

THE AFM OF SOUTH AFRICA

Pastoral Letter

• 1st QUARTER 2018 •

THE APOSTOLIC FAITH MISSION OF SOUTH AFRICA NATIONAL OFFICE

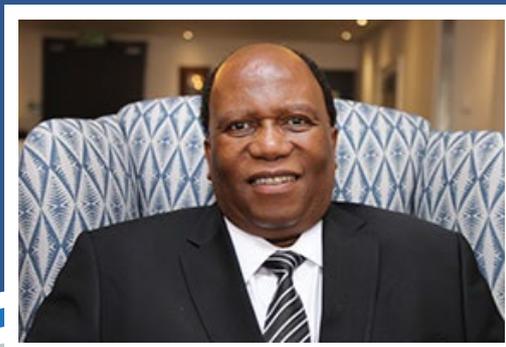
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Dear Colleague,

Greetings in Jesus' Name. As this year progresses I am constantly reminded of the AFM's precious and very specific calling – to win souls. It is our vision to see that every single member of the AFM claims his/her role as a local missionary in their community. Gone are the days where we had to travel to a foreign and distant country to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the lost. South Africa has become home to various foreign nationals. They can be reached with the Gospel within our reach, in our neighborhood, work places and places of entertainment. Every AFM member is a soul winner or Kingdom worker and has a responsibility to proclaim the Gospel there where they are – at work, within their families and local communities. Our role as pastors and leaders of the church is to create an assembly culture where members can grow, develop and be equipped as missionaries, Kingdom workers or modern-day Apostolic Agents. This precious calling is at the heart of our One AFM Game Plan.

In this Pastoral Letter we consider a few issues that affect the church's ability to reach and fulfill its calling: (i) Missionalty – traditional vs. new paradigm of missions, (ii) Leadership Succession Planning and (iii) Coaching as a Leadership Development tool and (iv) Language – a key to unlock understanding of the Game Plan.



MISSIONALITY – TRADITIONAL VS. NEW PARADIGM OF MISSIONS

Dr. Henri Weideman – General Secretary

A key part of the traditional paradigm of missions, sees an individual believer receiving a call from God and traveling to a far-away foreign country to preach the Gospel to unbelievers, in what is called the “mission field.” A “Mission’s Board or -Committee” then “adopts” this missionary, raises support and “sends” him/her out to do missions work. In this paradigm, mission is mainly the “work” or focus area of a department/committee and a few missionaries.



Times have changed, and we are now living in a new reality: People from all over the world are coming to our country, communities, and neighbourhoods to live and work. This is happening everywhere in the world. The “mission field” is now in our own houses, communities, places of learning and leisure and in our own workplaces. Make no mistake! God still calls people to go to other countries as missionaries, but He is also now calling us more than ever, to open our eyes and see the tremendous opportunities to share the Gospel right where we work and live!

“The “mission field” is now in our own houses, communities, places of learning and leisure and in our own workplaces.”

Did you know that England, a great Christian missionary-sending nation for centuries, now has more mosques than churches, and must itself be reached with the Gospel all over again! America with its 195 million unchurched people, has also become a new “mission field”. The people best positioned to reach them, are the Americans and British citizens themselves. The One AFM Game Plan is our strategic plan to transition the concept of mission in the AFM, from the traditional one into a new paradigm. The five drivers or focus areas of the One AFM Game Plan are critical in the implementation of this new paradigm.

It is therefore important that we understand the concept of being missional.

BEING MISSIONAL: In the past mission was regarded as a responsibility of a certain department, or group of individuals. Being missional means that mission is the daily task and calling of every believer. The basic premise is that all Christians should be involved in the fulfillment of Great Commission of Jesus (Matthew 28:19-20). Not only through “official” ministries and structures, but as part of our everyday life style.

“...all Christians should be involved in the fulfillment of Great Commission of Jesus (Matthew 28:19-20).”

Being missional includes embracing the thinking, behaviour, and practices of a missionary, in order to reach others with the message of the Gospel. “Missionality” is a term used by Christians to

MISSIONALITY – TRADITIONAL VS. NEW PARADIGM OF MISSIONS cont.

describe this missionary lifestyle. Jesus said: "As the Father has sent Me, I am sending you" (John 20:21).

The Church (every Christian) is sent into the world to continue that which Jesus came to do - in the power of the same Spirit, reconciling people to God (Lesslie Newbigin, The Gospel in a Pluralist Society, Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1989, 230).



So, for a missional church it is not about building a "department" that does missions, but about empowering all assembly members with a missional mindset and practical know-how: That of being an agent of God's mission to the world. The church as a whole and individual believers specifically, are the instruments of this mission. The Church is not supposed to be an end in itself; God has a mission that goes beyond the Church. There is church because there is a God-given mission, not the other way around. Mission in its widest sense, is what the church is there for.

"..empowering all assembly members with a missional mindset.."

