



# Alabaster Ministries

*He shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified and meet for the master's use and prepared unto every good work." 2 Tim 2:21*

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## OCTOBER 2013

Dearest Partners and Friends,

Thanksgiving is upon us again and we have so much to be grateful for. It is always wonderful to sit down to a Thanksgiving meal and to go around the table and individually speak out what you are grateful for. How you have been blessed during the past year by God and by those around you. It might be a good idea to inform those who are coming to have something ready to share and to be brief. How often do we tell family members or close friends that they have really blessed and enriched our lives? We think that people automatically know that they are loved but it is ALWAYS a good thing to voice it.

With Christmas and Thanksgiving so close it is a time when many family members get together. In many families there is no *harmony*. Someone always has to be the "BOSS" or in charge of everything. There is often a member who is manipulating or controlling and these "get togethers" which should be fun and loving turn out to be a great disappointment with everyone leaving and vowing never to return to another function.

I am so very blessed that this does not happen when my children and grandchildren spend time together. My children recently took me on vacation for my birthday and we spent ten days together – comfortable but still in close quarters. In all that time there were never harsh or angry words and there was total peace and *harmony*. How wonderful not to feel that you are stepping on egg shells each time you say or do something! How wonderful to feel that you do not have to be a peacemaker when others are going at one another. It is exhausting to stand in the gap and try to keep peace and all because there are some selfish people around who have to prove that they are better than the rest of the family.

How do we avoid the same old, same old ruined family dinners? I ask my "grey hairs" (the old people or elderly) in Africa how can we change things and they have learned over the three years that I have been teaching them that prayer really works. They believe it and it works for them. Do we believe that God can change a person's heart so that they become more in *harmony* with everyone around them? (I am not advocating that we drop our standards or what we believe in so that we fit in. My children and unsaved friends are all well aware of my standard and they respect it). I am talking about characteristics that many Christians still have not been able to overcome even after walking with the Lord for

decades. They are still manipulating and controlling and still think that they are the only people who are right and never wrong or that there is no-one who can do the job better than them.

I am a good cook but when I am at someone else's house I do what they ask me to when helping in the kitchen and I do not take over the kitchen. Ladies, if you are visiting your daughter-in-law for the holidays, do not walk in and take over the kitchen - even if you KNOW she cannot cook - unless she invites you to.

If you know that you are a problem then ask God to change your heart. He is so able and so willing when we are serious and really want change. If you are not sure that you are the problem then ask Him to reveal how many holidays you have ruined by your actions. He is only too eager to do that too.

*Harmony* – what a wonderful word! There is nothing like listening to a mass choir who are singing together in *harmony* or an orchestra who are playing some wonderful piece of music. Imagine the *harmony* of orchestra and singers when the Hallelujah Chorus was played for the first time. It was so powerful that King George II of England rose to his feet.

Rom 12:16 in the NIV says, "**Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.**"

My experience of those who manipulate and control is that they are always proud and almost always conceited.

Imagine the *unity/harmony* at the opening of the Temple of Solomon. "**It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of musick, and praised the LORD, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever: that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the LORD; So that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of God.**" 2 Chron 5: 13 & 14

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There were 120 priests blowing trumpets. Can you imagine if they were not in sync what a terrible noise it would have been? Sometimes I think that is what is what is wrong with some of the modern music. Not only are the instruments not in *harmony* but the singers aren't either which makes for nothing but noise which is not at all edifying to the spirit or the soul. This is one of the reasons that we should not be importing worldly type music into the church.

My body is in *harmony* with itself. If it isn't then it is sick. God created us perfectly. All that He creates is perfect. The devil cannot create but he can corrupt what God has created. I cause the problems in my body with what I eat, how I live, what I do. My fingers were created to work with my hand and my hand created to work in *harmony* with my arm.

