

LADIES MEETING HELD
RECENTLY



February 2020
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ALABASTER MINISTRIES

UPDATE

Dearest Friends,

I thought I was so ahead of things when I got the newsletter out in plenty of time and now am way behind again.

Of course, the major issue at present is the pandemic. I am not being flippant about it, and while I know that Jesus is my Healer, we need to be wise at this time. I no longer watch the news – just how much negativity can one take, not just over the pandemic but also regarding how our leadership is handing it. Surely Revelation is upon us. Multitudes of Christians are a part of the Church of Laodicea. The President and Vice President have got it! Get on your knees and pray! We are battling with a pestilence that is impacting the world and while it does not appear that Africa and the sub-continent of India are as badly affected (possibly because many of them are full of anti-malarial drugs) Africa has been hit by a plague and famine this year. Locusts swept in from the Arabian peninsular and destroyed the crops in Somalia, Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan and there were reports that they reached parts of Zambia. They are beginning to increase at 400%. Kenya reported in one area alone there were 800 billion of them. Mozambique, Zimbabwe and parts of South Africa and Malawi have had severe lack of rain.

I am not wanting to put fear into anyone, we have plenty of that

from the media, and I am not a prophet but I don't believe I have to be as the signs of the times are there for all to see.

It is time to get serious about Him. He is serious about us. God has never taken His people out of a difficult situation. He is there with us when we are going through them and He expects us to be the light. We should be so filled with Him that we are the light and the glory and people should be attracted not to you and me but to He who resides in me. You think about a light – it dispels the darkness. Darkness cannot dispel the light. Everything is drawn to the light. *Christ in me the hope of glory.* Col 1:27. Forget about repentance – that should be a given because God commands it. Sanctification is so much more. Walk away from the old and embrace Him. Put the flesh down and allow the spirit to have complete reign, in other words die to all that is self. When we get rid of self and we kill the spiders instead of sweeping out the webs He has more room in our lives. He can operate in and through us so much more powerfully because I have set aside my selfish desires, my selfish needs and wants and am allowing Him to have full control of my life. This is the one and only time to allow someone else to have full control over you. As humans, there are times when we allow people to have control over us. Been there, done that and it is hard to get free. If I am in Him then He is in me. It is up to me as to exactly how much of Him is in me and how much I allow Him control.

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8514 N. Donna Ct. Kansas City, MO 64153

"He shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified and meant for the master's use and prepared for every good work."

REPORT FROM PASTOR SHADRECK

I greet you in the name of our Lord Jesus and hope that you are well. The Lord has been faithful to us and continues to preserve and take us from glory to glory. We are truly grateful for your prayers and support which continue to propel our work and vision forward. I am extremely happy to report that the women in my church have become evangelists in my village and are preaching and leading more people to the Lord. We used to have 20 families in my home church but through the evangelism in the women's ministry we are now a church of 103 families. I am in awe of what the Lord is doing by growing our church which has all been possible because of the vision to get women and the youth active in the church by giving them equal opportunity to attend the Bible School in Chididi as well as through the continuous women' and youth conferences. We are pioneers in this sort of ministry in our region and so have become the spearheading force that is here to reach out and touch so many lives as well as pave the way for future generations who will bear the torch for Christ. (Ed note: It is our plan to extend this church in the next three months. It will cost us about \$1,500 to do this).

It saddens me when I go around and see all the dying crops in our fields because I know that we must endure another long spell of food shortage up here in the mountains. We praise the Lord for the good rains He blessed us with during the previous farming season so some have stock that we saved. The government seldom ever implements their fertilizer subsidy program up here which makes it difficult for the underprivileged to have a good crop. Our friends in the Shire valley are blessed to have access to whatever small plots of land that are suitable for irrigation farming and so will have some sort of a breather unlike those who live in Chididi and beyond, whose fate lies in the hands of the government. Government alleviation programs seem exist only on paper. Furthermore, it seems there will not be much left in the gardens since most people are already salvaging whatever maize has dried out and milling it for food, which means they will have a low harvest next month. Such is the reality on the ground and we can only pray that the Lord grants us a miracle.

