



February 2021
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ALABASTER MINISTRIES

UPDATE

Dear Friends and Partners,

There are things in this life that we cannot change and it is no good focusing on what cannot be changed. God is forward looking and does not reflect on the past. His way is the straight and narrow and our spotlight should always be on Him and not what is going on to the right and the left of us. Sometimes we do not understand what is happening and that is when our statement should be, "I don't understand Lord but I trust you." If we do not put our trust and faith in Him then we become ships without rudders being tossed to and fro with no direction. Ep 4:14 *"That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive."* What a generation we live in where deception is at its highest and the church has no discernment, when deception is in the church itself and we fail to recognize it because we ourselves have lost that wonderful, personal relationship with Him.

We choose to be about our own business instead of the business of the Kingdom. We choose to be busy and caught up in everyday life instead of seeking He who gave us this life. When our emphasis is on Him, He gives us direction and peace and fulfillment.

How many have lived in fear of this pandemic? How will you survive in persecution and tribulation? Fear Kills our faith. Job 3:25 *"For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me."* At the beginning of this pandemic fear came upon me. I have two doctors in the family and they were concerned about me because I am in "that bracket" even though I surely do not feel as if I am. I kept anti bacteria bottles in the car and all over the house, I washed my hands continually. If someone even with gloves on held my credit card I disinfected it afterwards. Then I remembered people like John G Lake and Rees Howells. During an outbreak of a deadly virus, he had the virus from and infected person placed on the palm of his hand. As they looked at it under a microscope it

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

withered and died. I did read reports somewhere that it may have been an earlier form of Ebola. At his mission station in Zimbabwe Rees Howells drew a line around the mission and declared that no virus would come within the bounds of that line. It never did and everyone who moved within that boundary was safe. That was during the Spanish flu of 1918. I visited that mission many years ago and was able to speak to an old man who remembers the incident as a young boy and was one of those who lived within the border. He said no-one was ever sick there.

Fear can cripple. Many years ago, when I was faced with a situation and was crippled with fear the Holy Spirit whispered, "Overcome your fear for as long as you are crippled by it, I am powerless to help you." Strong words, but as soon as I began to pray the fear was pushed back and the peace that passes all understanding came over me.

The fear that I had over this virus has been experienced by multitudes of Christians. It is time for us to rise up and claim what has already been given to us as the children of God. He came so that we might have life in abundance. In 10:10 *"The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."* God is the same yesterday, today and forever. What He did for Rees Howells He will do for us. I do not do anything reckless and I will obey the laws if they do not contradict the Word of God.

We cannot change the virus; we cannot change the election even though many are convinced they were corrupt. The devil goes about as a roaring lion and many are controlled by him and are reprobate. That makes them like Hitler or Mugabe and they enjoy the power he gives them even though it is for a short time. BUT he has no teeth because his teeth were removed at the Cross when he was defeated by my Jesus. The roar of a lion is powerful and very frightening but when he has no teeth or claws, he is a pathetic beast. Jesus, on the other hand, is the Lion of the Tribe of Judah who will one day be the great judge. All our life will be thrown into the refiner's fire and only that which is pure gold will be of any value. Everything else will burn as wood, hay, and stubble. Everything we do should be, *as unto the Lord*. If we do things with a bad attitude because we really do not want to then it is best not to do it because it is stubble. When I was far younger, I was a "people pleaser." I did things to please everyone around me until the Spirit asked me why. He told me that it was okay to say NO!

Let us drop the busyness of our lives – the running back and forth, the worry and anxiety and fear when most of the time we cannot change things and let us put our focus on Him and Him alone and see what it does for us. He should be our all in all!



Francis and Linda (report on page 3). She has been one of our elderly since we began this ministry in 2011.

You can see on her face the love that she has for Francis. That has been the key to the success of this ministry – LOVE. It is wonderful that they are fed and clothed and that some may get a home BUT more than anything else they respond to LOVE. I remember when I first began in 2011, telling them that even though they thought they had been abandoned and cast on the refuse dumps to die, God looked down from heaven and saw them and sent this ministry to take care of them. They responded to the LOVE of God and it has changed their lives. *"The love of God, shed abroad in our hearts..."*

ABOUT US

Alabaster Ministries

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 Wardship Services

Our representatives there are Michael and Penny Shellswell.

Contact: +44-7780-383452 (Michael)

+44-7551974316 (Penny)

In Malawi we have Oresti and Julie Annakis 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 region 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.

It 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
514 N Donna Ct

Kansas City, MO 64153

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REPORT FROM PASTOR FRANCIS:

Multitudes of people across the world have been shell-shocked by the Covid-19 pandemic and have found themselves sheltering at home or operating under extreme precautions following this unrelenting contagion. The preventive measures that are being adopted are critical in the fight against this pandemic. Curfews and lockdowns have presented us with the difficult challenge of increasing misconduct and gender-based violence against women and children. According to UN reports, there has been a spike in gender-based violence since April 2020. Living in confined environments continues to foster tensions resulting from economic pressure, security, emotions, health strains, and sometimes worries stemming out of fear of the unknown future.

