

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

Dear Friends,

September 20, 2022

Debbie and I pray this tardy update finds you all well as you transition from summer to fall in the northern hemisphere! Since our last communique in late June much has happened that has occupied our time and attention.

Upon arriving home in Cape Town in mid-June, we were plunged into the abyss of darkness as the state-run power utility experienced a crisis of power generating unit breakdowns. Our days were filled with nine hours of rolling blackouts in two-to-four-hour blocks, mostly during peak hours. We found ourselves constantly scrambling to charge all our devices in between blackouts, so that we could get some work done when the lights went out.

In desperation, I had to research and plan to have an inverter with a lithium-ion battery installed so we could keep the lights and Wi-Fi on and limit interruptions. Thankfully we were able to source the equipment we needed in country and found a very competent electrician who installed it for us! It has made such a huge difference during those episodic blackouts. We are even able to keep the refrigerator and freezer cycling so no food perishes. The next step is to have some solar panels installed to feed into the inverter and mix it with grid electricity while charging the battery with solar.

After a few weeks with few blackouts, we are back in a vicious blackout cycle again. At least this time we continue working and going about our business without the eerie blackness and powerless nights. I had a three hour Zoom meeting this-morning in the middle of a two-hour blackout and didn't miss a beat!

The last three months have found me doing quite a bit of pulpit fill in the area for some like-minded churches. And we continuing working with the Berean Bible Institute (BBI) as we plan and strategize for 2023 while wrapping up the third term and preparing for the final term of 2022.

Next week I will be flying up to Johannesburg to participate in a biblical worldview conference with Voddie Bauchum. A good friend and brother in Christ, Tim Cantrell of Antioch Bible Church, invited me to speak on the biblical worldview of climate change. Given the in-your-face prominence of

the issue Tim wanted this issue addressed. Who knew that fifteen years of interest and research on climate change would finally come in so handy. The title of the seminar is *Climate Change or Climate Con? A Biblical Evaluation*. The conference takes place next Friday and Saturday (September 30 — October 1).

For her part, Debbie has been busy trying to keep things on the home front running smoothly amid the blackout chaos. She ministers to a number of ladies in the church in a variety of ways whether it be counseling them or taking some of our older widows out for tea or to buy groceries. I am so grateful for her servant's heart that works tirelessly behind the scenes. This week she has been hastily preparing for the arrival of our son, Micaiah, who is arriving on Wednesday September 21<sup>st</sup>!

When I returned to the pulpit of Everglen Baptist Church, I started a new expositional series going through 1 Peter entitled *Grace Under Fire*. I was planning on preaching through Daniel, but I sensed our people are really struggling with all the political, economic, moral, and spiritual upheaval in both South Africa and the world at large. Expositing the theme *Grace Under Fire* has received the hearty approval of our people. Peter concludes his epistle with the overarching theme of the book "... I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the grace of God. Stand firm in it" (1 Peter 5:12b). It is our prayer that God, by the riches of His grace, will enable each of you to stand firm during these difficult and challenging days.

Yours for the Master's Use

*Mark & Debbie Christopher*

Prayer & Praise Corner

**Praise:**

- We praise the Lord for His wonderful provision which enabled us to purchase a power wall so we can keep the lights on during rolling blackouts!
- We praise the Lord for Cameron Davidson, one of our BBI students, who preached his first sermon two weeks ago and did a wonderful job.

Cameron hasn't had homiletics yet, so I spent some time with him working through the whole process. I made him rewrite his manuscript three times before he was allowed to preach. He thanked me afterwards. He preached a truly Christ exalting message!

**Prayer:**

- For next week's biblical worldview conference. There will be 1200 people in attendance to hear Voddie Baucham. Pray that God will grant me the grace and wisdom needed to deal honestly and biblically with one of the premier issues of our day.
- For our BBI students as they begin the final 10-week term and for me and the men helping me as we plan for 2023.
- For Debbie and I as we spend some time with our son and try to minister to him for the five weeks he is here.
- For South Africa. The crippling power outages are destroying what little is left of an already ravaged economy. Thus, the possibility of violence and riots is greatly increased. There is no quick solution to the energy crisis because it is 30 years in the making. It is highly doubtful they will ever sort the matter out given their current trajectory.