The AFM Leader: Special Edition

Dear Colleague,

The AFM’s heart is pulsing with leadership issues. We are reflecting on the type of leadership qualities that will be required for the future AFM. We are envisioning leaders that are called, servant leaders with unshakeable integrity. Leaders that live the AFM’s values, draw daily inspiration from God and are supported by a praying spouse. Be blessed by this specific issue of the Pastoral Letter as we take a closer look at the AFM leader of the future.
LEADERS FOR THE FUTURE AFM

Dr. J.J. La Poorta – Deputy President of the AFM of SA (japie@afm-ags.org)

Future leaders should embrace and cherish specific principles in their life and ministry. These are: Firstly, that they must have a calling into ministry that will be the guiding principle by which they conduct their lives. Secondly, exemplify a model of servant-leadership. Thirdly, be active proponents of the unity of the church that will enhance cohesion within the AFM of SA on all levels of their ministerial involvement. Lastly, one of the four values that the AFM embraces namely integrity, should permeate all views of leadership that will be explained in this article.

A Calling into Ministry by God
Future leaders of the AFM must be aware and informed about the fact that only God calls people into the ministry (1 Corinthians 12:11; Romans 11:29). They must also understand that the calling and ministry from God are irrevocable (Romans 11:29). The issue of whether a person is called or not, is a decision that solely rests with God’s prerogative choice. Present day and future leaders in the ministry must be sure that they are called, because if God calls a person, He will HONOUR His Calling. If a person was never called by God and it is just a desire or a career, that person cannot expect God to be responsible for his or her ministry endeavour and provision - where God leads, He is bound to provide according to His riches in glory.

“As leaders they did not insist to be served by their followers, instead they were prepared to serve.”

Be Known as Passionate Unifiers
Leaders for the future AFM must be passionate unifiers that promote, protect and exemplify the unity of the Church of Jesus Christ through a Kingdom vision, that will enhance cohesion within and outside the AFM. They must promote unity by employing practical actions that will foster cohesion - protecting unity especially in situations in the AFM where cohesion is disregarded and threatened - by being an example through words and deeds. They must be on the forefront of creating and developing friendships across language, racial and cultural divides. They must be deliberate in their outreaches to people of other races, cultures and socio-economic status, in their attempts to reach unity in the broader church in general and within the AFM in particular.

“...where God leads, He is bound to provide according to His riches in glory.”

Display Servant Leadership
In the life and ministry of Jesus, John, Peter and Paul we have excellent examples of servant leadership. As leaders they did not insist to be served by their followers, instead they were prepared to serve. (Matthew 20:28; Mark 10:45; John 13:1-17.; 1 Corinthians 4:1-13). A servant leader does not lord over people but he or she serves people diligently and in many cases without expecting any reward. The example of Jesus and the apostles that were mentioned, serve to underline this statement. Paul even mentioned in Corinthians 4 that they have not burdened the assembly but have taken care of their material need by working with their hands. Paul was a tentmaker by trade and from there comes the well-known phrase “tent makers ministry”. It does not mean that all ministers should now learn the trade of making tents, but that they use whatever skills, talents and abilities they have acquired to take care of their material needs while they minister to the flock. As stewards of the ministries of God they are to be faithful to their calling. Faithful in their endeavours to serve the people to whom they are ministering.
LEADERS FOR THE FUTURE AFM cont.

It will be an exercise that will demand sacrifices that the future leaders must be willing to make. In all their endeavours they will try to fulfil the dream of a united AFM of SA. They will always remember the price that was paid by those who struggled to achieve this unity, when they are engaged in the issues of unity. The unity that has been achieved thus far is not the end of unity at all, because there are various avenues where division continue to exist as a result of the historical past. Unity is not an event but a process within the AFM that has not yet been achieved. It is an ideal, a dream - that must be pursued and finally achieved.

Leadership Integrity
Future leaders of the AFM must be drenched in integrity. According to the dictionary definition integrity revolves around honesty, truthfulness, dedication and commitment to a noble cause. Being called into ministry is noble, because it is the highest calling in life. During our tenure in ministry we can edify, impact and destroy people’s lives if we go about it without integrity. We are called by God and are ultimately accountable to Him. During our time on earth we function in organisational structures that demand various levels of accountability. Integrity is a way of life in which a leader must be prepared to meet the necessary challenges with reference to behaviour. In whatever the leader does or attempt to do, he or she must be willing to operate within an inclusive paradigm that leads to nobody being excluded. Integrity is applicable to not only the leaders but encompasses everybody within the focus of the missionary church.

