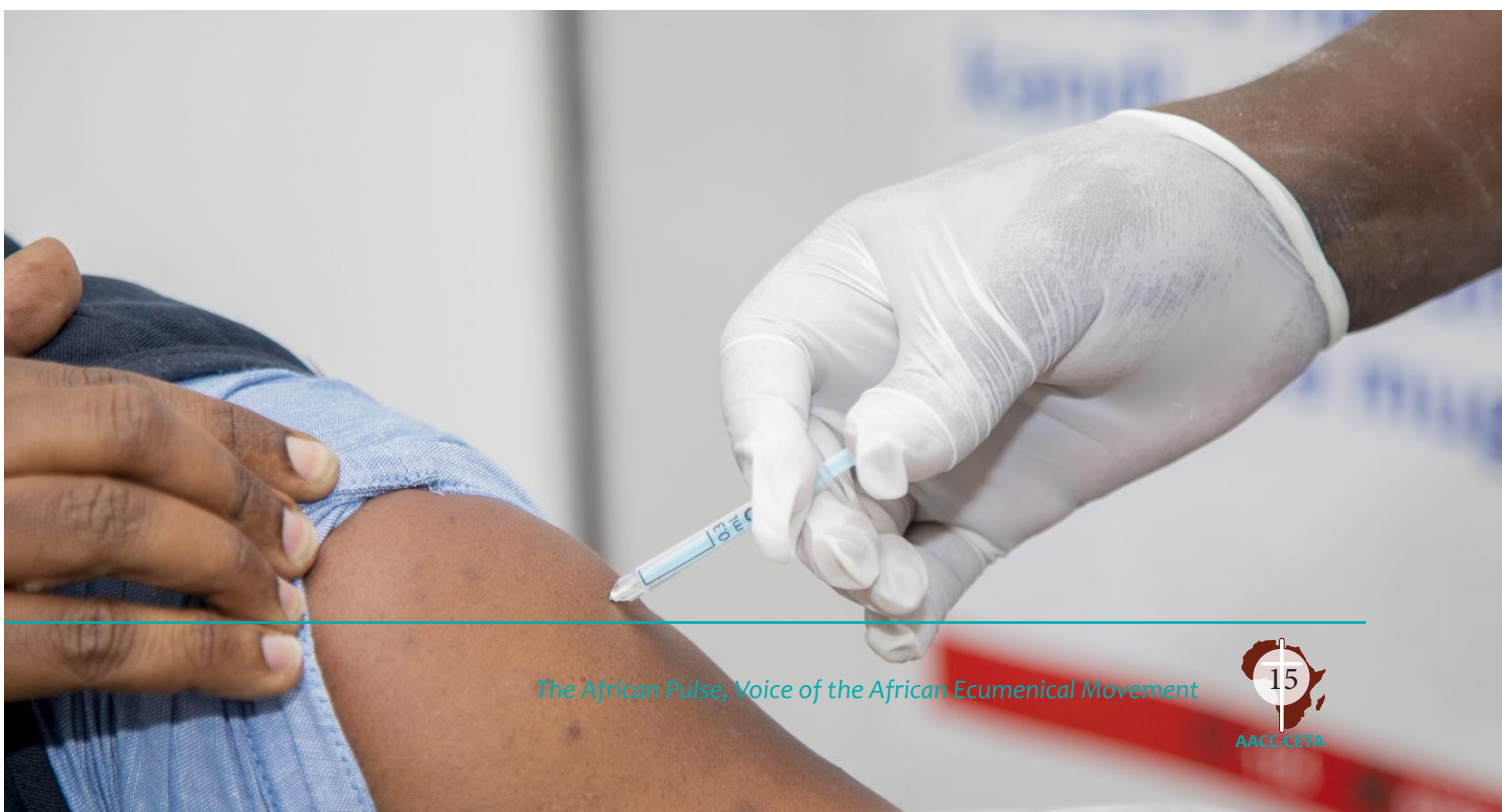
We need to accelerate vaccinations in Africa and especially in low- and middle-income countries across the world to save more lives.

