



# 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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## NOVEMBER NEWS 2015

Dearest Friends,

Thanksgiving has already gone and we are headed for Christmas at an alarming rate. Another year has passed and in my life I feel as if I have accomplished so little. It is amazing how easily we get side-tracked by every day circumstances and all the petty and unimportant things that the devil sends our way to distract us from what the Lord really wants us to do. Or we can stop blaming the devil and begin to take a serious look at self. How many times do we procrastinate in favor of doing something for self? That can be me!

Sometimes we think that we have achieved something when, in actual fact, we have been taken off course doing what may be seemingly right and "of God" when it has really been self.

Let us examine "self" as it applies to us according to dictionary definition. Self is ego, self-worth, sense of self, self-esteem. "Self" places all of the focus on us. God has not changed from being the God of the Ten Commandments – He still wants the glory and since I am pretty helpless without Him, I believe He deserves all the glory.

I watch so many people in the Kingdom spend their lives scurrying from place to place, busy doing this and that but they are never at peace with their fellow man and nor are they at peace with God. A lot of the time they are scuttling to build buildings and create ventures that they say are from God but in actual fact they are running from what God has truly called them to do because it is something they do not want to do or it is not "fun." They keep busy because they know that the Lord wants to deal with issues in their lives and they do not want Him to because they are happy with the "rats" in their basement. "Rats" love the dark and hide in the darkest recesses of our hearts. We will allow the Holy Spirit to kill the "parents" because they are too ugly but the babies are so cute we want them left. Rats breed at an alarming rate because there is no breeding season for them, litters are large and they come to maturity very early. Incest is no problem for them. This is just like sin. Once we allow one sin to take hold it is easier to ignore the next and the next until we are hardened and no longer susceptible to the conviction of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Our conscience becomes seared.

"Rats" multiply and bring terminal sickness and disease with them. *"The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord."* Rom 6:23. The Bubonic plague or "Black Death" killed almost 70% of the population of Europe in the middle ages.

Finally the time comes when self takes over completely and pride enters in and they believe that they can do anything because they are special in the sight of God. The longer we believe we do not have to answer to our brothers and sisters in the Kingdom is when we begin to believe we no longer have to repent and we become "above the law." If our lives do not conform to the horizontal pane (our fellow believers) then how do we think they will conform to the vertical?

That is when the running really takes over because there is no longer any fulfillment in Him. Everything is striving.

God wants us to be at peace all of the time - when we are busy with Kingdom work or busy at home with family and even when we are busy with our secular jobs. Sometimes I wonder how I will get everything done but when we are doing it along with the Lord, He seems to increase the hours of the day. When I first began the Elderly project it seemed that it took us almost a week to put together all that we needed for the hampers. My first week in Malawi was running from one place to another. Now it takes us a day and a half. We have found ways of cutting corners (nothing to do with operating illegally or incorrectly) and He has given us favor even amongst the Islamic community. We received discounts now that we did not in the beginning. When we work WITH the Lord we find approval with Him and with man.

He is so faithful and working alongside Him is always such an incredible adventure. Be sure though that the team you are with view it the same way.

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If you hate Mondays and the thought of going to work, then chances are that you are doing the wrong job. We may have been doing that job from long before we were saved. Am I suggesting we go back to college and start afresh? No, God can change our hearts. He proved that with me. I did not like the elderly and yet He called me to work with them. He has given me such a love for them – His love flowing through me and not my love. He is able to do that in any of our situations and circumstances when I am in Him and He is in me. I love the scripture and know I have quoted it before – “the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.” It makes it so easy for us to love the “unlovely.” Tired of the same old boring routine? Then ask the Lord to brighten it up for you.

When we begin to do things, *“do it heartily, as to the Lord and not unto men,”* and we will find that we will have an attitude change. Believe it or not God designed work for His glory and for our good.

We all know well that we do not get to heaven because of our good works. That is despite the fact that one of the current Pope’s spiritual sons, Tony Palmer made the following statement, “Brothers and sisters, Luther’s protest is over,” and not a single Charismatic or Pentecostal leader corrected him. James 2:20 *“But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?”* Our faith in the completed work of Christ - His spilled blood at Calvary and the fact that He rose from the dead and is seated in heavenly places – is what saves and cleanses me from all sin and unrighteousness. It is not what I attempt to do in my own flesh. I do what I do because of the compelling love of God who said, *“For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, In as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”* Matt 25:35-40

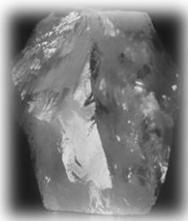
I know that we are to reach out to people with the Gospel but if they are hungry or thirsty and we do not give them physical food or drink and then preach about the wonderful, loving, saving grace of a merciful God, do you think they are going to hear what you have to say? I know these verses refer to the spiritual needs of people but we also have to meet their physical needs as well and as best we can. Fortunately, most of us have never been that hungry to where it feels as if something is inside of us and clawing at our stomachs. If we try to preach and do not feed they will not hear the message. Sometimes we get so spiritually minded that we become no earthly use. This nation is the biggest donor nation on the face of the earth and because of that God has blessed us with great wealth. As the church though, we cannot feed physically and not spiritually. We cannot put in wells without preaching and teaching that the well is where the first evangelist delivered her message of hope or that we should be as wells of living water. We cannot clothe without teaching about putting on the garment of praise and entering into the Holy of holies. The love of Christ compels us to do something. If it does not then it is time to get on our knees and ask the Lord for His love and compassion to overwhelm us.