“Future leaders of the AFM must be drenched in integrity.”

The type of future leadership that is described here for the AFM is indeed achievable, provided that the leaders spearheading the process are prepared to make the necessary changes! May we see more and more leaders in the AFM with these qualities.

DRAWING DAILY INSPIRATION FROM GOD: A TREE SHALL BE KNOWN BY ITS FRUIT
Marcel Hattingh Ph.D. - Doxa Deo (marcel.hattingh@doxadeo.org)

“Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; but his delight is in the word of the Lord, and on His word he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water that brings forth its fruit in its season. Whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper.” Ps 1:1-3

As a minister of the Gospel, I have the privilege of getting out of bed every morning and spend most of my day in the marketplace – consulting, training and coaching leaders of all industries. Unfortunately, more often I am confronted with a kind of soil (condition of the heart) that does not seem likely to produce any harvest. For these leaders I believe God has a special grace installed and we keep on laboring and loving them with a fierce and Godly love. However, it is on those occasions that I do cross paths with a confessing child of God that I am more often completely caught off guard. Frequently the thought goes through my mind, “...but I know this person, and I know where they worship on a Sunday.” However,
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considering their conduct in the marketplace sometimes leaves me wondering as to whether I truly do know them?

What do I mean by saying this? In Luke 6:43-44, Jesus made an interesting observation when considering the authenticity of a person: “For a good tree does not bear bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. For every tree is known by its own fruit.” It is interesting how we call a tree after its fruit, not its leaves, trunk, or roots. An apple tree bears apples, an orange tree bears oranges and a fig tree figs. The frequent contrast between what leaders confess to be on a Sunday, compared to the fruit they bear on a Monday at work, is often quite troublesome.

I believe there are few places in the Bible that so clearly present the kind of fruit that we are called to bear - Paul’s letter to the church in Galatia. I don’t know about you, but as for me, there are some major challenges locked up in this passage. It seems that some of these elements come quite natural, some I have to continuously and intentionally work on, but then there are those who are just stubbornly hard to grow, even to the extent that I have considered if they do belong to my personal tree! Yet the Scripture is clear that in Christ we are all called to bear all of these fruit.

“...in Christ we are all called to bear all of these fruit.”

So personally speaking; as a leader, the love, joy and faithfulness comes quite easy. I do have to work at the peace, patience, goodness, but it is the kindness, gentleness and self-control that seems to be an ongoing problem. Do you perhaps share a similar view? Or perhaps a different combination of fruit? How often do we for instance think of leaders in terms of being gentle? Or continuously showing kindness towards others? Are these the fruit we see in our celebrity leadership figures out in the world? Or did we perhaps begin to admire other fruit in their lives – their visionary capacity, their strategic intent, their cultural acumen, their emotional agility, their resource pool, etc.?

For years I have now been confronted with this reality; trying to figure out how to best cultivate all of these fruit in my life, when I discovered a remarkable emphasis in the Amplified version of the passage: “But the fruit of the Spirit [the result of His presence within us] is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” Galatians 5:22-23. Truth be told, a tree does not produce fruit by trying; it produces fruit by being! Personally I am convinced that I cannot produce all of these fruit by trying, rather I need to discover the unchanging, intimate presence of the Holy Spirit within my life in order to bear much fruit.

A tree never bears fruit for its own consumption, but for the nourishment of others. It is the fruit that contains the seed that ensure a continuation of the fruit tree. Without the seed there cannot be any other trees. If we want to increase our ministry capacity of the Gospel, we first need to bear much fruit for the nourishment of others; and second, if we want to ensure that our ministry continues to be strong and healthy, our sons and daughters will have to discover the seed inside the fruit we bear.

There are nine elements to the Fruit of the Spirit. I want to invite you to consider a 1 month (31 day) journey studying the scriptures pertaining to each element. Can you imagine what might happen through our lives and ministries if all of us draw daily inspiration from God and produce a bumper harvest of fruit in this season?
LIVING CORE VALUES: A PRACTICAL GUIDE

Dr H.J. Weideman – General Secretary of the AFM (henri@afm-ags.org)

What are your core values? If you can’t name them, it is probably a good idea to set some time aside and think about it. It is relatively easy to write a thick book with a long list of good values, but what would be the three to five core ones you choose to define your life? Values are more important than we sometimes think: They form the basis from which we make certain decisions. They determine our focus, as well as what we do and don’t do. Our core values also determine how and on what we spend our money and how we use our time.