It is a sad fact that in most countries, access to vaccines still remain a privilege for a few. Vaccine equity is a fundamental right, and any spokes put in its way must be vehemently denied.

The world must rally behind the call for a waiver on patenting rights, as well as robustly fight corruption both on the local and global fronts.

It is a pity that human lives are being thrown on to the line, while human and corporate greedy is meant to flourish. Profits before human life is unethical.

The message from AACC was presented by Gorden Simango, the AACC Director of African Union Office & Advocacy, at the Interfaith Vigil of “International Partners in Solidarity for Global COVID – 19 Vaccine Access” on Tuesday, 20 July, 2021.



Energizing Ecumenical Diplomacy For Peace In Africa



By Rev. Charles Berahino

Eminent Persons Group Undergoes Refresher Training



Group photo of the Eminent persons during refresher training at DTCC in Nairobi, August 4, 2021

Church leaders cannot afford to give up on peace in Africa, work that is complex and requires personal sacrifice.

“When you work in Peace and Security you cannot give up. It is slow and frustrating. You make two steps ahead and three steps back. But you cannot give up, because people’s lives depend on it,” according to Rev. Dr. Fidon Mwombeki, the General Secretary of the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC).

The Rev. Mwombeki was speaking when opening a refresher training for the Eminent Persons Ecumenical Programme for Peace in Africa (EPEPPA) in Nairobi.

EPEPPA is a critical component of AACC’s work for

sustainable peace in the continent of Africa. It is a dimension of the peace work that demonstrates active solidarity with countries in turmoil.

This strategic initiative is meant, among many other expectations, to deepen the culture of peace, justice, equality, dignity, and political stability in Africa. It is both a response to early warning signs/signals on possible eruption of violence and mediation mechanism where peace and stability are evidently challenged.

This remains a potent approach in AACC ecumenical witness for peace and stability in Africa.

EPEPPA was established and revitalized in October 2019. The members met in Nairobi for a training that had been delayed due to the Covid-19 crisis and travel restrictions.

Ecumenical communities have potential to contribute to sustainable peace, and their contribution has never been more critical. Yet we are also committed to improving our work in order to ensure and expand its positive impacts. There is, therefore, need to identify what really works and show that Ecumenical Diplomacy in Africa is actually contributing to building peace and preventing conflicts.

In closing, the AACC Director of Programmes, Rev. Dr. Lesmore Gibson Ezekiel urged the Eminent Persons to be innovative and adaptive. Solutions may not be apparent until several steps have been tried. He urged the Eminent Persons to use their access to all levels of power-community, nation, and international to

address conflicts. The trust and moral authority they hold from broad-based constituencies that makes them unique to facilitate peace missions throughout Africa.

They must show that their engagement in peace work from an interreligious and ecumenical perspective is making a difference. Other actors and institutions require a systematic way to learn and improve approaches.

On the other hand, religious actors have to enhance their analytical capacities, in order to examine complex systems to develop effective methods for constant testing of interventions.

Building A Strong Network For Peace

AACC To Support Key Project In The Horn

As the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) rolls out its Horn of Africa Peace Project, one of the key success factors will be the support of its stakeholders.

AACC has already started the process of building a strong network of its stakeholders for the projects' success.

At a virtual event held on 30th July, 2021, AACC introduced the Horn of Africa Peace Project to its members based in the project region. These include AACC member churches, and national councils of churches.

The Director of the AACC Liaison office to the African Union in Addis Ababa, Mr Gordon Simango, noted that as custodians of peace building in the region, it is critical participants understand their role in the project.

He noted that the project's objectives are advocacy for peace and development. During the event, the different participants committed to support the implementation of the project.

The Horn of Africa Peace Project, dubbed "Transforming Lives in the East and Horn of Africa through evidenced-based advocacy and campaigning for peaceful change," has two key tents.

