



*The Blessing of Spending Some Time with Our Son--Micaiah!*

**“And we proclaim Him ...”**

**Colossians 1:28-29**

Dear Friends,

December 17, 2025

Debbie and I send you summer-splashed Christmas greetings from a sun-drenched Cape Town! This update would have gone out sooner, but I just returned from a three-week sojourn in Los Angeles before flying to Johannesburg from LAX.

The quick trip to Los Angeles was primarily related to my PhD dissertation. While there, I had the opportunity to sit down with my advisor one afternoon and go through a significant portion of my first chapter. There is still some work to do before presenting the chapter to the PhD committee. As a bonus, I landed just before Thanksgiving, so I was able to spend the weekend with our son, Micaiah!

The week after Thanksgiving was filled with meetings and lunches before jetting off to Johannesburg for meetings three hours' drive outside of Joburg. There, I met with twenty-five other like-minded men to discuss the development and launch of a hybrid seminary. The concept of a hybrid seminary entails establishing Zoom rooms across

South Africa in partnership with interested churches. These participating pastors and churches will share the lecturing load in their areas of interest and expertise.

The training model we are pursuing differs from online training in that students will be required to attend the designated Zoom room in their area rather than attend lectures from home. Because we believe pastoral training requires life-on-life, each participating pastor will be required to disciple the students in his care.

As an added perk, I, along with two other brothers, have been in dialogue with a like-minded training center, Central African Baptist University (CABU), in Kitwe, Zambia, for the last eighteen months. These discussions have resulted in an arrangement whereby we will offer their accredited Bachelor of Bible degree here in South Africa. After investigating the legal aspects of such an arrangement, we recently learned that neither the Zambian nor the South African law prevents us from pursuing this partnership. Consequently, 2026 will see a team of eight men from across South Africa put the specifics together for a 2027 start date. No doubt this collaborative effort will expand in the years to come, enabling us to train men across South Africa and possibly beyond!

Just before I departed for Los Angeles, Debbie and I had the joy of attending the twenty-fifth-anniversary celebration of Living Hope Bible Church. Before I preached, we heard several testimonies that greatly encouraged us, evidencing the leadership there continued to build on the foundation we laid in the early years. To God be the glory for the great things He has done in and through LHBC since we turned the work over 14 years ago!

As another year rapidly nears its finish line, Debbie and I want to thank you for your prayers and partnership throughout 2025! May you all have a Christ-glorifying Christmas and a blessed start to 2026. The Lord has used you to greatly bless and encourage Debbie and me throughout a very busy 2025.

Yours for the Master's Use

*Mark & Debbie Christopher*

## **Prayer & Praise Corner:**

- We praise the Lord for an eventful 2025 and all that He has accomplished through the ministry He has entrusted to us! We are especially excited about the opportunity now opened to us to train men for ministry without the encumbrances of South African bureaucracy. We covet your prayers for the planning needed to launch this new training initiative in 2027.
- We also praise the Lord for the way he has worked in the lives of the dozen or so ladies Debbie has faithfully led in her Saturday Bible study this year. We look forward to how He will work in the lives of these ladies in 2026!
- Please pray for me as I endeavor to finish my PhD dissertation in 2026!
- Please pray for the young adults' Bible study Debbie and I lead. We have about a dozen committed young adults who meet monthly for a meal and a Bible study. Pray especially for one of our young men, Jared, who does not appear to be a believer. Yet, he faithfully comes. We pray that 2026 is the year that sees him come to Christ!
- Please pray for us as we seek to minister to and encourage the sheep God has entrusted to us in a country where the government is going full Marxist. Amid this uncertainty, we strive to keep reminding our people that believers have a living hope that will never disappoint us!