



**“And we proclaim Him ...”**

**Colossians 1:28-29**

Dear Friends,

October 8, 2025

How time flies when you are doing ministry and trying to navigate life! Before another week slips into the rearview mirror, Debbie and I want to quickly update you on life and ministry here in our corner of the vineyard.

It was a cold, wet, and eventful winter here in the southern hemisphere. As I wrote in the last update, my South African colleague, Tiny Coupar, had major back surgery and was bed-bound for the whole winter. I had to take up much of the slack his absence left. I used the occasion to utilize some of our key men. There were three men I had worked with in the past in the area of homiletics. I relied on them to preach every other week. I guided them through the process of sermon preparation and then gave them each post-sermon critiques after they preached. Other men, I mobilized for shepherding tasks while I handled the crisis situations. The men helped me immensely and were used of the Lord to minister to the flock at large. I am happy to report that as of 4 weeks ago, Tiny resumed ministry in the church. He is almost back to full strength.

No sooner was Tiny removed from the ministry equation than life threw a few surprises our way. The week of Tiny's surgery, a beloved dog of ours was diagnosed with terminal cancer. In the month before we euthanized her, I made 10 trips to the vet. Many tears were shed as we said our goodbyes to Aggie for the final time. We had both of our kids on a video call, as we all said goodbye to her before heading to the vet. While this brought

great sorrow to us, we rejoice for the 10 years we had with her. We praise God for all creatures great and small and how He uses them to enrich our lives and bring glory to Himself (Psalm 104!).

Soon after Aggie's cancer diagnosis, I made my annual pilgrimage to the dermatologist for a check-up. I received the news that I had skin cancer on my scalp. Fortunately, the pathology revealed it was a basal cell carcinoma, so it was non-life-threatening. The surgery went well. I opted for conscious sedation and walked out of the hospital 30 minutes after the hour-long procedure. I came home, ate a full dinner, and resumed regular duties the very next day. Outside of having my whole head bandaged for 10 days, I never had any pain or discomfort and felt 100%! The Lord was exceedingly gracious through the whole ordeal. The surgeon did such a fantastic job that the 4-inch incision is completely healed with no scarring. The pathology report revealed that all of the cancer was removed, and no further treatment is necessary. Now, instead of an annual dermatological check-up, I need to go every 6 months to be safe. I guess 51 years of running and cycling in the sun finally caught up with me, so extra precautions are now in order.

For her part, Debbie is busy with teaching, discipling, and counseling the ladies of our church. God has given her a very effective ministry with several of the women. Amidst all she does, she had to take some time out to fly 900 miles east of us to help her mother, who has dementia and was recently diagnosed with COPD. I am thankful Debbie was able to sort out all of her mom's affairs and finances. Her mom is doing a lot better now and has a full-time carer to help with the day-to-day matters.

The political and economic situation here in South Africa continues down the spiral staircase. Every day, more corruption and fraud are revealed in high places. As a distraction, the Marxist government proposes more draconian legislation. The latest proposed legislation is a law seeking to mandate licensure for pastors. They have taken a page out of the Chinese Communist playbook here. The proposed law still has several hurdles to surmount before it becomes law. They have a real uphill battle to pass this, but never underestimate those blinded by the cult of Marxism. Please pray for us as we contest this bill and pray that it goes down in flames.

As we reflect on the last 4 months and all that has happened, we have much for which to praise the Lord! I am reminded of 1 Corinthians 15:58: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord!"

May you take as much encouragement from these words as we have!

Yours for the Master's Use

*Mark & Debbie Christopher*

## **Prayer & Praise Corner:**

- We praise the Lord for his sustaining grace and for good health. We both made it through the winter season without any colds, flu, or other illnesses. We both feel great but are more conscious of our age and mortality. So, we do not take our current health and strength for granted.
- We praise the Lord for Pastor Tiny's full recovery and the fact that he is back in the saddle of ministry.
- Please pray for my 3 Mentor Model students: Regard, Mike, and Rudi. All three are currently studying online at The Master's Seminary, and I meet with them every week to disciple them as they navigate the challenges of family, church, work, and studies.
- Please pray for me as I speak at the Equip Conference next week (October 17-18) and then speak at a mission's conference the first weekend in November.
- Debbie would appreciate your prayers for two upcoming year-end ladies' functions she is speaking at on November 22<sup>nd</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>.
- Please pray for me as I try to finish a 100-page chapter on my dissertation. I hope to finish by this time next week. I have a defense of the chapter on December 3rd. My advisor needs time to go through it, and then I need time to make the necessary revisions. The goal is to finish the whole dissertation by December 2026. Until then, I will continue to juggle ministry, life, and writing.