

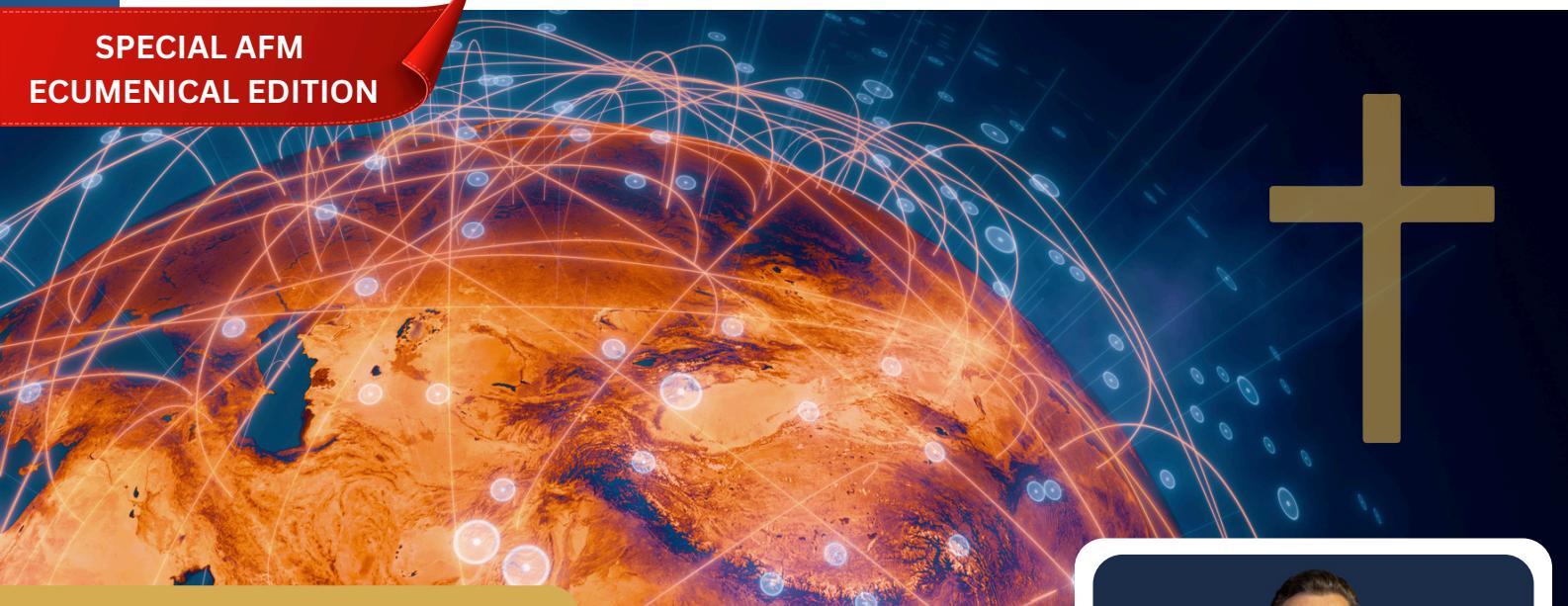


# NEWSLETTER

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**SPECIAL AFM  
ECUMENICAL EDITION**



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### AFM Family,

The AFM's missional call emphasises unity and collaboration among Christian believers, recognising that we are part of God's larger Church, although we function as separate entities. Rooted in Jesus' prayer for oneness in John 17:20-21 and Paul's exhortation in Ephesians 4:3-6, this call challenges us to move beyond exclusivity and embrace a Kingdom-minded perspective. By honouring and partnering with other churches, the AFM seeks to demonstrate the power of Christian unity, showing the world that Jesus was truly sent by God. This unity is not about uniformity or competition, but about mutual respect, shared purpose, and advancing the Gospel together.



The AFM believes that the growth of God's Kingdom requires strong relationships with other life-giving churches and active participation in ecumenical efforts. Whether through celebrating significant Christian events together, joining hands for community outreach, or collaborating on national and international platforms, the goal is clear: to strengthen the witness of the Church and make a greater impact.

