

ACTION

MAGAZINE

FIRST EDITION / 2020



A CHURCH FOR ALL NATIONS
PUBLICATION

JESUS: OUR PASSOVER LAMB

In this Edition! >>



Best time to be alive!



How to effectively study
the Word



Importance of
communication in marriage



A lockdown within the
Lockdown: our son's
accident

Wel come note!

It is an absolute pleasure to welcome you to our first edition of ACTiON magazine. Its fresh, exciting, edifying and indeed worthwhile to read.

ACTiON is Cfanites led publication with the intention to empower the saints into spiritual maturity, to share testimonies as well as a means to share the gospel. This is in line with the our vision of Going and Growing for the Glory of Christ.

As we look forward to pass this desert of lockdown, now that restrictions on movement are being eased, businesses are re-opening and churches are planning to get together again, we look back with thankful hearts that God has spared us. But more exciting is the future we are about to encounter with and in Jesus. This Passover is for a reason, to put our faith into ACTiON going forward. Our Christianity is not merely an idea but it is full of adventure. We therefore need to put our faith into ACTiON; we are called to be ignited, to ignite each other, to go and share the gospel and make a difference. Our city is waiting! We hope you'll find ACTiON as an inspiration to ACT.

A big thank you to contributors as well as co-ordinators of this magazine. Enjoy

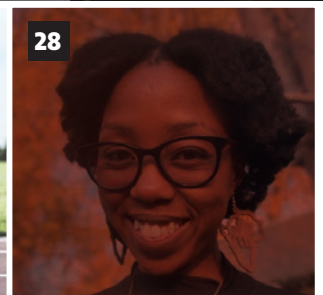
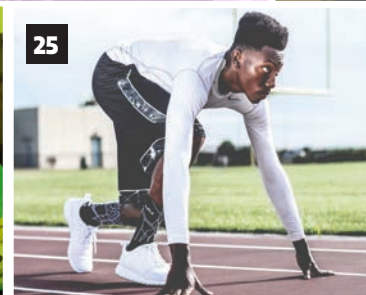
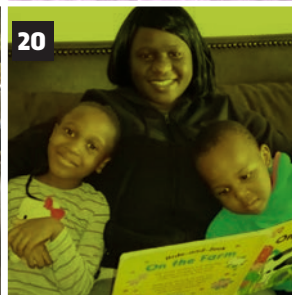
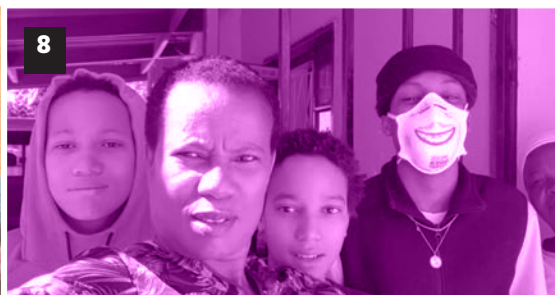


Simon & Kay Ramaabya
Cfan's Lead Eldering couple and their beautiful daughter, Naomi.

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Cfan leadership is very excited about having this platform through which the saints can edify one another. We thank everyone who took time off their busy schedules to contribute their time, gift, talent, knowledge or wisdom towards this work. We encourage all Cfanites with testimonies and encouragements to approach Joe Sithole [75 689 104] so they can also be part of this exciting journey we are on.

HAPPY READING!

Best time to be

alive!



What a privilege to be alive!
Talk about living to tell the story. The writer of Ecclesiastes rightly put it, there is a time for everything!

Ecclesiastes 3. 1 *There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens: 11 He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end.*

At the end of last year I shared on “understanding Seasons” and would like to remind us some of truths shared then;

1. God is never surprised by any season! He lives outside of our natural seasons and time, he is therefore always aware of what is to come.
2. Seasons bring maturity and build spiritual muscles.
3. A new season requires us to operate at a new level.

4. Some seasons are preparatory for what is to come (for a new day to come, there has to be a night!)
5. They give us an opportunity to remember what the Lord has done.

This season of the Pandemic, difficult as it may be, presents many opportunities that can easily be missed. I am always encouraged by the love and Grace of God towards us, that whilst we were still sinners, Jesus died for us! Wow! God could have easily just seen the “mess and unlovable” state we are in and looked away, but because He so loved us, He looked at us with loving eyes and restored us to our precious position in him.

Psalm 32:8 *I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you.*

We therefore have to continually see opportunities even in times of adversary. Just like David before Goliath, we need to see the mighty God on our side. Just like Caleb in Numbers 13, we should see and believe the possibility of taking the land regardless of giants in the land. My question is

“What do you see?”. There are many such possibilities and opportunities now, so let us explore just three that are on the table now.

1. The Gospel

Time and again we have been reminded about the inherent power of the gospel. **Romans 1:16** *For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. (NIV).* The good news is that the gospel is not under lockdown, there is no restrictions and social distancing imposed on the gospel. Meaning its power is not defused, in fact this kind of platform is the best time for the gospel to be catapulted to areas it has never reached, to villages, tribes, governments, family members, colleagues, friends etc. Therefore let us be on mission, to tell those we can reach about the life saving and transformational story of Jesus. It's time to speak and share the love of God **2 Corinthians 5:17** – *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.*

Best time to be

alive!



2. Leadership

This time has been an opportunity for leadership at all levels; presidents, ministers, church leaders, ministry leaders, business owners, supervisors, husbands, parents and the ability to self lead at an individual level. It is easier to lead when all is going smoothly, but quite interesting during a time of crisis. I am reminded of when David was distressed, He found strength in the Lord.

1 Samuel 30:4-6

4 So David and his men wept aloud until they had no strength left to weep. 5 David's two wives had been captured—Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail, the widow of Nabal of Carmel. 6 David was greatly distressed because the men were talking of stoning him; each one was bitter in spirit because of his sons and daughters. **But David found strength in the Lord his God.**

This is an unprecedented time where long term is not ten years any more, but a week! One key aspect of leadership is cultivating the skill of combining known facts with the unknown future. The one can't overshadow the other. The known facts can easily make leaders lead from a place of panic, haste or even fear. We can also lose sight of the future or the vision because of the known facts. Leaders should therefore (remember

that we are all leaders) not lose the vision and the passion to follow through. We need to be prophetic in nature, actually faith is prophetic (faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see - Heb 11). Boldness, along with the peace of God is required for facing the current "not business as usual" situation. This means that at times like these some difficult decisions will have to be taken, coupled with unconventional new ways of doing things. In Cfan we always upheld the saying "Blessed are the flexible, for they shall not be broken!". So I would like to encourage all not to hold on to the past, but follow God's leading during this time, be flexible.

It has also been a good opportunity for self leadership, How are you doing in your self-leading in prayer, worship and the word of God?

Pausing

Life is getting busier and faster, and I am sure many of us have longed or imagined a time to just pause and reset. Well this is it! Even if you have been physically working, the situation calls for a pause looking at the state of the world. It is time to reflect, pause and reset spiritually

and of course in many other ways like marriage, family and things we are involved in. Pausing helps us to assess 1. where we come from, 2, where we are 3, what we have been "chasing" and 4 where we are going. Have we been chasing the wind or have we been keeping the main thing the main thing? Psalm 46 encourages us to trust and hope in God in times of crisis. *Psalm 46: 10 Be still, and know that I am God; 11 The Lord of hosts is with us; The God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah (Nkjv).* This is not time to doubt God, or doubt our call, but a time to pause and see everything in awe again.

In conclusion, I would like to encourage you to fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses. (1 Tim6:12). Do not shrink back, be encouraged and strengthened, keep spreading the gospel, check and pray for each other, be actively involved in what the church is doing now, and be a good neighbour by assisting those in need.

Blessings

Written by Simon Ramaabya



Staying connected: the key to intimacy.

Life at a glance

Life is a roller coaster ride from the day one is born to the day they die. There is such an aggressive drive towards doing the next big or trendy thing that it's easy to be thirsty whilst one's feet are ankle deep in the water. The pursuit for success and fulfilment has forced humanity to over invest in 'the doing' at the expense of 'the living', leaving them unanchored in something fulfilling and enduring.

“ Getting saved does not remove our need to seek God on the premise that we are now saved. Rather, it affirms it! ”

We have gotten so intoxicated by the illusionary allures of what success can bring our way that we have forgotten the need take care of ourselves so that we can prosper from within, and out of that prosperity reach out for what we can be from a secure position. It's not unusual for one to be alive and active, healthy and wealthy, yet long to live and be fulfilled at a soulish level. Nevertheless, the opposite of that is also true which is; it's possible to be poor and afflicted yet experience such joy and fulfillment that it's confounding. Here is a question to ponder on: how much life is in your living?

Spiritual beings

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!) God is Spirit and so are His children.

Our challenge does not stem so much from our total lack of the knowledge that we are born again unto a new birth, rather it comes from our ignorance of what we ought to do for the new man to prosper which is; to deliberately pursue God as the source of the joys and pleasures of life - to enjoy life as an overflow of communing with Him privately rather than publicly. In other words; our getting saved does not remove our need to seek God on the

premise that we are now saved. Rather, it affirms it! It is in the seeking that the knowing happens and in the knowing that the relationship is established out of which, intimacy with Him will flow. Imagine how weird it would be for a young man to meet the right woman, get engaged to her only to cut his interaction with her to a bare minimum until the wedding day due in two years. That is unbelievable and yet we behave as such whenever we opt for a functional relationship with God, just waiting to go to heaven.