Of course, domestic violence has existed for centuries before this pandemic reached the heights that it has today. However, about 243 million women and girls have been subjected to physical and emotional abuse and this number is likely to increase under the isolated living conditions we have adopted to curb the spreading pandemic. Malawi has registered an increase in physical and emotional abuses in the past 14 months with rising girl defilement cases causing a stir in the ineffective bureaucracies. The people would love to see more drastic measures implemented as well as more action rather than talk being practiced.

Alabaster ministries have always used the podium it has to reach out and speak against such evils and where there is need be act against the perpetrators. We grateful for Pastor Shadreck who has become a champion in his village to lead in the fight against Gender Based Violence that gets girls who were sold into early marriages out of them and back into school. Shadreck is becoming a role model for the Bible School students and we pray they go on spearheading the movement to bring radical mindset change in our community. As these pandemic rages on, and the measures continue to isolate us from our friends and family, let us remember to persist in checking on one another. Let us drop that regular text messaging and make those facetime calls. Let us also check on our friends' mental health and continue to pray for one another. The day is coming when we will sing a different song like Miriam sang after the Children of Israel crossed the red see and witnessed Pharaoh's peril behind, a song of hope and lasting victory. God always bring His people through to victory and we need to be praising Him not just after the victory but before it happens. (Ed note: Francis is recovering from Covid at the moment. Please pray for him).

LINDA MINOLA:



There is nothing more precious that to sit down with Grannie in Africa. Grannie is everyone's best friend because she always spoils the grandkids and tells wonderful folk tales from days of old before the internet took over and our social skills lost to cell phones and plugged earphones. I have known Minola Linda for five years and have established a great relationship. We became friends the first day she heard my name. She says it reminds her of her late nephew who as it turns out was the only person who used to help her.

Mr. Minola followed in the footsteps of men who left the comforts of their homes in Nyasaland to go to and find work in the mining industry in the now Republic of Zimbabwe and South Africa. Mr. Minola settled in Bulawayo and there Linda was born. She made the journey back to Nsanje when she was 18 and got married a few months later. Unfortunately, her husband left for work in Mozambique and meet his end at the hands of the Portuguese. The news was so heavy that Linda suffered a miscarriage. She never remarried and has no surviving children. She is however one of the most upbeat people I have met and a day spent with her is always full of laughter.

Her living conditions are extremely poor since she does not have anyone around to help her. She has been shortlisted as one of the beneficiaries for the next housing gift that the Lord blesses us with. We are grateful for the church at Chazuka for coming to her aid when her roof fell apart as you can see in the image. We hope that by this time next month she will have a new thatch on her roof and eventually a new cottage.

(Ed note: A new cottage with corrugated iron roofing, fired bricks, windows with mosquito netting and burglar bars, concrete floor and a front door will cost approximately \$600.00).

REPORT FROM PASTOR SHADRECK:

Please receive greetings in the most wondrous name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have been overwhelmed by wave after wave of this unforgiving pandemic but we remain steadfast in our resolve to trust and believe that we shall prevail in the end. Schools and public gatherings are still prohibited and kept at a minimum low until further notice. The first batch of vaccines have arrived in the country and will soon be distributed across Malawi. The misconceptions and fear that have spread across this nation are just unbelievable but we know that the devil is the father of lies and while we are being cautious, we refuse to be fearful because it robs us of our faith and our peace.

To begin with, I held a small meeting at Joseph's place and we are grateful for Joseph because he is always happy to let us use his church whenever we have our meetings. We were addressing one of the most controversial issues among Sena and Chewa people. For years people in Nsanje have indulged in the M'bona spirit worship where people still go to offer traditional beer sacrifices to this spirit who supposedly controls the rain and pretty much everything that is life. Needless to mention that Nsanje has been badly hit by drought this year. And so, we began reading Deuteronomy 13 and I witness to the elderly who have lived for so long and have either seen first-hand or heard of how our ancestors worshipped spirits and were involved in several acts of divination some of which still happen today. It was extremely easy to make them understand the differences between true worship compared to anything that isn't.

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REPORT FROM PASTOR SHADRECK CONT:

It is this our African heritage that has seen the rise of hundreds of false prophets who are all about enriching themselves because they have built empires preying on the traditions of Africans to trust in vain divination and spirit worship. It sounds so easy to purchase anointed water and oil at exorbitant prices rather than having faith in Jesus, taking hours to pray and establish a great relationship with Christ. This is harder than the easy route of paying spirit mediums and the so-called modern prophets. Divination and spirit worship just cost money and application of instructions from whoever gives them the water/oil/potion. The modern African prophets have become overnight millionaires out of the ability to tell someone else's past and conjure what someone's life pattern in the next couple of months or year will look like do it through spirit mediums. Deuteronomy warns against any such practices and the book of James challenges us to question the spirit and see if it is of God and not one of these dreamers and vain babblers who are deceiving so many.

Being a prophet has obviously become a lucrative business and unfortunately the rural areas are the worst compared to the cities regardless of differences in costs. It is my hope and prayer that people everywhere in the world will not be easily taken by these false prophets, their silver tongues and their rhetoric sound so easy to follow, BUT there is a way that may seem right in the eyes of men but the wages of which is separation from the throne of the MOST HIGH. I pray therefore, that if ever we come across any such a man, we boldly question the spirit that is speaking to him.