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The AFM of SA has four core values that we all should take note of and that we should incorporate in our life and culture as a church:

AFM Value #1: Integrity

Having integrity means doing the right thing in a reliable way in all circumstances, even if no one is watching you. Integrity is the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles. To act with truthfulness and consistency of character. To hold oneself to consistent standards of conduct and to always act with honor and truthfulness. The word integrity evolved from the Latin adjective “integer”, meaning whole or complete.

One may judge that others “have integrity” to the extent that they act true to themselves, and according to the values, beliefs and principles that they claim to hold. It’s a personality trait that is admired, since it means a person has a moral compass that doesn’t waver, is principled, trustworthy and dependable. How to grow integrity:

- Keep your promises even if it takes extra effort.
- Inform the cashier that he/she gave you too much change back and go back to a store and pay for something you forgot to pay for.
- Do not gossip or talk badly about someone.
- Remain true to your spouse or partner.
- Return money that you noticed someone dropped without expecting a reward.
- Never take materials/supplies from the workplace without asking.
- Do not let someone else take the blame for something you did.
- If someone gives you confidential information, never tell anyone what you know.
- Work when you are supposed to and save socializing, snacking, searching the Internet and personal phone calls for break time.
- Show respect to coworkers with appropriate conversation and empathy.
- If you find yourself in a conflict of interest, get out of it as soon as possible.
- Be responsible. Do what you say you will do.

AFM Value #2: Excellence

Excellence means striving to achieve the very best you can with what you have. It is the quality of excelling and striving to truly be and do well in everything that you attempt. Excellence should be a moving target: The quality of our craft and serving today should not be the same as the
LIVING CORE VALUES: A PRACTICAL GUIDE cont.

“...striving to achieve the very best you can with what you have.”

quality of our serving yesterday. It should be increasing and moving forward. How to build excellence:

• Have a hunger for excellence.
• Benchmark against the best.
• Believe that you can do it.
• Build concrete strategies and plans.
• Learn from the best role models.
• Do not limit yourself.
• Go all out; Work hard.
• Focus your efforts.
• Be adaptable.
• Never give up.

AFM Value #3: Relationships
Personal relationships refer to close connections between people, formed by emotional bonds and interactions. These bonds often grow from and are strengthened by mutual experiences, as well as shared purpose and vision. They vary in differing levels of intimacy and sharing, implying the discovery and establishment of common ground. Interpersonal relationships have many characteristics, such as caring for others, being compassionate, accepting others, honesty, flexibility and having patience. How to strengthen relationships:

• Purposefully reach out and meet new people. Also, cross-culturally.
• Engage in verbal communication.
• Respect diversity.

• Endeavor to understand.
• Focus on genuine interest, not superficiality.
• Treat others with kindness.
• Share your mutual stories.
• Learn to listen. Listening is the first step in building a strong rapport with others.
• Build trust.
• Display caring non-verbal communication. Resolve conflicts in healthy ways

AFM Value #4: Accountability
Accountability is answerability, blameworthiness, liability, and the expectation of account-giving. It is the acknowledgment and assumption of responsibility for actions, decisions, policies and governance. It is about the obligation of an individual or organisation to account for its activities, accept responsibility for them, and to disclose results in a transparent manner. It also includes the responsibility for money or other entrusted property. If you take responsibility for your own actions, you show accountability. An individual has accountability for acts and behaviours. Sometimes, being accountable means admitting you made a mistake. Accountability cannot exist without proper accounting practices; in other words, an absence of accounting means an absence of accountability. How to deepen accountability:

“If you take responsibility for your own actions, you show accountability. An individual has accountability for acts and behaviours.”
LIVING CORE VALUES: A PRACTICAL GUIDE cont.

• Develop an attitude of transparency and accountability (Set an example)
• Build good interpersonal relationships and trust.
• Determine what is really important and how it will be reported.
• Establish the frequency of accountable feedback.
• Do it!

