

engagement



abijan
1969

CETA
AACC

engagement

'abidjan 69'

engagement

la deuxième assemblée de la CETA
'abidjan 69'

the second AACC assembly 'abidjan 69'



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PREFACE

Abidjan 69 was more than an opportunity for the member bodies of the AACC and other participants to worship, study, discuss and have fellowship together; it was a rallying point for effective engagement in the demands of the post-independence era of Africa. There is a unique contribution which only churches and individual Christians can make, knowing that they work with Christ in His redemptive work in Africa.

There is, therefore, a sense in which Abidjan 69 fails unless there is clear evidence that its thinking has been followed up and implemented in the life of the churches and councils that were represented. This Report of the Assembly is intended to help in that post-Abidjan engagement and its title expresses the hope that the churches will go into action.

The publication has been timed to synchronise with the 1970 observance of the 'AACC Week' so that, as the churches and councils engage in publicity, prayer, as well as financial support for the AACC, the experiences of Abidjan may be recalled and drawn upon.

This foreword gives me the opportunity of renewing our thanks to all who in various ways helped to make the Assembly such a success, and it is fitting to say a special word of thanks to those who have helped to produce this Report—Samuel Aklé (Dahomey) and Bethuel Kiplagat (Kenya)—who worked on the French and the English texts.

Our effort to follow up the thinking at Abidjan will be the best expression of our thanks, especially to the Lord Whose we are and Whom we serve.

Nairobi, May 1970

S. H. AMISSAH
Secretary-General, AACC

MESSAGE OF THE 2nd AACC 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 Christians 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, millions are still oppressed. Racial, tribal and ethnic discrimination endanger our security and cause dissension; social injustices prevail; authentic cultural enrichment is threatened; political malpractices 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 denominational bodies, whether they be new 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 the 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.

Part One
Towards Abidjan

1. OPENING CEREMONY

The opening ceremony of Abidjan 1969 took place down town in the house of Congress at Treichville, on September 2. By four o'clock the participants, distinguished guests and members of the diplomatic corps, were already seated, waiting for the arrival of Mr. Auguste Denise, Minister of State, representing His Excellency, Houphouet Boigny the President of the Republic. Mr. Auguste Denise was accompanied by other Ministers and the President of the National Assembly, Mr. Philippe Yace.

As host to the Assembly, and as President of the Methodist Church of the Ivory Coast, Pastor Samson Nandjui in his welcoming address thanked the President of the Republic of the Ivory Coast, Mr. Houphouet Boigny, on behalf of the Assembly, for the way in which his government had not only allowed the Assembly to be held in the Ivory Coast but also in their total involvement during all the stages of its planning. Without this unreserved support the Assembly would not have taken place. Pastor Nandjui also drew the attention of the Assembly to the great role of the AACC which it has played and ought to play as an instrument of dialogue, of fraternal co-operation and unity of the churches of Africa. At this Assembly, he continued, we shall be looking back to the path we have followed since Kampala and looking forward to the years ahead, and in so doing we must have courage to change the structures of our organisation so that it truly reflects the social, economic and spiritual realities of our churches and our continent.

Mr. Babia Ble, Minister of Defence, read a speech on behalf of President Felix Houphouet Boigny in which the President expressed deep gratitude to the AACC for choosing Abidjan as the venue for their second Assembly. 'Delegates and all the participants should feel at home because the Ivory Coast wishes to be a forum for dialogue and reconciliation: a veritable centre of humanity, welcoming and friendly, rich in that human warmth which gives birth to faith, to trust and to tolerance.'

In his conclusion he underlined the importance of the Assembly and the theme chosen, 'With Christ at work in Africa today' at a time when we are all looking at the problem of under-development only from a technical point of view. 'For without a spiritual dimension, development will be empty.'

It was the turn of Pastor John Kotto of Cameroon to reply on behalf of the Assembly to the preceding greetings. The significant thing for him about the Assembly was that it had taken place in a French-speaking country and this had broken the old myth that French-speaking Africa is entirely Roman Catholic.

After the official opening the Assembly moved straight into business by welcoming eight churches (two from Cameroon, two from Liberia, two from Malawi and one each from Madagascar, Nigeria and Congo

Kinshasa) into the membership of the AACC. This first official day of the Assembly ended with a reception at the Presidential palace.

Six years have elapsed since the AACC was officially constituted at Kampala. During this period the continent of Africa has undergone tremendous social, political and economic upheaval. Indeed, the prophesy of Ibadan 1958 has come true, that '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 the crucial years'. 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 rededicate 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.

2. PARTICIPANTS

At the first Assembly of the AACC there were 400 participants representing 100 churches. Among the participants there were about a dozen women and ten official youth delegates. In order to right this grave mistake of perpetuating the old idea of equating the church with pastors only, the Planning Committee of the Abidjan Assembly strongly recommended to the member churches to send three representative delegates of which one should be a woman, one a young person and one a church official. Although the target was not achieved, at least women were better represented at this Assembly than at Kampala. The pre-Assembly women's conference made it possible to have had 47 women at the Assembly. Youth came off badly. Most of the young people at the Assembly were mainly observers, consultants and stewards; there were only four delegates under thirty. The new general committee has not one single youth delegate, the youngest member is thirty-four years old and, for that matter, a pastor.

Despite this continuous neglect and even suspicion at times on the part of the church leaders towards young people, Aaron Tolen of Cameroun—a member of staff of the World Student Christian Federation for Africa who introduced one of the main addresses in plenary on 'Fire on all horizons'—spoke of the apathy of young Africans towards the church. Young people must be more involved in the life of the church. He called upon the churches to consider the World Student Christian Federation as their servants and instrument in its mission to the academic world. The Federation in Africa wishes to work hand in hand with the churches at the national and regional level. The youth participants at the Assembly met at emergency meetings when they heard that with the reorganisation of the AACC the youth department will be absorbed into another department. A memorandum was sent to the Structure Committee pointing out the reasons for keeping the department of youth as an independent entity. The fears were allayed when the final report of the Structure Committee appeared with the youth department shown as autonomous.

Continuing with our analysis of the participants to the second Assembly, one of the most significant factors is the strong delegation from South Africa; probably this was the largest single delegation. The Government of the Ivory Coast kept its word that no delegate would be stopped from attending the Assembly for any political reason. This spirit of openness and tolerance can be summed up in the words of the President of the Republic of the Ivory Coast already quoted above, 'For Ivory Coast wishes to be a forum for dialogue and reconciliation: a veritable centre of humanity, welcoming and friendly in that human warmth which gives birth to faith, to trust and to tolerance'.

All the countries did not interpret this gesture of tolerance and good

will in the same way. There were no official Nigerian delegates at the Assembly. This is particularly due to the fact that the Ivory Coast is one of the countries that has recognised Biafra. The Federal Government would naturally look upon this attitude as hostile to its policy of a united Nigeria. With the severance of diplomatic relations between the two countries, the Nigerian Government could not guarantee the safety and security of its citizens in Ivory Coast. Despite this set-back, there were quite a number of Nigerian participants who came in their personal capacity and as members of staff.

For the first time, also, the independent churches were well represented. The African Brotherhood Church of Kenya, a member of the AACC, took the General Committee's appeal seriously and made every effort to send two delegates, a woman and a young person, to the Assembly. Their return air fares were met entirely by their church. In a paper presented to one of the sections of the Assembly by delegates of this church, they showed how their church was able to meet all their expenses without external aid. Their stewardship campaign is biblically based and requires each church member to pay an annual subscription. A man is expected to pay Shs. 7/50, a woman Shs. 3/50, a young person Shs. 1/20 and a child 60 cents. There is also the Sunday offering. It is interesting to note that the Finance Committee of the AACC adopted some of these ideas. For the next period the annual subscription of member churches will be based on the number of communicant and non-communicant members. The figure works out at 2d. or 5 C.F.A. for each member.

The independent churches in Africa are taking the ecumenical movement seriously. For the first time the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches, at its Canterbury meeting, accepted the Kimbanguist Church of Congo into its membership pending the approval of the member churches. The attitude of some of the missionary societies and churches in Europe is changing towards the independent churches. Some even would go as far as seeing these churches as the true expression of African Christianity. There are some individual Christians and churches in Europe and America who, probably due to bad consciences, are now sending money and personnel indiscriminately and unwisely to these independent churches. This unwise support could have an adverse effect on the 'self-hood' and self-reliance of these churches. For this reason and for the well being of the church in Africa the Assembly proposed the setting up of a Secretariat for independent churches which will, among other things, make a detailed study of these churches as well as examine more fully the criteria for AACC membership. There was quite a sprinkling of observers from the conservative evangelical churches. Without the constant visit and persuasion of the Assembly staff and the AACC staff, these churches would not have sent even observers to Abidjan. It was sad, however, that these churches did not send Africans but missionaries. These churches are, undoubtedly, still in the hands of the missionary societies who are convinced of their influence in saving the African Christians from false doctrines and from communism. This gesture of

sending at least observers to the ecumenical gathering at Abidjan could pave the way for more contacts and better co-operation in Mission.

There were only four Roman Catholic observers: Archbishop John Amissah of Cape Coast, Father Stransky of Rome, Father Matzoane of Lesotho and M. J. Amichia of Abidjan.

Between Kampala and Abidjan there has been a radical change of attitude and relationship between the Roman Catholic church and the Protestant churches. It would be wrong to imagine that this change of attitude has permeated through all the echelons of the churches' hierarchy.

On Wednesday, September 3, the delegates and other participants gathered at the amphitheatre of the University of Abidjan for a routine business session. Greetings were first received from fraternal organisations: the World Council of Churches, the World Council of Christian Education, the World Student Christian Federation and, lastly, the Vatican Council. The Archbishop of Cape Coast, Archbishop Amissah, the leader of the Roman Catholic observers, gave the greetings. He must have taken at least half an hour, in what was later termed by the Assembly as a historical speech, when he pleaded for an examination of conscience and search for inter-communion as a first step towards organic communion. This is what he had to say: 'It is not merely our duty to Christianize African customs or bring Christian meaning to them that I am pin-pointing here. The point I am trying to make is an examination of conscience with regard to whether or not our notions and our attitude towards inter-communion may have contributed towards our shying away from our obligation to renew all things in Christ in Africa, including our culture and our ideas on inter-communion. Are there not occasions when inter-communion (eucharistic) is to be permitted, (a) as a sign of unity already achieved, and (b) as a means of achieving the grace of further and more intimate and more realistic unity.'

In conclusion he called for a wider concept of the interpretation of the apostolic succession, not just the laying on of hands by validly consecrated bishops, but also the special chrism—a gift of the Holy Spirit—the special intention both on the part of the ordained and the ordaining minister and the ecclesiastical authorisation from the church. These things must not be entered into or applied without due consideration to the Christian community lest our actions lead to further division and thus retard progress towards the goal of organic unity which the church is seeking.

3. SPIRITUAL LIFE OF THE ASSEMBLY

Together we have adored Christ and studied His word

On Tuesday, September 2, the 522 participants gathered at the amphitheatre of the University for the opening service of the Assembly. Dr. John Kotto, member of the General Committee of the AACC, presided. He was assisted by Mr. Nicholas Maro—the General Secretary of the Christian Council of Tanzania. A liturgy specially prepared for the Assembly was used.