Looking at our incumbent predicament I thought it was an opportune time to spread the message of love and unity among all God's creation for we will surely depend on one another in the months to come. Africans have not had the opportunity to do away with the extend family values and thus believe in community living which can serve as an advantage when disaster strikes since people are compelled to help each other. But we have seen such values as the urge to give a lending hand to a struggling neighbor diminish because of changing times. People have become selfish and we must adapt and practice AGAPE love. When we love unconditionally, we will not turn a blind eye to our neighbor who is suffering beyond his abilities or turn a deaf ear to the moaning of children around us. I know that love never fails, it is the purest gift God gave mankind and we know it is good because there is not a single soul alive today that does not yearn to be loved. I know I want to feel that I am worthwhile and that if I ever needed saving, my closest friends and family would be there to lend me helping hand. Such was the message I took with me to all my house groups for when the storm comes, all we have is each other, and we will not be able to support and care for one another if we have no love in us.

In summary, I would like to say that we are keeping you all in our prayers as this COVID19 pandemic continues to spread across the world. Our prayers are with you that the Lord preserves you and keeps you well, and that all the necessary institutions employed in dealing with this pandemic find lasting solutions and cohesively work to preserve lives. God bless you always.



This is a millet field that has failed because of the drought situation in the mountains

ABOUT US

We, Alabaster Ministries are based in the United States with a tax-deductible status under 501(c)(3).

We also have representation in the United Kingdom and are covered by Stewardship Services

Our representatives there are Michael and Penny Shellswell.

Phone: +44-7780-383452 (Michael)
+44-7551974316 (Penny)

In Malawi we have Oresti and Julie Yiannakis who are a wonderful support and without whom it would be extremely difficult for us to operate.

Our staff comprise of local Malawians, and volunteer staff in the USA and UK.

It is our belief that we should train the locals to one day be able to totally run every aspect of the ministry in their nation and to train the next generation to one day take over while we support and give advice where needed.

God has blessed us with an amazing team of people who are always ready and willing no matter what comes against us. God is in charge and is faithful when we are about His business.

This is an exciting ministry to be a part of and we so appreciate your support.

CONTACT US

You can support this exciting and vibrant ministry by sending checks to:

Alabaster Ministries
8514 N Donna Ct
Kansas City, MO 64153

OR

Via the web site direct to PayPal.

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REPORTS FROM SOME OF THE BIBLE SCHOOL STUDENTSJOSEPH LASTON

I greet you in the most precious name of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ and hope that you are well. I was raised in a Christian family and my father has a church some five kilometers away from Chididi. You would assume that my conduct was that of a typical pastor's son, gentle and with good manners, but I have had a troubled upbringing and was quite unruly in my late teens. I left my home and moved to Pastor Shadreck's village where the Lord got a hold me. My sister decided it was a good idea for me to live with her and away from my father with whom I was in constant conflict. No sooner had I started spending more time at church than the responsibilities came. I was charged with teaching Sunday school kids and I thought what a job to give a former troubled kid with no experience and no patience that it takes to teach children. I am so grateful that now I have this opportunity to study the word of God so that I can be an effective teacher for the next generation of Malawian leaders. It is our duty to raise our children in the ways of God and that is why I love this Bible so much. The leadership has taken strides to make sure that our communities will have people who have the word at heart and thus raise a righteous generation that gives glory to God in heaven. My interaction with colleagues at the Bible school has taught me that we are all coming from different backgrounds and have had different life experiences to get to where we are, BUT one thing is certain; our lives will never be the same again. I pray that you continue to invest in the next generation to raise a generation of Malawians who shall be upright and chaste before God.

SAMUEL MOYO

I used to be a security guard at a sugar plantation in Nkhotakota and for me, there is no lonelier job in the world than working in a sugar plantation. Imagine being posted six miles away from civilization and all you see around you is sugarcane. It was during these lonely moments when I was sitting in a watch tower somewhere, that I began to seek the Lord. I found comfort in praise and music and prayer but still did not develop a deeper and intimate relationship with God. I returned to Chididi after my mother's passing and continued to seek the Lord everywhere I went. Whether I was tilling the land in my garden or walking in the forests, I worshipped until I began to hear His voice and the purpose He has for my life. I found guidance in my new journey at the Bible school. I have seen my life completely change after I allowed the Lord to take charge of my life and obeyed His will to go forth and spread the Gospel.

I am becoming well informed of the Gospel and have become a better preacher in my village. I am now able to assist my resident pastor with other duties like visiting and praying over the sick, encouraging the brethren in their homes, and holding Bible studies.

I am very grateful to the leadership of this ministry for choosing to invest in young people and would like to extend my gratitude to the staff at the Bible school for the great work they are doing.

MAXWELL CHIPO

I would like to thank the Lord God Almighty for the opportunity to be a part of this dynamic group of young people at the Bible school. I have seen my image change or transform from loving all the vain worldly pleasures and beginning a new life in Christ where the yoke of sin no longer exists and the victory of Christ is greatly felt.