First, it follows a Right-based approach and conflict sensitive programming and, secondly, adheres to a Do-No-Harm approach. These tenets are mainstreamed in all programming and intervention areas of engagements for an effective and impact-based advocacy.

Regional Peace Programme Strengthens Engagement With the AU



By Paska Nyaboth



RPP representatives pose for a group photo at the AU Headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Peace and Security in the Horn formed the main agenda when the Eastern Africa Regional Peace Programme (RPP) partners paid a courtesy visit to the African Union Commission (AUC) institutions on August 18-19, 2021.

These meetings also discussed key areas of joint collaboration between the AU institutions and RPP institutions. The series of meetings were facilitated by the All Africa Conference of Churches Liaison office to the African Union, based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Some of the AUC institutions that the RPP team met include CIDO, African Governance Architecture, Interfaith Dialogue forum, Political Affairs, Peace and Security department. The AUC institutions and RPP each presented their work and engagements in the Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes region.

The Eastern Africa Regional Peace Programme is a peace advocacy program aimed at contributing to a more inclusive, just, cohesive, and peaceful Eastern Africa region. The RPP works together with Eastern African religious actors and civil society organizations.

Their mandate is to promote social cohesion, prevent and counter violent extremism, strengthen peace structures to prevent and transform conflicts, ensure that peace processes are inclusive, and mobilize action to safeguard social action for peace. It covers the Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes Region.

The programme is implemented by Norwegian Church Aid in partnership with regional faith-based and civil society organizations. Members are the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC), African Council of Religious Leaders (ACRL), Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa (AMECEA), Arigatou International, Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa (FECCLAHA), International Centre for Peace Human Rights and Development organization (IPHHRD), and Hekima Institute for Peace and International Relations.

Ms Paska Nyaboth is the AACC Programme Associate for the Horn of Africa Peace Project. She can be reached at paska@aacc-ceta.org

AACC Petitions AU

Expresses Disappointment Over Continued Instability And Violence in Africa



**ALL AFRICA CONFERENCE OF CHURCHES (AACC)
CONFERENCE DES EGLISES DE TOUTE L'AFRIQUE (CETA)**

AACC-CETA

General Secretariat (HQ): P. O. Box 14205, 00800 Westlands, Nairobi, Kenya

Tel: +254 724 253 354, + 254 20 4441483 • E-mail: secretariat@aacc-ceta.org • Website: www.aacc-ceta.org

Statement of the AACC to African Union Commission

H.E Ambassador Bankole Adeoye

Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security

17, September 2021

Your Excellency,

We bring greetings to you from the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) and the faith actors from the continent. We congratulate you on your appointment as the Commissioner of Political Affairs, Peace and Security.

Your excellency, we acknowledge the positive actions that we have noted in the recent years after the transformation of the Organization of African Unity to the African Union, especially that it has broadened space for greater participation of non-state actors in the affairs of the union. As a result, AACC has been granted a Memorandum of Understanding with the AUC for which we are grateful. We amplify the voices of the faith actors in the continent for sustainable peace and development.

We have always supported and promoted the Agenda 2063, "The Africa We Want". For that reason we are very committed to Aspiration 4: 'A peaceful and Secure Africa'. Like our fore leaders said in the past decades "Africa is not free until all countries are free." Similarly, Africa is not peaceful until all countries are peaceful and secure. We gratefully note that there are countries that have been relatively peaceful and secure; there is need to nurture the peace and security in those countries and to learn from them.

However, we are extremely concerned about the continued instability and violence in the continent. We are specifically disappointed by the missing of the target of Silencing the Guns by 2020. Instead, there were more conflicts in 2020 than before. The young people of Africa have expressed their disappointments through a petition submitted to the Chairperson of AU Peace & Security Council in February 2021, and they have no reason to believe that the extension of 10 more years will provide different results. We the people of Africa have failed our continent.

There is need to address the root causes of lack of peace and security which include:

- Inequitable access to natural resources, profiling and exclusion,
- Ethnic based violence,
- Religious conflicts, Radicalization and Violent Extremism,
- Poor governance,
- Unemployment especially of the youth.