In this edition of the Pastoral Letter, we have requested Dr. Henri Weideman (President of the AFM of SA) to report and share his insights and reflections on the recent ecumenical outreaches of the AFM on international platforms. We trust that it will inspire and enrich your personal ministry efforts as we continue to share the Gospel and win souls for the Kingdom.

## A GLOBAL PENTECOSTAL MOVEMENT

The 27th Pentecostal World Conference took place from 4-7 June 2025 in the impressive Helsinki Ice Hall, Finland. This global event, hosted every few years, brought together Pentecostal leaders, pastors, missionaries, and believers from around the world. Representing the AFM of South Africa were the National Office Bearers (NOB), who joined thousands of others in worship, teaching, and fellowship.



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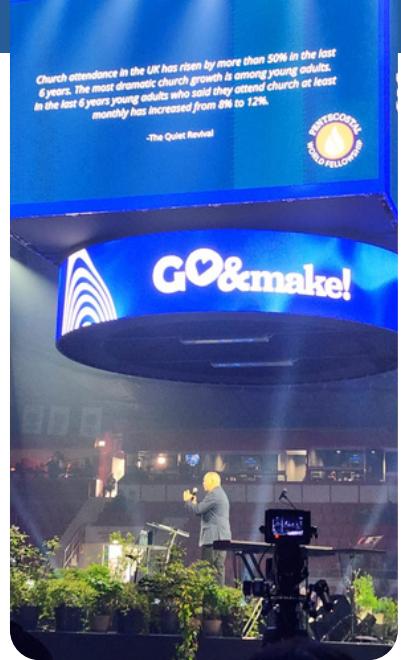
Before the official start of the conference, an Advisory Committee meeting was held on Tuesday, 3 June, at the Maria Hotel in Helsinki. During this gathering, Dr. Henri Weideman, who had been serving on the Advisory Committee for some time, was elected to serve as one of the seven members of the Executive Committee of the Pentecostal World Fellowship (PWF). This appointment is a significant milestone for the AFM of South Africa, being one of the founding members of the PWF, as it strengthens our voice and presence in the global Pentecostal movement.

The theme for this year's conference was "**Go and Make**" - a direct reference to the Great Commission of Jesus Christ.



The theme served as a call to action: to equip believers, pastors, and church leaders with practical tools and a fresh vision for their ministries. The organisers succeeded in creating an environment where participants were both inspired and practically equipped to return home and make a difference in their local contexts.

The Pentecostal World Conference is a major event, and this year it was clear that much preparation had gone into every detail. The sessions were well-planned, the speakers were excellent, and the worship was God-focused. Attendees consistently commented on the way the program combined both spiritual depth and practical training.



The conference officially opened on Wednesday, 4 June, with Pastor Rick Warren delivering a keynote message on the planting of churches. Known worldwide for his work in church growth and discipleship, Warren not only inspired but also challenged leaders to **think strategically about multiplying churches across the globe**. On Thursday, he also led a practical workshop titled “The Heart of a Pastor,” where he reminded leaders that ministry is not only about vision and structure, but also about compassion, humility, and servant leadership. Each afternoon of the conference featured a unique format: Four short talks of 15 minutes each, followed by a lively panel discussion moderated by Dr. Ed Stetzer. This structure allowed many different voices to be heard and encouraged participants to reflect on a variety of perspectives.

Among the many highlights, one session stood out strongly: Christine Caine’s Thursday evening message on preaching the Gospel. With her characteristic passion and boldness, she urged the global church to remain uncompromising in proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ. Many attendees described her contribution as powerful, stirring, and deeply inspiring. Worship is always a vital part of any Pentecostal gathering, and this year it was no different. Different worship teams led at various sessions, but what stood out was not the talent or showmanship of the musicians - it was the genuine focus on God. The atmosphere was one of heartfelt praise and deep worship, **drawing participants into the presence of the Lord**.

In addition to the main sessions, a wide variety of workshops were offered. These smaller gatherings allowed for more focused teaching on specific areas of ministry.

Topics included:

- Ministry in the power of the Holy Spirit.
- Reaching the next generation (“Go and Make” in the Next Generation).
- Community transformation.
- The Gospel and the marketplace.
- Innovation in children’s ministry.
- Church revitalisation and church planting.