If we, as the Body of Christ really grasped that concept then we would have long ago been able to reach out to every man, woman and creature on this planet. My hand is not the same as my foot but it is a part of my body. They serve different functions. So it should be in the Body of Christ. We should all be working together in unity and *harmony* even though we are all performing different functions. The BOSS is not you or me but the head of the church – Jesus Christ! We should be able to submit to one another instead of thinking that we are always right and no-one else knows anything or that we are the only people getting the job done or no-one can do it as well as we can. If we make a mistake then we should be open to someone telling us in love that we are in error and make the necessary corrections. If we do not witness with what someone else is telling us then we should take it to the Lord. He will tell us fast enough.

Thanksgiving and Christmas are upon us once again. Let it be a time of *harmony* as we get together to celebrate all that God has given us and done for us this past year. I know that for many it has been another tough time economically but let us remember those in other parts of the world who cannot turn on a faucet and get fresh running water – hot or cold. They have to walk miles to get a five gallon bucket and then it may not be clean and fresh. When you cook your meal think of those who are starving and when you go to bed at night thank God you have a roof over your head so that the rain does not pour on you and thank Him that you have a blanket so that you do not lie there shivering with the cold.

We have so much to be thankful for and perhaps when we acknowledge that we will realize that we might be the problem when we find fault with everything and are not at peace or in unity with friends and family over the holiday season.

## MALAWI GIRLS

Malawi is one of the poorest countries world-wide and due to poverty most young girls are forced to marry before the age of 16. In the remote and rural communities such as Chididi which is a village in Nsanje district, poor families are forced to sell their daughters for a packet of sugar that is worth no more than K500, US \$1.25 or they are sold in exchange for other goods that benefit the rest of the family. These girls are sold to family relations such as their uncles who may be considered as well to do, or they are simply sold to other men (where there can be as much as a 50 year age difference), so that they can support the rest of the family. It is not just poverty that is the cause of these early marriages. Most people are still bound to tradition and various religious beliefs. For instance, when the older sister dies, the younger sister has to sleep with her in-laws because of tradition. This makes them exposed to the vast spread of HIV/AIDS

Alabaster Ministries has come into these villages and preaches the word of God, which is beginning to set them free from many of these traditional and religious practices. These girls have no say, nor the ability to make their own decisions. When married, these girls are often abused and battered by their husbands, and if complaints are raised by them about the abuse, they are overlooked because the husband is the only source of finance. They are often wife three or four which means they will be abused by the more senior wives. During child birth these girls are faced with complications because they are so young and without the medical care it causes a lot of infant and maternal deaths.

Alabaster Ministries has taken the initiative of enrolling some of these abused girls in schools in order for them to acquire education and pave their future. By educating and empowering these young girls, they become aware of the value they are, and become aware of the fact they are created by God to become shining vessels of his glory. They also learn that they can be successful. Alabaster Ministries encourages these young girls to have faith and believe that God has the power to save them and direct their lives onto a different path that no man anticipated. Linda Mavutula Director Malawi.

Ed note: We have to look at building a center so that these girls have a place of refuge. We already have the land on which to build. We also need a house for staff and guests that is comfortable. It is tiring being out in the villages all day and staff need a place that they can come back to that is peaceful and where they can sit in comfort or sleep in comfort. We are looking at a dormitory with showers and toilets along with a cottage attached for house mothers. Cont page 3 column 2.....

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## ECONOMICS 101

An economics professor at a local college made a statement that he had never failed a single student before, but had recently failed an entire class.

The professor said, "We will have an experiment. All grades will be averaged and everyone will receive the same grade so no one will fail and no one will receive an A... (let us substitute grades for dollars - something closer to home and more readily understood by all).

After the first test, the grades were averaged and everyone got a B. The students who studied hard were upset and the students who studied little were happy. As the second test rolled around, the students who studied little had studied even less and the ones who studied hard decided they wanted a free ride too so they studied little.

The second test average was a D! No one was happy. When the 3rd test rolled around, the average was an F.

As the tests proceeded, the scores never increased as bickering, blame and name-calling all resulted in hard feelings and no one would study for the benefit of anyone else.

To their great surprise, ALL FAILED and the professor told them that socialism would also ultimately fail because when the reward is great, the effort to succeed is great, but when the reward is taken away, no one will try or want to succeed. Could not be any simpler than that!