I have come to learn so much that I appreciate the living reality of Christ and the glory therein so much more. I would have been a statistic but because of the saving power of Christ I am a somebody in the body of Christ. It is my prayer that the investment that Alabaster has made in all these young people multiplies ten-fold so that the next generation should also be blessed.

REPORT FROM FRANCIS

We send you our regards and pray that this finds you well. It is our hope and prayer that the Lord preserves you as the entire world has been overwhelmed by the corona virus pandemic. It is our prayer that the Lord comes through for His people and that He inspires the necessary institutions to come up with drastic innovations to combat such a pandemic.

Malawi has had a fair share of both groundbreaking and saddening moments following ongoing political imbalances for almost a year now. The Judicial institutions and human rights activist groups have come out in the open to oppose the incumbent government on three occasions and there seems to be some hope to end the charade which has shut down progress in all sectors for the past nine months. If all goes well, it seems the nation will be heading to polling stations again on the 16th of May 2020. It is our hope and prayer that we continue to maintain peace and we would like to implore you to keep this nation in your prayers.

The harvest is upon us and reports indicate that there has been a good rain all year round with a few exceptions in drought prone regions and other regions due to financial dilemmas. There are at least six districts in the southern region of Malawi that have been greatly affected and recent reports show acute food shortages. In Nsanje, which is our focus area, most of the maize (Corn) crop did not do well as a result of leaching. In some areas which received more rain the fertilizer was washed away and in others the people were unable to access fertilizer since the government fertilizer subsidy program is very ineffective. Nsanje will have a serious food shortage problem with some respite for those who can afford to buy maize coming from the Central region of Malawi however pricy that maybe. Nevertheless, we have been fortunate to receive the rainfall we have, as our neighbors - Mozambique and Zambia have not been so fortunate.

We will soon have our Easter conference which gives us a wonderful opportunity to reflect on our lives and have fellowship with our loved ones. I am looking forward to celebrating Easter with the elderly in Chididi, I wish that some of you could join us some day. Remember to follow all the precautionary directions medical professionals are advising to minimize the risk of the COVID 19 virus. We pray that the Lord grants us all favor and His hand of protection should hover over us during these times. May the Almighty God Bless and Reward you tenfold.



The Alabaster Team headed up by Francis (center front). They are running things until this pandemic is over. Thanks God I have a team that is capable and does not have to be directed every day

REPORT FROM PASTOR PETER

Please receive greetings in the name our Lord Jesus. The work of the Lord here is going on well. We are approaching Easter and it is my prayer that together we can observe and celebrate the life, death, and resurrection power of our Lord. In some quarters Easter is seen as the highest point of our Christian year as we remind ourselves of the vitality of the cross and the glory of the resurrection. In the middle of a busy healing, teaching, and preaching ministry, Jesus went up to Jerusalem to celebrate the traditional Passover festival. Jerusalem was jam-packed with pilgrims who were all excited in their celebration of the sacred festival and soon after we know that the Lord Jesus was betrayed by one He loved and later suffered the cross for the redemption of all mankind. We would like to ask you to join us as we observe this wonderful time and prepare to celebrate the Gospel of Jesus.

We are amidst political chaos in the country, and very little attention but preserving political interest has been paid to anything else. The worry now is the rapid food shortage problem we are experiencing and it doesn't help that reports have indicated the Lower Shire will have an average low harvest this season. Our concern as always lies with the underprivileged who suffer the most and have little if not NO assistance to alleviate their hunger problems. We are grateful for the distribution which helps the elderly a great deal and we pray that the Lord preserves them through these difficult times. We pray that the Lord convict whatever authorities there maybe to pay serious attention to the predicament at hand and we pray for lasting solutions.

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Report from Peter Continued

We have observed that the Bible School students are doing extremely well with a few outstanding performances from Samuel Moyo, Teleza Chagaka, and Maxwell Chipu. We are particularly impressed with Teleza Chagaka for the progress she keeps making and we would love to help her realize her dream in another year and a half when they graduate. She is a real champion and an inspiration for other women in the classroom and in Chididi as a whole.

In summary I would like to extend my gratitude to all who sacrifice to keep the vision of the ministry going and to my dear friend Ellen for her undying support. May the Almighty God bless and preserve you always, AMEN.

Teleza Chagaka was a cook during the last Bible School. When I found out she could read I gave her a Bible. Then we found that she needed glasses which I had with me. Now there is no stopping her. The cooks would come in when they were not busy around the fire and listen to the lessons or take part in the praise and worship. Of the five, four are now in the Bible School.

