Dear Colleague,

Allow me to reflect on the 2018 GBM (General Business Meeting) and NC (National Conference), held on Sunday 9 September to Thursday 13 September at the Word and Life Assembly in Boksburg. Two words come to mind – historic and memorable! The theme of the Conference was “Go Tell!” It is anchored on Isaiah 6:8-9 (NIV):

“Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send and who will go for us?”
And I said, “Here am I. Send me!” He said, “Go and tell this people:…”

Our strategic plan encapsulated in the phrase “One AFM Game Plan” is reaching an important implementation stage. During the evening services we unpacked the theme around implementation and established that it is time for our pastors, members and church structures to have a transformational impact in our society, through the sharing of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God.

This Conference was historic in the sense that it was used as a platform to celebrate the 110th Anniversary of the AFM of SA. The church’s national office celebrated this anniversary on 25 May 2018, which was the “official” birthday of the AFM of SA. The Leadership thought it wise to allow the broader church to celebrate it during our September 2018 GBM and National Conference.
GREETINGS cont.
Past. M.G. Mahlobo - President of the AFM

It was also a memorable event, as we honoured the pastors with 40 years of unbroken service before retirement in the AFM. This was done during the evening services. We also handed over tokens of appreciation to all those who contributed towards the unification of the church in 1996 (some were appreciated in 2016 and the rest were appreciated at this Conference). Further the program also included development sessions on topics such as “Financial Reporting and Tax Laws,” “A Healthy Family Life for Pastors,” “Bringing About Social Cohesion in Society” and “Praying the Psalms in Different Seasons of Life.” AFM ordained pastors that attended accrued PCD points.

Delegates to this GBM considered important amendments to our church’s constitution. These amendments deal with the issue of leadership succession in the church. The objective is to build into the succession plan, transitional mechanisms to allow orientation and a smooth hand over to the newly elected Officers. These amendments also seek to ensure a higher level of experience and clear core responsibilities for the Officers, especially at the national level. The possibility of creating an election pool, from which eligible candidates may be nominated and elected were also considered.

In this Pastoral Letter I share some of the highlights of the GBM and National Conference with you. I pray that it will bless you and give you a view into this historic and memorable event!
WHO WILL GO FOR US?
Past. M.G. Mahlobo - President of the AFM

The 2018 General Business Meeting (GBM) celebrated the 110th Anniversary of the AFM of SA. The official “birthday” of the AFM is 25 May 1908. Our name “The Apostolic Faith Mission” is a description of a people on a mission. The objective of this mission is to fulfill the Great commission of Jesus in Matthew 28:18-20. It has the characteristics of the ministry of the Apostles and operates through faith.

“Our name “The Apostolic Faith Mission” is a description of a people on a mission.”

In its early years missions described the reason for the existence of the AFM. It was done through evangelistic outreaches which involved church members and their leaders. As years went by the passion to reach subsided and only a few carried on with missions. The church established a department to take care of missions. Gradually missions shifted from the center to the periphery of the church’s ministry. The focus shifted to taking care of members at the expense of the lost. The Missions Department was later closed. Missions were carried by individuals who had to do it on self-support basis. In 2007 a Missions’ Advisory Committee (MAC) was established to coordinate missions’ projects.

During this time the leadership felt that the church needed to go back to its basics. MAC developed a missional strategy, which became known as: Vision 2020. It was also known as “Qalakabusha” (roughly translated as: ‘new beginning’). Vision 2020 sought to re-commit the AFM to its missional calling. The AFM would be:

“The whole church taking the whole Gospel to the whole world, saturating communities with the presence and principles of the Kingdom of God.”

The church’s slogan became prominent: “Wherever you find people you will find the AFM.”

Our vision of “the church that is accessible to all people, celebrating its God-given diversity, empowering its members for caring and transforming communities to the glory of God,” was combined with Vision 2020 and this led to the concept of a missional church. This concept became the anchor of the church's strategic plan, namely the One AFM Game Plan. A missional church is a Christian community that defines itself and organizes its life around being the agent of God’s mission to the world, as its real purpose. The One AFM Game Plan is driven by five drivers which are broadly known as discipleship, empowerment,
ecumenical involvement, community involvement (social responsibility) and governance (stewardship).

“A missional church is a Christian community that defines itself and organizes its life around being the agent of God’s mission to the world, as its real purpose.”

GO TELL
I have chosen Isaiah 6:1-10 and Matthew 28:18-20 in order lay the foundation for a missional church. Basically, there are four important issues in this regard. These are (i) our understanding of missional context, (ii) acknowledgment of God’s sovereign rule in a missional context, (iii) hearing God’s missional call and (iv) making a missional commitment. Let us briefly look at these.

Mi ssional context for Isaiah, the Disciples of Jesus and our context. In Isaiah the context is that of bereavement (king Uzziah has died) and moral degeneration in Judah (Isaiah 5:8-21). In Matthew 28, the Lord is risen from the grave and has all authority in heaven and on earth. Our context today points to the following: 35% of the world’s people claim to be Christians, the nominalism percentage is huge among Christians, poverty, war and diseases.