Pastor Seth Nomenyo of Togo, and a member also of the General Committee of the AACC, preached the opening sermon based on John 5.17—'My father is at work and I am also at work.' First, Pastor Nomenyo gave a list of the great achievements of the church in Africa: the church can boast of her contribution in the field of education and medical work. We might even add that she is now moving into rural development. He warned the Assembly not to be blinded by these successes and thus be deaf to the strong criticism labelled against the church and the Christian faith by many Africans who regard it as a close collaborator with the colonial power. Christianity is seen as an arm of the colonial power which has had as its policy the civilising of the African continent. This policy led to a systematic destruction of the African culture, the African civilisation, the imposition of alien values on the African society, the destruction of the communal life and the introduction of western individualism. These are very serious allegations and Pastor Seth Nomenyo warned the Assembly to take them seriously. As the church engages herself in mission in this continent she must not forget that Christ is already at work bringing about His kingdom of justice, of love and of unity. 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? Those who preach the word must seek the power of the Holy Spirit.

Mr. Nicholas Maro echoed the same theme during the intercessory prayer when he appealed to the African Christians to go out and announce the good news of Christ: to work with Him in His work of healing, of giving sight to the blind, liberating the captives, the oppressed and announcing the time for pardon and reconciliation between man and his neighbour and between man and his Creator. With the message of the opening service the tone was set for all the work of the Assembly.

Ecumenical Service

The first Sunday of the Assembly was set aside for an open air ecumenical service at the Houphouet Boigny Stadium. Long before the date of the Assembly approached, Archbishop Yago of the Roman Catholic church of the Ivory Coast, wrote to the Catholic community of Abidjan asking

them to remember the Assembly in their prayers and urged them to turn up for the ecumenical services set for September 7. The presence of so many Roman Catholics shows the greater desire for unity among the African Christians.

As part of Christian witness, a long procession of participants, the Christian communities (both Protestant and Catholic) of Abidjan and the surrounding towns and villages marched through the streets of Abidjan and converged on the Stadium. The procession was led by choirs and bands in colourful uniforms. Compared to the spectators at a Sunday football match, the ecumenical service did not attract as many people as it was hoped. Only one side of the Stadium was used and on the other there were very many empty seats.

The service was scheduled for 9.30 a.m. While waiting we were entertained by the two choirs on both sides of the temporary altar erected at one end of the Stadium, complete with microphones. Behind the altar stood a hidden wood cross. There was coming and going as the time approached. The television people got their equipment in position, photographers looked for the best positions for taking photographs. The President of the Republic was represented by Mr. and Mrs. Ekra Mathieu. Mr. Mathieu is the Minister of Information.

Pastor Richard Andriamanjato, who is certainly used to speaking to large political crowds, drew our attention at the beginning of his sermon to the importance of the theme: 'With Christ at work in Africa today'. For him this is a statement of faith, a belief that Christ is indeed at work in Africa today despite all the tribulations, conflicts and divisions. And what a privilege for us as Christians to be co-workers with Christ.

After this introductory statement he went on to speak specifically on the text quoted above, relating it to the incarnation. If we speak in tongue no one will understand what we say. Let us, therefore, follow the example of Christ who in order that man may truly understand the love of God, came down and took upon himself our nature and thus fully identified Himself with man.

He then painted for us the state of the church today—our own state. Our worship, our language, our pattern of thought is no longer comprehensible to the world, let alone to ourselves. What, as Christians, have we done or said on the injustice that surrounds us? We live in the midst of the injustice between the rich and the poor; we are witnesses of so much blood that has flown and is still flowing in this continent; we are part of the society that discriminates against others because of their race, colour and creed; and yet what word, what action have we taken? Have we not forgotten our great calling, that of waging war against all evil.

In conclusion he reminded us of our coming together to Abidjan. There is an opportunity for us as a church to take stock of our position and to go out in faith into the world and join Him who is at work in our continent today.

According to James Lawson, the Associate General Secretary of the

AACC, there are now about one million refugees in Africa, and as a sign of solidarity and witness the collection made at the service was set aside for the churches' work among the refugees in the city of Abidjan.

The service was over. For many this was the first time they had taken part in an ecumenical service with Catholics and Protestants. Jean Pierre Koutouan, of Anyana seminary, spoke for most of us when he said at the end of the service, 'Even if organic unity is not achieved now, we hope to attain it one day because such ecumenical gathering is both a blessing and a concrete sign of our obedience to the Lord's call for us to remain one'.

This section of the report would not be complete without mentioning the service of holy communion held on the 12th of September almost at the end of the conference. By this time quite a number of delegates had already left, but most of those still present took part in this moving service celebrated by Pastor Samson Nandjui according to the liturgy of 'The Fraternity of the Port of Abidjan'. There was one Roman Catholic among the communicants. For the Protestant Christians in Africa the question of inter-communion does not really raise formidable barriers as it does in other parts of the world. Among certain Christians the very thought of associating with Roman Catholics, let alone partaking of the Lord's supper together, is out of the question.

Bible Study

Worship, prayers and Bible Study formed an integral part of the programme of the Assembly. The Bible Study was planned in such a way as to act as a basis for all the other discussions on culture, education and renewal of the church. As part of the preparatory document an outline for Bible Study prepared by Canon Burges Carr and Pastor Buana Kibongi of Congo Brazzaville was sent to all the delegates. The Bible Study was in two parts: the Ministry of Christ and the Ministry of the Church.

Pastor Buana Kibongi introduced the first part of the Bible Study on the Ministry of Christ based on Mark 10/45, 'For I have come to serve'. In his three Bible Studies he dealt with miracles of Christ and the reasons behind them.

In conclusion Pastor Buana Kibongi underlined the importance of seeing the death and the resurrection of Christ as a whole.

It was the turn of Canon Burges Carr of Liberia, now staff member of the Division of Inter-Church Aid of the World Council of Churches to present the second part of the Bible Study on the Ministry of Christ. This part was based on 1 Corinthians, 31-9, where Paul was so deeply concerned with dissension, jealousy and rivalry among the Corinthian Christians. Burges Carr pointed out the very relevance of this passage to our own churches in Africa today. Paul was also concerned with the way the Gospel was presented to this cosmopolitan, sophisticated, intellectual community of Corinth. Likewise, the church in Africa must heed Paul's concern and not present the Gospel in such a simple way to the educated Africans and thus render it sterile.

After the Bible introduction the Assembly divided into small groups for intensive group study. Time was so limited that it made it almost impossible really to get to grips with the text.

Before moving on to the work of the sections, let us hear the report of the General Secretary.

4. REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

Ibadan to Abidjan

Ibadan

Ibadan '58, Kampala '63 and Abidjan '69 are significant landmarks for the AACC as well as the Church of Christ in Africa. Ibadan was a symbol of the deep stirrings in the hearts of many people in Africa. Ghana had become an independent sovereign state in March 1957 and it was evident that it would be the forerunner of other independent states. The birth-pangs of a new era would gather momentum and as the new states came into being, they would seek membership in the United Nations, take their place in the councils of the international community and shoulder the responsibility for the ordering of their affairs. The struggle for independence might be long, arduous and even bitter, but it was full of exhilaration and great hopes and promise. It was significant that the message of Ibadan to the churches of Africa struck a prophetic note:

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 the crucial years.

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 the various countries of Africa, but also to produce indigenous leaders, capable of carrying forward the task in a way that would reflect the unique contribution that Africa could bring to the heritage of the worldwide Church. There were stirrings for greater opportunity to share in the burden of leadership and to demonstrate the maturity of a number of 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 strategy together and in their togetherness witness to what they have in common, but also be challenged by their weaknesses due to their many labels, their division and separateness. There are people in this assembly who may recall the warmth of the fellowship at Ibadan, the joyful discovery that the churches had been well and truly established in Africa, that God had richly blessed the labours of His messengers to Africa, that the churches made a substantial contribution in proclaiming the gospel and winning many to a new life of trust and service and in providing education and other facilities for the benefit of the people of Africa.

The provisional committee that was set up to carry on the work of Ibadan, was most active during the five years of its life. The survey of theological education in Africa, the rapid social change studies, the assembly

of 500 youth in Nairobi to grapple with the theme 'Freedom under the Cross', the long consultation on Christian Home and Family Life, the Salisbury conference on 'Education in a Changing Africa', the conference on mass communications media; these and other efforts in which the churches participated helped to underline for them the immense possibilities of working together to achieve what any single church, working on its own, would fail to achieve.

Kampala

Thus the ground was prepared for Kampala. Many African countries had become independent since Ibadan and others were in the running. It was right that the theme of the assembly should reflect the rallying forces of the continent which was coming into its own and had started to think in terms of unity—'Freedom and Unity in Christ'. Churches warmly responded to the invitation to Kampala and the All Africa Conference was rechristened All Africa Conference of Churches and duly constituted as an organisation 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.

Kampala to Abidjan

The Chairman of the General Committee, which was elected at Kampala, has already reported to this Assembly about the stewardship of the body which under the constitution has carried the mandate of the Kampala Assembly during the last six years. As General Secretary I should like to pay the tribute of my colleagues on the staff and myself to the devotion and earnestness with which the General Committee has served during its term of office. Their annual meetings have been long and heavy: a session has usually taken about ten days, as the committee has had to cope not only with normal administrative matters and the affairs of a growing staff, but also with staff programmes of work. The Commissions, which were envisaged at Kampala to guide and direct the staff in their work, have not functioned for lack of funds. It therefore became necessary for the General Committee to guide the staff in their work. The Committee has given sound counsels, encouraged the staff and sought to interpret their mandate in the light of new challenges and opportunity. They have all of us, staff as well as member bodies of the AACC, in their debt and we ask them to accept our very sincere thanks.

As we seriously reflect about Kampala to Abidjan, several pertinent questions may be asked: for example, what has AACC achieved or failed to achieve? What have been some of the difficulties as the blue-prints of Kampala have been translated into action?

Perhaps it would be well to look first at hopes which have not been fully realised, looking at some of the comments which are made about the AACC in good faith by those who shared our hopes and expected great things to happen in Africa and in the churches because AACC had come into being in Kampala. Some of the comments are:

AACC has been forced to pay more attentions to its relations with the West than its African constituency.

The challenges and creative possibilities of true ecumenicity in Africa have been little met as yet, for example in relations between the English and French-speaking sections of the constituency, in relationship with independent church movements, in winning conservative evangelicals to ecumenical understanding.

Few distinctively African programmes have yet been devised for developing effective Christian witness and service where Africans feel a special need or opportunity, for example in political life.

Little study has yet been initiated, by Africans in Africa, of the distinctive contribution which African churches have to make to the whole ecumenical movement.

AACC is not known in the churches of Africa.

These comments may not by any means exhaust the list and it is important that, as in this Assembly we take a close look at the organisation which we have set up to serve the churches, we seriously consider its apparent weaknesses, in the hope that it may be more fruitful in the post-Abidjan period. A close look may well reveal that in the prevailing mood at Kampala we may have been too optimistic about what the infant organisation might have been expected to achieve in the first few years of its life; compared with what the churches had found difficult to achieve in their long history, in some cases going back a hundred years.

But, thank God, it is not all a non-success story. Part of the story is told in the reports of staff about their work in the last six years in the magazine, *Ensemble*, prepared especially for this assembly, to tell the story of the work of the AACC since Kampala. Fifteen thousand copies of the magazine are available here and I hope that copies will be shared with members of the churches and councils represented. Part of the story is also told by other AACC publications, which include two books in French and English respectively and based on the consultation of African Theologians held in Ibadan in January 1966. The exhibition by the different departments of the AACC at this assembly will also tell part of the story.