Knowing begets connection

Jesus says of those the Father had given Him in John 17:3 Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. The knowing was to happen in the present continuous sense until Jesus comes back. This is a clarion call to pursue intimacy with God NOW!, in this lockdown season because the eternity to come comprises of the knowing and enjoyment of God in perpetuity! Wow! And yet sadly, this revelation can be veiled to those who would rather relegate the expression of their faith to the confines of the religious rituals of just church attendance, praying, reading the word, singing hymns, and such people are prone to being thirsty whilst having their legs knee high in fresh, cool water.

An open invitation to know Him

God is not vague about his desire for us to not just be His children but be intimate with Him. James 4:8 says, *Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.* There is a certain level of interaction with God that is too basic to receive revelatory (not head) knowledge about God, that transforms and renews the mind. The High Priest's experience and reverence of God from the Holy of Holies was realms apart to that of the ordinary believer in the outer or inner court and yet for the New Testament believer, the blood of Jesus has removed this separation so that he or she can go to the Father directly, anytime, anyplace anywhere!

Pay attention to what Paul says in the following; **Ephesians 4:13** *..until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Ephesians 3:19* *..that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.* The goal of our being saved and our service to God as ministers is that (are you ready? Drum-roll please.....) **...we can be just like Christ!** Now that is a motivation to press, pursue and connect with God.

Staying connected: the key to intimacy.



Connection comes from abiding

The issue is not that you are not connected at all. Rather, it's about the quality of the connection you have to Him. The kind of believer that the Lord is looking for is one who **abides in Him** for the simple reason that it's in abiding where the continuous flow of life is found, out of which fruitfulness for the believer comes from. In John 15:5, the Lord says *"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing"*. A branch cannot survive, let alone bear fruit, unless it remains in the vine. Jesus warns us in case there are some who want to practice self-religion (practicing Christianity on your own terms than God's) by warning that apart from Him, they can do nothing. In verse 7 He says: *"If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples"*.

So, staying connected to the Jesus produces;

- **the renewing abundant (Zoey) life of God in us** - counterfeit life has no sustaining power and burdens the person.
- **growth in us from the continuous flow of water and nutrients** - our health is judged based on the quality of our source and what better way to get our spiritual nutrients from the vine that is Christ

- **Fruitfulness in us** - we ought to desire to be fruitful otherwise we are not good to be on this earth. To be saved is not fruitfulness, it's merely being born again but being obedient to God as you grow and mature in your faith is fruitfulness.

Living out our faith as doers of the great commission; healing the sick, casting out demons, taking care of the poor and needy, all fall under fruitfulness but are birthed in abiding - being connected to the vine continuously.

Connection is sustained by hunger

God placed a longing in us when He created us in His image in the beginning. Unless and until we resolve to embrace this as our anchoring truth for our lives, we will struggle to set our hearts on Him as our all-in-all - our reason for being and object for being. The law of Moses echoes this longing in the form of what Christ shrewdly prescribed to the expert in the law as the greatest commandment: *Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."* - Matthew 22:37. God wants all of me and any half hearted attempts at pursuing Him are not enough to establish a solid connection for abundant life to flow. When we pursue Him with everything in us, we will know Him and become like Him: fruitful. Jesus Himself was so hungry for the Father that when He felt hungry and thirsty in His flesh after fasting 40 days, He denied that which would satisfy the flesh so He could triumph spiritually. Jesus' ministry was sustained by His connection to God the Father and He doesn't expect anything less from us. *Mark 1:35 Very early in the morning,*

while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. Matthew 14:23 After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone.

Last word

What a tree needs to grow once planted in the soil is a consistent supply of water. Likewise, once a believer gets planted in the family of God they need a strong connection to Jesus the vine so they grow mature and love God intimately. Notice what the Psalmist says about the tree and water; *Psalm 1:3 That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither - whatever they do prospers.* Prosperity in God comes by living our lives anchored in Him, so that we won't conform to the standards of this world. The connection to Christ is established by hungering and thirsting for Him as we do for food and water or even better, air. The following scriptures capture the correct heart posture for the establishment of an ever-growing connection with God. Ponder on these for a little...

Psalm 84:2 My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.

Psalm 63:1 You, God, are my God, earnestly I seek you; I thirst for you, my whole being longs for you, in a dry and parched land where there is no water.



I think it's appropriate to end on this note; there is no destination in pursuing God, you yearn, long, hunger and thirst for Him today, tomorrow, the day after - **till eternity!**

Written by Joe Sithole



My Home Church experience

"I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live, loving the LORD your God, obeying his voice and holding fast to him, for he is your life and length of days, that you may dwell in the land that the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them." Deuteronomy 3:19-20 ESV

The above has reaffirmed our resolve to serve the Lord with all our hearts, to understand His word and live in the abundance the Lord has availed for us so that His name continues to be glorified. The home church has allowed the active participation of all the members of my family especially the boys. We have seen growth as they are able to participate during the service, share their understanding of the word from the preach, read verses from the bible and explain

what they mean to them. It has been a very interactive session as they ask questions when they don't understand. It allows for detailed examples which are specific to their day to day behavior at home. The One verse which really stood out for them was **John 3 verse 6-7** ***"That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, "You must be born again".*** This was a verse shared by one of the boys which presented an opportunity to explain to them the difference between a spiritual and physical man as well as the importance of accepting Jesus as our Lord and Savior and having the holy spirit live in us to continually guide us in terms of what we do and say.

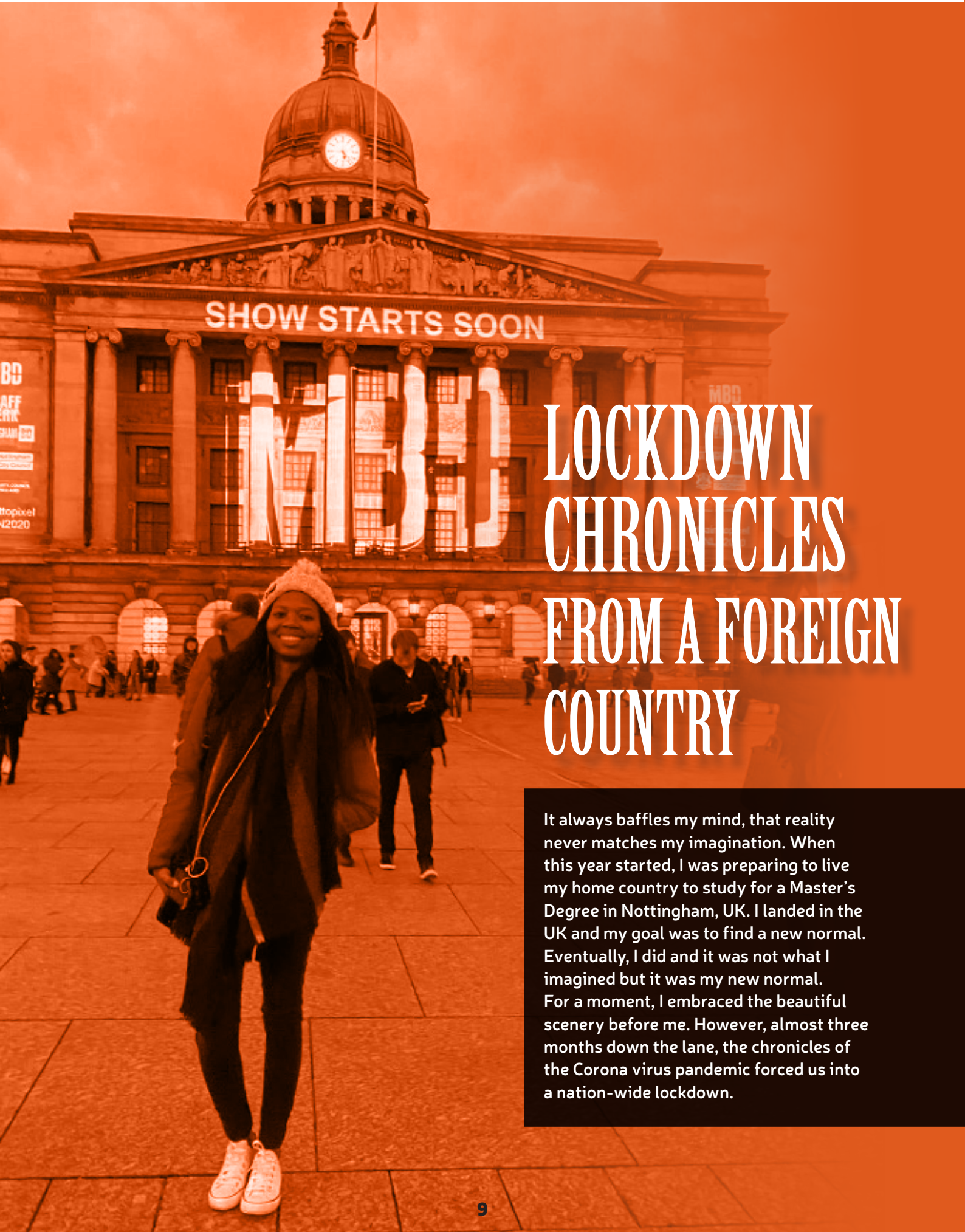
It has also afforded me an opportunity to really internalize the word and deepen my understanding of what it really means when the word says, everything has been given to us, the fact that the Lord lives in me, He is basically part of

me, therefore whatever I do, say or not do directly impacts on this relationship. I cannot love the Lord if I don't love myself enough to nourish my soul with the word, and completely trust in Him. The ability for me to experience joy and peace that surpasses all understanding is mine to experience, in Christ Jesus. I have asked myself what I need to do differently going forward so many times and I found my answer in **Romans 12:3** ***"I'm speaking to you out of deep gratitude for all that God has given me, and especially as I have responsibilities in relation to you. Living then, as every one of you does, in pure grace, it's important that you not misinterpret yourselves as people who are bringing this goodness to God. No, God brings it all to you. The only accurate way to understand ourselves is by what God is and by what he does for us, not by what we are and what we do for him."*** The Message (MSG):

Be blessed

Written by Mmametsi Setlhare





LOCKDOWN CHRONICLES FROM A FOREIGN COUNTRY

It always baffles my mind, that reality never matches my imagination. When this year started, I was preparing to live my home country to study for a Master's Degree in Nottingham, UK. I landed in the UK and my goal was to find a new normal. Eventually, I did and it was not what I imagined but it was my new normal. For a moment, I embraced the beautiful scenery before me. However, almost three months down the lane, the chronicles of the Corona virus pandemic forced us into a nation-wide lockdown.