1. You cannot legislate the poor into prosperity by legislating the wealthy out of prosperity.
2. What one person receives without working for, another person must work for without receiving.
3. The authorities cannot give to anybody anything that they do not first take from somebody else.
4. You cannot multiply wealth by dividing it!
5. When half of the people get the idea that they do not have to work because the other half is going to take care of them, and when the other half gets the idea that it does no good to work because somebody else is going to get what they work for, that is the beginning of the end of any nation.

Cont. from page 2 column 2

We also need a kitchen/dining area for the girls. For the staff we need four bedrooms and bathrooms with open plan kitchen, dining and sitting room.

There is an elementary school across the road from this property so the girls would be able to attend school and come home and learn a craft or do some work in the gardens in the afternoons.

Please keep this program in prayer. It is fine for us to preach and teach the Word and build homes and feed the elderly but once we begin to work on changing tradition or culture it is often no longer acceptable. We are not advertising what we are doing but just quietly getting on with the job at hand and doing what the Lord has commissioned us to do – flying under the radar.

This young lady below is probably the worst case that we have. She is almost eighteen but looks as if she is barely into her teens. She is an orphan and was taken in by distant relatives who have used her as a slave and have forced her to prostitute herself. She would not even look at anyone when she first came to us and she desperately needs long term counseling. We have bought her school uniforms and paid for her schooling and have encouraged her to come to church on Sunday. Because we are paying for her education and that is more important than anything else in Africa – education - we are able to dictate a number of things to her “guardians,” though that is seriously a misnomer for them.

On our next trip I want to take these girls and see that they are tested for HIV/AIDS.



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### GREY HAIRS

All materials for the balance of the houses have been purchased and delivered to the villages and they are rushing to get them all completed before the rains begin. Thank you all so very much for your donations towards this project. This has been so wonderful to see these cottages emerge from the normal hum drum mud and thatch of the villages but more than that - to see these grey hairs move in to a more comfortable and secure environment.

In the rural areas of Africa you have to understand that this was an absolute miracle to see the completion of 20 of these cottages in eight months!

We are now preparing for our Christmas delivery of food and clothing and because it is Christmas we want to make it a little more special. We have already purchased the beans with finances I left behind on my last trip as the price has escalated by 50% since I was last there. We plan to purchase a bale of second hand shirts for them and a piece of cloth for the women to wrap around their waists. Along with that there will be food and soap and we would like to add a cooking pot. The total for each will be \$30. Please would each of you seriously consider sending that amount as a Christmas gift.

May the Lord bless each and every one for Thanksgiving and I pray that you will have the best family gathering that you have ever had. I pray that peace and *harmony* will reign over your homes during the holiday season.



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### 2014 CONFERENCE

Upon reflecting on the 2012 conference that we held last year in April, I said never again. It went so well, everything was perfect and everyone had a wonderful time, BUT, when thinking on the logistics of it all, I figured it could never be repeated. On this last trip I was asked on more than one occasion if we could do another conference. When we put it to the elderly they were really excited. So..... we will be having a conference July 6<sup>th</sup> through 10<sup>th</sup> 2014. If anyone would like to come and be a part of it please let me know.

It is not comfortable. We want to build a house near the conference center but do not think it will be ready by then. At least it will be cool and there will be a minimum of mosquitoes at that time of year. The quickest way to get there is on Delta into Johannesburg, overnight there and then fly into Blantyre the following day. That would mean leaving from Atlanta GA July 3<sup>rd</sup>.

I would suggest two full weeks. We would have to return to Johannesburg on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup>. You will have plenty of opportunities to pray for the sick and to minister. We normally have two teaching session in the morning each for an hour with a group session after each for an hour. After lunch there is another hour teaching session followed by a group session putting into practice whatever they have learned. After that they have a time of fellowship or they can bathe and then there is early supper and they normally go to bed by seven.

We will definitely have a foot washing on the first afternoon - we will wash feet and pray over them.

We are expecting 375 elderly this time and since school will be out we will also invite the girls to attend. There will be about 30 pastors as well so approximately 450 people.

Perhaps two days at the game park on the way home!!