The major part of the story could best be told by individuals who have shared in the various conferences, seminars, consultations or workshops organised by the AACC; by refugees who have been helped through EPEAA, a special agency which was set up by the AACC to help in refugee and development projects of the churches; refugees who have been helped to re-settle and become reasonably self-reliant or helped to

further their education even at the university level. People carrying responsibility for the broadcasting work of the churches have been helped by six-month residential courses at the AACC Training Centre in Nairobi, to bring a new competence and confidence to their work; and so the story of help in need, of training, new insights, improved skills, new friendships across national and denominational frontiers through AACC could continue.

I myself recollect moving experiences during the AACC Goodwill Mission to the Sudan in December 1966, under the leadership of one of our presidents, Dr. Akanu Ibiam; of long sessions, sometimes well after midnight, with government, political, security, church and other leaders, seeking ways and means whereby the estranged north and south of the country, symbolised by the army and the 'anyanya' might be reconciled. We can thank God that as a result of the confrontation, the Government of the Sudan, on its own initiative, declared that it would favourably consider requests for missionaries from Africa to work in the Sudan on the recommendation of the AACC. As a result two Roman Catholic Priests from Tanzania have been working in Malakal in the Upper Nile Province of the Sudan since June 1968 and the Presbyterian Churches of East Africa and of Ghana are considering sending missionaries to the Sudan. These may be small beginnings, but they have great potential.

I also recall the excitement with which my colleague, the Associate General Secretary of the AACC and I chatted at the theological college in Porto Novo, Dahomey, for a good hour with a team, drawn from various French-speaking churches in Africa and joined by volunteers from Tahiti, France and Switzerland; they were coming to the end of a six-month period of preparation, during which they lived together, to launch into the Fon area of Dahomey on team evangelisation. The project had been undertaken as a result of a survey of the unevangelised areas of West Africa, jointly sponsored by the AACC and the World Council of Churches. This survey led to a consultation at Yaoundé, which studied the report. The French-speaking churches in Africa, which participated in the consultation, felt challenged enough to take the initiative for planning and eventually undertaking the team evangelisation, with the help of other interested bodies. This has been a venture of great promise, underlining the togetherness of the churches and their common witness to the gospel committed to them.

So we have cause for great thankfulness to God for what the AACC has been used to accomplish within Africa in the last few years, but we need to remember that AACC has its links and commitments outside Africa. Its personnel have shared in world conferences, bringing an African perspective to bear on the deliberations at the world level. It is generally agreed that the contribution of Africa at the world conference on Church and Society, organised by the World Council of Churches in 1966, was quite significant. So also was the impact of that conference upon thinking in AACC and the churches in Africa. In fact, that conference started the thinking which was to crystallise in the theme for this assembly—WITH CHRIST AT WORK IN AFRICA TODAY.

Abidjan

In thinking about Abidjan it became clear that this Assembly would be in a rather different situation than either Ibadan or Kampala. In both cases the continent and the churches were looking forward, in a unique way, to independence; the future looked rosy and full of great possibilities. At Abidjan, however, most participants would come from countries which had been independent for a few years and were learning from stark reality what it really means to be the Church in the situations created by the aftermath of independence.

It also became clear that if the gospel was to be proclaimed relevantly in Africa in our time, then it must come to grips with the setting of the people among whom the churches lived and worked. It meant that the churches must face courageously the challenges and opportunities of the independent sovereign countries of which they are part, seeing the issues as clearly as possible and trying to understand how they affect the lives of men, women and children of the nations. This then is part of the task of this Assembly as we prepare for the post-Abidjan operation of the AACC and the churches and councils which it serves.

There are at least four aspects of the post-independence situation in various countries of Africa, on which we need to reflect:

(a) With independence new *power* has come to governments and individuals and with it, the temptation to use the power in the interest of minority groups. In the hey-day of a ruling party in one independent country a Minister of State was reported to have declared 'There is nothing that the party cannot do, except turn a man into a woman'. The exercise of that power led to such abuses that it brought untold suffering to most people and the eventual fall of the party. Here and there in Africa, there is an effort to keep fellow men under by every possible oppressive means. There are areas of tribal and racial tension and as a result of oppressive policies and practices, people have had to leave home and become refugees. In some cases tensions have led to war.

It is in such situations that the gospel of love, mercy, forgiveness and reconciliation has to be proclaimed by word and life. How do the churches fulfil their appointed task of reconciliation in such circumstances or do they pretend that the situations do not exist and, therefore, do nothing about them? If they are anxious to take the gospel seriously, then what must they do to make it relevant?

(b) With independence, a determined drive is being made by the governments to increase opportunities for *education*, especially for young people at all levels—primary, secondary, technical, teacher training, university—in order to develop the human resources for the tasks of each country, to raise the general level of the people, to make it possible for many to enjoy a fuller life as a result of their potential gifts which education has helped to cultivate.

To what extent are the churches, which pioneered in education and thus helped to produce the leaders of today, thinking in terms of holding

on firmly to what they have built up over the years, instead of voluntarily seeking ways and means to co-operate in the national effort and bring their own unique contribution to bear, so that there is co-operation rather than competition?

Recently in one country when the national university was making plans to establish a department of religious studies, the churches which were considering degree-level training for ordinands were thinking in terms of establishing a new college of their own for the purpose. Could not the churches let their candidates take their degree at the national university and then arrange for them to be prepared for ordination at the churches' theological colleges? Would there not be a great advantage in the young future leaders growing up together in their academic life, irrespective of their particular disciplines?

What does togetherness imply in the effort of the governments and the churches to build up the life of the new African independent states? Should Church and State be separate bodies working in competition?

(c) With independence has come a realisation that political independence has not much worth if there is continuing economic servitude. The efforts of governments to ensure *economic development* have meant a rapid growth of our cities.

Are the churches making a study of the fast-growing cities and on the consequent effect on the villages, in order to assess the effect on people in both the cities and the villages and to discover how best to minister to their needs in the new situation?

It is challenging to know that such study has been undertaken in one or two places and that similar studies may be necessary elsewhere if the concentration of development in the cities of our land is to lead to effective ministry by the churches to people in both the urban and the rural areas.

(d) With independence has come the idea of a *continental unity* symbolised by the OUA, the Organisation of African Unity. While the new states are understandably jealous of their national sovereignty and integrity, they are nevertheless looking for larger affiliations, in order to establish solidarity and achieve economic co-operation. It is too early perhaps to assess the achievement of the regional and other groupings, but no one can minimise the worthwhileness of the groping towards some form of unity.

It is a cause for great thankfulness to God that the Churches in Africa took the initiative to think in terms of togetherness and of working together, long before many of the independent African states came into being and conceived of an OAU. It may be presumptuous on our part to think that we created the idea for them, but as churches, we had sown the seed at Ibadan and it had blossomed at Kampala and we had good reasons to think in terms of working together in a continent which had been broken up into English, French and Portuguese-speaking colonial territories and into many competing confessional church-bodies.

In his May 1969 letter to his flock the Archbishop of Cape Town (Anglican), The Most Reverend Robert Selby-Taylor wrote *inter alia*:

The All Africa Conference of Churches is a visible demonstration of the oneness in Christ of Christians throughout this continent. The conference seeks to overcome national and racial divisions by working for the unity of Christ. It is perhaps significant that the move for joint Christian action came from the newly emergent countries of Africa. We are part of this great continent. We members of the Anglican Church in South Africa—and other South African Churches—belong to the younger churches. Our roots go into the past, and we are proud and thankful for our heritage, but we belong to the new world, to the younger set. We have inherited too many prejudices from our parent bodies and these we must be constantly striving to overcome.

It is important that we should demonstrate this oneness not only by our constitution and synods, but by the everyday life of our church. One way we can do this is by taking our fullest possible part in the Abidjan Assembly.

The case could not be put more succinctly. The day of self-sufficient isolation, if ever there was such a day, is gone, for a world which is being forced more and more to realise and demonstrate its interdependence and its essential oneness. The churches have an even greater obligation to live as the One Body of Christ, and the churches in Africa cannot but face up to the challenges of their states as they seek ways of ensuring solidarity in building up their new life. It is not enough for the churches to talk about unity, they must demonstrate their convictions, that the world may believe and that the divisions into developed and developing, rich and poor, haves and have-nots may be healed.

All this has very practical implications as far as the AACC is concerned. We cannot reflect on the operation of the AACC during Kampala-Abidjan without voicing our gratitude and thanks for the most generous financial support which has been given by churches, national councils of churches, mission boards, various women's organisations and individuals around the world. The contributions have come year by year for the support of staff budgets and programmes and the various conferences, seminars, consultations or workshops organised from time to time by the AACC. This support has demonstrated the faith of many people outside Africa in the AACC and their practical concern for the churches served by the AACC.

It has also encouraged the staff to think of the links with the world Church of which the Church of Africa is a living part. Though we have acknowledged each gift year by year, it is fitting that this Assembly should record its appreciation to all, who, by their funds and prayers, have supported the AACC during the past six years.

There has of course been support also from Africa itself, through the affiliation fees of member bodies year by year, through the contribution of churches for their participants in AACC conferences, seminars, consultations or workshops, through the donations of individuals who have registered as Friends of AACC. We cannot be too grateful for the interest and faith of

our own people in an organisation which they themselves have set up. But the truth of the matter is that the support from Africa itself has been most inadequate, and will need to be stepped up considerably. The Finance Committee which has been set up at this Assembly will look carefully into this matter and bring proposals to a later session. It is clear that the inadequate support from Africa stems from the fact that we have not exploited our potential. The lesson of the one-million shilling campaign to raise funds in Africa for this Assembly is that we *can* raise substantial support for the AACC.

Support for the AACC, however, is required not only in money but also in personnel, especially French-speaking. The first full-time French-speaking member of staff was appointed in December, 1961; it was not until May 1968 that it was possible to appoint the second. The churches have no small difficulty in releasing the people with the necessary gifts to serve the churches through the AACC, but if the French-speaking and the English-speaking constituencies are to be effectively served, then the staff with the necessary competence and maturity must be available in adequate numbers.

Conclusion

These are only some of the challenges that face the churches of this continent as we reflect on the growing maturity of our states and ourselves and as we endeavour to take our places responsibly in the world community. We are no longer children, cared for, controlled, directed by adults: we are responsible adults, with a sense of our destiny and eager to come to grips with the realities of adult life.

As we think of what the AACC has meant and can mean in the life of the churches it serves, we are reminded that the Church is the Lord's; He said, 'I will build my Church' and later He commissioned His disciples:

I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples: baptise 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.

We believe therefore that in the turmoil of Africa, 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. Pray that we see and hear Him, not only in the retreat and deliberations of this Assembly, but also in the stark realities back home, because the Assembly will have revealed them as the true setting for our witness and service with Christ.

Part Two
Work of the Sections



1 THE CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL SITUATION

The theme for Section 1—At Work with Christ in the contemporary social, economic and political situation in Africa—was introduced by Mr. Jean Mark Ekoh, Minister for Agriculture in the Government of Gabon. Before starting his address, Mr. Ekoh called upon the Assembly to stand and observe one minute's silence as a tribute to the late Mr. Tom Mboya, Minister for Economic Planning and Development in the Government of Kenya, who had been invited to be a guest speaker on the main theme of Section I.