LOCKDOWN CHRONICLES FROM A FOREIGN COUNTRY

The first week was great because my mind is always tricking me into thinking that if I stay home, I will be much happier. Obviously, in a first world country everything is fast-paced, my school was already transitioning to do everything online and we were to sit for our examinations the following week. The third week was challenging because reality set in. This will be my new normal for now. To tell the truth, I was not afraid of the Corona virus, I spent my early 20s handling and working with the HIV virus. Viruses are deadly but the more you train in the field the more you get accustomed to the bad news. I was rather anxious about the plans I had envisioned for the year.

I started trying to be productive and plan my days, but nothing was going as planned. Frustration was setting in. Social media was a big accelerator of my frustrations. Everyone seemed to know how to be productive during this time and life was moving forward. I am used to being a key worker, hands-on, and working through holidays. This was not my reality anymore. I was home and stuck with a laptop; my mind could not comprehend this new normal. Being an office person is really not my cup

of tea. So, I decided to do a social media detox. I deleted some of the social media apps for some time and exited some Whats App groups which were increasing my anxiety. This was helpful. I started focusing on my reality and finding ways to navigate through it.

I joined a whole year Bible reading plan in the local church here. I started reading the old testament. This is effective because you have to constantly share in the Whats App group, which day you are on and the nuggets of verses that stand out as you read. I started digging the scriptures and dusting off the words that I received from God beginning of the year. I became productive even though it wasn't perfect, there was progress. *Heb 11:3 "By faith, we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible" NKJV.* I have always read this scripture but I have never seen this part....ha-ha. Truth is the words we say matter and like what Pastor Mark Pasimupindu says "Frame your world". We are of God which means we have the power to frame our world also. Yes, it is hard and negative

words are at the tip of our tongues but begin the process. If you fail today, try again tomorrow until it becomes your second nature.

This season, my plan is to wage a war against every thought that tries to exalt itself above the knowledge of God in my life (Paraphrased 2 Cor10: 5) I catch myself during this lockdown sending wrong words to frame my world, however, I am relentless in this pursuit because I have victory in Christ. As the weeks went by some days were super productive and some days all I could say was, Jesus you are my strength and victory. Pressing times reveal our true-self and my advice is to give yourself grace, you have never been here before. God provides in every season so, press into Him.

Practically, I have books that I am reading before I go to bed to reprogram my mind and think the right way. My mornings are for praying and waging war for my destiny. Communicating with loved ones also alleviated my fears; I would like to think, there is nothing love would not heal. This is the new normal for now and I am not sure how long it will last but I have decided, I won't back down. Keep standing in the faith front lines and fully show up.

[Written by Kenanao Kotokwe]



How to Effectively Study the Word

As humans are spiritual beings that live in a physical body. From the moment we are born, we feed the physical body to grow stronger and bigger. The more we eat, the healthier we eat, the more we exercise, the stronger our bodies get. So it is in the Spirit. Through nature, God is able to teach us, speak to us, and provide for us.

Psalm 19:1-4 (NIV)

“The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge. They have no speech, they use no words; no sound is heard from them. Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world”.

Romans 1:20 (NIV)

20 *“For since the creation of the world, God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been*

made, so that people are without excuse”.

1. We have to settle in our hearts and minds that we need the Word of God on a daily basis.

For our spirit man to grow stronger and healthy we have to feed it since it feeds from the Word of God, otherwise we become malnourished and unfit. When you take your meals, just ask yourself, when last did I feed my spirit and how much have I fed it?

2. We need to settle the place of God in our hearts.

Let your whole being (mind, soul, body, heart, spirit) know that God is your everything, without Him you can do nothing; you can’t even move a finger. In my life, I found that settling this in my heart helps me to always find time to commune with the Father. No matter how busy and demanding life may be, I find myself remembering **Leviticus 6:12** - *“The fire on the altar must be kept burning; it must not go out. Every morning the priest is to add firewood and arrange the burnt offering on the fire and burn the fat of the fellowship*

offerings on it. 13 The fire must be kept burning on the altar continuously; it must not go out”.

We are of the priesthood of Christ, the responsibility to keep the fire burning is ours and the firewood that we add every morning is the Word of God.

3. Avoid familiarity with the Word of God.

Familiarity breeds contempt. If we allow ourselves to become too familiar with anything, we eventually take it for granted. The same happens with the Word of God.



How to Effectively Study the Word

We start thinking; 'I have read this over and over again; I do not like this book of the bible, What else is there to learn about this book of the bible, etc.'

I was advised at an early stage of my Christian life that like Manna, the word of God is fresh everyday, even if it's the same verse, it is fresh every time I read it and I must open my heart to let the Lord speak to me through it again.

4. I borrow the words of Peter Bell "Read it like a love letter to you from your Father/King".

When you view the Word that way, you begin to see your beautiful love story unfold. You see how it all started, how special you are, who you are, what you have, the promises, the caution and guidance that you need as you journey through life. You begin to find your purpose and pursue it.

You can't help but fall in love with the Lord. You begin to think about Him more often, day by day, night by night, in your business, work, and even in your diversions. You then find, you are getting to know Him better as you treasure Him and His Word more. Your speech becomes seasoned with grace and your action by His ways.

What a beautiful love, you begin to speak like Solomon in Song of Songs;

Song of Songs 2:4, 10-13 (NIV)

"4 Let him lead me to the banquet hall, and let his banner over me be love".

10 My beloved spoke and said to me, "Arise, my darling, my beautiful one, come with me.11 See! The winter is past; the rains are over and gone.12 Flowers appear on the earth; the season of singing has come, the cooing of doves is heard in our land.13 The fig tree forms its early fruit; the blossoming vines spread their fragrance. Arise, come, my darling; my beautiful one, come with me."

5. Do more than just reading, Study the Word.

Last but not least, if anything most important, we need to learn how to correctly divide or handle the Word of God. 2 Timothy 2:15 (NIV) "15 Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth."

Whenever there is communication (which is the transmission and reception of thoughts and feelings in a medium common to both the sender and the receiver), there is always an understanding gap that exists between the sender and the receiver. This is why there is a need for interpretation on the receiver's side and explanation from the senders' side.

This gap exists between us as recipients of God's word and the people that wrote the scriptures and God, whose message is being relayed. To divide the truth, we need to bridge this gap; we do that by mainly studying the Word.

Without boxing the Holy Spirit, here are a few general guiding principles that I have learned and would like to share;

- a) Consider context rather than phrases.
 - Every Scripture should be read in the context of the whole bible and then in the context of the relevant testament, narrowing it down to the book it appears and then to the passage in which it appears. No verse in the bible exists in isolation; there is always a train of thought behind it relating to the whole subject matter.
 - Do not read into the text (imposing your own perceived ideas and experiences) but rather read out of the text, allowing scripture to talk to you. To effectively do this, you will need to meditate on it, think about it over and over again and let the Holy Spirit reveal it to you.
 - Scripture must make sense, it must be understood, otherwise it would

not benefit our spirit man. This may mean that you need to refer to other resources and materials such as books, seminars, conferences and other saints.

b) Understand the historical background, the language and culture of the writer and original recipients of the book. Failure to understand this leads to abuse of scripture. For example; **Deuteronomy 22:5 (NIV)** 5 "A woman must not wear men's clothing, nor a man wear women's clothing, for the Lord your God detests anyone who does this".

This scripture has been used as a basis for discouraging women from putting on trousers. In bible times, people wore robes, but there were those meant for men and those meant for women. Even in this day, there are trousers for men and those for women.

c) Every scripture must be interpreted by another scripture. Scripture is full of repetition; ask yourself, 'What has God said about this scripture in another area of the bible. Check where else it was mentioned, how was it used and where was it used. This gives balance to our understanding of scripture.

I will stop here for now and hope we will have a great adventure as we see the scripture come alive.



Article by: Christinah Nyathi

SERVING THE KINGDOM

under lockdown

WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN DOING?

In this season, we asked God to continue to use us for His purposes. We had resolved in our hearts that serving the Kingdom was our primary purpose, and that whatever that looked like, we would yield to God. One of those visions was for our Youth Ministry, and another for worship and musical skill.

