



Mike (L) and Rudi (R)

“And we proclaim Him ...” (Colossians 1:28-29)

Dear Friends,

May 11, 2023

Long overdue greetings from Cape Town! The starters gun to 2023 began with such a colossal bang that it has been too easy to procrastinate on such things as updates. Rather than follow the usual format to our prayer letters, I am going to share a few praise highlights from 2023 to date in bullet-point fashion. There is much for which Debbie and I can praise the Lord for, but here a few of the key highlights:

- On January 9th I flew to Johannesburg to speak to 300 faculty and staff at Herron Bridge College. Herron Bridge is a secular private school for K — 12 students. Of all things, I was asked to speak on the Bible and the environment, because the theme for the school year is “Behold, I am making all things new ...” from Revelation 21:5. I had 45 minutes to make the biblical case for wise earth stewardship. I worked from the lesser to the greater as I concluded with the gospel focusing on Christ as Creator, Sustainer, and Savior. It was a wonderful opportunity to tackle one of the primary issues of the day while taking them to the summit of Calvary!

Before I departed for the airport, the head of the science department approached me to thank me for a “very clear and impactful presentation”. He asked me if I would be willing to address his students later in the year via Zoom or make another trip to Joburg. It remains to be seen if this materializes or not. Regardless of what does or does not happen in this regard, Debbie and I are just thankful for the opportunity afforded us to minister in such a capacity.

- The last weekend of January saw Debbie and I travel 75 miles south-east of Cape Town to the resort town of Hermanus to meet with Mike and Rudi. Mike and Rudi were co-pastors of a wildly charismatic church of 250 people when they started listening to John MacArthur and R. C. Sproul. This culminated in what they were learning. As a result, the church went from 250 down to 25. They are now left with a church plant of about 50 to 60 people. To make a long story short, I now have the blessing of advising and encouraging them as they seek to rightly apply the Scriptures to shepherding their church plant. Debbie and I will no doubt be making more trips to Hermanus to meet with these men, their families, and the church!
- Early in January I had the immense blessing of preaching in our old church plant Living Hope Bible Church (LHBC). It literally brought a tear to my eyes to see so many with such a ravenous hunger for the word of God. LHBC has gone from strength to strength under the leadership Pastor Denver Solomon and the other two elders I helped train up — Don and Peter. Their greatest need now is a building of their own.
- Mid-February saw me board a Los Angeles bound Emirates flight to visit a few supporting churches, attend the Shepherd’s Conference, have numerous meetings, and visit a few friends as well as our son, Micaiah, and my dad. Debbie remained behind on this trip to keep things running smoothly on the home front. While it is always good to see old friends, it is always a thrill to return home. Especially after 6 weeks apart from my bride of almost 36 years!
- The Berean Bible Institute is off and running this year with 6 for-credit students and 14 who are auditing courses. We have some exciting developments in the pipeline as BBI looks to the not-too-distant future. For now, please keep my fellow lecturers and co-laborers — Bruce, Etienne, Lonngren, and Denver —in prayer as they serve with me in this most vital ministry.
- This past weekend I was further blessed to make a quick trip to Johannesburg to preach in a new church plant: Berea Christian Church. This Afrikaans speaking congregation is a breakaway from an Afrikaans denomination that has become increasingly more apostate. When Pastor Gerhard was forced out last year, the majority of the congregation followed him. What a joy and privilege to preach to this hungry congregation — albeit in English, not Afrikaans. As I confessed to them

on Sunday, “Ek pratnie Afrikaans nie.” Loosely translated, “I don’t speak Afrikaans.” They graciously and intently listened to every word and even laughed at my poor attempt at humor.

Lest you get the impression I am one-man band doing all of this by myself, I can assure you Debbie has been serving tirelessly behind the scenes ministering to the ladies of Everglen Baptist Church. She taught the ladies Bible study for several weeks and regularly meets with several of the women to counsel, disciple, and pray with them. Even though she can’t always travel with me, it is always a blessing when she can.

As this update indicates, the Lord has moved us more and more into a strengthening ministry both at Everglen Baptist and to churches and pastors beyond Everglen. Acts 14:21 and 22 records a similar kind of ministry through Paul and Barnabas: “After they preached the gospel to that city and had made disciples, they returned ... strengthening, encouraging them to continue in the faith ...”. It is only because of the prayers and support from many of you that we have been used over the last 28 years to encourage many here to continue in the faith!

Yours for the Master’s Use

Mark & Debbie Christopher

Prayer Requests:

1. For Rudi and Mike in Hermanus to continue to grow and deepen their roots as they lead their church.
2. BBI students and lecturers as we weave our way through the various courses on offer this year and plan for the future.
3. LHBC and their permanent building needs. They have outgrown their current facility and need a permanent lodging place. That God would provide the right venue for them and the finances to do this.
4. Debbie and her multivarigated ministry to the women of Everglen Baptist Church.
5. South Africa’s electricity grid is literally hanging by the thinnest of threads and could completely collapse at any time. As winter rapidly approaches now those in the know project a catastrophic winter with very little electricity available. This could well leave us with rolling blackouts that could exceed 12 hours a day as the winter demand outstrips the feeble capabilities of a terminally ill grid. The social and economic consequences of this are hard to fathom but are certainly already being felt. Even now small businesses are closing, and major corporations are downscaling and laying off because of the added expenses associated with generators and solar panels with inverters. This may prove to be South Africa’s winter of discontent. Thus, we covet your prayers.