God’s sovereignty in all missional contexts. In the midst of bereavement, as a result of king Uzziah’s death, Isaiah is reminded that God is still reigning on His throne. The disciples of Jesus, in their moment of bewilderment and doubt, they are confronted by the risen Lord upon whom all Divine authority had been conferred. Jesus is still the Lord of lords and the King of kings in our context. We need to acknowledge God’s rule and power in all situations. It is through this power that we bring the good news to all nations.

God’s missional call: “Whom shall I send and who will go for us?” God’s missional call requires messengers of integrity. One of the Seraphs had to do purification on Isaiah before God called him. The lives of those who are God-sent must exemplify a life of “walking the talk”. Our conduct must give credibility to our message. In Isaiah God’s call has to do with the state of Judah at the time. Jesus calls us to the unreached nations to represent Him in word and in deed.

“Here am I, send me Lord.”

Missional commitment. Isaiah saw, heard and made a commitment: “Here am I, send me Lord.” We are calling on our members, irrespective of race, color, language, gender and age to make a missional commitment and like Isaiah say: “Here am I, send me.” Pastors we need you to offer coaching to our members as they reach out to the nations with the Gospel of Jesus. Would you make a commitment today, by saying: “Here am I, send me?”
THE BIBLICAL MANDATE FOR THE WELLBEING OF PASTORS AND LEADERS IN THE CHURCH

Dr. Vincent Atterbury

To be called by God to serve as a leader in His work on earth is a great honor and privilege. Such a call is irrevocable (Romans 11:29) and comprehensive. It has bearing on the total being of those who are called. The call of God is never at the expense of anything that is part and parcel of the total existence of the called.

The wellbeing of those who are called by God to serve as leaders is relevant and addressed in the Bible over and over. The Biblical perspective on the wellbeing of God’s leaders emphasise that they are accountable for their own wellbeing and that it is an inherent requirement. Those who are called by God to serve as leaders have a personal responsibility for their own wellbeing. In Paul’s last meeting with the leaders at Ephesus, he emphasised that they have a responsibility for their own wellbeing and not only for the people God placed under their leadership.

**ACTS 20:28 (ESV)** “Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which He obtained with His own blood.”

“Those who are called by God to serve as leaders have a personal responsibility for their own wellbeing.”

From the context it is clear that there are many challenges and threats that may have an effect and influence a leader’s ability to live his/her calling with sustainable fruitfulness. Paul’s message to Archippus is clear and applicable to all leaders in the church “Be sure to finish the task you were given in the Lord’s service.” (Colossians 4:17 - GNB). This is not something that will be achieved without focus and without a disciplined lifestyle that enhances personal wellbeing. Each leader has the responsibility to respond in a responsible way to God’s call by attending to their own wellbeing in order for them to be an example to those they lead in fulfillment of God’s call.

“Never let the fire in your heart go out. Keep it alive. Serve the Lord.”

In Romans 12:11 Paul emphasises that as part of the normal Christian’s life, each one have to ensure that their courage and fervor for God stay intact. “Never let the fire in your heart go out. Keep it alive. Serve the Lord.” (NIV) This is even more crucial for leaders that are to be the examples to those they lead. Ministry in itself is demanding in all areas of a person’s life. Not only the leader is affected by the demands and pressures encountered, but those who are led and those that are the closest to the leader. The best gift a leader can give to those that are led and those who are closest to him/her, is to prioritise his/her time and to ensure personal wellbeing.

“My greatest gift to you is a healthy me.” (Paul Scanlon)

In ministry leadership it is easy to experience burnout because of the inherent demands that

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THE BIBLICAL MANDATE FOR THE WELLBEING OF PASTORS AND LEADERS IN THE CHURCH cont.

seldom leave time for self-care. “Don’t burn out; keep yourselves fueled and aflame.” (Romans 12:11 – The Message)

“Zeal without Burnout” (Christopher Ash)

When Paul gives instructions and guidelines to Timothy and Titus with regard to the criteria for those who are suitable to serve as leaders in the church he touches on all the areas of their personal lives (1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:6-9). Paul clearly indicates that there is not one area in a person’s life that is unimportant and can be neglected in favor of another. Paul emphasises that leaders who serve in the church should live a life that is an example of a well-managed life where there is a healthy balance between spirituality and the physical. Paul himself was an example of a balanced, disciplined life and ministry, taking care of himself in order that he himself could share in the hope he brings to others (1 Corinthians 9:23-27).

“Taking care of yourself enables and empowers you to take care of God’s people.”

The primary responsibility of each and everyone who are called by God to serve as a leader in ministry and the church is first and foremost to attend to and take care of themselves. Taking care of yourself enables and empowers you to take care of God’s people. A leader’s wellbeing has an effect not only on him/herself, but also on those that are the closest to them, e.g. spouse and children, and on their ability to be able to care for others and lead them.