We call on the AU to practically recommit to the aspirations of Agenda 2063 especially Aspiration 4: “A Peaceful and Secure Africa.” We believe AU has great potential to make sustainable peace happen, therefore we advocate for AU to:

- ✓ Secure stronger enforcement powers, mechanisms and adequate appropriate funding for peace and security work.
- ✓ Ensure access to humanitarian corridors in conflict areas.
- ✓ Involve religious actors in mediation processes
- ✓ Recognize the importance of soft power in conflict resolution to bring an end to the sufferings of the African people. History shows that the use of force has not brought sustainable peace in any country.

We commit to:

- ✓ Continue to play our prophetic role in order to avert conflicts.
- ✓ Continue to advocate and contribute to peace and security in Africa within the framework of Agenda 2063.

We request the AUC through your office to:

- ✓ Convene an annual High-Level retreat with the faith actors for continuous dialogue with the Commission on Peace & Security.
- ✓ Involve Faith Leaders in mediation and reconciliation processes (including harnessing the roles and lessons played in the past).
- ✓ Find opportunities to interact with faith actors in their constituencies.

We sincerely thank you for this opportunity and we assure you of our highest consideration.

May God Bless Africa! “Africa: My Home. My Future!”



Meeting of the AACC EPEPPA delegation led by AACC General Secretary Rev. Dr. Fidon Mwombeki to the AUC Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security H. E. Ambassador Bankole opened doors for further collaboration. AACC presented requests related to peace and security across Africa which were well received.

Defiance To God Root of Climate Change Calamity



By Rev. Dr. Lydia Mwaniki

God Mandated Both Male and Female to Be Stewards of Creation On His Behalf

Human beings disobedience to God's word has exposed the world to food insecurity and other effects of climate change.

Humans have disobeyed the text in Genesis by failing to image God in care for creation. It can therefore be rightly said that part of what has necessitated endless consultations on climate Justice is *the sin of disobedience or consequences of disobedience to God's Word*.

In Genesis 1:28, God mandates both the male and female to be stewards of creation on God's behalf. This implied that without care for creation, human beings expose themselves to food insecurity and other effects of climate change.

Consequently, Genesis chapter 1:

- Offers the first Scriptural Basis of intertwine of Faith and food-or Theology and food,
- It offers the first biblical basis of Faith and food security i.e. through the Mother Earth, God has given enough food for everybody on earth but not enough for our *greed*.
- The text also offers biblical basis of gender equality in that male and female are created in the image and likeness of God-they are equal in nature but different in sex.
- The text offers gender equality in leadership because both male and female are given an equal role of stewardship/ leadership over creation

From Genesis chapter 1, we can already see that God's plan is that male and female equally become

contributors to agricultural value chains, leaders and developers of sustainable food systems.

So, where did human beings miss the mark?

In the process of acquiring our cultures through the learning processes of socialization, human beings have constructed masculinities and femininities in asymmetrical ways. The female is subordinated to male and is less privileged in many ways including in areas of leadership and decision making, against God's Word in Genesis.

It is also culture that determines food security or insecurity through its influence on what society considers acceptable for consumption, to give a certain people their identity.

There are for example cultural restrictions, applied particularly to women and children, over the consumption of several nutritious foods from livestock.

How do we address this?

One way of redressing the situation is to build on the positive dimension of the Intertwine of Culture and Faith in Food Systems.

Religion and culture shape each other. Culture comes from people and focuses on human beings. It is not static but dynamic-ever changing. On the other hand, Religion is associated with the creator God. Given an opportunity, religion influences culture by offering an ethical dimension that influences people's beliefs, behavior and traditions.

Religion can therefore transform retrogressive norms and beliefs that accelerate gender disparities in food

security and bad stewardship of nature, in order to create food security.

The following are recommendations to deal with this challenge.

