



***Enjoying A Night Out With Our Son Before Saying Goodbye!***

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

Dear Friends,

December 19, 2023

As Christmas rapidly approaches, Debbie and I wanted to write one more update before the year concludes. We just returned from our trip to the US where we were able to spend Thanksgiving with our kids in Dallas. From Dallas we flew to LA, where I wrapped up some work on my dissertation proposal and bibliography. In between the painstaking work of sifting through a 25-page bibliography for minor errors, I had several meetings and met with some South African students at The Master’s Seminary. Debbie used the time to catch up with old friends and was greatly encouraged in the process.

Last Wednesday was my opportunity to go before the TMS PhD Committee with my advisor, Dr. Bryan Murphy, to present my dissertation proposal for approval. I was grateful to receive approval and move ahead with my proposal idea with some required changes. Because my proposal was too broad, I was requested to narrow the focus. In the long run this will make writing it a more manageable task! Rather than sharing the 10-gallon title with you, the essence of the dissertation will be to critique and refute a couple of primary ecotheologians — yes, that is what they call themselves — regarding their aberrant

treatments of the creation mandate in Genesis 1-2. The final chapter will present a biblically balanced ethic for creation stewardship with the creation mandate serving as the cornerstone. I now have 2 years to complete the task. I simply ask for prayer for strength, a sharp mind, and the endurance to balance ministry and life while researching and writing in the evenings.

Debbie and I are now going to take the next couple of weeks to catch our breath before 2024 begins with a bang. On January 9<sup>th</sup>, I begin teaching a course for the Berean Bible Institute entitled *From Exegesis to Exposition*. This overlaps with the Hermeneutics course I just finished by taking sound biblical interpretation and fashioning it into a sermon or Bible study. There are also many things in the church that need to be addressed by me and my fellow elders as we begin the new year. Debbie and I also need to journey to Hermanus (70 miles away) to spend a weekend with Mike and Rudi as we continue advising them in their church plant there.

As we prepare to place the capstone on 2023, Debbie and I want to take this opportunity to thank you for your prayers and support for the year that was. We pray that each of you will enjoy a Christmas filled with the grace and truth that epitomizes our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

Yours for the Master's Use

*Mark & Debbie Christopher*

Cape Town, South Africa

Prayer & Praise Prompters:

- We are thankful as the Lord has brought us both through what has been a very busy year of ministry and travel. We were grateful to conclude the year by spending a few days with kids while in the US.
- We solicit your prayers as we travel to Debbie's mom and brother this Christmas. While Debbie's mom and brother know the Lord, the rest of my brother-in-law's family does not know the Lord. Pray for wisdom and grace to share the gospel with unsaved family members.
- Pray for strength, wisdom, and grace as 2024 ministry begins after the first week of January.
- Pray for South Africa as we face national elections in May of next year. It is our prayer that the ruling African National Congresses' 30-year hegemony will finally be diluted by the official opposition.