

THE AFM OF SOUTH AFRICA

Pastoral Letter

• 2nd QUARTER 2018 •

THE APOSTOLIC FAITH MISSION OF SOUTH AFRICA NATIONAL OFFICE

Building no. 14, Central Office Park, 257 Jean Avenue, Centurion,

Gauteng, South Africa

P.O. Box 9450, Centurion 0046

Tel: 27 12 644-0490

Fax: 27 12 644-0732/4

www.afm-ag.s.org

www.facebook.com/AFMOFSA/



Dear Colleague,

IN THIS EDITION:

Pg 1 - Greetings

Pg 2 - REWIND - To move forward we need to remember our missional roots

Pg 3 - PAUSE - Celebrate the AFM footprint in SA

Pg 5 - PAUSE - Celebrate the AFM footprint globally

Pg 6 - PLAY - The AFM is moving forward into the future!

Pg 8 - Conclusion

On Friday the 25th of May the Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa celebrated its 110th birthday! This historic milestone was marked with a special event that was held at the AGS Centurion Assembly in Pretoria, with Pastor Rudi Briel and Mariesa Briel as hosts. The theme for the service was "The Going Gospel – Moving Forward" and illustrated by means of a 110-Year emblem that was specifically designed for the occasion. The main feature of the emblem is the arrow that symbolises the AFM's apostolic DNA of breaking new ground and moving forward with the mission.



Guests included the National Office Bearers, Regional Office Bearers in and around the Gauteng area (representing AFM regions, networks and national departments), the AFM national office staff, leadership of the AGS Centurion Assembly as well as special guests from the Pentecostal/Charismatic Christian community. In this letter we share the messages that were delivered by our key note speakers that morning. My wish is that this Pastoral Letter will bless you by reminding you:

- Where the AFM comes from (Rewind...)
- What the current footprint and impact of the AFM is (Pause...)
- And where the AFM is heading in the future (Play...)



REWIND - TO MOVE FORWARD, WE NEED TO REMEMBER OUR MISSIONAL ROOTS

Dr. I.S. Burger - Former President of the AFM

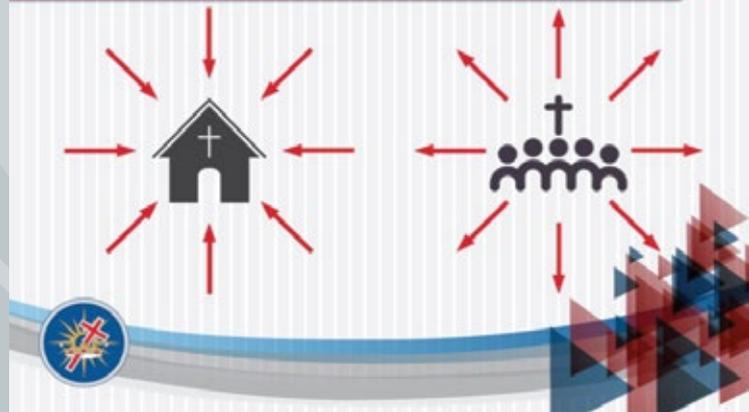
The term "Missional" has become a buzz-word in church-circles today, but the concept itself is as old as the church. The church is in fact the result of God's mission. How far should we then go back? The missional concept starts with God, He is the great Missionary. He is also the first "Sender". We call this the *Missio Dei*. The Father sent His Son (John 3:16). The Father and the Son sent the Holy Spirit. Then the Father, Son and Spirit sent us (John 20:21). The church in essence is therefore a "sent-entity", both individually and collectively.

The early church, particularly in Antioch, was a missional church.

While the church in Jerusalem was **centripetal** (in other words moving *towards* the centre), the church in Antioch was **centrifugal** (in other words moving *away* from the centre). The church in Jerusalem tend to focus on the Jews and the disciples were reluctant to leave the city. They were also hesitant to acknowledge the Christianization of non-Jews, e.g. Cornelius and his household (Acts 10). Remember also the council-meeting in Jerusalem in Acts 15. Antioch (in modern-day Turkey) was a missional church, sending out Paul and others on different missionary journeys. It is necessary that we evaluate ourselves in this regard. Do we reflect the attitude and mind of the church in Jerusalem or the church in Antioch? To put it differently; are we *missional* or *attractional*? Are we a "Go and be" or a "Come and see" church?

We have to accept that God's most important point of connection with the world is not the

The early church was a missional church.



"...missionality implies the incarnation of Christ in our communities through us, His Church."

church building but the market place. We refer to the incarnation of Christ to emphasize the fact that God became man. In a derived sense missionality implies the incarnation of Christ in our communities through us, His Church. Christ must be manifested through us. Acts 4:13, gives expression to this: "They marveled, and took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus."