- There is need to build agency and voice for women including decision making on food system matters (inclusive policies and programmes). We must move beyond simply thinking of women as contributors to agricultural value chains to considering them as leaders and developers of sustainable food systems as good stewards of nature in line with Genesis 1:28.
- Empowering women when it comes to food production including access to land as much as men (i.e. promoting gender justice by recognizing that women have right to access factors of production, Gal 3;28)
- Provide nutrition education especially when it comes to dietary/food consumption behaviour (e.g. by demystifying retrogressive cultural norms where women are not allowed to eat certain nutritious foods such as eggs, chicken e.t.c. leading to malnutrition amongst women and children
- Strengthen our social protection programmes by collaborating with church and other non-state actors in supporting vulnerable women and children facing food insecurity (since for example Covid-19 presented weaknesses in our social protection system and the church came in to support/feed families who could not get assistance from the state)
- Diversification of food produce (by increasing access to under-utilized indigenous nutritious crops). Some of the African leafy vegetables are rich in iron which women need in order to address the challenge of anaemia
- Improved infrastructure in our open air food markets where close to 80% of the vendors are women (i.e. provide breastfeeding/day care centres within markets for lactating mothers and any other gender support)

Rev. Dr Lydia Mwaniki is the AACC Director for Gender and Women. She can be reached on lydiamwaniki@aacc-ceta.org

Faith Must Import Science To Address Climate Change Disasters

People of faith should embrace science in their efforts to care for the environment.

A meeting bringing together the faith community and scientists reached a consensus that the former needs science so as to understand climate change, especially its immediate and long-term effects.

The faith community was represented by the host, the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC), the United Religions Initiative (URI), and the Baha’i International Community (BIC) at the webinar discussing the nexus between Climate Change, Faith & Science.

In his opening remarks, the AACC General Secretary, Rev. Dr. Fidon Mwombeki, noted that there was deepening concern of the impact of climate change.

“We are all witness to the devastating impact and effect of climate change, including drought that’s deepening the circles of poverty, rising temperatures causing heat waves, and unending flooding causing

human suffering, and devastating communities and societies in the continent,” he said.

The General Secretary said AACC was committed to battling climate change, and had a programme of action in this regard. He added that individuals and institutions should respond to climate change not only as man-made emergency, but also as an obligation from God to human beings as stipulated in the Bible.

“We believe every individual and institution has a responsibility to protect and nourish the earth, it is our daily practices that reflect on the bigger change that we want,” he added.

This webinar was organised in collaboration with Christian Aid, Southern African Faith Communities’ Environment Institute (SAFCEI), Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI), and the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA)

Time To Stand Up And Be Counted

Male Champions Lead Their Compatriots in Fighting for Gender Justice

The All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) has established six Platforms of Male Champions for Gender Justice in different countries representing its constituency. In 2020, Platforms were established in Uganda, Malawi and Nigeria. In 2021, others were established in DRC, Cameroon and Togo. Each of the Platforms identified contextual gender-based issues and methods of addressing them. The following are some of the engagements featured by the Platforms in Malawi, Nigeria and Uganda.

The African Pulse has profiled the work of some the champions for gender justice have been doing since being inaugurated.

Rev. Moyenda Kanjwera, Deputy General Secretary for the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) Blantyre Synod, Malawi

Lead Male Champion for Gender Justice in Malawi

The platform of male champions in Malawi was launched on 11th December 2020, by the Minister of Gender, Children and Community Development Hon. Dr. Patricia Annie Kaliati at the Grace Bandawe of the CCAP Blantyre Synod in Blantyre. Some of the activities implemented so far include:

- Sports Ministries
- Prison Ministries
- Youth Ministry
- Economic Empowerment

Sport Ministries - Rev. Moyenda Kanjwera, chairperson for the Board of Directors of one of the popular football teams in Malawi, has been instrumental in promoting social behaviour among football players. He uses the opportunity to educate men on good morals, issues of GBV and their role in promoting good relationship in their families.

Prison Ministries - The ministry highlighted the importance of addressing issues of GBV to inmates, considering that some are in jail because of GBV related crimes.