The tragic death of able men like Tom Mboya is a sign of the deep malaise, frustration, upheaval that has been sweeping the continent of Africa, particularly within the last ten years. If African society and her nations are to survive, they must enter into the technological age of the twentieth century. New values, ideas and economic structures of the western world should not be embraced wholesale without careful study in the light of the customs and traditions of Africa. We need to build a society with a spiritual foundation. This is where Christians can and must make an invaluable contribution 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 life. A pressing problem that needs attention is the mass exodus from the rural areas which is causing grave social problems in urban centres and leaving the rural areas depleted of able-bodied men. The raising of the standard of living in the rural areas by the introduction of industries, the construction of roads, the provision of health centres, etc., might be ways of averting this exodus. In all our concern over economic and social development we must not lose sight of the individual man as the centre of all our concern.

Thus Mr. Jean Mark Ekoh introduced his address before embarking on more specific economic and political areas.

Economic

An economic plan is essential for development. In order to be effective, such a plan must aim at helping the poorest section of the community, who should be involved at all stages of the plan. A long period of psychological and educational preparation is necessary in order to obtain a maximum support for the plan by the whole community. In this way, the common pitfalls of using spectacular statistics to indicate the measure of economic achievement will be avoided. Very often a country is quoted as having a high *per capita* income, but a close examination reveals that the majority of the population in that country may well have incomes falling well below the

bread line. It is not sufficient merely to draw up a plan; it is important to evaluate the results of its implementation critically in the light of the goals set. Each country must fix its own criteria in the light of its own development needs and social values.

Political

As for political problems, this is the summary of what he had to say.

The Churches' role and contribution to the development of Africa is greatly appreciated by many governments on this continent. However, no government today is prepared to tolerate political interference by the Church. The Church is therefore called upon to be loyal to the State. This does not mean that its individual members cannot play their part as citizens in party politics, but in doing so, they should apply the principles of tolerance, restraint and reconciliation. Today the Church is called upon to play an even greater part in the task of reconciliation. The report of the General Secretary indicated the efforts made by the All Africa Conference of Churches in this field of reconciliation, such as the sending of a goodwill mission to the Sudan in 1966 led by Dr. Akum Ibiam.

It was interesting to note that when such areas of conflict as Nigeria, Rhodesia and South Africa were being discussed, there were fewer emotional outbreaks during this Assembly. Members were more restrained in their intervention and were at great pains to find just solutions to these problems. Some members of the South African delegation were taken aback by this unusual attitude, finding it a big change from the more usual condemnation, not only of the regime, but also of participants at international meetings.

Is the rest of Africa too preoccupied with its internal problems to give serious considerations to these areas of conflict? However, this Assembly can hardly be accused of that. Instead of making yet another statement on the Nigeria/Biafra conflict, the Assembly decided at its last session on September 11 to send a mission of reconciliation and goodwill to Nigeria and Biafra, in the hope that the great value of a face to face dialogue with the parties concerned might lead to a greater understanding of the whole context of this problem and a just reconciliation. The text presented by the General Secretary on this particular motion was passed unanimously by the Assembly.

Mission of Reconciliation—Areas of Tension

The All Africa Conference of Churches tonight decided to send immediately a goodwill mission to Nigeria and the former Eastern Region in order to express the fraternal greetings and concern of the Church of Africa and to consult with Christians there on what service the AACC could render in this difficult situation.

The full text of the statement adopted by the Assembly follows:

After hearing the report of the General Secretary:

1. This Second Assembly of the AACC meeting in Abidjan, September 1-12, 1969 has viewed with deep concern situations of conflict which have arisen in many parts of the continent of Africa.
2. In our response to the demands which are placed on the Church of Christ to be an instrument of reconciliation in the world, this Assembly feels called to appoint a Mission of goodwill and fellowship to our Christian brethren in Nigeria and the former Eastern Region:
 - (a) to convey in a personal manner the fraternal greetings and concern of the Churches of Africa; and
 - (b) to consult with them on what service the AACC as a fellowship of Christians could render in this difficult situation.
3. Should the consultation with the Churches warrant it, this Assembly feels that the Mission should further seek ways and means whereby cessation of hostilities could be effected to enable the two sides to come together to seek a permanent solution to a situation that has brought suffering and misery to many.
4. This Assembly further enjoins all member Churches of AACC and African Christians to engage in constant prayer for solutions to be found in similar situations in Africa and without taking partisan involvement to give any assistance needed towards this end.

Mr. Ekoh did not completely rule out the use of violence in inhuman situations, but a decision to resort to violence should only be taken when all other efforts to achieve justice have failed. Even when resorting to violence, the participants must never lose sight of human values, forgiveness and final reconciliation. When the Minister finished his long presentation covering the social, political and economic problems facing the continent of Africa, a few moments were allowed for questions. Among the questions asked were the following:

What should be the attitude of the Church towards the Nigerian/Biafran conflict? (Gabon is one country that has recognised Biafra.)

The Churches should make their respective governments aware of the problem. Any solution proposed should be concrete and locally based, which is why the Church of Gabon is acting as foster-parent to more than five thousand children between the ages of 1-12.

The presentation of Mr. Ekoh's and other preparatory documents were used as guidelines and resources material for Section I. The Section discussed further some of the points raised and in their final report they had the following points to add to the main documents:

The whole problem of development makes it imperative for the church to have its vision rooted in biblical theology. "All men are created in the image of God and stand equal before Him; each man has a right

to the world's riches, according to his needs. In the political sphere the Church has a right and duty to be critical in a constructive way of all human institutions, including that of the state. She should be a pioneer in establishing new projects. The Churches in Africa still enjoy a very privileged position in the rural areas, and should therefore play an important role in rural development." All these tasks require specialised ministries, which the Churches should be seriously considering.

2 THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION

This theme of Section II was presented at the House of Congress in Abidjan by Mr. Eteki Mboumoua of the Evangelical Church of Cameroon, former Minister of Education and current president of the general conference of UNESCO. He started his lectures by emphasising the necessity for a cultural revolution. According to him, revolution is essential for Africa, if she is to free herself from the political, economic and social domination of the former colonial powers. One cannot isolate culture from politics, which is why the former colonial powers imposed their civilisation and cultures on Africa. Attainment of independence, particularly when obtained without a struggle, does not necessarily guarantee a cultural revolution in that country. The old structures were often retained, particularly among the so-called 'elite' who, in order to be accepted by the civilised world, continued to assimilate wholesale western values and western civilisation. To their great surprise, this 'elite' who had rejected their own culture and embraced that of the west, found themselves discriminated against. It is interesting to note that these same people are now searching for the 'African' culture—a return to the primitive world and to a kind of passive culture. However, such a culture is not adaptable to the complexities of the modern scientific world.

What is now required is a concerted 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. Culture, if it is to be truly beneficial must not be the privilege of only a few, nor should it lead people into a ghetto-type outlook, but it should be a synthesis of African as well as other cultures, so that it becomes truly effective, living and dynamic.

Eteki Mboumoua did not spare the Christian Church either in his criticisms. Earlier in his talk, he pointed to certain tendencies among some African Christians to over-emphasise the positive role and contribution made by the Christian faith in Africa. These people, he went on, forget that the missionaries took no account of either the social structures of African society, nor his spiritual dimensions—his religion. This can only be corrected if instead of trying to convert people, Christ is simply presented to them as a Saviour in their own cultural and spiritual environment. This outlook on the Christian faith was echoed later in section and subsection.

Culture and education go hand in hand and that was why this speaker devoted half his time to this question. He spoke for the whole Assembly and for Africa when he said that present educational systems in Africa were not adapted to the economic, cultural needs of the continent. Education had become an instrument of alienation. It is therefore important that the Church which is still interested in education, should take the lead in working

out a system of education which would take into account the needs of nations, the cultural values of African society and its 'milieu'.

Section II, which had Eteki Mboumoua's paper as their main working document, spent most of their time discussing 'African Theology' by which they meant 'a theology based on the biblical faith and which spoke to the African soul' (or relevant to Africa). It was expressed in categories of thought which arose out of the philosophy of the African people. This does not mean it is narrow in outlook (or syncretistic). To speak of African theology involves formulating clearly a Christian attitude to other religions. It must be pointed out that the emphasis is basically on Christian theology which could be expressed through African thinking and culture.

3 CHURCH RENEWAL

The Rev. Adeolu Adegbola, former Principal of Emmanuel Theological College, was given the task of introducing this very important theme for Section III—on the Renewal of the Church in Africa. Church renewal does not take place in a vacuum, but in the historical, cultural and social context of a given society, which is why the planners of the Assembly put the theme last and not first, after the other two topics dealing with the political, social and cultural problems. Adegbola pointed out the common tendency of the Christian in Africa to see the Church as a body apart—opposed to the world instead of being set in the midst of it. This is contrary to the image of the Church as portrayed in the New Testament, which is the Mystical Body of Christ set in this world to carry out His mission of bringing more abundant life to man through sacrificial service. This task is indeed great, but God has not left his Church alone, He has given His Holy Spirit to lead the Church into new realms of truth and service.

If the Church is to exist for others, it has to be outward-looking rather than inward-looking where all the money and energy of its members is spent in maintaining the costly, ineffective structures. This calls for new structures which are mission oriented. Adegbola pointed out the fact that the New Testament does not give us a blueprint for church structures, nor even a doctrinal or theological basis. Each generation and society must work out its own church structure. Here, the established church can learn a great deal from the independent churches, where the latter meet the socio-psychological needs of the masses of the people. Adegbola concluded by saying that Church renewal must take into account the need for an improved standard of worship, the re-awakening of zeal for Christian witness and Christian involvement in social and political affairs. It is only when the church has taken seriously its mission in the world and is no longer concerned with an institutionalised body or hierarchical structures, that we shall reach the stage where the road to unity will be open.

This very far-reaching and critical address did not go unchallenged, but the kind of questions and reservations expressed seemed to have completely missed Adegbola's appeal for a church with a new vision—of God's people totally engaged in offering themselves to the service of the world. The questions of cathedrals, church buildings, of the church being an institution are all secondary to the demanding mandate given to the Church by Christ. The main thesis of Adegbola's address, the questions raised in plenary session and the discussions of the groups, could all be summed up by the definition of 'mission'.

The meaning of 'mission'

The mission about which we read in the Bible is God's mission. By this we understand that God has a purpose for the world and that He is seeking to accomplish this purpose. We understand what He is doing today as we see Him at work in Old Testament history with its prophetic concern for peace, justice and liberation; as we see Him at work in Jesus Christ who becomes both suffering servant and Lord of the world and who is at work today by the power of the Holy Spirit both in the Church and in the world.

4 ORGANISATION OF THE ASSEMBLY AND PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

The second Assembly of the AACC should have taken place in 1966 but it was postponed due to the Uppsala Assembly of the World Council of Churches in which most of the member churches of the AACC were involved. It could not be held in 1967 either because of the World Conference of Christian Education. So 1969 was chosen as the best year when pressure from other ecumenical conferences would be at a minimum. Once the dates had been set—September 1–12—the Planning Committee met in March 1968 in Abidjan to draw out a general plan for the Secretariat of the Assembly to work on. Mr. Jean Fischer of the Division of Inter-Church Aid of the World Council of Churches was given the great task for all the detailed arrangements of the Conference with the help of the AACC staff, the Methodist church and the Government of the Ivory Coast. Members of staff were involved in systematic visits of the member and non-member churches of the AACC. These visits paid great dividends. Nearly all the churches filled their quota of delegates and even the non-member churches sent observers. This was indeed a great achievement considering that the travel expenses and the Assembly fees were supposed to be borne entirely by the churches. On the whole this was a very encouraging sign because most of the churches accepted the challenge and did actually meet all the expenses.

