



## Fellow AFM Colleague,

### 1. WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

Today I include a special and timely message of encouragement written by Past. Barend Petersen – our General Treasurer. He also asked his wife, Dawn and daughter, Grace to contribute messages for the spouses of our Pastors as well as Pastors' children. May our AFM Pastoral Families be blessed by these personal words of encouragement.

### Words of Encouragement

A special Message to our  
Pastors, Pastors' Spouses and  
Pastors' Children

Psalm 121

#### RESOURCES:

1. GBM Online Registration  
Form

[https://afm.easychurch.co.za/?page\\_id=413](https://afm.easychurch.co.za/?page_id=413)

2. Pastoral Letter: 4th Quarter

<https://afm-ags.org/pastoral-letter-4th-quarter-2020/>

3. AFM of SA 2021 Calendar

<https://afm-ags.org/updated-afm-calendar-2021/>



**TO OUR PASTORS – PAST. BAREND PETERSEN**

Today I feel in my spirit to just reach out to encourage and express my heartfelt gratitude and condolences to every Pastor, Co-Pastor, Governing Body, AFM Member and family of our beloved AFM. I write to you being deeply moved as I remember those who fought the good fight and succumbed to this pandemic.

Many of us have lost loved ones in the past year and the pain is still fresh in our memory. Finding closure was much more difficult, as we were not able to mourn as we are accustomed to - without the support that ordinarily would have carried us through our time of sorrow and grief.

Whilst the calling of Pastors by the Lord is divine, we minister and live our lives intertwined in the life cycles and experiences of those whom we minister to in this broken world. Commitment to our divine calling does not prevent us and our families from experiencing the trials and tribulations of life including loss, pain, suffering, despondency, disappointments, and death. Like all other people, we also experience parental-, marital-, financial-, health- and relational challenges. At times we are at a loss for answers when we are desperately trusting God for a miracle and our faith is met with what appears to be a stony silence from God.

We know that God, by His Spirit comforts us in pain and illness and can bring healing to our souls. Pastors, I am aware that our ministries have been deeply impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. We are not able to gather at capacity for services or prayer meetings in our churches. There are no crusades, open-air conferences, house visitations or fellowship gatherings as we were accustomed to. We notice a rapidly changing world with a shift from what we were used to – a shift to a place of *uncertainty*. The Covid-19 pandemic and even the attitude of our government, is causing the church to reflect on her influence in society.

I reflected on the prophet Habakkuk who is introduced to us in Chapter 1:1-4 as a prophet with a burden and in despair, doubting God. He is overwhelmed by the circumstances around him, and it seems that God has removed Him from the earthly scene. God is nowhere to be found. His despair is palpable, the pain is real, the doubt is consuming, the future is bleak, and hope has evaporated. In the midst of pain and uncertainty, in the midst of hopelessness and of darkness, Habakkuk encounters God and has a vision of God's restorative power so vividly proclaimed by David, in Psalm 121: "I will lift up mine eyes from whence cometh my help".

The prophet is no longer controlled or even anxious about his circumstances, his sight was lifted. He was no longer consumed by what he sees, but by what he believes. He proclaims these immortal words that still ring true today, in Chapter 3:

*"17 Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: 18 Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. 19 The Lord God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places."*

2020 was one of the most difficult years for all of us and it seems as if this pandemic will continue to torment the world for much longer than ever anticipated. Allow me to share with you that I have experienced the restorative power of God during the most difficult times of my life. During the past four years, I have again experienced it and continue to bear testimony of His unfailing grace. **My brothers and sisters, I want you to know that we are in this together.** As a family of the AFM of SA, we thank you for your faithfulness and holding firm onto your faith and not letting go.

Today, I PRAY for Pastors, Pastors' Spouses and the children of Pastors who are going through tough times and facing intense challenges, battling with the conflict between faith and our lived experiences. I pray that you and your family will experience the presence of God, like Habakkuk, which will lift your hopes beyond what you now experience.

I pray that God will carry us in these trying times when we are all so in need of the presence of Him who called us to His service - and to proclaim His glory.

## TO OUR PASTORS' SPOUSES - DAWN PETERSEN

I write to you at this painful time, yet I am trusting that God knows full well what we as spouses are going through at this moment. As a Pastor's spouse we have a great responsibility to our family and especially when we are leading with our husband/wife in ministry.

We are currently living in uncertain times with the outbreak of Covid-19. During times like these, our faith can be challenged, and it can be hard to see where God fits in with this new normal. We witness the pain and anguish our spouses endure when a loved one passes away. I appreciate you for your strength in helping those in need, your commitment in reassuring family and members in a time of uncertainty. We have buried our members and some of us even our loved ones. The pain we carry can only be understood by the Lord our God.

Today, I want to thank every Pastor's spouse who has been in the field as a frontline worker. To every spouse who has never complained about the work but accepted their responsibility in the ministry with joy. Your endurance and strength to stand in the ministry gives every spouse hope to continue in their gifts and calling. I know there are times when we are not even appreciated in what we are doing but today I am blessed to have other Pastor's spouses walking alongside each other calling each other my "sister" and my "brother".

Remember that God's Word tells us that, in the day of affliction and despondency, we take refuge in God who affirms and establishes our faith. We strongly take courage in the fact that we have to support our husbands and wives, as well as those we are entrusted with. **God is not unjust to forget our work and labour of love in the day of trouble.** He who promised to always be with us, is faithful to keep and sustain us. What

kept me moving was my firm belief that we have this sure foundation, serving an Immoveable God and we may cast our burdens upon Him as He will never let the righteous be shaken!

Rest in God's presence, knowing that we will be refreshed, comforted, and nourished. His abundant life brings healing to a weary and burdened soul. As we PRAY daily for our families and ministry, may you continue to grow from strength to strength!

### TO OUR PASTORS' CHILDREN - GRACE PETERSEN

Being a Pastor's Kid (PK), I am sure you see your parents caring for others on a consistent basis. You see them showing up for a family at 3 am in the morning because a loved one had passed away. You see them sacrificing their time, resources, and energy for the bigger picture. You see them selflessly serving those God entrusted them to shepherd.

If this is what is humanely possible in terms of caring, how much more does God not care? He cares for you consistently. He desires to be there for you during your 3 am moments. He has already sacrificed His Son so you can have life and truly live it in abundance. **You** are the bigger picture. (Well, together with your brothers & sisters obviously!) **You** were on God's mind when He sent His Son Jesus Christ. **You** are cared for. **You** are loved. It is up to us to accept His care. Not just at the point of salvation, but to truly accept it daily. To live our lives knowing and believing that we are cared for. He is kind, slow to anger and abounding in mercy.

From one PK to another.

Blessings!

M.G. Mahlobo

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