Everything we do as, and on behalf of, the AFM of SA should be done in the context of integrity, God honouring Excellence, healthy interpersonal relationships and accountability to one another.

MY PRAYING SPOUSE: JACOBETH
Past. M.G. Mahlobo – President of the AFM of SA (mmahlobo@afm-ags.org)

At a recent leadership engagement, I received the following question: “What sustained you and kept you going until today?” One of the three things in my response was the prayer support from my wife. I would like to share a few personal instances in my ministry journey where the prayers of my wife led to breakthroughs. This year (2019) we celebrate our 41st wedding anniversary. When I look back at our life together, one of the things that stands out is my wife’s complete reliance on the power of prayer. Like all pastors I have had a fair share of challenges in the ministry. Of course, I have also experienced many blessings as well.

In times of personal needs
Our first congregation was in Machadodorp, one of the small towns in Mpumalanga. I was the first ordained pastor of this congregation. It was a small congregation of approximately 25 members. Due to few members who were tithing, the monthly income was very little. I had just got married and had no assets except our clothes. The congregation loved us, and we were also happy to shepherd them. The allowance I received would not carry us beyond the 15th day of the month. At the time I was also busy with my university studies. This was a serious challenge for me. I realised how my wife would go down on her knees and thank the Lord, in advance, for the supplies that He would provide. The Lord did not increase our financial allowance, but at any given moment there was enough food, clothes and tuition fees given by the members of the congregation and other people. None of them had been approached to assist. Through her consistent prayers God provided us with our daily bread in times of personal need.

In times of ministry needs
Towards the end of 1994 I was appointed as Principal of the AFM of SA Theological Institute (AFMSATI) in Soshanguve. The buildings were not in good condition and needed renovation. Other challenges that caused me sleepless nights included finding College staff, including lecturers and finances to cover the College’s budget. My wife immediately prioritised these needs in her prayer program. Then something that nearly caused me a heart attack happened. The section of Soshanguve where the College is situated was hit by a huge hailstorm. It left considerable damages to properties in Soshanguve, including our
MY PRAYING SPOUSE: JACOBETH cont.

College. Window panes were smashed, the ceilings in the classrooms caved in because of the water, the carpets in the offices were damaged beyond repair and the documents in the shelves were drenched in water and became illegible. I can still remember my wife praying for God’s intervention and singing the song: “I know the Lord will make a way for me!”. After assessing the extent of the damage, Past. Van Schalkwyk who had offered to assist me with the College administration, went through the water-drenched documents and found the insurance policy documents for the College which were sealed in a plastic cover. I asked him to obtain three quotations and submit them together with the claim to the insurance company. The insurance company chose the quotation that was more expensive than the other two. Within three weeks all the damages were fixed, and new ceiling panels and carpets were fitted. The amount paid by the insurance company was just over a R100,000.00. Once again, I experienced the power of prayer although the answer was dramatic!

In times of need for a divine miracle

In one of the local assemblies that I pastored, the husband of a women whose wedding I had conducted a year earlier, passed on. After the funeral service the widow requested to visit us immediately after the funeral. We agreed and indeed she visited us within a week of her husband’s passing. She told us that before her husband passed away, he made a confession to her that he had been unfaithful and, consequently he contracted the killer HIV virus. What was heart rending was that he became infected with the virus before tying the knot with her. She was very emotional. As a good pastor I was already thinking about how to prepare her psychologically for imminent death. My wife embraced her and told her that nothing is impossible with God. My wife asked that we should pray for God’s miraculous intervention in this woman’s life. After prayer we consulted one of the medical doctors that we knew. The doctor offered her accommodation while undergoing the HIV test. A few days later she received a clean bill of health. You should have seen the joy from this lady and all of us! I asked the doctor to explain this miracle in medical terms. The doctor said that her immune system was so powerful that the virus had no chance of compromising it. The doctor said it is one of the rare cases. I have seen many other miracles happening as a result of my wife’s prayers.

I will be forever grateful to God who partnered me with such a pillar of ministry support. To God be the Glory, Power and Honour for ever and ever!

CONCLUSION

This Pastoral Letter is special with its unique focus on the AFM leader of the future. When I considered everything that is written here, I cannot help but to feel inspired and excited about the future of our church. May God help us to become Godly leaders and cultivate the leadership qualities that will contribute to the God-given missional calling and purpose of our church!

Past. M.G. Mahlobo