- Mentoring the next generation.
- Creative communication in ministry.
- Building Christian unity.

The diversity of topics ensured that there was something for every leader and church worker to take home and implement in their local setting. One of the strengths of the Pentecostal World Conference is that it brings together voices from across the globe. Women were strongly represented this year, and several female speakers left a deep impression.



African voices were also very strong and well-received. Speakers such as Denis Mukwege, Isaiah Dau, Julius Rwotlonyo, and Goodwill Shana reminded the global audience of the vibrancy, courage, and prophetic voice of the African church. The younger generation also had a prominent platform. Leaders like Teo Hayashi, Carla Hornung, Augustine Mendoza, and Terry Parkman, among others, carried a clear passion for seeing young people reached, discipled, and mobilised for mission. This intentional inclusion of youth voices was both refreshing and necessary for the future of the global Pentecostal movement.

As much as the conference was about teaching and worship, it was also about fellowship. Walking through the halls, one could hear conversations in dozens of languages. Friendships were formed, old acquaintances renewed, and networks for ministry collaboration were strengthened.

For many attendees, the opportunity to connect with brothers and sisters from all over the world was as valuable as the sessions themselves. Of course, attending a conference in Finland also came with some cultural experiences. While advertised as “summer,” the weather at times reminded the South African delegation of a mild winter back home.

There was some rain, but overall, the climate was pleasant enough for walking through the beautiful streets of Helsinki. Perhaps the most unusual experience for many visitors was the fact that the sun hardly set. With such long daylight hours, one had to learn the discipline of going to bed while it was still light outside!



The 27th Pentecostal World Conference in Helsinki will be remembered as a time of fresh vision, inspiring worship, and meaningful global fellowship. The theme “Go and Make” was not only spoken about but also lived out, as participants left with renewed commitment to making disciples and planting churches across the world. For the AFM of South Africa, it was an important moment. Our church family is well-positioned to contribute meaningfully to the ongoing global Pentecostal conversation.



**“Our church family is well-positioned to contribute meaningfully to the ongoing global Pentecostal conversation.”**

As we reflect on this experience, let us continue to pray for the global church, for the leaders who carry responsibility in these times, and for our own AFM family as we seek to live out the call of Jesus in South Africa and beyond.

## **LEARNING FROM M4 EUROPE: CHURCH PLANTING IN NORWAY**

From 11 to 13 June 2025, the National Office Bearers (NOB) of the AFM of SA, as well as Pastor Nico Nel, attended the M4 Europe Church Planting Conference in Kristiansand, Norway. Since we were already scheduled to be in nearby Finland for the Pentecostal World Fellowship Conference, this was a great opportunity to also learn from leaders and practitioners in Europe about church planting and revitalisation.

The vision of M4 is both ambitious and inspiring: To spark church planting movements that will one day result in a new church being planted every single day across Europe. What makes M4 unique is its focus on teams rather than individuals. Church planting is not seen as a task for a “lone ranger” but as a calling to be lived out in community. The model emphasises: not “I” but “we.”

**“Church planting is not seen as a task for a “lone ranger” but as a calling to be lived out in community.”**

At the heart of M4 is the Great Commission from Matthew 28:18-20. The movement is built around four core principles: Mastery, Mission, Multiplication, and Movement. These principles provide a framework for how they train, equip, and release new church planting teams. The training journey begins with an assessment. Potential church planters are prayerfully and carefully evaluated in four important areas: calling, character, chemistry, and competence.

This helps to ensure that teams are spiritually prepared, relationally strong, and practically equipped for the task ahead. After assessment, planters receive ongoing coaching. Coaches walk alongside them, guiding them in leadership and supporting the planting project so that it can be as effective and fruitful as possible.

Another important feature of M4 is the use of learning communities. These are collaborative groups where leaders and teams come together to wrestle with the most critical issues and challenges of church planting. Instead of training happening in isolation, it is done in a spirit of shared learning and accountability. Much of the program is delivered online, making it accessible and sustainable for most leaders.



