



## AFOA Overview

### Introduction

#### 1.1 Overview of AFOA

'Australian Friends of Africa' partners with Australian and African church communities in sharing in the gospel in our experience of faith, evangelism, and compassionate, practical aid for those in need.

#### 1.2 Mission

Building on the unique relationships that already exist between a number of church communities in Australia with our brothers and sisters in Africa, Australian Friends of Africa will seek to facilitate a mutual desire to 'build one another up' in the faith and will endeavour to deliver practical aid, delivering short, medium and long term support and community development, often in areas where established aid agencies are unable to help because of distance, lack of infrastructure, poor access, stretched resources etc.

The desire of Australian churches to partner with friends in Africa will take many diverse forms and emphases, but will tend to reflect a common desire to

- share our faith experiences as we seek to extend the kingdom of God
- acknowledge that we in the west are richly resourced and in a position to fulfil the Christian imperative of attending to those in need of food, shelter, physical and mental healing, clothing etc. (Matthew 25)

Colossians 3:17 expresses the fundamental motivation:

*'And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.'*

#### 1.3 Differentiation.

It's important to be clear that AFOA does not seek to duplicate the humanitarian work carried out by agencies such as Compassion, Baptist World Aid Australia, World Vision etc. In fact, the areas in which AFOA finds it is able to be a resource are those communities which, for a variety of reasons, would never qualify for projects run by those major agencies. Some of these reasons include:

- geographical remoteness
- lack of infrastructure and resources
- too sparse a population to support some schemes
- lack of qualified personnel in the community
- lack of communication technology: phone and email etc

Secondly, AFOA does not intend to be a 'sending' agency, engaged in resourcing people from Australian churches into African communities long term. However, AFOA has been engaged for some time in coordinating team visits from Australia for short term projects, relationship building, evangelism and provision of Christian resources such as Bible and song books.

## 1.4 History

One of the major means of establishing relationships with African communities has been the periodic visits to Australia of teams of pastors, particularly from East Africa.

These visits have had at least two major impacts:

1. for the Australian church, an insight into the 'elemental Christian spirituality' of the African confession of Christ that is much needed by us in the west
2. an awareness of the magnitude of the social and individual catastrophe of issues such as HIV/Aids, poverty, famine, and lack of opportunity and resources that are Africa today. This awareness, and the immediate opportunity to help in a practical, visible way, has been the catalyst for many projects to help with orphan support, food, water, health, education projects, and some small business enterprises.

## 1.5 Challenge

Because of the haphazard nature of the various relationships that formed between individual churches in Australia and the key contacts in Africa, it has been very difficult to have a clear idea of what agreements are being entered into, whether duplication exists, and what are the financial arrangements concerning accountability.

**Australian Friends of Africa** will seek to clarify some of these issues, build a framework in which the relationships can function successfully and provide a way for information to be shared about our experiences and the solutions that have worked in particular situations to facilitate the efficiency of our responses. The purpose of Australian Friends of Africa is to be a body through whom relationships can develop and build.

## Guidelines for Ministry and Leadership

There is a desire for Australian and African church communities to share in worship, experiences and growth in personal faith, and to provide mutual support in ministry and the development of church leaders.

Examples of this include

- Personal testimonies
- Participation in home groups and church planting work
- Preaching at churches
- Participating and leading church music worship
- Involvement in future plans for theological and pastor training
- Taking bible studies
- Being a leader in worship songs
- African pastors preaching in Australian churches