



“And we proclaim Him ...”

Colossians 1:28-29

Dear Friends,

September 6, 2026

As your summer gradually fades and our spring finally dawns, it is time to quickly update you before any more time is thrown into the junk heap of the past. We arrived home 4 weeks ago from our short furlough in the States. It was a tremendous blessing to see many friends and supporters as we moved from place to place. The Lord enabled us to accomplish a lot in the 6 weeks we were on the ground there. Our only regret is that we did not get to see everyone. On the next trip, we will prioritize those we had to bypass this time.

Thirty-six hours after landing in Cape Town, I underwent a prostate biopsy. The results confirmed that I have stage 3 prostate cancer (a 4+3 or 7 on the Gleason scale). While the lesion is large, the MRI indicates it is still contained within the prostate. Tomorrow I will have PET scan to confirm the MRI findings.

Debbie and I met with the primary surgeon who will perform the surgery on September 21st. We were both impressed with him and the detail he gave us about my situation and how robotic surgery works. Other treatments were explained, but the other options would require a combination of treatments—each with its own side effects and duration. By removing the prostate, I will probably not require any further treatment.

The initial recovery period after a robotic radical prostatectomy is fairly rapid. After one night in the hospital, I will be able to go home, barring any complications, of course.

Since I am quite active, the doctor wants me to start walking ASAP. He said the day after I go home, I can start a brisk walking program and work up to running in a few days. Cycling will be out of the question for a few weeks, but it won't take too long before I can sling my leg over the saddle again. For now, I'll confine it to my indoor cycle trainer. Doubtless, there are side effects from a serious operation of this nature. This will require physical therapy to strengthen the pelvic floor and abdominal region.

Throughout this unexpected journey, the Lord has given me incredible peace that surpasses understanding! There hasn't been one anxious moment. I credit this to everyone who has prayed for Debbie and me. Proverbs 3:5-6 continues to remind me to trust in the LORD and not to lean on my understanding. Regardless of the ultimate outcome, I know that I am in God's sovereign grip. It is a tremendous comfort to acknowledge this. So, please keep praying as Debbie and I face the next few crucial weeks. We will send out a short update once I return home from the hospital to let you know how it went. In the meantime, we will keep our hand to the plow of ministry to the degree that we can.

Now unto Him who is able to keep you from stumbling and present you faultless before His throne!

Yours for the Master's Use

Mark & Debbie Christopher

Prayer and Praise Prompters

- Debbie and I praise the Lord for a good furlough. We met with 5 churches and many friends. Also, we saw my family. I spent a whole day with my 97-year-old Dad. We went on a 2-mile walk with him. He still walks every day and is very sharp for a 97-year-old. We also had short visits with both of my sisters. There was no way we were traveling 10,000 miles without visiting both our kids too!
- Please pray for our ongoing efforts to establish a hybrid seminary (Zoom rooms with two-way live feed). I have had several meetings with the rest of our steering committee over the last couple of weeks for academic planning for a February 2027 start!
- Please pray for my upcoming surgery on September 21st and rapid recovery with no serious complications.
- Please continue praying for Mike and Rudi in Hermanus. They have been studying through the Mentor Model program at The Master's Seminary. They are doing very well academically and have adapted to the great demands of full-time

study, church, and family. Pray for continued strength, grace, and wisdom for them.