We had to become a little creative, so we started a devotional series called 'Killing Kryptonite' with J-CREW (our Youth) as we felt it was in line with GOD'S vision for young people. However, we couldn't leave it at posting videos once a week: we engaged them by asking and answering questions. Just as God doesn't want us to only pop up when we want something from Him, we knew that as servants and shepherds, we are encouraged to not just be there for people when it's convenient for us, but to be present even when it costs us something.

don't sweet-talk your way to the top. Put yourself aside, and help others get ahead. Don't be obsessed with getting your own advantage. Forget yourselves long enough to lend a helping hand.

Think of yourselves the way Christ Jesus thought of himself. He had equal status with God but didn't think so much of himself that he had to cling to the advantages of that status no matter what. Not at all. When the time came, he set aside the privileges of deity and took on the status of a slave, became human! Having become human, he stayed human. It was an incredibly humbling process. He didn't claim special privileges. Instead, he lived a selfless, obedient life and then died a selfless, obedient death—and the worst kind of death at that—a crucifixion.

We're called to be servants. It's not an easy calling, but it's rewarding.

So how do we cope with the demands of Social media and online interactions? It takes a SET GOAL, RESEARCH, PLANNING, ENGAGEMENT and TIME. I don't remember the last time we sat and watched a movie until late hours in the night, why? Because we had to have a plan for the next post, the next questions to search the scriptures for, the next call to answer and minister.

Our vision as Christians should be for our city and our country. We are called to GO, and I can go anywhere from my lounge, if I put in the effort and time to use those gadgets and programmes right at my finger tips.

We're called to be servants. It's a harsh calling, but it's eternally rewarding.

Philippians 2:1-8:

If you've gotten anything at all out of following Christ, if his love has made any difference in your life, if being in a community of the Spirit means anything to you, if you have a heart, if you care - then do me a favour: Agree with each other, love each other, be deep-spirited friends. Don't push your way to the front;



SERVING THE KINGDOM under lockdown

THE REAL CHALLENGE AND JOY

Even though we set goals, and try to keep the momentum up, this is purely a FAITH thing: Sometimes you may get discouraged when your group of 50+ teenagers aren't reading your posts, or would rather be doing something else. But we have to constantly seek the Holy Spirits guidance on their passions, goals, desires and interests; from their favourite colour to their ideal coffee. If they even like coffee? Constantly remembering that in order to impact anything, consistency is a key contributor. So we keep innovating new ways to post and communicate, and what keeps us from discouragement is the GOAL that God has in mind.

We both also had to try juggle looking after our 1 year old child while still working full-time as well as other church related posts and graphics. It really took a lot of patience, flexibility and willingness for God to challenge our innermost heart, before we ended up in a cycle that was productive yet not all consuming.

Ultimately, we are all called to "love your neighbour as you love yourself". The real joy of doing this comes from knowing that God gives us capacity and enlarges our territories, like the prayer of Jabez, when we earnestly ask him. To hear the guys liven up after they have watched a video is truly rewarding for us, and we wouldn't have it any other way.

“At the core of our faith lies this belief that almighty God humbled Himself to serve us and die for us. At the root of our calling is a command to imitate Him by serving one another”

ENCOURAGEMENT

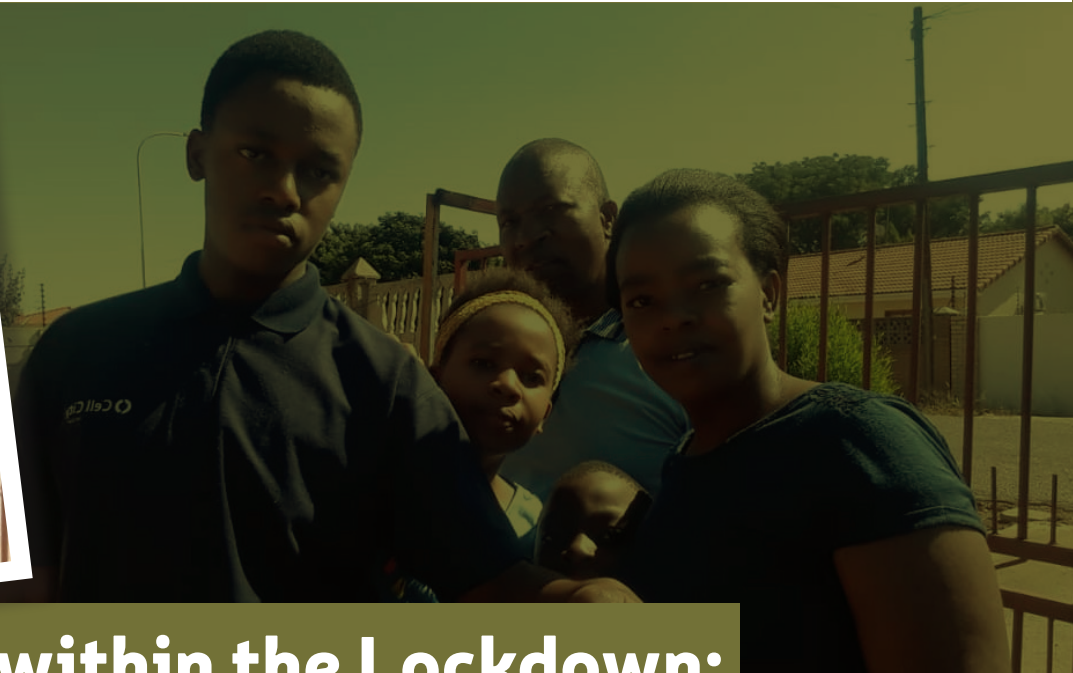
In Francis Chan's 'Letters to the Church', it reads:

"At the core of our faith lies this belief that almighty God humbled Himself to serve us and die for us. At the root of our calling is a command to imitate Him by serving one another".

It's so easy to feel a bit lost sometimes, and as humans we are truly creatures of habit. Thanks to Jesus breaking the mould, He brought a new Way: This season is the perfect time to re-evaluate and reflect on WHO, WHERE, HOW and WHEN you can start a new Way in serving the Kingdom.

1. Understand **WHO** you are shepherding in order to know the steps to take
2. Ask for the passion and the FIRE to show you where you are called, or to re-ignite that spark that you have lost in going through the motions
3. **WHERE** should the vision lead to. Is this for just my community or should it go beyond
4. **HOW!** This is the real deal breaker - Ask the creative God to show you how, or even creative friends for some advice
5. Lastly, time is important - **WHEN** (Reading the temperature of the virtual room). There is a time and season for everything.

Written by Phil & Val Brown



A lockdown within the Lockdown: Our sons accident!

Monday the 20th of April looked like any other day, like many, I think, its arrival marked a milestone: we had just begun the third week of the lockdown, and only two officially remained. As a family we had done what we could to draw a lockdown programme

I had earlier on in the day successfully applied for a permit to go to the office to pick some documents which was granted. After being done I retraced my footsteps (or my car prints?) back home. At the gate my little son, Munya, came out to open the gate with the sister nudging behind. I did see him start to open the gate but I am not sure what happened next. I came to my senses when I heard this loud scream from the boy. I watched in horror as I realised the gate had fallen on top of him. I momentarily froze. I remained behind trying to understand what had happened only to realise the gate came out of the rail and came crashing on him. I pinched myself.

When I came into the house, Evelyn who was equally shocked, asked a thousand and one questions. I explained that what had happened was an accident. The boy had now been laid on the sofa and the challenge was to identify where he had been injured or confirm where it hurt most. Afterthought, sweat and tears, we took Munya to a clinic. We agreed with my wife that we would not alert anyone at this stage, until we understood the degree of injury and what needed to be done for treatment,

lest this would cause anxiety and alarm to many people.

A friendly nurse advised the boy needed an X-ray which could only be obtained the next day. She helped by putting a sling on the left shoulder. We prayed to God for speedy healing before retiring to sleep. Evelyn said Munya had struggled to sleep, as he complained of pain. We obtained the X-ray the next day. I decided not to open it due to possible anxiety. I took the X-ray back to the clinic, on Tuesday 21st April before noon. A kind medical practitioner attended to us and after examining the X-ray she asked me whether I understood what the X-ray was showing. I said no, as I had not viewed it. The doctor plainly said the left collar bone of the young man was broken into two! My heart sank. The young boy instantly cried and was inconsolable. Seeing the my son cry like that moved me.

Questions ran through my mind like lightning. I had never experienced this bone fracture before or witnessed it on my close friends or relatives. Through this brief moment of panic, I immediately asked God to tell me what he was teaching me about this accident. As I was lost in my thoughts,

the doctor explained we needed to see an orthopaedic (bone) doctor at the referral hospital.

What had looked like a simple situation had suddenly become grim, and I couldn't help but to feel responsible in a way. It seemed suddenly to become dark. The lockdown assumed its true meaning on me and my family. Suddenly it was me who needed support and encouragement, but it was me who had just send a message of encouragement to others the previous week, how quickly things can turn around. Waiting to go to the referral hospital, we were confined to an emergency room. I immediately started to pray for my son in the emergency room, in a standing position and holding him by the shoulder. As I continued to pray, a nurse entered the room, momentarily I thought the sight of me praying to my son in any emergency room was very odd to the nurse.

We were whisked in a government car to the referral hospital. My wife having joined me at the hospital, Munya was admitted to the outpatients department. The orthopaedic surgeon assessed the x-ray said there are two options for

A lockdown within Lockdown: **Our son's accident!**

achieving treatment and healing: one was operation and the other natural healing or conservative method. He said operation involved incision into the body and healing would take anything up to two months but the conservative healing would take much longer. Lighting fast thoughts plagued my mind before I settled on the operation as the best option. The doctor explained in both cases 100% healing was achievable, only the time frame was different. As if reading my mind the doctor said that with natural healing you will be amazed with how clever the bones are, they will merge perfectly and complete healing would be achieved. He said he would consult his senior to settle on an option.

