



THE APOSTOLIC FAITH MISSION OF SOUTH AFRICA DIE APOSTOLIESE GELOOF SENDING VAN SUID-AFRIKA

(PBO no/WO nr: 930004069)

NATIONAL OFFICE – NASIONALE KANTOOR

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The Honorable State President of South Africa
Mr C M Ramaphosa
Private Bag X1000
Pretoria
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presidentrsa@presidency.gov.za
malebo@presidency.gov.za

Re: **THE REOPENING OF CHURCH GATHERINGS.**

Honorable President

As one of the oldest indigenous Pentecostal churches, with 1.4 million members and 1739 registered assemblies across all demographic and cultural groupings in South Africa, the Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa (AFM) is most concerned about the impact of the lockdown regulations on society in general and the church in particular, and wish to bring the following to your attention:

We are not aware of any Sunday church gatherings that became a super spreader event. Most churches, including the AFM worked hard to ensure that our local assemblies comply with the preventative hygiene regulations. It is our respectful submission that the church is not treated with due consideration and equality, especially when considering that casino's and restaurants can operate, although with a limited number of patrons. Why are the churches not afforded the same opportunity to gather and responsibly minister to our members and our society in this difficult and faith shaking times?

We agree that funerals, pose a greater possibility for infection and we will continue to ensure that funerals are conducted within the parameters of the preventative regulations.

We, however, note with concern that members of Government in some very prominent instances seem not to adhere to the regulations at funerals, without any real consequences. This, while members of the public are sometimes handled with brutality by the Police if they do not adhere to the regulations.

Furthermore, we record our concerns about the lack of consultation, as promised in the past, before the return to lockdown level 3 was announced in December 2020. As churches we want to discuss the devastating effects of the pandemic and how we, collectively as a country can mitigate it in an open and transparent way with our president and government.

Various faith communities in South Africa play an important role in the everyday lives of most South Africans. An unfortunate impression is being created that the faith communities are only consulted as an afterthought and that the impact of our input is minimal when the decisions regarding regulations are made. This does not assist with the development of the collective effort required to defeat this pandemic.

Church gatherings play a vital role in society, especially given the current circumstances and the psychological, spiritual, and physical impact the pandemic and the lockdown regulations have on people. The lives and livelihoods of our people are not only impacted by their finances but also by the expression of their communal Spirituality as well as the Spiritual care of counselling and prayer provided by the Church, which is vital for all believers.

Considering the above, the AFM of SA respectfully requests our State President to consider the urgent re-opening of church gatherings, with all the preventative measures in place, to assist our members to deal with the trauma of the Pandemic.

We want to assure you, Mr President, of our prayers for your endeavours in defeating the current pandemic.

“Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, ‘He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.’ Surely, He will save you from the fowler’s snare and from the deadly pestilence. He will cover you with his feathers, and under His wings you will find refuge; His faithfulness will be your shield and rampart. You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day, nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday.”

-Psalm 91:1-6 (New International Version)

Kind regards



PASTOR MG MAHLOBO
PRESIDENT