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It is time for the church to forget about self – me, me, me and I, I, I..... and focus on the Kingdom and He wants His Kingdom filled to overflowing with people from all walks of life whether we find them obnoxious, rude, unlovely, old, young, sick, demon possessed or whatever. All were created in His image and it is time for us to see the gold seam in the otherwise ugly rock or part of the uncut diamond that He wants to fashion into a beautiful gem. Imagine the diamond mine. All the hard work with a pick ax clearing away the rock and rubble and suddenly..... what is it...a piece of stone that does not look anything like the rubble around it. The Cullinan diamond – 3,106.75 carats.



That is how God sees everyone who gets saved - a diamond in the rough. My Bible says that there is great rejoicing in heaven and yes, dancing and twirling too. He sees us all as that wonderful diamond that HE will fashion into whatever He wants us to be. I did not start out life wanting to take care of the elderly and to teach and train them to pray and evangelize. In high school my desire was to pursue a degree in Latin, ancient Greek and Ancient History so that I could teach at college level. Suddenly the Lord began to take me down a different path to where He has led me now. AND it has been a wonderful journey, full of adventure, full of joy but also many times full of pain and hurt but He has brought me through and He will you.

I know that Christmas is the wrong time of year for the birth of our Savior and I know that it was a pagan celebration but it is the time of year when people from all walks of life become “givers.” Where families and friends get together and celebrate. Let us celebrate the Lord and all that He has done in our lives and continues to do. He is altogether wonderful and marvelous. Let us not see Him as the babe in the manger but as the Lion of the tribe of Judah – the soon coming King.

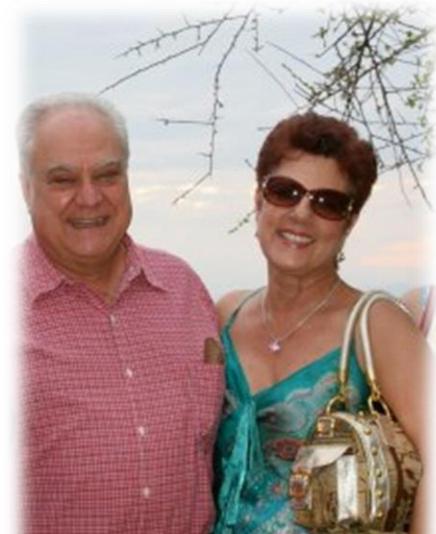
With all that is going on in the world today, I am convinced that we have but a short time left before His return when the trump shall sound and all will have to acknowledge who HE is. People will be running and trying to hide from His glory as He approaches the earth. Let us reach out in this coming year to all who will hear the message of salvation.

## MALAWI

I am so very excited about the changes made with the team in Malawi. They are working closely together and are excited about the work despite the fact they have been under real attack in the last two months. They encourage each other and stand alongside one another and they pray together.

Francis is purchasing building materials for the land and will be leaving early next week to drop them and spend some time with our Pastor Peter.

The most amazing miracle is the Director and Treasurer of Alabaster, Malawi. When I asked them if they would be prepared to be on the board the first question they asked was how much they would be required to do. I casually told them that they would just have to attend two board meetings a year. They are very busy people, running their own business and in the process of building a new factory. They are fully involved with their church and yet they have taken over everything when I am not around. Not only that, they are loaning me one of their trucks to transport the materials for the land. God is so faithful but the wonderful thing is that Julie and Oresti have captured the vision of the ministry and are running with it even though they have never met the elderly.



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FRANCIS BANDA – Spent a number of years at college in the United States and speaks perfect English. Not only that, he is able to preach which will be an amazing asset because Linda was not able to.

He has come through a long and dark tunnel and is finally becoming free to be all that God wants him to be. He comes from a family of five boys and I have met his parents and all but one of his brothers. They are a loving and caring family and great supporters of Francis and he of them. Francis and Julie and Oresti are very capable not only of overseeing things when I am not there, but they are capable of making decisions on my behalf.

The ministry will be going full speed ahead this coming year. It is exciting when you are working with people you can trust and people who really share the vision and desire to see it grow.

Please keep Francis in prayer. He still needs to get totally free from some things. It has been a long journey and he is well on his way.

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## **NEEDS FOR MALAWI**

The truck leaves early next week with the materials needed to finish the house for Pastor Peter. Grateful thanks for the support we needed in order to build this. In the New Year we will begin building the church and I will have a plan for the newsletter so that you can see how it will look.

I am beginning to collect money for a late Christmas distribution for the elderly. Please help with this - \$10 goes a long way in Malawi especially since they have had to devalue their currency again.

We need money for two motorcycles at \$800 each and two bicycles at \$100 each. This will enable our pastors to get around faster and more easily and will save money in the long term since mini bus fares are now so expensive. Mini buses are a real pain to travel on. Sometimes they are overloaded and you have to wait for the next one, or they break down along the way and you are stranded until some other form of transport comes along.

No wonder things take so long to accomplish in Africa and everyone has a fatalistic attitude.

## **BLESSED CHRISTMAS**

Have a wonderful Christmas with family and friends. Grateful thanks to all those who have prayed for the ministry this year and for those who have given so generously.

Let us remember the true meaning of Christmas. He gave His all for us – let us give our all for Him. The Christian walk is all about giving.