Rev. Kanjerwa standing right with Ntopwa FC Team Managers at Chichiri Stadium

Youth Ministry - The CCAP Youth Department had a triple launch of youth books, the Sexual Reproductive Health Rights Manual (SRHR) Manual, the Youth Bible Study Guide and the Strategic Plan. The launch took place on 21st March 2021, bringing together close to



200 youth from 18 presbyteries.

Rev. Kanjerwa called upon the youth to make use of the manual as it has biblical structure that will help them know their sexual rights. He addressed increased cases of rape as well as men victimizing girls and women.

Economic Empowerment Rev. Kanjwera spearheaded empowerment of girls, noting that when young girls have been fully empowered, cases of Gender Based violence that emanate from high poverty levels will be reduced.

Pastor Mathews Kambalame

Male champion from Malawi



Rev. Mathews Kambalame

As a champion, Rev. Kambalame used his talents in music to do advocacy against GBV.

Activities Undertaken

- Composing a song both audio and video. The song advocates against GBV. Link https://web.facebook.com/watch/?v=511976956505267¬if_id=1622533667892099¬if_t=watch_follower_video&ref=notif
- Designing advocacy posters using his photos to advice public on gender based violence especially to girl and women and share the information on social media.
- Teaching Church members about gender justice.



Training church leaders on GBV related issues in Thyolo, Malawi

Rev. Charles Mawaya

Male Champion for Gender Justice from Malawi

As a champion for gender justice, Rev. Mawaya decided to start the initiative from his immediate family by allowing and supporting his wife to return to school. She is currently studying at a teachers college, hence breaking the silence of GBV in Education starting from family level.

Rev. Charles identified issues in his community, such as sexual and physical abuse, which he has been addressing through organizing church meetings for elders, deacons, youth and women to sensitise them on GBV issues. Other issues which he has been addressing include wife battering, children killing, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), cyber bullying, pornography, deformation, rape, taking away earrings of a woman, believing that women cannot be leaders or educated, and many more GBV issues.

He has been involved in sensitising church leaders to lead by example by using Biblical principles of gender justice. He indicated that he would like his capacity to be strengthened on issues affecting women.

His Eminence Rev. Dr Samson Ayokunle - Lead Male Champion for Gender Justice in Nigeria



His Eminence Rev Samson, Ayokunle (middle in a red stall) visit to the “Miracle” Governor of Bayelsa state (middle in white shirt) on campaign mission against GBV in March, 2021, 2021.

The lead Male Champion for Gender Justice in Nigeria- His Eminence Rev Dr. Samson, Ayokunle- a former president of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), as well as a former President of the Nigerian Baptist Convention, visited the “Miracle” Governor of Bayelsa State on campaign mission against GBV in March, 2021.

He urged the state Governor to be an Advocate and a front liner in promotion of Gender Justice in his governance Policy of the State. He also urged the legislative and the judiciary to be proactive in passing the bills.

Blazing The Trail To Unmask Gender Violence



Martin Sabiiti Rwabihurwa

Eliminate GBV, put men at the forefront

The majority perpetrators of Gender Based Violence (GBV) are men (according to Uganda Bureau of statistics survey on gender issues 2016). But most of the interventions target women.

For many years now, meetings to discuss GBV are dominated by women. In meetings to discuss GBV, speaker after speaker castigates men for abusing women. The few men who would be in those meetings would come out looking guilty and disarmed. They would come out empowered to contribute in finding a solution.

The natural reaction is to be defensive. I was defensive myself from the beginning, whenever the issue of GBV came up.

Today I have legs to stand on in the realisation that we cannot effectively fight and eliminate GBV without putting men at the forefront. I saw the light on my way to Damascus. Many men need to hear it from fellow men that abusing women is wrong. Hearing it from a woman sounds accusatory and prejudicial which takes a way their interest. But hearing it from a fellow man sounds like counsel.

Since I was commissioned as a male Champion on 2nd December, 2020, I have been involved in a number of activities to sensitize men and enlist them to fight GBV.

