

APOSTOLIC FAITH MISSION INTERNATIONAL

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FIRST 2021 PASTORAL LETTER TO THE PRESIDENTS OF THE AFM AND OFFICE BEARERS OF THE AFM INTERNATIONAL

Dear Fellow Workers in the Lord's Vineyard.

Compliments for the New Year. My prayer is that each one of you will experience breakthrough in 2021 despite the Covid-19 pandemic.

1. IMPACT OF COVID-19

- 1.1 Covid-19 has been disruptive and a game changer in many ways.
- 1.2 Many of the AFM member churches had to cancel or reschedule some of their planned events due to the restrictions that were imposed by Governments to stem the tide of the pandemic. In some countries Sunday and mid-week church services were either prohibited or restricted to fewer attendees. Our members missed the in-person gatherings. Many of our churches experienced a knock-on effect on their finances. Despite all these challenges the church continues to be resilient and to forge ahead with its ministry. Indeed, the church of Christ is built on a solid foundation and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it (Matthew 16:18).
- 1.3 The current pandemic also influenced our liturgical practices. When in-person gatherings were prohibited, many churches resorted to virtual meetings and virtual ministry. The way the funerals of those who succumbed to Covid-19 are conducted is a call to the church leadership to look into new ways of going through grief. We are headed to the new ways of doing things.
- 1.4 I would like to receive a feedback on the impact of the Covid-19 on your pastors and their families, the church finances and on the liturgical practices, such as laying on of hands when praying for the sick and dedicating children, water baptism and conducting of funerals.

2. 2021 PRESIDENTS' SUMMIT

The Office Bearers of the AFM International has resolved that the Presidents' Summit for 2021 be convened in Botswana. Dates are yet to be confirmed. If it is impossible for in-person Presidents' Summit to be convened, it will most probably be convened virtually. Once the Office Bearers have finalized this matter, you will be informed accordingly by the Office of the Secretary General.

3. AFM IN ZIMBABWE

3.1 The Office Bearers of the AFM International were mandated by the Special Presidents' Summit which was held in Nairobi (Kenya) in 2019 to facilitate the Road map process and that the AFM in Botswana and the AFM of South Africa be requested to lend assistance that may be needed by the AFMI Office Bearers in this process.

3.2 Since the Kenya AFMI Conference in August 2019 the situation within the AFM in Zimbabwe has not changed.

3.3 This is despite the attempts by the AFMI Office Bearers to convene a meeting of the two groups to discuss the way forward based on the Roadmap as per the resolution of the Summit. The meeting which was planned for 18 October 2019 had to be forgone because Rev. Chiangwa and his group accepted the invitation while the group led by Rev. Madawo declined the invitation. Rev. Madawo's group decided that this matter be deferred until the Supreme Court of Zimbabwe's judgment hereof. Attempts by the AFMI to persuade Rev. Madawo's group to reconsider their position fell on deaf ears.

3.4 Our attempts to find an amicable resolution have stalled due to pending court processes. We continue to hope and pray that the AFM in Zimbabwe will eventually be able to agree on the best way to forge ahead. The AFMI Office Bearers continue to look at other ways of finding a solution for our church in Zimbabwe. In this regard we solicit your prayers.

4. AFM OF LESOTHO

4.1 I assume that you are all aware of the passing on, of Pastor Motlatsi Monoko, former President of the AFM in Lesotho, on 29 September 2020. The Office Bearers of the AFM International sent condolences of R10000-00 to Mrs Monoko on behalf of the AFM International.

4.2 On Saturday, 05/12/2020 the Apostolic Faith Mission of Lesotho held elections to fill the vacancy created by the passing on of the President. Pastor Moetsuo James Qhobela who was the deputy President was elected as President while Pastor Poello Mohapi was elected as the vice President. Let us pray that God will enable the new leadership to take our church in Lesotho to another level.

4.3 On 10 January 2021 a historic event took place in Lesotho. The AFM of Lesotho and Ntlo yaTshepo under the leadership of Past Molemo Seutloadi had been in Court over the ownership of the church building in Hlotse. Past Seutloadi had initiated the out of Court settlement with the late Past Motlatsi Monoko. In terms of this settlement the Hlotse church building in dispute would be handed back to the AFM of Lesotho. This settlement took place on 10 January 2021. I was supposed to facilitate it. Due to my hospitalisation and the nonavailability of the AFMI deputy President, I requested Past Sam Tshabalala (current Chairperson of the AFMI Children’s Ministry) to act on my behalf. I would like to thank the leadership of our church in Lesotho and that of Past M Seutloadi for deciding to resolve this matter through dialogue rather than through secular Courts. This event was also captured by the public media in Lesotho. What a good testimony!!!

