



Bruce Newsham preparing to teach inaugural BBI Course!

**“And we proclaim Him ... And for this purpose, also I labor,
striving according to His power, which mightily works
within me.”**

Colossians 1:28-29

Dear Friends and Ministry Partners,

December 2, 2020

Greetings from our part of the world to yours! It seems like every year at this time Debbie and I are scratching our heads in amazement at how quickly the year has gone by. As our lockdown restrictions began incrementally easing in June, it seemed like time picked up the pace hurtling us rapidly to the end of this most bizarre year. Now we find ourselves knocking on the door of 2021 as we scramble to put 2020 to rest.

Since we last sent an update out, much has happened. Debbie has been busy ministering to number of the elderly ladies in the church — visiting them, taking them shopping, and taking them for tea so they can get out from the confines that COVID restrictions have imposed.

For my part, I have been occupied with launching the Berean Bible Institute (BBI). In September I oversaw a small renovation project at the church which gave us one good sized classroom and small library and office space. With new bookshelves installed, we were able to unpack and shelve some 650 books that were donated by one of our supporting churches. Then through further generosity of a friend we were able to go shopping for another 170 books. I added another 150 books from my own library and will no doubt cull more books from my personal library to add to BBI's library in the future. We are quickly approaching 1000 volumes and all the books are excellent must-have volumes! So, we are off to a good start.

In early September BBI hosted the first inaugural course: Old Testament Survey taught by Bruce Newsham (a Master's Seminary grad). Due to lockdown restrictions, it was decided to host this inaugural course via Zoom. There were 16 people from 5 different churches who availed themselves to the course. About half of them did the course for credit and the other half audited. But all agreed the course made a huge impact on their spiritual lives!

Starting online courses was not what we originally envisioned but given the circumstances we played the hand God providentially dealt us. When the course concluded two weeks ago, we had a Sunday afternoon picnic so we could meet some of students face to face. This gave me an opportunity to share our philosophy of ministry and plans for next year.

Now, as Debbie and I wrap up what remains of 2020, December is proving to be a busy month as I provide pulpit fill for three different churches. Next week I will be flying up country for a two-day retreat for Master's Seminary grads who are ministering in South Africa. It will be refreshing to see some old friends, meet some new friends, and network with likeminded men. Then three days before Christmas, Debbie and I fly up to Johannesburg and drive three hours south to Debbie's mom for Christmas. Upon returning to Cape Town just after New Year's Day, we will roll up shelves once again and begin plowing the fresh furrow of 2021!

As Debbie and I glance back over the year that was 2020, we gratefully marvel at God's sovereign hand over our lives during this most eventful year. We are just as grateful for all of you who prayed for us and those who provided for us financially despite your own unique challenges that COVID imposed on the USA. We thank God for each and every one of you.

Our prayer for each of you is that you will have a wonderful Christmas season as you reflect on the miracle of the incarnation of Christ. And may the Lord richly bless each one of you during the adventure of 2021!

Yours for the Master's Use

Mark & Debbie Christopher

Cape Town, South Africa

Isaiah 9:6 "For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace."

Prayer & Praise Prompters:

- I am very thankful for a young man in our church, named Etienne, who is helping me with IT issues related to the seminary. I have been able to employ him part-time to help me with technical issues I am not able to address. God's provision of Etienne is a real praise!
- Debbie has been ministering to a lady, named Melanie, who lives down the street from us. She cares for a grown son who has chronic illness. Melanie has very meager resources, so we have been able to step in and help her put some food on the table. Melanie comes from Mormon background, but in recent days she has been listening to some of my online messages. Please pray for the salvation of both Melanie and her son.
- Next year is a pivotal year for BBI as we offer more courses and seek to cement a relationship with a like-minded seminary up country called Christ Seminary. Once this relationship is sealed, we will be able offer Christ Seminary's Bachelor of Theology degree at BBI. There is much to do on several fronts, please pray that we make significant progress as a seminary in 2021.
- Debbie and I are planning on heading to the US at the end of February 2021. With all the uncertainty surrounding lockdowns and restrictions we would just ask for your prayers as we try to plan our trip. We need to see a few churches, and touch base with family and friends.