What the early church did not have, was a missionary board or missionary program. Missions was not a program, it was the essence of being church. God's mission in the world is still redemptive. He wants to use His church as His main instrument. To use the metaphor of a wheel - missions was never intended to be a spoke in the wheel, but the hub, the cone. Every other ministry

REWIND - TO MOVE FORWARD, WE NEED TO REMEMBER OUR MISSIONAL ROOTS cont.

and activity are the spokes that find their significance, sense and meaning by being part of the hub - anchored in the Missio Dei.

“Missions was not a program, it was the essence of being church.”

While the term/concept of missional is a “modern” word, the true meaning thereof was initially part and parcel of the AFM:

- John G Lake and his companions from America came to do mission-work.
- The baptism of the Holy Spirit, as in the early church, stirred believers to witness and work for God. (Acts 1:8)
- There were only a few full-time workers but many full-time witnesses.
- The role of divine healing overcame the negative sentiments of many.

The early AFM was spontaneously a Missional Church.



The early AFM was indeed in practice and spontaneously a Missional Church. It is God’s mission (Missio Dei) that calls the church into existence. We can no longer see the church as the starting point when thinking about mission. The church must be seen as the result of God’s mission. There was a Mission before there was a church. In the words of South African missiologist David Bosch: “It is not the church which undertakes mission; it is the missio Dei which constitutes the church.”

“The early AFM was indeed in practice and spontaneously a Missional Church.”

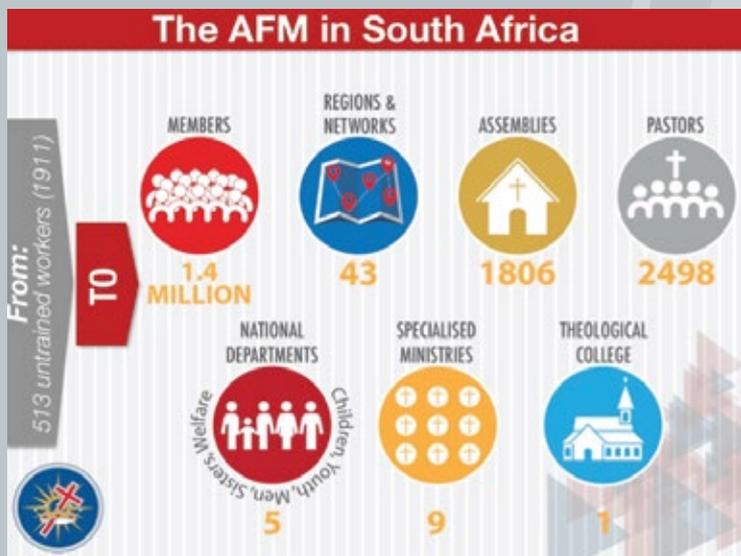
Or stated in a slightly different manner; “It is not so much that God has a mission for his church in the world, but that God has a church for His mission in the world.” (Christopher Wright) The AFM indeed was such a church and ought to be dead-serious to be such again!

PAUSE – CELEBRATE THE AFM FOOTPRINT IN SA

Dr. H.J. Weideman - General Secretary

The AFM started with one assembly in Doornfontein. At the beginning of 1911 there were 513 untrained workers (338 black & 175 white), sometimes referred to as Apostolic Faith Missionaries. Over the years the AFM grew to over 1.4 million members, structured into 43 Regions and Networks, with 1806 congregations, 2498 pastors, 5 National Departments (Children, Youth, Men, Sisters, Welfare), 9 Specialised Ministries and a Theological College. The administrative Head office is in Central Office Park, 257 Jean Avenue, Centurion.

PAUSE – CELEBRATE THE AFM FOOTPRINT IN SA cont.



Early AFM members regarded the missionary task as their main interest and Commission. At that stage the names Apostolic Faith Mission and Apostolic Faith Movement were used alternately as synonyms, even in the minutes of the Executive Council.

“Every member should understand what it means to be missional...”

Today the AFM is in the process of becoming a modern-day missional movement. Every member should understand what it means to be missional and be able to live daily from the basis of being sent into his/her community and every sphere of society, as an agent of change: Impacting the lives of others with the message, values, character and love of Jesus.

Our One AFM Game Plan is the communication platform that re-aligns various levels of AFM leadership with modern-day missional. Our Missional Strategy was launched in November 2013 and has five drivers, or focus areas namely:

1. **Discipleship** -guiding our members to become true followers of Jesus and not only fans. To move believers from only being church members, or spectators to active team members.
2. **Empowerment** - of all members for missional living.
3. **Ecumenical Involvement** - recognizing the body of Christ as all life-giving churches, working together where possible to fulfil our mission.
4. **Community Involvement** - addressing the real needs in our communities, to be socio-economically and Spiritually relevant.
5. **Governance** - to structure, lead and govern ourselves with integrity and accountability, as part of our everyday witness as followers of Christ.