- (a) **Video Messaging:** During the lockdown, I recorded three video messages encouraging men not to abuse their wives. The videos were in English, Luganda and Runyankole and were widely shared on whatsapp groups.
- (b) **Article:** I wrote an article on the biblical perspective of Gender for an online newspaper called Daily Bread News. It was widely shared on all social media platforms. It was even shared by the Side by Side international team
- (c) **Sermons:** I preached twice at St. John's Church Kamwokya on the issue of God's purpose and plan

for men and women. It was drawn from Genesis 1:26-27. It was emphasizing the centrality of the equal standing of men and women at creation and that both carry the image of God.

- (d) **Fathers' Union Fellowship Programming:** As a mobilizer for the St. John's Church Kamwokya Fathers Union fellowship, I helped the Chairperson to include positive masculinity as a topic in the trainings for the fathers and men at St. John's Church.

- (e) **Helping a widow with land problems:** I participated in helping a widow repossess her land after her late husband's relatives had chased her away. My role was to mobilise the press to publicise her story. Indeed, after the story run on TV West, the relatives retreated and let the widow return to her land. As we speak now, the old woman is actively using her land.

The only challenge to my work was the lockdown. It curtailed movement and physical meetings.

I appeal to the Church to lobby for the establishment of a family court to handle family matters. I also appeal to the Government to intensify the fight against poverty since it is a big facilitator of GBV.

Below is a link to one of my brief messages to men. https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=10213691366717091&id=1792628307

Martin Sabiiti Rwabihurwa is a Male Champion for Gender Justice in Uganda.

Church Picking Up In Covid Period

Church Leaders Ponder What The Post-Covid Church Will Look Like

Churches have been hit hard by the COVID lockdowns. Churches are now concerned that even as restrictions are eased, people are slow and hesitant to return to in person services.

Churches were forced to turn to the internet to offer services to the faithful during lockdowns. A year and a half later, church leaders met virtually to discuss what impact digital technology has had on Ministry and the faith of the congregations. In a webinar held on September 29, 2021, they also discussed what the future looked like. The webinar was hosted by the All African Conference of Churches (AACC) in conjunction with the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the World Association of Christian Communicators (WACC).

Below are perspectives from some of the main speakers, in their own words.



Churches stayed empty during COVID-19 lockdowns

Rev. Dr Fidon Mwombeki

One and a half years later, the time has come for us to ask ourselves what effect this new regime has had on Ministry, and how all this will pan out. We have to take note of the fact that Covid is still with us.

Due to connectivity challenges, most of our people, were, and continue to be, in spiritual wilderness, disconnected from any ministry. What is the status of faith in the continent today due to this?

Churches have suffered declines in revenue. What does this portend for the viability of churches in the future? Are we at risk of some churches not making it through the pandemic?

Compounding this dynamic is the economic devastation that Covid has wrought on our congregants. People have lost jobs in their thousands, businesses have been shut down. The Church can no longer expect the level of financial support it was used to pre-Covid. How can we mitigate this?

Even as Governments ease restrictions and allow in person church services, the feedback on the ground is that the return to church has been slow and hesitant.

It certainly would be very concerning, if this turns out to be an enduring trend. There is a fellowship in human nature that cannot be replaced by technology.

There's also the real practical challenge of ministering to the faithful. How do I give Holy Communion or conduct baptism virtually?

Rev. Dr Fidon Mwombeki is the General Secretary of the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC)



Dr Stephen Brown



Covid-19 pandemic completely changed the landscape for churches. Offering pastoral support during pandemic has been more difficult than ever. Church ministers have had to undergo a crash course in technology. It has been a challenging experience for many churches and pastors.

Several questions arise. How do we create a sense of community among people dispersed variously?

What does it mean theologically to gather as a church in the digital services?

Living in the pandemic era of digitalised ministry shows just how much digital justice is important in today's world.

Dr Stephen Brown is the Editor, Quarterly Journal of the world Council of Churches-The Ecumenical Review- and President of World Association of Christian Communicators-Europe



Rev. Dr Bukelwa Hans

Covid-19 has been very disruptive in every way and has affected churches greatly. Restrictions isolated us and made association with congregants impossible. Our outreach services and faith has been affected by Covid.