Those who belong to Jesus are called, here and now, in the power of the Spirit, to be agents of that putting-to-rights purpose (N. T. Wright, Simply Christian, Harper San Francisco, 2006, 201, 204).

BEING SENT: *Jesus was the first apostle. Sent by his Father. He, in turn, sent the Twelve. They went to people who would then take the Gospel to the rest of the world. Whoever received it would understand that they, too, had been sent. With the Gospel being what it is, the church as bearer of the Gospel is bound to be Apostolic (Jim Petersen and Mike Shamy, The Insider, NavPress, 2003, 83).*

"We are all missionaries sent into our world."

As missionaries sent by Jesus, every Christian must learn to live a life that actually impacts our surrounding culture and all spheres of the society that we live in. We should be doing this, not by "preaching" to the people around us, but by engaging them - firstly through our own way of living, secondly by sharing our (Christian) values and thirdly, by demonstrating and talking about the difference that Jesus made in our own lives. St Francis Assisi once said: *"It is no use walking anywhere to preach unless our walking is our preaching"*. Every disciple/follower of Christ should strive to be an agent, a representative of the kingdom of God and endeavor to carry the mission of God into every sphere of his/her life. We are all missionaries sent into our world.

We are all called to go - even if it is only to the next room, or the next block. (Thomas Hale, On Being a Missionary, p 6).

LEADERSHIP SUCCESSION PLANNING

Past. M.G. Mahlobo – President

The matter of succession is provided for in our church's constitution as perpetual (continuous) legal succession. This phrase recurs with regard to the legal status of the following structures: Local Assembly, Regional Leadership Forum and the specialized ministries which are referred to as Departments. Perpetual legal succession in this instance, has a reference to the continuation of the church's existence despite leadership vacancy that may be due to natural attrition or any other form of exit.

In the local Assembly, pastors are called and utilized in terms of service agreements between them and their respective local assemblies. Succession becomes an issue when such a pastor is no longer available to serve them for whatever reasons. Members of the local Assembly's governing structures are elected during the church's election year. When it comes to the Regional, National and Departments' structures, election year is the interval at which new leadership is elected. Currently this happens every four years. The next election year in the AFM is 2020.

“How should we understand the concept of succession planning?”

Elections unleash a lot of emotions. Some of these emotions are destructive and have the potential to undermine and compromise interpersonal relationships. On the other hand, there is no clear job descriptions for those elected into leadership, especially at Regional and at National structures of the church.

How should we understand the concept of succession planning? Succession planning is a three-fold process. It includes leadership identification, leadership development and leadership retention.

LEADERSHIP IDENTIFICATION: Some of the current challenges when it comes to leadership succession, are a lack of adequate experience orientation, transitional mechanisms and a lack of clarity when it comes to job-descriptions. It is becoming evident that most of the General Business Meeting (GBM) delegates are not sure about who is available when it comes to election of the National Office Bearers of the church. This becomes intensified when those that have been in the leadership for a long time are no longer eligible or available for election.

“We must always bear in mind that those appointed to lead the church are leading a church organisation that is multiracial, multilingual, multicultural and of course that the church has a history of 110 years.”

Identifying leaders without guidelines, leads to a state uncertainty and “caucusing”. We need to find a way of identifying potential leaders through open discussions. We need to relook the eligibility requirements for potential candidates. These requirements must include skill, status and



LEADERSHIP SUCCESSION PLANNING cont.

experience. We must always bear in mind that those appointed to lead the church are leading a church organisation that is multiracial, multilingual, multicultural and of course that the church has a history of 110 years.

We also need to consider transitional mechanisms. Such mechanisms must ensure that there are exit reports prepared and handed over to the successors. They must also ensure that the newly appointed leaders are given ample time to comply with their contractual obligations, where necessary.



“While current theological training produce pastors who are doing well, it must be stated that it does not necessarily produce leaders.”

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT: If we agree that leadership succession includes leadership development, it is essential that the National Leadership Forum (NLF) be requested to formulate a leadership development framework. While current theological training produce pastors who are doing well, it must be stated that it does not necessarily produce leaders.

A leadership development framework must take into cognizance the diversity aspect of our church organisation and the impact of information technology, just to mention a few of the ingredients.

LEADERSHIP RETENTION: The NLF will be requested to also look at strategies for leadership retention. It is important that the church retain its leadership. The above matters have been discussed by the NLF and are currently being presented to the Regional Committees and Local Assemblies' leadership during the NOB Regional Empowerment visits. Written inputs are received from participants. I and the Deputy President are further canvassing these matters with Regional Leaders and the church's National Departments' Leaders.

“The current discussions on succession planning may culminate in the proposal for constitutional amendments to be considered by the 2018 AFM General Business Meeting.”

The current discussions on succession planning may culminate in the proposal for constitutional amendments to be considered by the 2018 AFM General Business Meeting. It is my view that we need to consult broadly with the church before amendments to the constitution are presented to the GBM for action. In this regard I solicit your prayers for God's guidance. You are also welcome to send your input via e-mail to the General Secretary at henri@afm-ags.org.