As soon as the doctor went, the discussion set in. I wasted no time in outlining my preference trying to rally everyone to it. Then the little boy quipped, "Dad, I already made a declaration to God that I should not be operated". I was taken aback and I remembered that at some point I had a discussion with the children about declaring to God what you want or don't. I always use the example of David how he declared to the Philistine giant Goliath about how he would kill him, through the Lord of Heavenly armies. With this, I meekly consented that if he had already made a declaration to God, He would honour it.

The doctor came a few minutes later and informed us that they had settled on natural healing as the preferred option and stated that the boy needed to be admitted into the pediatric surgical ward for at least one night for observation. With this the boy was admitted, and unfortunately, Evelyn had to stay with the boy in hospital during the period of admission. I went home after a very long day and Munya's siblings were keen on hearing his condition. I told them he was doing well and recited the daily proceedings to reassure them. We hurdled together and prayed for him and his mom. Munya spent the next two nights in hospital.

When I went to see him the next day which was Wednesday. He had a question for me, Dad, if you were injured like me how would you feel? "I would be happy—, "Happy?" he chipped. "I mean thankful..." "Thankful?" he chipped again. "What I mean is that I would be happy and thankful to God that it was not worse", I finally said.

Lessons

There are numerous lessons I learned through this process including;

1. **Protection of children**
Every parent feels it's their responsibility to guard and protect their children. This is correct. However, despite our best efforts we can only be there for them. Full protection is only provided by their Creator Psalms 127:3 Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward.
2. **Emotional connection to Children**
Emotional connection to children is normal. David fasted and lay on the ground for 7 days when his son was sick 2 Samuel 12:16-17; David mourned for his son Absalom who was plotting to kill him and wished he had died instead of his son: 2 Samuel 18:34
3. **Position of God**
Our emotional connections with our children and everything he gives us does not replace the position of God in our lives: Matthew 22:37 (Love your God with all your heart). God comes first in our lives. If I had no kids my love for God should not be any less strong. Romans 8: 37-40-nothing in all creation should separate us from the love of Christ.
4. **Spirituality of children**
The spirituality of Children come at an early stage: Even though we tend to think they are not there yet, children's connection to Jesus comes early and they grow with it. Munya surprised me by saying he had declared to God he didn't want an operation
5. **Testing the family bond**
In the middle of a crisis, the family bond is tested. The Devil likes it when you lose focus and blame each other
6. **The power of prayer**
Prayer has power that cannot be underestimated. Even without immediate results, it is reassuring and strengthens our faith in a crisis (Hebrew 11:1- Faith is the confidence of what we hope for; it is the evidence of

things we cannot see). Jesus prayed before he was crucified and continued even on the cross. In the most difficult circumstances, it is easy to feel that God has forsaken us, but this is the very time to pray for He is with us.

7. **The joy of children**
Our journey through this was made easier by the attitude of Munya. Apart from the first two days of the injury he is jovial and up and about, obviously masking the seriousness of the injury. The Mashatinis (Pauline and Tendai) reminded us when they visited us that this is why Jesus said let the children come to me for the kingdom of God is for people who are like children (Luke 18:16). Adults tend look for all kinds of conspiracy theories in these circumstances
8. **Humanity**
Everywhere where we went, the nurses and doctors were very friendly. It so much lightened our grief to see and know that people cared and we were in awe that God is in them.
9. **Relationships**
Every support we got from the CFAN family, the sms, phone calls, the prayers really mattered and not only gave us spiritual and moral support, but challenged our response to others in similar circumstances. Somehow it makes you realise that the small things you do to people matter and they remember. Talk about relationships as a bank account, also described as Social Capital-just like with an actual bank account, you can withdraw the money in a crisis, so with relationships. You can always bank on them during these periods. Our since thanks to all those who have supported us in whatever way.

As we look forward to the healing of our son, we thank God it was not worse and through his Grace he will receive complete healing. Again the young man is in good spirits and we thank everyone for their support.

Let us trust Him in all circumstances

Written by Fungai Muzawazi



Importance of Communication *in marriage*

At the core of every healthy marriage is the ability of a couple to successfully communicate with one another. Learning to communicate with your spouse is like learning a foreign language. It doesn't come naturally, It is a skill that must be learned and developed.

Polls and surveys consistently demonstrate that the number one issue that cripples a married couple's relationship is poor communication..

WHAT COMMUNICATION IS NOT;
Communication is not just talking..."
running our mouth"Real communication
involves talking,..BUT IT INVOLVES
MUCH MORE!Nor is communication is just
listening!

SO WHAT IS COMMUNICATION?
Communication is the SHARING OF
MEANING!A husband and wife have not
communicated UNTIL MEANING HAS
BEEN SHARED!One sends a certain
message and the other UNDERSTANDS
THAT MEANING!.That is communication!
God, the author of the Bible, is a
communicator. When he created the
heavens and the earth, he did it by
communicating. He said, "Let there be
light." In fact, through nature he speaks to
us every day. David said this:
*The heavens declare the glory of God; the
skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day
after day they pour forth speech; night
after night they display knowledge. There
is no speech or language where their voice
is not heard. Their voice goes out into all
the earth, their words to the ends of the
world.*

God speaks to us through nature, telling
us of his great glory and splendor. He also
speaks to us through his Son, who came

to the earth not only to die for our sins but
also to give us the Father's words. In fact,
John the Baptist called Jesus "the Word"
(John 1:1); God is a communicator, and
man, who is made in the image of God, is a
communicator as well.

*Proverbs 18:21 says, "The tongue has the
power of life and death, and those who
love it will eat its fruit."* What do you think
Solomon meant when he said the power of
life and death is in the tongue? Solomon
understood that as people made in the
image of God, we similarly have power
in our tongues. We have power to create
and power to destroy. We can encourage
people and lift them up with our words or
destroy them with our words.

Many people carry great hurt and pain
from words spoken over them years ago.
They were ugly, skinny, fat, not smart
enough, not athletic enough, not social
enough, etc., and that stigma stayed with
them for years. James, the brother of
Jesus, taught that even though the tongue
is a small member of the body, it controls
the body. It guides the body like the bit in
a horse's mouth or the rudder of a ship
(James 3:1-6).

By our words, we can develop a beautiful
and prosperous marriage that glorifies
God. And, by our words, we can destroy
the very gift and mission God has given us
in marriage.



Principles that will enhance
communication in marriage:

#Know Your Mate

Peter said this in *1 Peter 3:7*: "*Husbands,
in the same way be considerate as you
live with your wives, and treat them with
respect as the weaker partner and as heirs
with you of the gracious gift of life, so
that nothing will hinder your prayers.*" "Be
considerate" can also be translated "dwell
with them according to knowledge," as
seen in the KJV.

The husband must develop knowledge of
his wife's person. Each person is uniquely
made. Things that bother the wife might
not bother the husband. Things that excite
the husband might not excite the wife and
vice versa.

The husband must learn what makes
the wife happy, what makes her sad, and
what angers her and use this information
to build her up and communicate with
her better. Even though Peter speaks to
husbands, this is certainly true for wives
as well. In Greek, the word "know" typically
refers to not just an intellectual knowledge
but also an experiential knowledge.

Importance of Communication *in marriage*

How should they develop this knowledge?

As Peter said, they develop it by spending time with one another (i.e. "dwell"). While dating, couples often spend as much time as possible with one another, but sadly in marriage, quality time starts to fade. The husband has work; the wife is caring for the house and children and possibly working as well. As the children get older, the husband and wife spend more time focusing on the children and less time on one another. As this rhythm continues, they eventually get to the point where they no longer know one another at all. These two individuals change every day and to continue to know one another intimately, they must make time for one another. This time could include yearly couple retreats, weekly date nights, and daily times of intimate communication. The more distant spouses become, the greater they struggle with communication.

Marital communication is not only knowing your mate, but accepting and honoring your mate as the man or the woman God made them to be. A common source of miscommunication in marriage is the simple fact that men and women are different. Not only does the opposite sex have many physical and emotional differences but communication differences as well.

God chose man and woman for one another. Eve was taken from Adam's ribs and formed perfectly to match him. (Gen 1:27).

In creating man and woman, we can be sure God was aware of the immense differences that could cause conflict in their relationship. Therefore, he gave clear instructions in his Word about how to navigate the communication gap in order to have a successful marriage

Always Speak Edifying Words to your spouse:

God makes it very clear that we should never dishonor him or her through our words... Sadly, this often happens in marriages, in direct conflict with God's commands.

Paul says this in *Ephesians 4:29-30*: *Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. Never let unwholesome talk come out of our mouths...i.e cursing, blaming, accusing, gossiping, lying, etc.*

Paul also gives the positive directive of speaking "only" words that build the other up according to their needs (v. 29). Psychologists have affirmed a useful method to aid in this process called using "I statements" instead of "you statements". When a wife or husband says, "You never listen to me!" and "You don't care about me!" This automatically makes a husband feel attacked and go on the defensive.

Speak only words that edify, especially when dealing with a potentially sensitive topic.

Practice the Art of Listening (active listening);

James, the brother of Jesus, said, "My dear brothers, take note of this: *Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry*" (*James 1:19*).