The General Committee has for so long been concerned with the AACC's financial dependence on outside support. The General Committee decided to launch a 'One million shillings campaign' as an attempt to involve and give an opportunity to the churches in Africa to make a contribution to the cost of the Assembly as well as to the work of the AACC. A system was adapted whereby churches and individuals were sent collection boxes. This idea of boxes was borrowed from Norway who generously provided all the boxes for the campaign. A date was fixed for the collection and dedication of the money. What is the result of all this? The first thing we must note is that the churches in Africa are not all that poor. The money is there and what is required is a systematic education of the faithful to the importance of giving and of supporting their own organisation. This is the first step.

The second step which is even more important is the setting up of machinery for collection and channelling of the funds. The Finance Committee of the AACC presented noble ideas to the Assembly, that a tax of 2d. each would be levied on each individual church member. From a theoretical calculation the amount of money collected from such a scheme would be more than enough to meet all the running expenses of the AACC. Neither the Finance Committee nor the Assembly gave any indication as to how the money would be collected.

Coming back to the one million shillings campaign: how successful

was it? By the time of the Assembly, \$28,000 had been collected, a figure well below the target of approximately \$140,000. Even if the figure is small, this is a very encouraging sign compared to the African churches' contribution at Ibadan and Kampala. The churches in Western Africa made a much bigger contribution to this campaign than those of Eastern Africa. Why is this so? Is it because the churches in Eastern Africa are still dominated by missionaries and their societies? Is it that they are less concerned with the AACC as an ecumenical instrument in Africa? Or does the reason lie more with the staff of the AACC who have not put before these churches the importance and the need of the organisation in a challenging way? The reason may simply be the lack of breakdown of communication.

A local committee was set up to work hand-in-hand with the Secretariat. The Committee was responsible for providing us with morning and afternoon refreshment: coffee, tea and soft drinks which was greatly appreciated; and the evening entertainments. The highlight of the conference and the unforgettable excursions. The churches in and around Abidjan gave their whole heart to the conference. The delegates were moved by the warm and sincere reception they received on these excursions.

Abidjan 1969 is over. The churches of Africa met to discuss their common problems and responsibilities. They have left masses of documentation, of ideas, suggestions, criticisms and recommendations to the AACC. To get these recommendations carried out a 20-member General Committee was elected on sub-regional basis and at the same time ensuring a fair denominational and linguistic representation. It is a great pity that the General Committee does not really reflect the social cross-section of the whole church. Where are the laity, the youth and the women? There is not one single member under thirty. The laity is represented by the four women.

The new mandate of the AACC also requires new structures which would be able to respond more effectively to the Africa of the 'seventies. The Structure Committee proposed the following structures:

General Assembly which will meet once a year.

General Committee consisting of 25 members and 5 co-opted advisers to meet once a year.

Executive Committee of eight members drawn from the General Assembly.

The Secretariat consisting of four commissions: Finance and Service—Education—Ecumenical, Political and International Affairs—Communication.

There will be two parallel organisations, one for Eastern Africa and the other for Western Africa, with all the commissions and departments represented.

Departments: Christian Training or Education; Youth; Communication; Women.

Part Three
Reports of the Sections

1 WORKING WITH CHRIST IN THE CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL SITUATION

In a world that is changing faster than its members can adjust to the changes, Africa is, perhaps, changing fastest of all. The Church must apply its changeless truth to a society that is 'new every morning'. As co-workers with God it is not for us to fear change but to apply his eternal principles more effectively in the computer age than was done in the carriage age.

Almost the total history of the Church in Africa has been in a colonial framework, with all of the limitations on its participation in the essential elements of social, political and economic life. Suddenly, now, the Church functions over most of the continent in independent states, facing tasks for which there is no precedent. New questions loom large and demand immediate answers.

What is the Church's role in national development? What can it do for rural life, to slow the haemorrhage of its youth to the city and at the same time provide aid for the festering sore of that same youth, unemployed and purposeless in the cities? How can the Church speak on national issues such as tribalism and corruption in government, where in some cases any criticism of an insecure government is considered as treason? Has the international Church a voice to speak to the nations about the sources of national problems that produce a second haemorrhage—that of refugees—and about the human consideration of these same refugees in other countries?

It is to these and related questions that the churches gathered in Abidjan and scattered over the continent must find answers—quick answers but good ones.

Development

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.

1. Theological Area

In dealing with the problem of development, the Church must have a vision that is rooted in biblical theology. 'All men are created in the image of God, are equal before Him, and are each entitled to a share of the world's wealth according to their needs, and are stewards of the same.' God is concerned with the totality of man. His coming into the world in the form of human flesh was his identification with man in human history, to share the life of man and to liberate him from the scourge of sin, including conditions which create imbalance in the political, economic and social develop-

ment of human society. The unity of human personality makes it obligatory for the Church to emphasize, not only the spiritual needs of man, but also his material well-being.

2. *Sociological Area*

The Church represents a moral and spiritual force which must have its effect on human life. It is essential that the Church take into account the specific situation in any given country; but it must also be aware of the general situation in the modern world which is still dominated by nations whose realization developed from a Christian background. Opinion must be formed in a way that rejects the caricatures (e.g. the poor Church only waiting for the charity of others). Education must be directed at making all men fully responsible human beings.

3. *Political Area*

The problem of development is a continuous one and mistakes can be made. Political parties, like trade unions and other organizations, both national and international, must be recognized as a means of creating a greater freedom, a truer justice, an effective democracy and conditions for lasting peace. 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. However, the Church must not abstain from all political action, as she is called by her prophetic vocation to exercise a critical role in relation to the human order, by denouncing that which is contrary to the well-being of nations and to encourage that which is for their good.

4. *Economic Area*

It is significant that the decisions of international organizations which are in favour of true development, face a setback because of a moral and spiritual structure of society which is tied to a long tradition of egotism and exploitation. The Church must find a new ethic, based on international solidarity and the Christian concept of authority of the Lord over all that man possesses, in order that the declarations, often full of promise for a radical change in the economic relations of nations, may be effectively implemented. It is important also that the Church itself initiate projects which can act as pilot projects and demonstrate its own potential in this field.

The Church's response to rural urban relationships

In Africa today we are living in an age of development. Development is the human process in which the Church must be involved at grassroot level as well as at other levels, through individuals and congregations, and at national level through denominations and Christian Councils.

Development takes place in two areas, urban and rural, but these are essentially linked and inter-dependent. The Church's concern in development is to make society truly human. The Church should cooperate with the government in the planning of development schemes in an effort to bring

about social justice. It is essential, too, that churches make a careful assessment of government development plans so that the resources of the churches can be used to maximum effect in complementing these other resources.

Rural Areas

In Africa, at least 90% of people live in rural areas. Improved agriculture is the base of national development in most countries. Governments recognize the urgency of carrying out an agricultural revolution by improved methods of village farming and by major development schemes. In every way possible and at every level, the Church must study, understand and actively participate in this revolution in rural society. The primary concern of the churches should be for a higher quality of life in rural areas. We need to encourage respect for manual labour. Everything must be done to make rural life economically rewarding and socially desirable. Our churches are in a unique position to participate in rural development, because of the strength of the churches in rural areas. In some countries they may assist in modifying 'elitist educational systems' with an emphasis on the 'arts' to systems that give agriculture and crafts a rightful place. The churches are also in a position to contribute to supplying the greatest need—trained, concerned local leadership in community development.

Urban Areas

In urban areas we recognize that the surge (not drift) to the towns in Africa is part of a world-wide phenomenon and part of the technological age. The Church must recognize this as something for long-term planning. The Church must seek to be in communication with the new top-level leadership in the cities which is facing new problems requiring new answers.

People in the cities find themselves in new social, economic and employment groupings which cannot be adequately ministered to by the parish system alone. New, full-time ministries must be developed, while at the same time the parish enlarges its involvement in service.

The Church's Prophetic Ministry and its task of reconciliation in Africa

There are many reasons for conflict in Africa, but some of these are caused by artificial boundaries set by colonial powers, tribalism and racial differences.

The Church is commissioned by God, among other things, to minister in his name as his agent of reconciliation in tensions and conflict. We should like to emphasize our common heritage as children of God in Jesus Christ. All men are made in God's image and are equal before God (Gen. 1 and 2; Rom. 5; Eph. 2-14; Gal. 3:28).

There is cause for respect for the many African governments that have managed to achieve a considerable measure of fulfilment of their people's aspirations for freedom and democracy. However, the number of *coups d'etat* that occur must be considered as symptomatic of real problems in the

body politic. Among the causes is the frustration of people whose enthusiasm for their new freedom has been crushed by new forms of authoritarian rule, internal corruption and nepotism, and external influences in support of foreign interests. The churches must work for a stable and just society and should encourage the nations to follow constitutional means of achieving mature democracy.

In the social, political and economic conditions of new nations, tensions are inevitable, but the cost to human life when order breaks down is tragic, as seen in areas of violent conflict today.

It must be recognized that, although the gospel speaks to all men, there is a profound Christian concern for the oppressed and for those who are at the mercy of the powerful. Christians must be peacemakers. They must examine and act to remove the causes of violence, as well as endeavour to bring together in peaceful negotiations those who are in conflict. The churches must take care not to become wrongly identified with one side.

While it is not the task of Christians to advocate violence, violence sometimes becomes almost inevitable, for example when people are subjected to violent aggression or where peaceful means of preventing oppression have failed. In the tragic conditions of violent oppression and conflict, Christian love and compassion must extend to both sides. Christians must have a fundamental concern for human well-being and not allow lesser loyalties such as race, tribe or nation to divert them from their true responsibilities.

Refugees in Africa

1. We note with extreme concern the plight of thousands of persons who have been forced to flee their homes on this continent and have become 'strangers' in conditions of extreme hardship.
2. We note with deep appreciation the assistance which such humanitarian organizations as the United Nations High Commission for Refugees and governments provide to the refugees. In addition, we note with appreciation the support and assistance in finance and personnel which Christians and churches around the world make available to refugees, through the World Council of Churches and the AACC.
3. We wish to express our gratitude to the Ecumenical Programme for Emergency Action in Africa for the work done in settling refugees and in initiating projects which help to bring new life to the distressed.
4. We warmly welcome the news of the unanimous ratification by the Sixth Summit Conference of the OAU Convention on specific aspects of African refugee problems, and we urge all member states to implement the provisions embodied in the convention in a humanitarian manner, in the interests of our suffering brothers, in accordance with other such provisions contained in the UN Convention on Refugees.

5. We are aware that there is a danger that nations and churches might accept the refugee situation and acquiesce in factors which create the situation. Therefore, we urge both churches and states to be vigilant and work tirelessly for the removal of such factors.
6. We call upon member churches and associated bodies to make continued vigorous efforts, at the highest national level, to effect policies with regard to the settlement of refugees.

Recommendations of the Assembly

1 Development

Principles

- (a) Individually and together, at local and national levels, the churches should work out a positive attitude to development and a pattern for their participation in development. The churches should make research into economic relationships and new ethics of development, leading to the creation of a positive attitude among Christians facing political and economic problems.
- (b) To be most effective, participation should be ecumenical, including the Roman Catholics where possible.
- (c) To make the best use of the human and material resources of the churches, a careful study of governments' national and local development plans is required. In participation, the maximum integration in such plans should be sought. The Church should use its resources as a complement to those of others.

