



Forming A Partnership With Central African Baptist University

“And we proclaim Him ...”

Colossians 1:28-29

Dear Friends,

March 17, 2026

Debbie and I greet you from what has been a very warm Cape Town. The last vestiges of summer are going out with a bang instead of a whimper. Over the last couple of days, we have enjoyed a respite from the hot weather, and we can finally see the first signs of fall.

Our 2026 began with such fury that we feel like we've been shot out of a cannon. One of the highlights so far was a trip I made to Kitwe, Zambia, with five other men to meet with the administration of Central African Baptist University (CABU). The purpose of the trip was to formalize a partnership with CABU for hybrid pastoral training here in South Africa. Our partnership includes establishing Zoom rooms in five charter churches so we can offer CABU's accredited bachelor's degree in Bible exposition. Our training model will be a hybrid delivery model. Unlike online training, this will require the men to be physically present in a participating Zoom room.

There are eight of us—me and seven South African brothers—who represent five churches. We form the steering committee. We will serve as adjunct faculty for CABU and teach their curriculum from a Zoom room to other participating Zoom rooms across South Africa. There will be a discipleship component to the training to help instill character training in those who desire vocational ministry. We hope to begin classes in February of 2027. Between now and then, there is a great deal of planning and setting up the Zoom rooms with the necessary IT. This is an exciting development, and one we have long prayed for over the past few years.

By going through Zambia rather than South Africa, we bypass all the bureaucratic headaches of dealing with South African authorities. For years, we sought a permanent partnership with Christ Seminary in Polokwane (1200 miles north-east of Cape Town), but the government's requirements proved too difficult. We are extremely grateful for the CABU option! CABU has an identical doctrine statement, philosophy of ministry, and the same passion for training servant-leaders.

A week after returning from Zambia, I traveled to Christ Seminary to preach at their 2025 graduation ceremony. Two of the fifteen graduates were men we trained in Cape Town under a special COVID dispensation for online training. Both Cameron and Hilton graduated *Summa Cum Laude* with a bachelor's in theology. It was a wonderful time of fellowship and celebration. The Lord granted me much grace as I addressed the men from 2 Corinthians 11:19-33.

Beyond a robust travel schedule in February, I kept busy with pulpit fill opportunities, planning meetings, various ministries at Everglen Baptist Church, and working on my dissertation. I am most grateful for good health and the energy to maintain a busy schedule.

For her part, Debbie has gotten off to a good start this year with her Saturday morning Bible study for full-time working ladies. She is currently taking fifteen women through an intermediate-level discipleship course. She has also resumed meeting with a few elderly women in the church on an *ad hoc* basis. Additionally, she helps me where she can.

In the midst of a world seemingly gone mad, we both try to keep our hand on the plow of ministry entrusted to us for over thirty-one years ago! This is only possible because of long-standing partnerships that have enabled us to keep plowing the furrow of ministry. Words seem an inadequate vehicle to express our gratitude to all who have given and prayed for our ministry for over three decades. May God richly bless you all and the remainder of the year ahead!

Yours for the Master's Use

Mark & Debbie Christopher

Prayer and Praise Corner

- We praise the Lord for giving us a 32nd year in which to serve Him!
- We praise the Lord for the opportunity to establish an extension of CABU in South Africa.
- Please pray for the planning required to begin CABU classes next February. There is also a need to establish Zoom rooms.
- Please pray for continued good health and strength for both Debbie and me as we face another busy year.
- Please pray for Mark to finish his dissertation by the end of the year.
- Please pray for the evangelical church in South Africa as we continue to face the encroachment of stifling Marxist government.