LANGUAGE – A KEY TO UNLOCK UNDERSTANDING OF THE GAME PLAN

Past. M.G. Mahlobo – President



As we travel through the various provinces on our annual NOB Regional Empowerment Workshops we are blessed with many informal conversations with our pastors, governing body members, department leaders and other leaders functioning in the church. These informal discussions, together with the feedback we receive through a formal survey or questionnaire, makes us aware of the needs, challenges and questions our leaders have.

With regards to Game Plan implementation, the issue of language is still being raised. We want to make sure that all leaders are aware of the fact that the Game Plan is available in 4 different languages:

- English
- Afrikaans
- isiZulu
- Sesotho

The AFM produced articles and video clips in 4 languages to explain missionality and its drivers. If you were not aware of this fact, I want to encourage you to visit the AFM website to view and download these resources. There is also a Game Plan DVD resource that can be ordered from the AFM National Office. All the relevant link are provided below:

Read more about the Game Plan process and progress:

<http://afm-ags.org/category/one-afm-game-plan/>

Learn more about each Game Plan driver by selecting the language of your choice:

<http://afm-ags.org/leading-the-afm/one-afm-game-plan/>

Order the Game Plan DVD from the National Office:

<http://afm-ags.org/leading-the-afm/order-resources/>

COACHING AS A LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TOOL

Dr. Henri Weideman – General Secretary

WHY COACHING? One of the core values of the AFM is relationships - genuine and edifying (enriching) relationships between believers, pastors, leaders and assemblies. It is no longer possible in today's context to keep others at an arms-length away from us, trying to avoid an in-depth meaningful relationship. True leaders and disciples are produced when individuals are led to spiritual and emotional maturity through relationship. Coaching (producing quality relationships) is an essential tool in our journey to fulfil our missional calling.



“True leaders and disciples are produced when individuals are led to spiritual and emotional maturity through relationship.”

In 2017 the National Leadership Forum (NLF) members received training in coaching and during the 2018 NOB visits to the regions and attendees were exposed to the basic elements of coaching, as well the GROW coaching model. Coaching is a form of development in which a person called a coach,

supports a coachee, in achieving a specific personal or professional goal by providing guidance, training and advice. Coaching ideally assists a person to find his/her own solutions, rather than prescribing a solution from the coach's viewpoint.

In short, the basic elements of coaching are the following:

1. The coaching attitude: In the first-place coaching is about an attitude that believes in the potential of every individual and wants to add real value to the life of others. This means that a person interested in coaching, should have a heart for other people and strive to bring out the best in the coachee.

2. Relationship and trust: An important part of the coaching relationship is the building of trust, as well as the maintenance of authentic rapport, sincerity and humor between the coach and coachee.

3. Asking questions: Powerful questions form the foundation of effective coaching. The quality of the questions that a coach puts to his/her coachee, determines the quality of the coaching. Questions should be open ended and avoids being judgmental or advice-oriented. The right questions will create buy-in and release solutions.

4. Listening & intuition (Discernment): Second in importance to asking great questions, is to really listen with the aim to understand. A coach should aim to listen rather than tell. An important part of



COACHING AS A LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TOOL cont.

good listening is to avoid jumping to premature conclusions. The coach should try to stay as impartial and non-judgmental as possible. Part of listening deeply is to observe the coachee's body language. Holy Spirit filled coaches also have the added benefit of discernment.

5. Feedback & awareness: Although we sometimes do not like it, feedback from the coachee is important for success. The coach guides the coachee to make decisions and to take action and needs to regularly ask him/her how the agreed upon action is coming on. In this context it is also important to build awareness in the coachee on what is happening around and inside him/her. This will aid and cultivate transformation.

6. Suggestions & Simplification: Sometimes it happens that a coachee gets stuck and struggles to see or find solutions and options for action to be taken. The coach should then be able to offer a suggestion/s but, must first get the consent of the coachee before doing so. An important mindset throughout coaching sessions, is to try and keep to

the rule of simplicity in all discussions and conveying of concepts.

7. Goals & Action plans: Without the establishment of clear goals of which the coachee must take ownership and commit to implement, a coaching session will ultimately only be an interesting discussion. The setting of goals, coupled with the creation of strategies and action plans to achieve them, is a very important part of successful coaching.

8. Accountability & Accomplishments: We should measure what is important, therefore part of successful coaching is for the coachee to be accountable to his/her coach on actions taken towards the completion of agreed upon goals. Accountability drives accomplishments and the coaches' side of this coin is to authentically acknowledge the efforts and progress the coachee is making.

In the Pastoral Letter for the 2nd quarter I will share the coaching process.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of the Pastoral Letter is to encourage, connect and engage with our leaders on matters that are currently at the centre of our church's heartbeat. I trust that you are informed and part of the important conversations that are taking place on different levels in the church. We ask God's guidance as we delve further in search for sustainable solutions.

Blessings!

M.G. Mahlobo