Here are a few tips to be a better listener;

Repeat what our spouse said in order to get confirmation. For instance, one could say, "This is what I hear you saying, you feel neglected when I watch TV all night. Is that correct?" By repeating, you get to clarify your spouse's words and intentions. You also show him or her that you are trying to understand.

2. Practice listening to what your spouse is NOT saying;

Communication is between 60 to 90% nonverbal. Sometimes, just the fact that a spouse is quiet may say a great deal. Study your spouse's body language and tendencies in order to enhance communication.



3. Practice listening to the Holy Spirit.

Practice praying, even sometimes during conversations, so we can hear what God wants us to hear and say (cf. Neh 2:4-5). James 1:5 says, "If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault..."

4. Practice speaking less.

We must learn how to talk less. Solomon said this in *Proverbs*, "In the multitude of words sin is not lacking" (10:19, NKJV). In many relationships, people talk way too much and, therefore, listen way too little, which leads to constant arguments. James said we should be quick to listen and "SLOW TO SPEAK."

God is a communicator; The Bible teaches that not only do we need God's wisdom but also God's power to communicate well because of our propensity to sin. Jesus said in *John 15:5*: "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." When you remain in Christ, God will give you the fruits needed to be successful. These fruits include patience, self-control, love, forgiveness, and even the right words to say.

By remaining in Christ, we recognize our inability to communicate well, and how, apart from his grace, we will destroy what God has given us. And for those who humble themselves daily before God, they will find great grace to communicate in marriage (cf. James 4:6, 10).

Conclusion

As we consider communication in marriage, we must remember God is a communicator and we are made in his image. Therefore, we are made to communicate. As we rely on God, through practicing principles in his Word, we can begin to use our communication to build our marriages instead of breaking them down!

ENJOY YOUR MARRIAGE!

Written by Roy Segatsho

Self Isolation: my experience.

Every year for the past 3 years, I have travelled for my birthday and I didn't expect this year to be any different. We had heard about this flu like virus illness overseas and still it seemed normal like every other year. Previously either bird flu, SARS, or Ebola, always threatened the world, but never succeeded beyond certain regions, but little did we know that this year was different. So we weren't worried initially, it was just another regular year or so we thought as we completed our Payments.

2 days before we were to leave for South Africa, our intended destination, they had their first a case of Corona and thats when the confusion started. We decided to take the risk, after all its just one case, and so we stocked up on hand sanitizers, masks, gloves and a few medicines including vitamin C, allegex and paracetamol and went. Trip was amazing, eye opening and we had no regrets but unfortunately on the other side, things started to unravel and the cases increased each day.

Out of panic and fear, we spent three times more than planned in order to get back, just in order to reduce the risk of contracting the disease. Once at the airport, we were screened and given only information leaflet, as we weren't considered a threat to the country. Home and work was a different story, sterilized at door by our mother, panic had struck, as colleagues feared for themselves and she was instructed not to return but to go to a health facility and get quarantined for the mandatory 14 days, and thats what happened. I was already on leave. First week of our self isolation was ok, short, we tried to stay in our sleeping areas though occasionally going out for some limited family time. Second week was harder, with our brothers home, as well as our mother working from home. All went well until day 11 and 14, when I had mild flu like symptoms. The confusing thing was that after taking some pills, I was fine but

was still worried. I prayed and trusted that this was just normal cold symptoms like I would have at least twice a month every month. On the last day of quarantine, which was before the national lockdown, I even tried going to the house church in my neighbourhood but I started sneezing on the way. A few minutes after arriving there, listening to people laughing, wondering what to do, I made my way back home without ever leaving the car. I went straight to bed until evening. It was another scary day as symptoms were still mild but more persistent.

Thinking back now, weeks later after testing negative, I have to say I am grateful for the many joyful moments experienced including bonding with my family like never before, and things I have learnt in all aspects of my life. I am also grateful to be alive at this time in particular living through this pandemic, which I would have always thought was a fictional book or thriller movie, but now knowing fully that by God's will, we will survive it as a nation and as the world, we just need to put our trust in him and seek him.

Though I was not able to do all that I had planned for my leave due to initial self isolation followed by lock down, I had time to reassess my life, and I have to say, I am blessed.



Written by Koone Pule

Effective ways of disciplining children.



Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, many schools have closed. Children are at home for an extended period and boredom and mischief can settle in. This can be a time for parents to bond with their children and enhance desirable behaviours in them. We need to be encouraged since God disciplines us as his children, we should also discipline our children. **Hebrews 12:5-6 states that, "Have you completely forgotten this word of encouragement that addresses you as a father addresses his son? It says, "My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son".** Below are a few methods in disciplining.

1. Obeying mother and father

The first commandment is **"Children obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honour your father and mother"—which is the first commandment with a promise**" **Ephesians 6v1.** I always wondered why this was part of the commandments, until I realised how important it is to God. The scripture emphasizes parents in the Lord. The parent needs to be within God's will so that the child can obey. Children are very aware of their surroundings and at first, they learn by imitation. They are constantly watching and internalising what is happening around them. They are seeing and copying what the parent is doing. Parents need to be in the will of the Lord so that the child can copy and also be in the will of the Lord.

2. Teaching and training the children

Proverbs 3v 1 says, "My son, do not forget my teaching, but keep my commands in your heart". We need to be consistently teaching and correcting until they have grasped it. We need to teach our children what is right from

wrong. It is easier to teach good behaviour from an earlier age than it is to correct bad behaviour when they are older. Positive reinforcement and highlighting when they do well is good. **Proverbs 22v 6 states that, "Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old, he will not depart from it.** Parents let us not get tired of teaching and training our children. Even if it seems as if it is falling on deaf ears, let us be consistent and firm.

3. To spank or not to spank

There is a great debate of whether corporal punishment is effective. The bible teaches in **Proverbs 13v24, "Whoever spares the rod hates their children, but the one who loves their children is careful to discipline them".** It further reads that, **"Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you punish them with the rod, they will not die. Punish them with the rod and save them from death"** **Proverbs 23 v13-14.** Whether one subscribes to corporal punishment or not, the bible makes it clear that there should be consequences to bad behaviour. Punishments need to be age appropriate and consistent. There are various strategies such as time out, being grounded, banning of TV/phone and made to do more chores, just to name a few. Hebrews 12 v11 further on explains that, **"No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it."** If spanking a child is not producing any desired outcomes, it would be advisable to explore other options. Getting a relative or teacher to talk to the child to find out exactly what is the reason for the rebelliousness, would be helpful.

4. Exasperating children

The word exasperate means "to roughen," "irritate," or "provoke." To exasperate is to make something that is already bad even worse. Paul writes that **"Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord"** **Ephesians 6v4.** When we try to discipline our children as parents, it is normally from a point of anger and frustration. We are so upset that we do not even notice that we are shouting and making the situation even worse. Let us learn to calm down and

address the issue, rather than attack the child. Use a calm but firm voice when approaching the child. Explain the issue, why it is bad and the consequences that will follow. This will create a chance to get a response from the child as to what his or her intentions were.

5. Forgiving children

Just like adults, children also need forgiveness. After the child has apologised and repented, the child needs to hear I forgive you from the parents. This is a great chance to demonstrate what forgiveness is. It brings reconciliation and mends strained relations. Culturally, it is very rare to hear parents say this as they bring up the same issues many years later. When Peter asks Jesus how many times he should forgive, "Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times" **Matthew 18v22.** This is mentioned figuratively as one can forgive as many times possible. God cannot out-forgive us, just as parents should not out-forgive their children. And believe me, there will be plenty of opportunities to forgive your children.

