



## **'ENABLING EFFECTIVE MINISTRY IN AFRICA'**

### **AN INTRODUCTION TO AFRICAN PASTORS FELLOWSHIP**

#### **Slide 1**

African Pastors Fellowship (or just APF) is a small UK-based African mission and development charity, founded back in the early 1980s by an Anglican vicar from Coventry. Despite very humble beginnings, African Pastors Fellowship quickly built a great reputation for establishing strong long-term relationships in East Africa that stretched across church denominations, cultural traditions and national borders. APF now works with numerous African church partners ranging from long-established Anglican dioceses, new indigenous church networks and Christian community activists.

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Currently, APF works with partners in Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and Malawi. There are strong historic links in the Democratic Republic of Congo being revived and APF is exploring exciting opportunities with potential new partners from South Sudan, Mozambique and Zambia.

APF aims to: "Empower Christian leaders and enable effective ministry that brings community transformation through local African churches"

But why is this important?

#### **Slide 3**

Experts estimate that across the developing world, as many as 3.2 million pastors are untrained or undertrained. In Africa, the challenge is particularly stark. Research found that as many as 90% of church leaders in Africa may never have received even a single day of formal training.

That's exactly what APF are changing.

By mobilising, resourcing and releasing the local African church for effective ministry within its own contexts, pastors are being equipped, communities are being transformed and lives are being changed in the here and now, and for all eternity to come.

#### **Slide 4**

APF are inter-denominational, working with African church partners from old established Anglican dioceses to young indigenous expressions of African church and everything in between.

They work at grass-roots level with a holistic approach. APF's activity in Africa is led directly by the dreams and hopes and vision that APF's African church partners express for their communities.

## **Slide 5**

APF are enabling effective ministry in Africa in three ways:

1. Pastoring of Pastors
2. Flourishing Communities
3. Hearing African Voices

## **Slide 6**

Let us start with the first strand: Pastoring of Pastors.

APF partners with influential African Christian leaders, thinkers and activists enabling them to support their colleagues based in remote, rural locations and access appropriate and culturally-relevant training and mentoring opportunities.

Frequently, this involves financing and facilitating training workshops like the one pictured here in northern Tanzania. This conference was run by APF partner Heavenlight Luoga who is a brilliant and respected Christian leader from the region.

In East Africa, rural pastors are not able to receive a stipend or salary for their work but rely on their small farms for their livelihoods. At this training conference, attended by leaders from many different church traditions, Heavenlight used the Bible to help the pastors and their families think more creatively about the resources they already had in their households and how they could use them to better support their families, ministries and churches.

## **Slide 7**

APF has always had a reputation for being pioneering. As internet access, social media and mobile technology explodes across Africa, APF is at the forefront of this revolution. They are currently developing a unique new resource called 'eVitabu'. *Vitabu* means 'books' or 'library' in Swahili and eVitabu is a ground-breaking solar-powered tablet computer containing a whole library of excellent training material prepared by respected African leaders, international mission agencies and accredited theological colleges.

TearFund, Christian Aid, Biblical Frameworks and Westminster Theology Centre, among many others, have expressed a keen interest in having their brilliant training material included on the device and APF is seeking to ensure eVitabu contains a good balance of Western and African origin training resources.

With eVitabu training delivered by APF's African partners, this project has the potential to enable thousands of rural church leaders access great quality teaching possibly for the very first time.

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Another Pastoring of Pastors project run by APF is called 'Let There Be Light'.

In partnership with Morogoro Diocese in central Tanzania, APF is financing solar-power units for church leaders who live in remote areas without access to electricity.

Before receiving a solar-power unit, pastors and their families were forced to spend a significant proportion of their small farm income on expensive and dangerous kerosene to light their homes. With solar-power, however, they have free, clean and safe light which makes all the difference when it came to studying, sermon preparation or the children's homework.

And on top of the savings made from no longer needing to buy kerosene, the solar-power units are used to provide a valuable village mobile phone charging service for the local community. No longer totally dependent on their crops for their livelihoods, pastors can invest more time and energy into their church ministries and in the community. Many pastors have been able to use the profits from their solar-power units to pay back into the scheme so more can be financed and others can benefit.