Training for Development

- (a) The training and orientation of pastors and theological students should be augmented in the field of development.
- (b) Education in schools should include an emphasis on the importance of development.
- (c) The churches should provide training courses for new urban ministries.
- (d) The Church should assume particular responsibility for awakening the consciences of young people to the challenge of development and for enabling them to play their full part.
- (e) We should encourage Christians to participate actively in political parties, trade unions and other organizations while guarding against the Church taking a partisan stand in politics.
- (f) We should use modern techniques of communication to help form public opinion about development and to inform people of the thinking of the Church.

The Churches' Involvement in Development

- (a) The churches should collaborate with secular agencies in seminars on urban development.
- (b) Service projects must be sponsored in crowded urban areas.

- (c) In rural areas the churches should be involved wherever possible in community development, homecraft and home improvement, agricultural extension and the provision of improved services such as water, health, roads and trade.
- (d) The churches may help to create farms or cooperatives and other collective enterprises which help change the economic structure in favour of the underprivileged.
- (e) We should particularly try to establish pilot projects to improve rural life and make it more attractive.

National/Regional Planning for Development

- (a) The churches and councils should create developments divisions on the national level and enlist the aid of technically competent people.
- (b) The Church in Africa should consider its responsibilities in helping the churches in the developed world to recognize the most constructive contribution to be made by them in development and to ensure that increasingly Inter-Church Aid support funds be undesignated.
- (c) The churches in Africa should consider the possibility of working jointly with the United Nations and its agencies, particularly the Economic Commission for Africa, and the Africa Development Bank.
- (d) To ensure the continuation of the service ministry carried on by EPEAA, the AACC is urged to form a Development Division to consist of:
 - (i) a rural development division
 - (ii) an urban service division
 - (iii) a refugee division

The five years experience of EPEAA should be used as the basis of the future structuring of this division, the divisions of which would of necessity be linked. The Commission should serve the churches and National Christian Councils in their mission and service by providing expert advice, by encouraging new thinking and projects. The Commission should serve donor agencies by assessing the validity and priority of development projects and by processing them.

The Commission should encourage churches in Africa to contribute to development programmes both within the continent and beyond.

It would be hoped that some unallocated funds be available to the Commission for seeding projects and assisting with challenges that suddenly arise in the development field.

The Churches' Ministry of reconciliation

- (a) The Church must reject every form of racism and race discrimination, educate its members to full Christian integrity in their behaviour in race relations, to help to defend oppressed or threatened groups, and to help ruling groups to respond creatively to the impatience of the threatened in their struggle for justice.

- (b) The churches should recognize their responsibilities for guidance, counsel and encouragement to those who wield great powers in our national societies.
- (c) The Church must develop means of exercising its responsibilities to speak and advise on social and political matters.
- (d) It is recommended that the AACC accept the responsibility for collecting and spreading information about what has been done by churches and NCCs in the field of reconciliation.
- (e) The AACC should assist and closely cooperate with NCCs and churches in meeting the challenges that arise in situations of conflict and tension.

Ministry to Refugees

We call upon all Christians and churches in Africa to assist refugees and displaced persons in the following ways:

- (a) finding sponsors and jobs for them in the areas in which they settle
- (b) providing assistance for those without employment
- (c) assisting in making travel arrangements
- (d) assisting with travel documents and permits
- (e) intervening on behalf of refugees in citizenship matters
- (f) offering school places and/or paying school fees for refugee students
- (g) standing beside the refugee until he becomes a responsible and productive member of his new community
- (h) providing pastoral care
- (i) We appeal to member churches to set aside one week of each year during which the needs of refugees will be brought before the Church and the general public and funds will be raised for assistance with refugee programmes. This week should include special services of prayer for the refugees and the work among them.

2 WORKING WITH CHRIST IN THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION

I. Definition of the Problem

1. In the contributions to the Assembly of Messrs. Eteki-Mboumoua, Dickson, Adegbola and Archbishop Amissah (Roman Catholic observer), as in the discussions in groups, certain ideas, namely (a) that of a criticism of our present styles of life and of self-expression and (b) that of a search for new ways of expressing ourselves which take into account the evolution of societies and, above all, of ways of thinking in African and Malagasy situations and cultures, were seen to be indispensable to the effectiveness of our witness on the one hand and to our contribution to the development of theological thought and of universal civilisation on the other hand.

2. As churches we assert that our point of departure is and must be the search for a common theological expression which allows us all, denominations, confessions, independent churches, to proclaim a clear and intelligible message.

3. That is why we discussed in turn:

towards an expression of African theology: a follow-up of the Ibadan Consultation 1966;

the influence of traditional religions, Islam and Christian faith;

the search for African liturgical forms and methods of artistic expression and their use in communicating the message of the Gospel;

education and Christian education; mass media and communications.

II. Towards a Theological Expression. A follow-up of the Consultation of African Theologians, Ibadan, 1966.

4. In discussing this topic, the group tried to give answers to the following three questions:

(a) What is African theology?

(b) What has been done since the Ibadan Consultation?

(c) What must be done between now and the next AACC Assembly?

A. African Theology

5. Since African theology is still in its early stages of development, it is impossible to offer an exhaustive definition now. The following is only a tentative one.

6. By African theology we mean a theology which is based on the Biblical Faith and speaks to the African 'soul' (or is relevant to Africa). It is expressed in categories of thought which arise out of the philosophy of the African people. This does not necessarily mean that it is narrow in outlook. To speak of African theology involves formulating clearly a

Christian attitude to other religions. It must be pointed out that the emphasis is basically on *Christian* theology, which could be expressed through African thinking and culture.

7. In changing Africa many people are engaged in trying to rediscover or capture the 'soul' of Africa. The Church has a duty to study the best method of helping to create the 'new' man and community of Africa. Hence, the problem of working out an African theological expression is urgent.

8. It will be helpful if some African theologians could do their theologizing first and foremost in their own mother tongue. This would ensure that their thought processes are drawn from an African heritage and that they are communicating directly to the heart of an African audience. Such theological writings can later be translated into more widely used languages such as English and French. Wherever the writing is done in English and French simplicity of expression should be aimed at as much as possible in order to ensure comprehension by readers in Africa.

B. What has been done since the Ibadan Consultation?

9. The contributions which were made by eminent African theologians at Ibadan have been published as a book in both English and French: *Biblical Revelation and African Beliefs* and *Pour une Théologie Africaine*.

C. What must be done between now and the next Assembly of the AACC?

1. Guiding Principles

10. Seeing that African theology is still a new field, our Assembly must recommend some guiding principles to African theologians. Here are some suggestions:

- (i) Christ must be at the centre of this theology. Hence a sound knowledge of the biblical faith should be encouraged through familiarity with the Biblical languages. This will reduce dependence on commentaries written for non-African situations.
- (ii) 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.
- (iii) The theologians should make an effort to use more African philosophy (thought) and less hellenistic philosophy.
- (iv) There ought to be a dialogue between African theologians and anthropologists.
- (v) Pastoral theology, biblical studies and systematic theology should relate to one another.
- (vi) 'African theology' should not be a syncretism, though the fear of this should not stop us from further research.

2. The Assembly must say clearly what we must study and explore, as for example:

11. Examine the available writings on African humanism and socialism

from a theological point of view, so that African theology can maintain a dialogue with these spokesmen of the new Africa.

3. Different possibilities of promoting African theological expression.

12. (i) Curricula of seminaries and theological colleges should reflect the current concern for African theological thinking. For example, some colleges include in their programme, among other subjects, the following:

a general introduction to religion
a comparative study of religions
primal religions
Islam and anthropology

- (ii) There should be a constant dialogue with independent church movements and also revivalistic movements which operate within the established churches.
- (iii) All the members of the churches should participate in the new thinking.
- (iv) Church union groups should also study together the question of African theology with a view to making use of the insights already gained, where possible.
- (v) The AACC should interest university departments of religious studies in the possibility of starting a dialogue with Black American Christian theologians who are themselves examining the relevance of traditional theological concepts.
- (vi) The Assembly should recommend that all churches should read and study 'Biblical Revelation and African Beliefs' (*Pour une Theologie Africaine*) and send their reactions to the editors/authors and to the officer of the AACC in charge of the follow-up of the 1966 consultation during the post-Abidjan period.
- (vii) Some of the relevant current pastoral theologizing which is being done orally should be documented and made available to a wider audience for appreciation and criticism.
- (viii) The AACC should help compile a full bibliography of what is available in African theological writing (in books and in journals) and also what the Afro-American theologians in the USA are now producing as they try to seek their own identity as black people.

13. Recommendation

In conclusion: The Section recommends that the Assembly provides a place for full-time staff in the structure of the AACC to do research in the field of African theology to stimulate African theological thinkers and to spread in our churches and abroad the results of study and research in this area.

III. Traditional Religions, The Islam and Christian Faiths

14. We have noted with regret that our churches have at their disposal too few researchers or experts in the study of traditional religions. On the other hand, they are interested in Islam with which some are trying to enter into dialogue.

15. Islam does indeed enjoy incontestable prestige in some African countries. Islam is attractive for the following reasons, among others:

the simplicity of its creed

its social status (style of clothing, community of all believers)

the preciseness of its religious duties which gives to the faithful the certainty that they have done God's will

polygamy and the superiority of the man over the woman and lastly, Islam is held to be an African religion, with almost no foreign missionaries, which tolerates African traditions.

16. On the other hand, many young people, mainly among the educated, react to the inability of Islam to adapt itself to modern scientific ideas, to its authoritarian teaching, against the little involvement in social action and to the status it accords to women.

17. Believing it to be urgent that the Church pay more attention to the encounter with Islam, our group requests the intensification of the work of 'Islam in Africa Project'.

Special attention should be paid:

- (i) to situations where the Christian/Muslim encounter has delicate political implications;
- (ii) to the question of education, especially with regard to marriages between Christians and Muslims; and
- (iii) to the promotion of a true dialogue and a movement towards African theological expression.

18. We have not only to *hope* that our dialogue with Muslims will produce conversions. If we want a *true* dialogue, we have to be prepared for our own knowledge of God to be deepened by our encounter with Muslims. We believe that Christ is at work in this deepening of the faith of Muslims and Christians, although we must not minimise the fundamental differences between Muslim and Christian ideas of God and although we still hope that they may one day confess Jesus Christ as Lord.

IV. The search for African liturgical forms and methods of artistic expression and their use in the communication of the Message of the Gospel

19. If the message of the Gospel is to be better understood, it must be proclaimed to each country and to each generation in terms of its own culture.

20. The search for cultural and liturgical forms through which we can express our Christian faith must go on in all fields of Church life in Africa: worship: praise and prayers, ways of preaching the Gospel, the offering, the administration of the sacraments etc.

the pastoral acts: marriages, funerals etc.

social service: schools (adaptation of curricula), medical work, artistic, economic and social development programmes.

21. We must avoid an exaggerated adaptation which would run the risk of reintroducing into Christian Worship certain 'pagan' elements. It is not a question of 'Africanizing' the Church but of transmitting the call of God in Africa so as to lead Africans to the obedience of the Christian faith. It is, after all, a call to conversion that is addressed to every people and to every race.

22. We encourage the use in worship of traditional musical instruments (the tom-tom, the drum and the balafon etc.) and the development of African art and its use in the communication of the message of the Gospel.

23. *Recommendation:* We recommend that the churches in Africa, either through an AACC committee for theological research or through our theological colleges, with the collaboration of specialists, prepare a programme of education in this field.

V. Education and Christian Education

24. We heard a report from the Education Secretary, Rev. Ayivi, on the evolution of the thinking and action of the AACC and of its member churches in the realms of education and Christian education. In particular, we studied and discussed the recommendations of consultations at Legon (March 1968) and Cotonou (February 1969) as well as those of the Consultation on the Christian Ministry in the Academic World, organized by AACC and WSCF at Accra in 1966.