Our time at the conference was deeply encouraging. We experienced powerful praise and worship and were inspired by the passion of Øivind Augland, the founder and leader of the M4 movement. Speakers like Mark Sayers (Australia), Matt Markins (USA), and Anne Lene Otterøen (Norway) brought valuable insights about the opportunities and obstacles facing church planting today. One of the most moving moments came when a young church planter from Ukraine shared his story. Despite the war and the destruction in his country, he and his team are courageously planting new churches. His testimony reminded us of the resilience of the gospel and the unstoppable power of God's mission, even in the hardest of circumstances.

We returned home with fresh ideas and a renewed commitment to see the AFM's own church planting and revitalisation efforts strengthened. The challenge before us is to contextualise what we learned so that it speaks to the South African reality. We desire that the AFM will continue to plant and grow churches that bring hope, healing, and transformation in our communities. The M4 conference reminded us again: God's mission is bigger than any one person or nation. **When we work together in unity, the church of Jesus Christ truly becomes a missional movement of impact.**

## AFM PARTICIPATION IN THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES CENTRAL COMMITTEE

The Central Committee of the World Council of Churches (WCC) meets every two years, and this year's gathering took place from 18-24 June 2025 at the Birchwood Conference Centre in Johannesburg, South Africa. The WCC is a worldwide fellowship of 356 Christian churches, representing more than half a billion believers across the globe. Although some people mistakenly believe that it is led by the Pope, the Roman Catholic Church is not a member of the WCC.

The current General Secretary of the WCC is Rev. Prof. Jerry Pillay, a South African theologian and minister in the United Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa. The Moderator (chairperson) of the Central Committee is Rev. Heinrich Bedford-Strohm from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria, Germany. One of the key responsibilities of the Central Committee is to elect 20 leaders from among its members to form the Executive Committee which provides direction and leadership for the WCC.



As part of the program, delegates worshipped with local congregations in and around Johannesburg on the Sunday of the meeting. The AFM Word and Life congregation in Boksburg hosted guests from across the world during their multicultural (English) service.

Dr. Henri Weideman, who was elected to the Central Committee in 2022 during the council meeting in Karlsruhe, Germany, serves on the Policy Reference Committee, which deals with governance and membership matters. This committee recommended four new churches for WCC membership - three from Africa and one from Germany, including a Pentecostal church.

Beyond governance, the WCC remains deeply committed to working for peace and justice worldwide. Current areas of engagement include conflict zones such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, Ukraine, Colombia, Papua New Guinea, and Israel-Palestine.

One of the most meaningful parts of the Central Committee gatherings is the rich experience of worship. Participants share in the prayers and liturgies of different Christian traditions and enjoy fellowship during informal conversations over tea and meals.

These times provide opportunities to learn, connect, and strengthen bonds across cultures and different Christian traditions. The AFM also had a visible role during the week. A worship team from the Ophir Region led during the opening service, while one of the evening devotions was led by the AFM and highlighted Pentecostal expressions of worship. Dr. Weideman contributed further by sharing the AFM of SA's unity journey during a morning reflection panel.

This year's Central Committee meeting was a special moment not only for the global church but also for the AFM family, reminding us again of our voice and place in God's wider work around the world.

Preach the Gospel, Live the Gospel - Sustain the Fire! Get ready to be ignited, empowered, and commissioned! We are thrilled to invite you to the AFM Ablaze National Conference 2025, a powerful gathering of believers, leaders, and passionate messengers of Christ, united under one divine calling - to Preach the Gospel, Live the Gospel, and Sustain the Fire!

This year's theme challenges us to return to the purity of the message, the integrity of the messenger, and the relevance of the method. As Paul charged Timothy, "Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season..." (2 Timothy 4:2). We are reminded that the call is urgent, the message is non-negotiable, and the harvest is plentiful. This is more than a conference - it is a divine appointment. Whether you are a preacher, worshipper, or kingdom builder, come ready to be refreshed, realigned, and reignited! Expect spirit-filled worship, life-changing teachings, and unrelenting passion for the Gospel.



### Register today and bring someone with you.

Come ready to be transformed, equipped, and set ablaze for His glory!

Friendly Regards  
Henri Weideman

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**PULPIT**

### THE APOSTOLIC FAITH MISSION OF SOUTH AFRICA

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