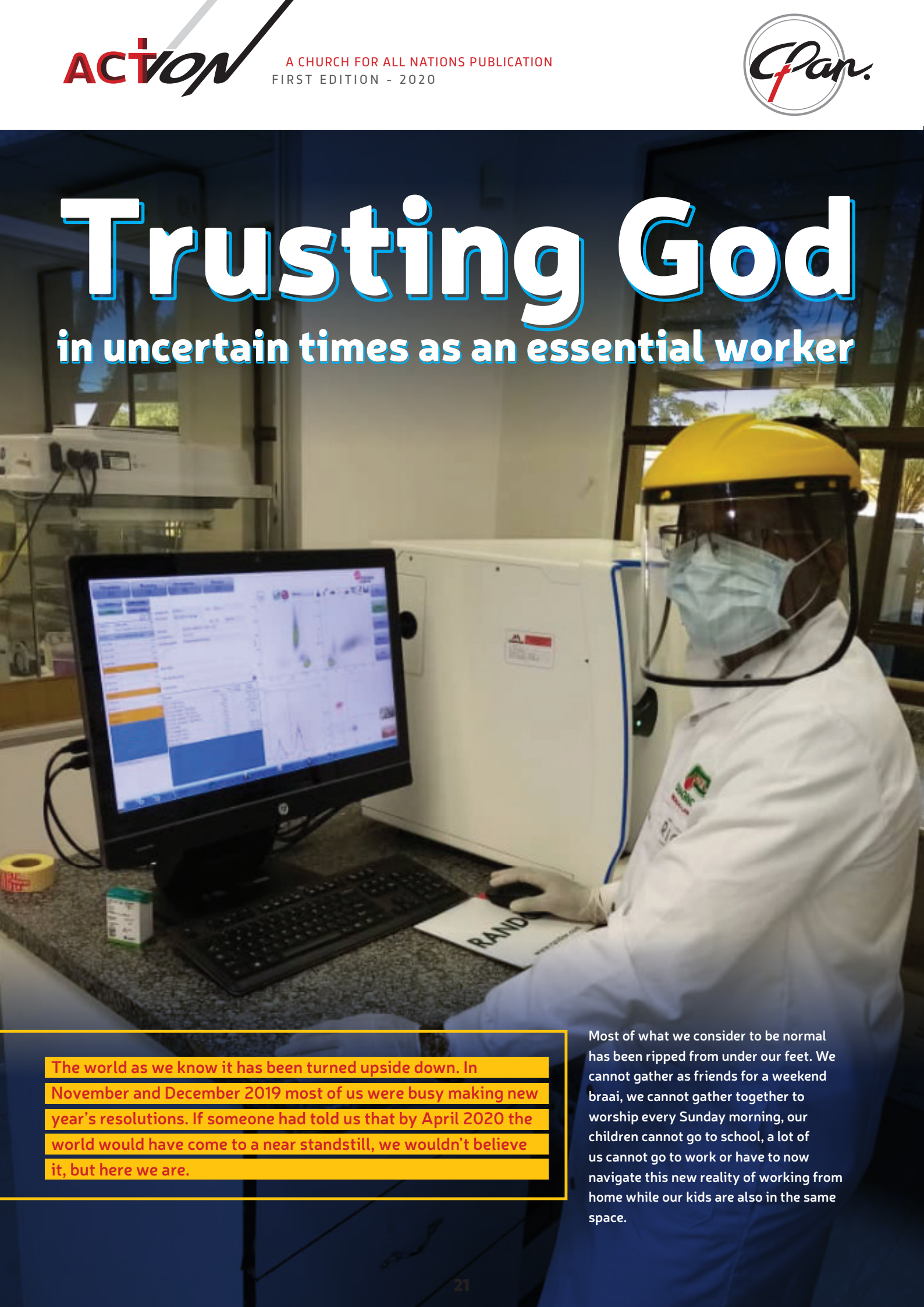
In conclusion, let us be comforted that the children we have are also God's children. He loves them and wants the best for them. As parents, we have a responsibility to input Godly values into our children. Luke 18v16-17 concurs that, "Jesus called the children to him and said, **"Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these."** Let us not hinder our children as they do have a place in the kingdom of God.



Curated by Nonsi Moyo

Trusting God

in uncertain times as an essential worker



The world as we know it has been turned upside down. In November and December 2019 most of us were busy making new year's resolutions. If someone had told us that by April 2020 the world would have come to a near standstill, we wouldn't believe it, but here we are.

Most of what we consider to be normal has been ripped from under our feet. We cannot gather as friends for a weekend braai, we cannot gather together to worship every Sunday morning, our children cannot go to school, a lot of us cannot go to work or have to now navigate this new reality of working from home while our kids are also in the same space.

Trusting God in uncertain times as an essential worker

These are some of the challenges a lot of us are facing. However, there is also a different kind of challenge most of us in the essential services sector are also facing. Everyday we leave our houses knowing that we are at risk of being exposed to Covid-19 and in turn expose our families. This leaves a lot of people in a state of fear and uncertainty. We need our Lord, Jesus Christ, the one who is always certain and never changing to help us get through this season.

The question someone working in the essential services might ask is, "How do I trust God when I am at risk of infection daily and how can I be sure God will protect me?" Some of us are working in supermarkets making sure people can still buy food, others are working at the farms making sure there is enough food in the country, others are working in hospitals looking after sick patients and being conduits of God's healing power while others are working behind the scenes making sure every suspected case is tested in a timely manner to allow effective contact tracing. We have some who work in the transport industry and are travelling to Covid-19 hot-spots in South Africa so that the country can have a constant supply of goods and food. We wake up everyday knowing we are going to interact with different people and some of these might be Covid-19 carriers.

We pray and trust God to protect us even when it is difficult for some of us to be sure of the assurance that God will indeed look after us.

Trusting God is based on the relationship we have with him. I don't know anyone who trusts someone they have never interacted with. All the people we trust are individuals we have met or interacted with at one point or another. This is the same with God. Our relationship, fellowship and interaction with God before and during this difficult time makes it possible for us to trust him. In John 15, Jesus talks about this relationship we have with him "Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing" John 15:5. When we remain in Christ, he remains in us and we interact with him. We get to know him, and

we get a chance to see for ourselves what he can do for us (be it healing, provision, protection etc.) and we learn to trust him. It is this interaction and fellowship that helps us to trust when times are hard. It becomes easier to trust him because we have a track record with him, the same way anyone who is thinking on embarking on a serious off-road adventure will trust using a Toyota Land cruiser over other brands.

One of the reasons we struggle in uncertain times is the fear of what might happen and, in this case, the fear of infection while doing our jobs. The risk of infection is genuinely high; however, the enemy takes advantage of that fact to paralyze us with fear and draw us away from our God-given duty of serving our nation. When we are faced with a fearful situation it is always hard to see and think clearly. One of the things I do when I find myself fearful about the future or an unknown situation is to decide mentally, emotionally and spiritually to turn away from the situation and focus on God. This helps me remember my identity in Christ which is found in his word. I read some of my favourite scriptures (Psalm 91, John 15, Hebrews 11). I find the Psalms to be soothing in this time, because like David we wake up everyday without knowing which direction this uncertainty is taking. When I read through the Psalms, I identify with David in his cries to God. I identify with David when he tells himself to trust God:

*"Why am I discouraged?
Why is my heart so sad?
I will put my hope in God!
I will praise him again—my Saviour" Psalm 42:5*

The second thing that happens in this time is that most of us start feeling isolated. The extreme social distancing has isolated some of us from our support system (Church, DGs, extended family etc.). One of the things I will encourage us is to have a personal relationship with God, one that doesn't depend on other people but one

that is built between me and God. Secondly, I will encourage us to take advantage of technology and connect with our support system. When I find myself discouraged, I'll pick up the phone and speak to someone using the different platforms for video calling to share my fears, worries and struggles (Whats App, Skype, Zoom etc.). I am also available to encourage others who share their struggles with me. For those of us who live alone, this daily connection with others is critical during this time. This connection helps us stay in touch but more importantly it helps us to continually encourage each other and pray for each other.

Finally, I also try to make it easier for myself to trust God. I try to filter the information and news I expose myself to. I want to spend more time focusing on how good God is and not on how many more people have died from Covid-19 around the world. Focusing on the global tally of infections and deaths discourages me most of the time while focusing on the goodness of God gives me hope that "this too shall pass" and we will live our "normal" lives again even if the new normal is different from what we knew before. However, in all this I do not ignore the facts on the ground. More and more people are still getting sick and more people are still dying, however I do not make that the focus of my life. God is my focus; I will remain in his presence and look at my situation through his eyes.

Written by Innocent Mpunga



Covid-19 Quarantine Diary

Some of you might be aware that my job at times entails travelling extensively within Botswana and External to Botswana as well. Thus follows that on Sunday 15th March 2020 straight after church service I travelled to Johannesburg, RSA with a work Colleague on business. Because the Covid- 19 news had started rearing its head we opted for driving thus avoid flights and OR Tambo airport which is deemed high risk due to the magnitude of passengers using it from all the world.

We drove through Tlokwen / Kopfontein border post. On return to Botswana(Wednesday evening 18th March2020)at the Botswana border entry, we were subjected to quick temperature checks and also had to fill in forms that also gave our contact details as well as next of Kin. We were also given a medical chart to monitor on daily basis temperatures, other related symptoms. All was well and we went our way. It is worth noting when we arrived at the border post there was much activity than normal and I may have counted about 5 ambulances stationed there and they were people being taken to the ambulances – I assume they were exhibiting some sort of symptoms. To be honest I almost panicked thinking when you get tense you may just display a false high temperature.

Next morning I flew out again to Maun for a project I am working on – the upgrade of Maun Airport and returned Friday 20th March.

Monday 24th I then received a call from MOH stating that since I had travelled to RSA a country deemed a hot spot of the Virus, I was to self-isolate /Quarantine with immediate effect, for 14 days upon which at the end I must present myself for final check and testing to be issued a clearance certificate. The whole experience was not bad but I had anxiety and prayed that I did not come into contact with any persons and contracted the disease. I recall one day I had a mildly upset tummy and my mind started racing in suspicion of a covid19 infection since this was listed as one of the symptoms.

Staying in Isolation is quite trying as you have to keep away from family and friends. With the incubation period being 2 to 14 days, one is never quite sure if they are safe or not and if at some point they can develop the symptoms. One of the challenges is taking temperatures daily as required even though you are not given a thermometer, which I had to purchase. Well, at least the positive side of it is that in the long term, I now own one and can check my temperature if at any point I don't feel well even for any issues outside Covid-19.

It just so happened that my quarantine period was ending the very day the whole country was put on lockdown. So, by the time this lockdown started, I was used to the experience. This time has given me time to reflect on a lot of positives as well; like there is no need to be at the shopping malls all the time spending money and fuel. I have resumed an exercise regime first thing in the morning that I used to avoid by using going

to work as an excuse. I trust this will carry on even after normalcy returns to our lives.

Friday 03 April, I reported to Block 8 for testing and my results came back negative accompanied by a clearance certificate to the fact. So my ordeal was over and I was happy and free once more. I do have to admit my house partner, my wife was also a bit on the anxious side thinking what it would mean for her if I had it. Even though it was evident, she didn't want to admit it at all.

It's now over a month and all is good. Although we miss attending church physically, we are keeping abreast with the online virtual church preached availed via Facebook and Whats App.