We have rural congregations but what we want to do is very limited due to issues of connectivity.

We forgot two critical constituencies- youth and children.

After Covid-19, churches should look to see how to use digital technology to attract youth to the church.

Rev. Dr Bukelwa Hans is a medical doctor, and an ordained Minister of the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa.



Rev. Fr. Jehoshaphat Calys-Tagoe



Covid-19 has been a positive wake-up call for the church. Sometimes it takes some of these disruptions to give us a wake-up call.

The church has been struggling with issues of digital literacy among its members, as well as the algorithms that determine how content is determined and consumed.

Covid or not, the world is changing, and the Church risks being left behind. The Church must see information technology (IT) as a relevant tool, as part of the mission tools that can help it achieve its mission goals.

Rev. Fr. Jehoshaphat Calys-Tagoe is an ordained Minister of the Anglican Church in Ghana.



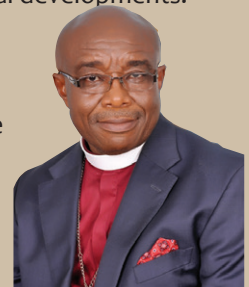
Rt. Rev. Ini Ukpoho

The restrictions due to Covid-19 have created enormous opportunities to catch up with technological developments. Of course, there are challenges of connectivity which are beyond the church. The impact of digital technology in Ministry has given reasons for the Church to do advocacy with governments to improve connectivity infrastructure in the continent.

There are also challenges in digital literacy which the Church needs to improve. We need to enhance information technology (IT) curriculum in our theology colleges to adequately equip our ministers with IT.

The world is changing, and the Church must adjust accordingly. There is need to develop a hybrid approach to our services and ministry. Onsite and online ministry must be part of growing the church, using IT as a mission tool.

Rt. Rev. Ini Ukpoho is a Minister of the Gospel with the Presbyterian Church of Nigeria.





AACC, DESMOND TUTU CONFERENCE CENTRE



Nestled within the ever growing Westlands Business District of Nairobi, and boasting of 104 delectably and comfortably furnished double and twin rooms, Desmond Tutu Conference Centre is your “MUST STAY and MEET” destination.

Complemented by 9 conference rooms with meeting capacities of between 10 – 800 participants and state of the art facilities, the hotel is ideal for both business and leisure. An onsite restaurant serves breakfast, lunch and dinner, while the gym within the compound can help you kick start the day or flex your muscles after a tiring day.

Desmond Tutu Conference Centre is an affiliate of the All Africa Conference of Churches, the ecumenical body for all churches in Africa, and the hotel prides itself in this association as it is the pillar and guidance under whose visionary leadership, value is added to hospitality.



ROOMS

All the 104 rooms at Desmond Tutu Conference Centre combine comfort and simplicity to offer our guests peace and quiet after a day's long travel experience or business meeting. Each room is equipped with high resolution digital TV's and high speed complementary WIFI connectivity.



CONFERENCING

Hotel boasts of a combined 1,169.5m² (12,588 ft²) of meeting space spread out across 9 rooms, all with natural lighting. Perfect venue for both small and intimate meetings of less than 10 to large gatherings of over 800 participants.

Facilities include state of the art Audio Visual equipment, Air Conditioning, Video conferencing services, Translation Booth and Simultaneous Voice Interpretation Equipment

RESTAURANTS

The hotel has 2 onsite restaurants with a combined sitting capacity of 200 guests at any one time serviced by a team of professional chefs and service staff ready to deliver authentic dishes from the kitchens of Desmond Tutu Conference Centre.

The hotel equally provides an array of dishes for Off-Site Clientele.



CONTACTS

Telephone: +254 710 734728 | +254 20 4440224, 4442215

Email: reservations@aacc-ceta.org | marketing@aacc-ceta.org | Website: www.desmondtutuconference.org