## **Slide 9**

A final example from the Pastoring of Pastors strand is APF's provision of grants for essential tools for ministry including resources like local-language Bibles or bicycles. For many people here in the UK, a bike is a means of getting exercise and having fun. But for a rural pastor in East Africa (like Pastor Eustace pictured here) a bike is an invaluable tool for ministry. A bike enables a pastor to more easily visit families scattered across the remote community they serve, it means they can attend an important meeting or get to a training workshop, and it can be used to help transport more farm produce to market each time.

## **Slide 11**

Next, is the Flourishing Communities stand to APF's work.

## **Slide 12**

APF mobilises church leaders to run initiatives and projects that reduce poverty and promote sustainable development in the communities they serve. This is about the local African church being Good News in the community.

Here, APF's strategy is fed directly by the dreams, hopes and aspirations that its African partners express for their local communities.

### **Slide 13**

For example, leaders from APF Malawian partner, New Life Christian Church (an independent church network of about 280 mostly rural congregations), recognised that the biggest challenge facing local communities was food security. Soil degradation and erratic rainfall caused by climate change meant that growing enough food to feed a rural household using traditional farming methods was becoming impossible.

For Pastor Lloyd Chizenga, who heads up the network, this was a huge cause for concern. Desperation was forcing parents to take their daughters out of school and offer them for early marriage. Poor nutrition was damaging children's healthy development and hunger was forcing young men to leave their families in search of work in towns and cities.

### **Slide 14**

Now, APF is helping New Life Church deliver a significant Christian sustainable agriculture project called 'Growing Greener' that has enabled a young team of church leaders train farmers to adapt their practices to meet the challenges of climate change and soil degradation whilst also sharing the Good News of Jesus.

Simple but effective sustainable farming methods like 'zero-till' cultivation, composting, mulching, agro-forestry, farm budgeting and marketing are now helping farmers like Elina Banda (pictured) grow more food and feed their families better. What's more, because of project's impact in rural communities, Lloyd's churches are growing fast.

### **Slide 15**

Another project that comes under the Flourishing Communities strand of APF's work is 'Daily Bread'. In the small village of Atirir in rural eastern Uganda, an APF partner is helping local women set up a cooperative based around a solar-powered bakery (pictured). This is still in the setup phase, but when established, the bakery will enable the women to increase their income by preparing bread for sale in local markets. This project will also help reduce deforestation caused by firewood collection which is a big problem in the area. Profits from the solar bakery will go to support a small Bible school in the village.

### **Slide 16**

Finally, the third strand of APF work is called Hearing African Voices.

## **Slide 17**

We all know how important it is to have your story heard. In fact, this is how justice begins. APF listens to what African partners are saying and advocates on their behalf, providing a platform for African voices to be heard.

APF receives requests for prayer and news of opportunities or challenges facing African communities. Through the website, on social media and in the free quarterly *News and Prayer* magazine, APF shares stories from Africa with friends, supporters and churches here in the UK, and beyond.

## **Slide 18**

In an increasingly interconnected world, it is important to know how the choices we make every day can affect those living in other places. APF believes that we all grow when we find opportunities to learn from and about each other.

## **Slide 19**

I hope I have been able to provide you with an insight into the work of APF and highlight a few of the ways in which APF works with African partners to enable effective ministry in Africa.

But maybe you are asking, 'How can I get involved?'

First, please pray with us. Complete a sign-up form to receive APF's free quarterly *News and Prayer* magazine that contains a daily prayer guide and keeps you up to date with news and progress from Africa.

Secondly, APF are always looking for volunteers to support and advocate for them in the UK and sometimes contribute key skills in African contexts. Maybe you could become an APF Champion and share what APF is doing in churches and groups in your local area? Let us know if that could be you.

And finally, you can give financially. You can do this through the website or pop a cheque in a GiftAid envelope. Even better, complete a standing order form and start making a regular donation.

Thank you so much for listening.