I urge us all to stay home and be safe, keeping ourselves busy for we shall overcome this period and rise again as a nation and the church soon. Stay positive in spite of all the negative effects of the lockdown.

Make sure your faith in God and prayer life does not change and go down during this lockdown. Now there is no church meetings on Sunday, prove that you a follower of Christ, not just a church goer and social attendee.

Stay Blessed

Written by George Chikurunhe



Doing business during lockdown

When the year started we all had our dreams, plans, goals and more, for 2020. I for one had done my first ever strategic planning session with my team and we were set for a new course. I believed God was on our side, as always and that He would definitely guide us to even greater heights. In the midst of all this, we were hearing of corona virus very far away from us. We heard about it, as we had heard of SARS, Ebola, Cholera etc. with the typical 'that doesn't concern us' kind of attitude. Little did we know that in less than three months people in Botswana would be under a nationwide lockdown, and we would all be pause and ponder our future.

As the news of the advent of Covid 19 in Africa and specifically South Africa came, we knew it was now much closer to us and discussions began among us as physiotherapists. What were we going to do, given that we are front line workers providing a service where we are in close contact with a patient for 30-45 minutes? People talked about how they couldn't risk contracting the virus, meanwhile, I sat there thinking about my ten members of staff, a large clinical area which translates to a huge amount of money in rent and the family to take care of. We surely couldn't afford to shut down. I started my conversations with God. Isaiah 1:18 says 'come let us reason together' and me being me, taking the bible literally, I started engaging God about the situation before us. I felt God lead me to Psalms 91 and it became our daily bread. I remember Nathaniel, my seven year old son, say, 'no plague shall come near our gate? So corona virus shall not come near us.'

We had to communicate our position with our staff members and gave them an opportunity to express any fears they could be having about working in such times. Only one opted out. This doesn't mean people were not afraid but as a leader I had to be strong and allow the team to draw

from my strength which I draw from Christ, the solid rock. I remember being asked why I didn't seem worried about Corona virus and my reason was simple; *greater is he that is in me, than he that is in the world.* Fear, child of God, robs you of peace and yet Christ has promised you His peace, a peace that is not like the other in this world but one that enables you to sleep peacefully during a storm. I must add at this point, that we have a daughter who is studying in the UK and all I could do for her was pray and point her to Christ, our healer, our protector and strong tower. The bible says 'he who trusts in him shall never be put to shame' and I believe this with all my heart.

First day of the lockdown we saw four clients, a number I don't remember seeing in the last two years (we have been operating for three years now). I was not worried because deep inside me I knew that things would turn around. I believe in a God of miracles, of abundance, who is concerned about my life - every aspect of it, (John 10:10). The next day we saw six patients, I was overjoyed. A few days later we were seeing twelve and now we are at more than fifteen and our best has



been twenty three so far. This is still not where we were before lockdown, but we sure can cover our huge rentals and some of the salaries. God has come through for us as usual and I know, He will exceed what I can imagine or think. Reading the book of Matthew, I realised that Jesus kept saying, 'as you believe,' or 'according to your faith, let it be done to you'. Do we limit ourselves because we do not believe in more for ourselves? *Matthew 4:4 says 'man cannot live in bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'* I have underlined every word. **Indeed I am who God says I am, I can do what God says I can do. I am a co-heir with Christ, the hope of glory.**

The word of God is my strength and my comfort for He tells me that 'He will never leave me nor forsake me', and 'He is with me always up to the end of time'. I believe my world is getting brighter and brighter unto the perfect day. In the meantime I hold on to the promises of God who has elevated His word above all else.

Written by Pauline Kusuwo

Kickstarting Your Spiritual Journey

Change is always part of God’s plan, for without it there can be no growth and progress. Change awards us the opportunity to embrace new beginnings, to embrace things that will bring a difference in our lives.



I believe you can agree with me on that, regardless of our position or level of maturity in Christ we all go through life experiences that challenge our fundamental Christian beliefs. Now and then, our faith in God gets challenged, we find ourselves losing the joy of studying the word, we lose track of our prayer life, our connection with the Holy Spirit drifts away. We get lost in the speed of what is happening in our lives and drift away from God.



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No soldier wants to go to the battleground in absence of his or her weapons. Soldiers frequently check if their weapons are still in good condition in case they get called to the battleground. They regularly advance their knowledge on principles of warfare because they know things change and advance. How often do we find ourselves drifting away from the things of God because of what we are going through or what is happening around us? How often do we keep check of our spiritual development? How often do we go back to the basics to see if they have not lost meaning to our spiritual journey?

Kickstart has been designed to help set alight a fire in our hearts for Jesus Christ. It's not only for new believers but for anyone who says, 'I want to learn and be reminded about basic Christian foundations, I want to learn more about Christian lifestyle.' It's a platform where we explain why we do what we do, why we do things the way we do them, why we value the values we value..

Now that I am saved what must I do?

Our salvation is a precious gift given to us from God, but its very imperative we understand that it does not end there. Our salvation calls us to a relationship with God and there is a way to maintain that relationship.

Let us look at some foundational tools that can help us grow and maintain our relationship with our Father, the Almighty God.

1. Prayer: communicating with God

I think the most important aspect of prayer is us knowing who we are praying to. God is our Father, and not only is He is our father but our father who loves us and has our best interest at heart. As a father He is our source of everything. It delights His heart when His children talk to Him and call on His name. God

wants us to talk to Him about everything. We as believers need to be a praying people. Make time to connect to your Father today through prayer. Be ready to talk and listen.

2. The Word: the sword of the Spirit

God is a relational Father. He wants us to know Him and how to relate with Him. His word provides guidelines for us to follow in order to live and act as God's children. We see that He has inspired men through the Holy Spirit to author the bible. It is through His word to us that He reveals His will for us, He outlines his plan for us. How amazing it is that we have a Father who does not keep us in the dark but reveals His heart to us, His children. [2 Timothy 3:16-17]

3. Holy Spirit: Our helper

The Holy Spirit has many roles in the life of a believer. It is important to realize that true Christianity is impossible without the help of the Holy Spirit. This means we need to maintain our connection with Him in our spiritual journey.

Some of his roles include;

- a. He convicts us of sin and righteousness
- b. He reveals the truth to us.
- c. He is the life giver
- d. He empowers us to witness for Christ
- e. He gives us spiritual gifts to use for ministry
- f. He helps us in our prayers.

4. Loving God and others

God himself loved us despite our weaknesses. We therefore, should not only love Him but others as well. *1 John 4:7 Dear friends let us love one another for love comes from God.*

5. Tithing & Giving

It is important for us believers that when we surrender our lives to Christ, we also give up our everything. When we give and tithe,

we obey God for He commanded us to do so. Tithing and giving shows, we love to honour God with our money. It also shows that we love God and put Him first before our money. We partner with God by supporting His work through the Church.

6. Be on Mission

As believers, we are mandated to reach others with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Evangelism is not only to be left to leaders.

We have all been given a mission by Christ himself to reach the lost. We need to live our Christian life with understanding and not do things, as a practice. Whatever we do needs to find meaning and bring a difference in our lives.

Written by Lame Mthethwa





It's a baby girl!!!



“Give thanks to the Lord for He is good,
his love endures forever” PSALM 136

We thank God for a smooth pregnancy, even though towards the end, anxiety was high due to the Covid-19 and movement restrictions. It was only through daily meditation in the word and prayer that we found peace, comfort and assurance especially from Psalm 23.

The Lord saw us through, and we had smooth passage to and from hospital, mind you, without permits! We have been blessed with a beautiful baby girl named Hope. We are humbled by His love, and give thanks.

Thanksgiving

Heavenly Father,
Thank you for your amazing power and work in our lives, thank you for your goodness and for your blessings over us. Thank you that you are Able to bring Hope through even the toughest of times, strengthening us for your purposes. Thank you for your great love and care. Thank you for your mercy and grace. Thank you that you are always with us and will never leave us. Thank you for your incredible sacrifice so that we might have freedom and life. Forgive us for when we don't thank you enough, for who you are, for all that you do, for all that you've given. Help us to set our eyes and our hearts on you afresh. Renew our spirits, fill us with your peace and joy. We love you and we need you, this day and every day. We give you praise and thanks, for You alone are worthy!

In Jesus' Mighty Name,
Amen!



LOCKED BEINGS*

In a time distant from now,
The story of Covid19 will pour between our lips.

Once we were locked beings
Recognizing from our backyard orchards
The gentleness of kissing gardenias and orchids,
and the magic of falling rain drops on brown fertile soils
Gigantic electric ropes connecting the entire Gaborone
and her flashing lights

Once we were energized by sunshine delights
and the wait for planted swirling seeds
As locked worshipping beings
With songs and dance laced at our swelling ankles,
We grew faith muscles in search for flight
we became wiser and soothed in prayer
As locked beings beholding promise at our lips
Waiting to laugh again in the crackling sound of breaking eggs
Embracing our bodies anew again as
Temples housing little scattered fires.

By Poetess Phopho



My Confidence

(A Song of Hope)

Lyrics - Val Brown

I desire a fierce love
I'd give up what I've got
Just to taste and see
To experience His wild fire.

Chorus

In the Father's house
On the mountain top
With my broken jar
Rest His promises
Everything I know, it belongs to God
Yahweh Yireh, my providence.

Face the giant up the mountain
And prepare the holy altar
With a heart of sweet surrender
Yahweh Yireh, my Providence

Outro

The promise of a thousand stars
His sacrificial love through His nail scars
Oh what favour can be found in
Yahweh Yireh, my confidence.