Jesus Himself exemplified it by taking care of Himself during His life and ministry on earth. In spite of the growing needs and demand for His ministry, He took time out when needed (Matthew 14:23, John 6:15); He allowed people to take care of His personal and physical needs (Mark 15:41, Matthew 21:1, John 4:7). He stayed in control of His own ministry (John 2:24 & 11:6).

“...self-care is the key to endurance in ministry...”

Paul in his advice to Timothy indicate that self-care is the key to endurance in ministry (1 Timothy 4:6-8). It is the key to a long, sustainable and fruitful ministry in spite of and in the midst of all the inherent demands and challenges in ministry. He also indicates that at the core of self-care is self-discipline in all areas and facets of life, e.g. spiritual, emotional, mental and physical. “Focus on working on your own development and on what you teach. If you do this, you will save yourself and those who hear you. (1 Timothy 4:16 - CEB)

Following the example of Jesus and implementing Paul’s advice pastors will be able to live out God’s calling upon their lives with great zeal and sustainable fruitfulness extending the kingdom of God on earth.
THE AFM ON THE MOVE
Puleng Nimrod Kekana

A Poem to Celebrate 110 Years of the AFM!

Designed and assigned by God
To reach the lost and hopeless of the world
From Azusa street to Bree street
The Spirit of God moved men as they obeyed
The mission of God kept on expanding
Yes, the move of God’s plan
Cannot, will not, shall not be hindered
The Apostolic Faith Mission is on the move
110 years later,
The move is getting stronger and stronger!

From the southern tip of Africa
To the ends of the world.
Let the message go to all nations.
Blow the trumpet Dr. Chikane,
Let the sound be heard everywhere
Jesus is Lord of the nations
Let missions run down like waters
And church planting like a mighty tsunami
Declare Dr. Murefu,
‘That the mission field is open
And that every congregation
Is an outreach centre to the world.’
The AFM is on the move!

Proclaim it Dr. Burger,
Wherever there are people,
You will find the AFM.
Qualified or unqualified,
Ordained or not ordained
Let everyone go back to their family, friends and community
And share the good news
Of what Jesus had done for them
Mercy is our song,
For sins forgiven and remembered no more
Grace is written all over us,

For our lives are restored and renewed
No longer strangers and foreigners,
But part of God’s family,
The AFM is on the move!

‘The Church is built upon the Rock,
And the gates of hell will not prevail against it’.
Dr. Lapoorta reminded us.
‘Unity in action,
Let us move forward.’
Pastor Mahlobo preached passionately.
‘To fulfill our mission as mandated by the Lord.’
The AFM is on the move!

From Africa to Europe,
India to the Middle-East,
South to North America,
This thing is exploding and advancing,
It is unstoppable and unbreakable
The AFM is on the move!

It has the cross,
Signifying our commitment to Christ
And our preparedness to die for our calling
In the foolishness of the cross,
Lies our power and confidence
Circled by the golden crown,
It’s a guarantee for our promise
For a crown of life that will not fade away,
To be steadfast, unmovable and always abounding in the Lord’s work
Sink or swim,
Dark or blue,
Favourable or unfavourable,
In season and out of season
Let the message sound,
‘Jesus is Lord of the nations’
Faith in his name,
And hope in his promise,
Is our inspiration.
The AFM is on the move!
THE AFM ON THE MOVE cont.

In South Africa, it is everywhere
It is blue, red and gold
It is blue, representing our dependence on the Holy Spirit
It is red, representing that salvation is found in no one else,
But in the precious blood of the lamb,
Jesus Christ our Blessed Lord!
It is gold, signifying the King of kings,
Who seat on the throne,
The Lion of the tribe of Judah,
And the Father of All mercies,
The AFM is on the move!

Wherever you find people, you will find the AFM
It is in the army,
It is in the police,
It is in the schools,
It is in hospitals,
It is in the public service,
It is in the private sector,
It is in business,
It is in politics,
It is in entertainment,
It is in the villages,
It is in the small towns,
It is in the cities

The AFM is everywhere!
From Zimbabwe to the UK,
From the UK to Australia,
From Ireland to Pakistan,
From India to Suriname
The AFM is going everywhere,

The AFM is everywhere!
It is like a mighty tornado,
A tsunami that covers everything
This is not a monument but a movement,
A mighty move of the Holy Spirit,
I can hear the sound,
I can hear the thunder,
It’s getting stronger and louder,
It is the move of the Holy Spirit.
And the AFM is privileged to be part,
Of this great deployment of the Spirit.
The AFM is on the move!

HAPPY 110 YEARS OLD!
Happy birthday AFM! GOD BLESS YOU!

CONCLUSION

In conclusion I would like to refer you to an article about the AFM’s 110th Birthday on the website of the South African Council of Churches. Myself and Dr. J.J. La Poorta had the opportunity to do an interview that would further shed light on this historic and memorable 110th year of the AFM! I trust that it will also bless you - http://sacc.org.za/celebrating-110-years-afm/.

Past M.G. Mahlobo