



The 2025 Shepherds Conference

“And we proclaim Him ...”

Colossians 1:28-29

Dear Friends,

June 26, 2025

As most of you enjoy the warmth of summer in the Northern Hemisphere, we are in the midst of winter in the Southern Hemisphere. We are most grateful for the picture-perfect weather we had for the Cape Town Shepherds Conference last month!

Thank you to all who prayed for this year’s conference. I am happy to report that it exceeded our expectations. We had about one hundred in attendance. Last year we had seventy-five attendees. It was a very edifying time as we enjoyed sweet fellowship and encouraging times around the word of God. We were incredibly blessed by the ministries of Dr. Steve Swartz, a pastor in Bakersfield, and Rocky Wyatt of XL Ministries. It was also heartening to see how the church came together to serve those who attended! As we look forward to the 2026 conference, our biggest challenge will be accommodating a larger number of people at mealtime. Therefore, we are addressing that issue well in advance.

During the Shepherds Conference, my South African colleague, Pastor Tiny Coupar, woke up one morning with excruciating back pain. The following week, he discovered that he had two slow-growing cysts in his lower lumbar region, which were impinging on the nerves. Two weeks ago, he had both cysts removed and has now begun the long road to recovery. He faces a six-month recovery period and will only be able to resume a half-

day work schedule in early September. This means that I have had to step in the gap and take up some of the slack left by Tiny's absence.

The first couple of weeks were filled with one crisis after another to include the death of one of our beloved saints. Thankfully, things have normalized for the time being. I am in the process of mobilizing some of our key people for tasks that can be done by someone other than me. Three years ago, I taught a basic homiletics course to some key laymen. I am now utilizing them to help me preach, so I am only preaching every other week with one of them preaching on the intervening week. I continue to help them with their preaching by reviewing their manuscripts and outlines, as well as meeting with them for a post-sermon critique. Once Tiny is back to full strength, these men will be able to assist with the preaching load.

This coming Sunday, I have a meeting with nine men after our morning service to enlist their help in shepherding those in need. In short, Ephesians 4:11-16 is being fully implemented for the good of the church and the glory of the Lord! When Tiny resumes ministry, he will have several who can support him in the work of ministry here at Everglen Baptist.

It is going to be a hectic winter of ministry for both Debbie and me. We covet your prayers for much grace, strength, and wisdom as we navigate the course of ministry God has set before us. We pray that the restructuring now underway will yield much fruit in the future.

Debbie and I are reminded that all things work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to His purpose! Thank you in advance for praying for us through this unexpected turn of events.

Yours for the Master's Use

Mark & Debbie Christopher

Cape Town, South Africa

Prayer and Praise Prompters

- We have much to praise the Lord for regarding the Shepherds Conference. We received a great deal of thanks from those who attended. It was a rich time of fellowship and teaching. We look forward to what God has for us next year!
- Pray for Tiny Coupar and his wife, Sue, during the long recovery period after his back operation. I am in regular communication with him as we realign some ministries in the church.
- Pray for Mike and Rudi, whom I have written about recently. Mike and Rudi have just been accepted into The Mentor Model Program at The Master's Seminary. They will now join Regard Beukes as my mentees for the next five years as they study part-time online, and I will oversee their discipleship needs to help them apply what they are learning.
- Pray for Debbie and me as we seek to minister where we can during Tiny's recovery period. Especially as we mobilize the church body for the work of service, in accordance with Ephesians 4:11-16!



Shepherds Conference Speakers