25. *Recommendations:* We recommend:

- (i) that the AACC Department of Education and Christian Education, and its member churches, make known and discuss the recommendations of the consultations mentioned above;
- (ii) that those in responsible positions at all levels, in dealing with questions of Christian education, keep in mind the need for adequate teaching of schoolmasters (e.g. Immanuel College Centre, Ibadan, for English-speakers);
- (iii) that in all these areas the churches' action should be ecumenical to witness our unity in Christ;
- (iv) and that to stand up to developments and the problems of the academic world, closer working relationship should be established between AACC and WSCF.

VI. Mass Media

26. The means of communication (or mass media) play a considerable part in African society today. Books (the Bible) have created a new man, the press, radio cinema and now television influence and modify the life of people and groups.

27. The churches have always used the different means of communication, at their disposal, but they have not always used them to the best advantage, through lack of knowledge of the techniques of diffusion and of their

out-reach and by mistrust of these new methods, considered as being secular.

28. The growing importance of the mass media, which is a sociological phenomenon, as well as a technical and cultural one, should encourage the churches to engage in new thinking which is both inventive and audacious. This report, which is a group document, is a pressing invitation to a better understanding of this question.

29. The word of God speaks to all men, in order to make new men. The churches must also take into consideration all aspects of human life and must participate actively in the search for an African expression of culture.

30. The creation of specialist organisations during the last ten years indicates a decisive step forward: Kitwe and Nairobi for training; RVOG at Addis Ababa, the Evangelical Literature Centre at Yaounde and Telestar at Kinshasa for production. Churches should use to the full these instruments which have been put at their disposal.

31. In order to work with Christ in Africa today in the realm of the cultural revolution, the group makes the following proposals:

- (i) Courses in mass media should be given regularly in *theological colleges and faculties*, on both the sociological and technical levels; articles, interviews, debates, meditations etc.
- (ii) It is necessary to *set apart immediately people for full-timework in communications* (men or women, laymen or ministers). It is easy to justify the creation of such a post if one lists the tasks which can be given to this specialised ministry; the editing of a new bulletin, articles for the local press, radio programmes, visits to parishes, public relations, etc.
- (iii) In order to accomplish this, the creation of a training centre for French-speaking Africa is necessary and urgent, as exists already in English-speaking Africa. To train versatile people, the various means of communication must be taught: journalism, literature, radio, T.V.
- (iv) The creation of press services in English and French for the use of existing papers is just as urgent. We recommend that the 'Christian Features Service' project, worked out by the Africa Literature Centre at Kitwe, be put into practice immediately (for the English-speaking countries). This project should be officially sponsored by the AACC.
- (v) The exchange of ideas, persons and programmes must be developed (particularly for T.V.). A better coordination is necessary, especially for big organisations.
- (vi) The Church is also responsible for the society in which she lives. She must help those who receive the information to choose, appreciate, criticise and profit by books, newspapers, films and programmes. This effort must be made especially in the youth movements. We recommend the *training* of organisers and the creation of *cultural centres*.
- (vii) Finally, it seems to us essential that our churches conceive of new forms of unselfish service for development, in collaboration, according to circumstances, with private and government organisations.

3 WORKING WITH CHRIST FOR THE RENEWAL OF THE CHURCH

Church unity and church renewal belong together as the work of the Holy Spirit. Through what is happening in our society, God is moving us at this time of our African history to seek unity—not for its own sake but for mission—and to search for renewal of the church structures and life for the realisation of her God-given task in the world. Therefore interconfessional dialogue should be kept open and new ways should be explored to establish contact and fellowship and, whenever possible, churches should endeavour to engage in joint action.

The main concerns of this Section will be discussed under the following headings:

I. The Meaning of Mission

A. The mission about which we read in the Bible is God's mission. By this we understand that God has a purpose for the world and that He is seeking to accomplish this purpose. We understand what He is doing today as we see Him at work in Old Testament history with its prophetic concern for peace, justice and liberation; as we see Him at work in Jesus Christ who becomes both suffering servant and Lord of the world and who is at work today by the power of the Holy Spirit both in the Church and in the world.

B. The Church has received the Lord's command to go into the whole world proclaiming salvation through the preaching of the Word. It is also called to respond to God's mission by identifying particularly with the poor, the oppressed, the hungry, the exploited and all in need. In doing this, the Church takes on the role of Christ, enters into his suffering and becomes the servant of man. Moreover, it always looks beyond itself to the Lord who is to come and thereby lives in hope and anticipation of what God will surely do.

II. The Search For Unity

What are the present trends in Church union negotiations? What are the values and consequences, particularly in local situations, of membership in NCCs, AACC, WCC?

To create unity is possible, since it is God's will. However, in the course of our search for unity, we have been confronted with numerous difficulties which still exist: proselytism, the validity of ordination, the validity of baptism, etc. (In addition to these theological difficulties, there are also certain practical difficulties.) Nevertheless, we feel a real desire for unity on the part of a great majority of churches. In many African countries negotia-

tions for unity are under way. Confessional differences and rivalry between churches is gradually dying out. The success of these attempts varies according to regions. In certain countries concrete results have been realised which are encouraging. To cite some examples:

In Kenya and Tanzania a common liturgy and common catechism have already been accepted by the different churches.

In the Sudan there exists already a uniform manual for christian education.

In Malawi there are common programmes for the training of ministers and laymen.

In Zambia more and more ministers' fraternals are gathering together ministers and catholic priests to discuss together the work of their ministry. These results may seem unimportant and superficial. They reflect however today's trend: co-operation in practical, concrete action precedes real negotiations for unity.

Let us note that pulpit exchanges between Catholics and Protestants are becoming more and more frequent.

Ministers of non-episcopal churches have been invited to share in laying hands on ordinands of episcopal churches.

After the efforts towards union in Nigeria collapsed in 1965, we realised that it takes much time to unite and that it is first necessary to undertake basic education and information.

This is why official inauguration in Ghana has been postponed from 1969 to 1971.

It is realised that this will be a long task; it is necessary to accustom the 'grass roots' level to the practical acts which have been mentioned above.

The possibility of membership and participation in a wider community such as a National Christian Council, the AACC and the WCC is of inestimable value. In such bodies, we learn to respect the different gifts which God has given us and in this way to move gradually towards the unity of His Church.

This fellowship is the expression of a universal movement of the Body of Christ. We think that 'on certain special occasions and under proper ecclesiastical supervision, intercommunion (eucharistic) is to be permitted:

- (a) as a sign of unity already achieved, and
- (b) as a means of achieving the grace of further and more intimate and more realistic unity'.

To avoid any possible confusion, it would be advisable for NCCs, the AACC and the WCC to work in conjunction. Nevertheless, local organisations should remain as autonomous as possible, while coming to share as fully and responsibly as possible in the work of great organisations like the AACC.

The search for church unity should be considered very seriously, for it is a response to God's will to heal our divisions and so carry out our mission.

Proposal

We ask the AACC to make a special study of baptism and the eucharist, with a view to dialogue and collaboration with the Roman Catholic Church.

III. Relationships with Independent Churches, Conservative Evangelicals and the Roman Catholic Church

It would be false to assume a self-righteous or judgemental attitude towards those churches which stand outside the various conciliar organisations which express a still fragmented and imperfect form of the ecumenical movement. It must also be pointed out that terms and labels used for such churches are inadequate and need re-definition. By all means those churches should be viewed, not through stereotyped forms, but as they would see themselves to be. The following points are proposed as guidelines for the search for more creative interconfessional relationships in the post-Abidjan period:

A. *Relationships with African independent churches*

The proliferation of African independent churches in the last fifty years could be described as a movement of both schism and renewal. It is schism because of the multiplicity of divisions taking place, splitting the established churches as well as dividing the newly separated groups. Nevertheless, it is renewal for it challenges the historic churches to examine their own life and open themselves to the possibility of learning from the independent churches what it means to root the Gospel in the needs of particular African communities.

There are also indications that many of these churches are now ready to reconverge with the main stream of Christianity on the basis of a re-discovered identity. A few have applied for membership in AACC and the WCC, and some are already members of national christian councils.

Proposals

In view of the new trends, we recommend that the AACC:

- (a) should set up within its structures a secretariat on relations with the independent churches
- (b) establish and publish the criteria for membership. (The full text follows.)

Suggested criteria for membership of independent churches in the AACC:

1. Subscription to the basis of the AACC.
2. Size. A church should be growing, keep reliable records of communicant membership and total constituency and in general have at least 5,000 communicant members.
3. Stability in organisation of congregations and provision of a ministry for them.
4. Universality. The church should be seeking to transcend loyalties of tribe, race, nation or culture and be willing to be taught by Christians of other traditions.

It is recommended that in order to foster creative relationships with independent churches the AACC appoint secretaries for that purpose within the appropriate commission. These secretaries will:

- (a) promote a dialogue at local and national levels between independent churches and local churches and christian councils and with the AACC, ecumenical and denominational agencies overseas;
- (b) assist independent churches with leadership training when requested;
- (c) encourage national christian councils to involve independent churches in joint strategies for church and national development;
- (d) keep in touch with research institutes, faculties of theology, departments of religious studies and others interested in the study of independent church movements and, where necessary, encourage particular enquiries;
- (e) provide information to overseas agencies seeking to relate intelligently to the independent churches.

Staff and finance

For this two secretaries and an adequate budget would be needed. The first appointment should be made in 1970 and should be of a person with a training in theology and if possible in African sociology, with gifts of sensitivity and the ability to communicate with the independent churches and the historic churches. He should be ordained, already in contact with the independent churches and speaking both French and English if possible. The second stage in 1971 would be the appointment of a second secretary with similar qualifications but with emphasis on research and analytical skills.

B. Relationships with Evangelical conservatives

The spectrum within which such churches fall ranges between two extremes. At the one end are those who, while critical of the ecumenical movement and its present conciliar expressions, are still open to dialogue and fellowship with member churches of national christian councils; at the other are those whose identity is based upon the constant attack on other churches. Fruitful relationships with these churches will have to be developed of an initiative on the part of the leadership of churches of the ecumenical community. Reconciliation will take place only to the extent to which we are willing to be instruments of the Holy Spirit. However, the approach should vary according to the demands of each particular situation, but cutting across the whole range of relations.

- (1) At the top level, mission boards abroad should attempt to resolve their theological conflicts and to refrain from inflicting them upon the African situation.
- (2) Contacts with African leadership of these churches should be made by the AACC staff and General Committee.
- (3) National christian councils should play a vital role in the ecumenical education of their own constituencies, so as to prepare the ground for more creative relationships among the various churches on the national scene. Special attention should be paid to the grass-roots level.
- (4) At the student level, much good could be achieved not only by passing on basic ecumenical information, but also by involvement in joint action.

C. *Relationships with the Roman Catholic Church*

We note with thankfulness to God the active participation of four Roman Catholic official observers in the Second Assembly of the AACC as a sign of the radically changing situation in relationships since the Kampala Assembly and the Second Vatican Council. Of particular significance for the Assembly was the challenge contained in the message from the official observer Archbishop John Amissah of Ghana. We share his hope that 'with the coming into existence of the All Africa Episcopal Symposium, there will be more joint studies, joint efforts and closer collaboration between the AACC and the Symposium in the field of ecumenism, in the search for "African Theology" and in the field of christian renewal of Africa in the context of the contemporary social, economic and political life of our developing and beloved Africa.'