Under the leadership of our president, Pastor M.G. Mahlobo the AFM also strives to deepen our unity and cohesion, while celebrating our God-given diversity.



PLAY – THE AFM IS MOVING FORWARD INTO THE FUTURE!

Past. M.G. Mahlobo – President

TIMES HAVE CHANGED

One of the significant changes from the inception date of the church to the current times, is the context in which the church finds itself today. Commuting systems changed from coal and steam locomotives to the rapid railway system (such as speed trains like the Gautrain). The pace of communication is much quicker than in 1908. This is evident in the gradual replacement of “snail mail” by emails and social network options. The availability of information is abundant and easily accessible.

Our world has been reduced into a “small village.” All these changes have their advantages and disadvantages, but these changes have brought more positives than negatives for the spreading of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. They have made it possible for the church to reach a vast number of people all over the world within a short space of time.

On the negative side these developments have also facilitated the spreading of a secularizing culture. This secular culture tends to confine faith into a private personal matter – which is contrary to the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20). It thrives on humanistic tendencies which promote human interest and push God to the periphery (materialism and hedonism). In this context the sole driving force for existence would be the ‘pursuit of happiness’. Religious pluralism is “the belief that the differences between the religions are not a matter of truth and falsehood, but of different perceptions of the one truth”. All these negatives present the church with an opportunity to represent God’s Kingdom by being the salt and the light of the world (Matthew 5:13-14).

OUR VISION

The vision of the AFM is: “We see a church (AFM) that is accessible to all people, celebrating its unity and a God-given diversity, empowering its members for caring and transforming communities to the glory of God.” The vision statement reflects four critical components:

- Accessibility
- Celebration
- Care
- Transformation.

STRATEGY

The rise of the missional church is the single biggest development in Christianity since the Reformation. Being missional is not doing “church-as-usual”. Going missional requires three shifts. These shifts have to do with ministry focus, people development and the leadership agenda. It is a shift from internal to external in



PLAY – THE AFM IS MOVING FORWARD INTO THE FUTURE! cont.

terms of ministry focus, from program development to people development in terms of core activity and from church-based to kingdom-based in terms of leadership agenda (Reggie McNeal 2009).

The early history of the AFM of SA bears an unmistakable evidence that every activity in the church was driven by the passion to win souls through the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This instinctive obedience to the Great Commission was part and parcel of being filled with the Holy Spirit. This is how we should understand our name: Apostolic Faith Mission.

“We want to be a community of God’s people that defines and organizes its life around its real purpose.”

That is why the concept of missional church is the basis for our strategy. We want to be a community of God’s people that defines and organizes its life around its real purpose –that of being an agent of God’s mission to the world. It is a church whose members and leaders regard themselves as the “sent people of God - sent on the Mission of Jesus.” Our One AFM Game Plan is the platform we use to create understanding about our missionality and also on how to practically implement.

IMPLEMENTING MISSIONALITY

On our journey to become a missional church again, there are two major shifts that will guide future implementation – and it has to do with our members and our Pastors.

Members. At its inception the AFM did not make a distinction between lay and clergy members. We referred to each other as Brothers and Sisters. Every member and leader of the church was expected to be a witness of Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit wherever he/she was. This is how

the AFM grew to be what it is today in South Africa, in various African countries and other parts of the world. Ordinary AFM members who were baptized with the Holy Spirit were on fire to share their testimonies. And the Lord worked with them, confirming their witnesses through signs and wonders. The key to being a missional church lies with its members. Its members act as apostolic agents in the world. My message to our members is none other than the one ascribed to Francis of Assisi: “Preach the Gospel all the time, if necessary use the words.” Our conduct should speak louder than our words and sermons.



PLAY – THE AFM IS MOVING FORWARD INTO THE FUTURE! cont.



“The key to being a missional church lies with its members.”

Pastors. One of the key shifts that our pastors will have to make is to becoming coaches. This may be illustrated as a shift from being just a *Shepherd* to being a *Coach*. The table below show some of the most important differences between the two:

Pastor (Shepherd)	Coach
Directly meets the needs of people.	Empowers people to meet their needs.
Draws fulfillment from doing the work.	Draws fulfillment from equipping people to do the work.
Reacts to needs that arise from moment to moment.	Creates opportunities to coach others.
Focuses on immediate needs.	Focuses on long-term vision.
Plays the role of player.	Plays the role of coach.

CONCLUSION

I trust that this Pastoral Letter took you on a journey into the AFM’s missional past, current footprint in South Africa and globally and its glorious future! My message to you is to keep on “*Moving Forward*” as a church. May God continue to use the AFM as His instrument to accomplish His Mission in this world. May every AFM member claim their position as a modern-day Apostolic agent and Kingdom Worker. May every AFM Pastor and Leader step into their role as coach and equipper of the saints – empowering our members to transform and care for their communities. In such a way glorifies God.

Forward AFM! Forward with the “Going Gospel”!