5. AFM IN PAKISTAN

5.1 AFM in Pakistan Sahiwal

5.1.1 Our church in Pakistan held elections last year. The following Office Bearers were elected:

- Mission’s President: Rev. Bishop Waseem Anjum Bhatti
- Vice President: Rev. Nusrat Shaheen
- General Secretary: Rev. Aneela Saleem and
- General Treasurer: Rev. Azhar Jayed

5.1.2 Let us pray that God will enable the new leadership, under Rev. Bishop Waseem Anjum Bhatti, to take our church in Pakistan to another level.

5.1.3 We would also like to thank the previous Mission’s President, Rev. Justan Pervaiz for his leadership role. We pray for God’s blessing upon him and his family.

5.2 AFM Church Ministry of Pakistan Multan

5.2.1 AFM under the leadership of Past Emmanuel Sadiq in Multan, which started in 2005, updates us regularly, through WhatsApp on their ministry.

5.2.2 Their ministry, in Pakistan, includes Gospel Outreach (Evangelism, food distribution to the needy and medical care to the sick), church planting and leadership training.

5.3 Church unity

5.3.1 The unity of the above two AFM churches in Pakistan remains an outstanding item.

5.3.2 The AFMI Office Bearers are ceased with this matter.

6. AFM IN MALAWI

- 6.1 Bishop Minesh Tembo has stepped down as the President of the AFM in Malawi.
- 6.2 This resulted in Pastor Rodgers Maere, former church's vice-President, being appointed as interim President of the church. Past Key Tembo was appointed as interim vice President.
- 6.3 Your prayers for the new leadership are solicited.

7. AFM IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

- 7.1 The AFM was established in the DRC in the 1970's. The missionary responsible was Pastor Edgar Gschwend who is now retired.
- 7.2 In 1988 there was an attempt to register the AFM in the Katanga Province.
- 7.3 Because of the protracted war in the DRC the Church was destabilized and contact between the members and the International Headquarters in South Africa was lost for many years. Many members were displaced within the country and lost contact with each other. Contact between the Headquarters and some of the members was re-established in the late 1990.
- 7.4 During the 2000s the AFMI was informed that the Church was deregistered and needed to apply anew.
- 7.5 The current registration process commenced in 2006 in Kinshasa. A confirmation of the receipt of the registration application, dated 19 July 2007 was received from the acting Director for confessional associations, in the office of the Minister of Justice in the DRC. Attempts to get this application finalized were not successful.
- 7.6 The AFMI Office Bearers, in 2018 wrote to the leadership of the Eglise du Christ au Congo (ECC), an officially recognised body of all registered Protestant Churches in the DRC to assist with this registration.
- 7.7 The AFMI Office Bearers are looking at other options available.

8. AFM THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION (AFMTEA)

- 8.1 You will recall that the following persons were elected as Committee members of the AFMTEA during the 2019 AFM International Conference:
 - 8.1.1 Pastor D Seithamo (Botswana)
 - 8.1.2 Professor L Maré (RSA)
 - 8.1.3 Pastor Sarah Kiariye (Kenya)
- 8.2 Prof. L Maré (RSA) passed on and Past D Seithamo (Botswana) resigned as AFM Pastor in Botswana.
- 8.3 The AFMI Office Bearers has requested AFM in Botswana and in South Africa to recommend substitutes.

9. LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

- 9.1 The AFMI Office Bearers sent out a questionnaire on Leadership Development to all AFM International member churches last year.
- 9.2 The Secretary General made us aware that he has not received feedback.
- 9.3 I would like to take this opportunity to urge you to ensure that response from your church has been submitted.

10. IMPROVEMENT ON SUBSCRIPTION PAYMENTS

- 10.1 One of the strategic decisions, taken by the last AFMI Council in Nairobi (Kenya) was the establishment of the Finance Team/Advisory Committee by the Treasurer General to assist with all aspects of financial management, financial planning, reporting, etc.
- 10.2 The AFMI Office Bearers approved the Finance/Advisory Committee as recommended by the Treasurer General.
- 10.3 I am delighted to inform you that I have seen great improvement in the remittance of subscription fees by some of the AFMI member churches.
- 10.4 Allow me to express thanks and appreciation to all member churches who are up to date with their subscription fees.
- 10.5 Let me also take this opportunity to urge those who remain non-compliant to come on board.

I pray that God will bless you and cover you under the divine protection.



**PAST MG MAHLOBO
PRESIDENT**