Proposals

This Assembly urges the General Secretariat of the AACC to develop contacts with responsible authorities of the All Africa Episcopal Symposium in order to determine those areas of collaboration which can realistically be initiated and promoted. Special attention should be given to the development of:

- (1) common projects of Christian witness and service in the social, economic and political life of African societies (for example through the assistance of SODEPAX);
- (2) ecumenical education of both the church leadership and the Christian masses, especially through lay training centres, pastoral institutes, theological seminaries and universities, including Christian organisations, campus ministries and departments of religious studies;
- (3) the search for liturgical renewal in the African context, for example, through the common celebration of church and national festivals.

We strongly recommend that African theologians, including Roman Catholics, study afresh the present theological, pastoral and disciplinary positions of the churches regarding the sharing of the eucharist.

IV. **Results could be realised by Joint Action in the Churches' Mission of Evangelisation and Service. New opportunities of Ministry.**

A. *The Basis*

Persuaded on the one hand that God has manifested his love for the world in Jesus Christ and, on the other hand, that the Church has the duty to shed abroad this love to all mankind, we ask ourselves the question how can we witness to this love if we remain divided, one against the other. If we seek out together the needs of those to whom we are sent and share together this knowledge, there is no doubt that our unity will, more and more take form. In our time, the Church must undertake a common action in the realms of evangelisation and of service.

B. *The Situation*

Joint action in the churches' mission of evangelisation and service will often meet with disagreement and difficulties, due to widespread suspicion that exists between conservative evangelical churches and churches with ecumenical relationships, ethnic and tribal tensions, racism and counter-racism, mutual ignorance and lack of understanding between the traditional churches and African independent churches. The fact that many of the African churches still work along the lines of confessional differences, territorial divisions, and the national distinctiveness of their respective missionary societies from the West, adds to the difficulties.

What must we do to break down the barriers which divide us? Activism will accomplish nothing. Before undertaking any such activity, we must seek to know what is the will of God concerning it. We of course cannot do this until we pray with repentance and humility for christian unity on the one hand and on the other that we dedicate ourselves to this unity and at the same time make every possible effort to pray together with those with whom we have not yet had fellowship. Only then will the Holy Spirit push us into cooperation.

But in order to come to a deeper mutual understanding, we must prepare our respective communities. Exchange pulpits, lay meetings and ministers' fraternals can help us greatly.

C. *The Task*

1. As a consequence of joint action in the field of *education*, we could hope for the following results—better selection of teaching staff, improvement in salaries and conditions of work, and coordination of the churches' contribution to education. Redundant schools would be eliminated, and buildings thus freed could be used for other activities, e.g. technical and vocational training which is much needed in Africa. By this, the churches would be much better geared to meet growing need for more and better education on all levels. Even where the churches haven't got their own schools, a chaplaincy programme should be planned and carried out jointly. The same would apply to university chaplaincy.

With regard to the many Africans studying in Europe and the USA, we should like to ask the AACC to see how their needs can be met. The annual meetings of African students at the John Knox Centre at Geneva do not in fact adequately meet this need.

Joint training of pastors and teachers has been rewarding and should be increased.

2. In the field of *medical work*, close cooperation and coordination are even more important, for it must be part of a wide plan which meets particular needs of a given region. Such a plan should go beyond, not only what is possible for a single church, but also the interests of that church. According to the local situation and the resources in personnel and finances available, we have to make a choice between fixed or mobile dispensaries or one or two well-equipped central hospitals with mobile dispensaries or a combination of these possibilities.

Evangelism is a difficult field of cooperation between some churches because it appears to many to be not simply a means of preaching the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ, but also of enlarging the membership of the individual denomination. But if Christ is the heart of the mission of the Church in the world, no one denomination can claim any group of non-Christians as its own.

The whole people of God are sent out. Therefore evangelistic teams should consist of people from all denominations working in the area concerned. It would be of great advantage if, as in Dahomey, such teams could work on an international basis.

Especially in urban industrial areas, work should be done by responsible interdenominational local committees, consisting of ministers and lay people. In the unevangelised rural areas converts should belong to the nearest church, while in urban areas a choice can be offered as to which denomination he may belong to.

Radio, television, literature, education in home and family life, specialised ministries in ports and industrial plants, work among youth in the growing cities, etc. call for a new approach and a united effort. This will lead to closer fellowship, creating the proper climate of awareness and desire for organic union.

We would appeal to the missionary societies and overseas churches to cooperate with—and not hinder—the local churches in their joint action for mission.

Proposal

We suggest to AACC to consider the publication of some periodical to transmit information on results already achieved and experiences won in joint action for mission. This could be a great help, encouragement and inspiration.

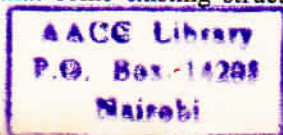
V. Structuring the Church for a New Age

A. *Mission is the Basis of Structure.*

1. By structure we mean the form which the Church has in the world.
2. A survey of the history of the Church indicates that time and time again the Church was restructured to meet new situations. At the same time, it is also clear that some structures became so entrenched that they determined 'mission' rather than vice versa. Today we are still largely confined to church structures which took their form during the middle ages in Europe.
3. Structuring the Church for today and more especially for tomorrow requires that we bear in mind the meaning of mission in a way that is both faithful to the biblical understanding of mission and related to the world in which we now live.

B. *New Structures*

1. As we examine present structures in the light of the above considerations, we see that some existing structures are valid for tomorrow, while





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others prevent the Church from fulfilling God's mission as it is defined in the Bible. That is why we must find new structures which will enable us to respond better to present-day needs and situations. Sometimes we shall be led to use the structures of the world, thereby showing that no structure has absolute or permanent value and that only the living faith and love of the people of God can help it to find the best structures.

2. It is God's people *as a whole* which is called to share in the Church's ministry, although part of this ministry is carried out by men who have been ordained to the ministry of the Word and sacraments. This particular ministry equips the community of faith, by enabling it to share fully in God's mission, in the service of the world.

3. Here we see the link between the community of faith and service of the world. The former exists only for the latter. This implies the involvement of the whole people of God which must be theologically trained so that it can share, in a full responsible way, in the life of the world.

4. At the same time, some ordained ministers and laymen need to be trained for *specialist ministries* within the structures of the world. This may require team ministries, tent-making or supplementary ministries and various other forms of ministries relevant to the contemporary world. But each of these needs to be related to a community of faith and worship.

5. *We ask the overseas missionary societies to mobilise their resources, of personnel as well as finances, for a common action in Africa, in the realms of evangelisation and service.*

6. *The Church should give closer attention to the Christian education of young children in primary schools.*

C. Administration

The administration of the Church must be understood in the same perspective, i.e. the Church should be on guard against a static conception of her mission and her structures, at the same time avoiding questionable actions and hasty decisions. Without wishing to underestimate administrative ability, what is more important, it would seem, is pastoral sensitivity, counselling, prophetic vision, the ability to deal with tensions in a creative manner within the Church.

Often the Church authorities seem more inclined to maintain the *status quo* than to move ahead, which inevitably leads to division between the leadership and those who are rightfully inspired to progress more rapidly.

D. Training the People of God

1. Those who make up the congregational life of the Church—ministers, laymen and women, young and old—need to be better equipped. A trained congregation or experimental group is a *sine qua non* for developing relevant structures. Training involves commitment and obedience to the Gospel as well as theological competence. Theological competence should not be narrowly conceived but understood as a ability to discern God's purpose and action in the world and how to relate to it. Furthermore, it is essential that the varied gifts of each Christian be utilised to the full which implies

amongst other things that those who are trained in disciplines other than theology have a particular contribution to make to the life and upbuilding of the Church in mission. Lay training is not to be understood as training simply to work in the Church but training for service in the world.

2. Much has been written about and experimented with in regard to theological education and lay training. The following points should be noted:

- (a) Theological education in seminaries seems to lack relevance in many instances. It would seem that the theological competence of the teachers needs to be complemented by greater understanding of the situation facing those they train, as well as a better grasp of educational method. It would seem that this implies the involvement of laymen and congregational groups in some of the sessions and seminars held at theological colleges.
- (b) Much more needs to be done about continuing the education of ordained ministers. Many ministers lose touch with any real theological encounter, and unless they are particularly gifted or charismatic tend to be absorbed into static structures and become part of the problem. Furthermore, church leaders often fail to understand younger ministers simply because they have lost touch with what is happening in theological thinking.
- (c) Lay training is imperative, and thinking on this subject as well as experience in many parts of the world is impressive. But much more time and energy needs to be expended in Africa. The teaching ministry of the local Church, the use of group dynamics, extension seminars from universities and programmed learning are all of vital significance. It is to be borne in mind that involvement is part of true Christian learning.

VI. Developing The Financial Resources of The Church

A. *The Church needs money for its own life, its various ministries and for service to others.*

1. The only basis for giving is the stewardship of the whole life. The Son of God gave his life fully and completely for the world. In response to Him, nothing less than the giving of ourselves and what we possess to Him and his ministry is called for. We have been 'bought', therefore we are already his.

2. The Church as the body of Christ needs to *maintain its life* for its own growth just as the human body needs to be fed, clothed and housed. The Church is maintained spiritually and also materially. The gifts offered by her members for the growth of the Church's life must be a *sacrifice* which is freely and joyfully made. It is this positive attitude which should replace the Church's negative attitude by which the rich and their wealth have so often been condemned.

3. While the Church needs to maintain her life, nonetheless she does not live for herself. The Church has received her Lord's command to go into

the world. In other words, she has as her mission to proclaim salvation in Jesus Christ through the preaching of the Word, through healing and through service to mankind. That is why the Christian's offering which is his response to God's grace also enables the Church to continue the mission of God in the world.

4. We note that much of the frontier work done by the Church is financed from abroad. While we see in this one aspect of the concern of one part of the Church for another, it is to be desired that churches should attain financial independence in all respects.

5. Voluntary work should be encouraged. Christians should learn to give of their energy and talents in God's service.

B. How to Develop the Financial Resources of the Church

1. It would seem that the first responsibility of the Church is to instruct its members in the meaning of the offering. This instruction is at the same time of a spiritual and practical nature. In the spiritual realm the Holy Spirit convinces the Christian that he is not subjected to a fiscal obligation but rather that he is invited to participate in the work of Christ in the world. In the practical realm, the Church must continually inform its members of its needs by the study of projects, of budgets and even of the planning in which leaders and other members of the Church should share. By this method decisions which are made will not seem to be imposed by the ecclesiastical hierarchy but as a result of the Church as a whole planning together.

It is equally important that the Church pay careful attention to the control and the administration of its financial resources in order to inspire the confidence of its members and to prove that the purposes for which funds were collected are realised.

Proposal

It is to be hoped that by the intermediary of the AACC there will be an exchange among the churches of information concerning financial campaigns which is one of the effective means of developing their financial resources.

2. The second task of the Church is to look for ways and means of raising funds, on the one hand according to biblical instructions, e.g. the tithe, harvest festivals, freewill offerings, regular pledges, etc.; and on the other hand according to the opportunities which arise, e.g. agricultural projects, commercial investments, etc.

Gifts and subsidies received from sister churches must be considered as help given in the context of the mutual interdependence of the churches.

3. The third task of the Church is continually to question its structure, e.g. by looking for new forms of ministry (lay service, part-time service, tent-making) or by adapting the church buildings to the real needs of the local community, in order that the Church might respond more adequately to the demands of its mission and at the same time to the situation in which it accomplishes its mission.

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