

Phillips Family Newsletter October 2020



Dear Friends and Family,

Thank you for praying with us and for us over the past three months.

We last wrote at the end of June as we were emerging from Lockdown and our students were doing a couple of weeks of catch-up classes before writing first semester exams. That all happened without any Covid-19 problems and so we as Mukhanyo staff and students are very thankful to God for a successful rather than disastrous semester. Now already we have had two months of our second semester and all is on track for our students to begin writing their final exams from mid-November. In fact, I must get my exam papers prepared within the next few weeks. We have also been working on updates to the Mukhanyo Prospectus for 2021, and in the last two weeks we have had a Strategic Planning Day, a Distance Tutor Forum, and a Faculty Forum. This has all been very stimulating. There is certainly plenty of vision and excitement for growth at Mukhanyo!

One of my class highlights this semester was in a Higher Certificate Bible Doctrine Survey lecture when we were looking at the topic of the Christian's spiritual union with Christ. In Ephesians 1:3 Paul declares, "**Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.**" That is a far-reaching declaration of faith! In fact, Paul is swept up in doxology for a whole twelve verses celebrating all that God has done for us **in Christ**. In another place Paul says, "**For all the promises of God find their Yes in him.** That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory." (2 Corinthians 1:20). Amen! As I went on to read out other examples of what God has done for us in Christ from more than thirty New Testament verses, we had our own spontaneous celebration as some of the students responded:

We are redeemed ... **in Christ**; alive to God ... **in Christ**; granted eternal life ... **in Christ**; free ... **in Christ**; nothing will be able to separate us from the love of God ... **in Christ**; we are one body ... **in Christ**; God leads us in triumphal procession ... **in Christ**; we are sanctified ... **in Christ**; we are God's new creation ... **in Christ**; reconciled to God ... **in Christ**; made alive ... **in Christ**; the blessing of Abraham comes to us ... **in Christ**; we are sons of God ... **in Christ**; seated in the heavenly places ... **in Christ**; created for good works ... **in Christ**; brought near to God ... **in Christ**; forgiven ... **in Christ**; will receive the prize of the upward call of God ... **in Christ**; receive God's riches in glory ... **in Christ**; and are called to God's eternal glory ... **in Christ**.

All this comes to us "according to the riches of his **grace**" (Eph 1:7) through **faith**: "**In him** you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation and **believed in him**, were **sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance** until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory" (Eph 1:13-14). Sadly, the other side of this truth is that those who remain outside of Christ can have no spiritual good, unless they put their trust **in Christ**. ...

At the beginning of July Carol and I reached and celebrated our 25th wedding anniversary! We praise the Lord for His faithfulness and goodness in keeping us. We are thankful for each other and our girls.



Hannah is now well on her way with her final two BTh subjects. In only six weeks' time she should have written her final exams. The exciting news for Hannah is that she has just flown back to Cape Town to take up the position of intern librarian at the Bible Institute of South Africa. She will be trained by the current librarian who is retiring. Thank you, David, for many years of service at BI. This is what Hannah has dreamed of doing for a long time, and now it is a reality. God is so faithful! Of course, we will miss her, but we are glad that she has this wonderful opportunity and can be back with her church and friends.

We made the most of her last ten days in Pretoria. Carol, Hannah and Ruth attended a surprise farewell for Hannah at our church. What a blessing! We also hosted the DeVries family for a candlelit "send-off" supper in our garden. The kids enjoyed blowing bubbles and other games with our girls.



Ruth continues to make steady progress with her home-schooling. Recently she finalised three of her elective subjects: Speech, Music and Health. She has been learning things I was never taught. Ruth has also done some brilliant original artwork. A highlight for Ruth was her 18th birthday in August with friends from the church surprising her by doing a “stop and go” visit with gifts and balloons. Another highlight was Ruth and I going for a two-hour hike at Wonderboom Nature Reserve where Ruth took hundreds of photos (literally) and got some really beautiful shots of trees, birds and dassies.



Of course, we have transitioned from winter to spring, and from jerseys to T-shirts. The flowers in our garden have been a delight, especially the clivias, irises, and roses. For the first time we bought poppies, so we have had great fun watching out for new ones “popping” open. We have also eaten several large paw paws from our own tree. A few weeks ago, we visited our favourite Ludwig’s Roses. The roses were not blooming yet, but we did about a two kilometre walk around the rose beds and irrigation dams, saw lots of birds, and again Ruth took the opportunity to practise her photography.



Our plan for the end of the year is to all drive down to Cape Town for Hannah’s graduation in the second week of November. Then I will fly back to Pretoria to finish up the academic year at Mukhanyo while Carol and Ruth will spend time visiting in Cape Town and then take a slow drive up to Mom at Seavale. I will hopefully be able to join them a week before Christmas.

We are thankful to the Lord:

- Hannah has been appointed as intern trainee librarian at the Bible Institute of South Africa from October 1st.
- Ruth has finished three of her home school elective subjects: music, speech and health.
- Carol is back to normal after a bad reaction to medication. No medication needed.
- Greg had the opportunity to participate and contribute in Mukhanyo's strategic planning day, online distance tutor forum, and faculty forum.
- Our church, Calvary Baptist, has started up its Sunday services again. What a joy to see each other again!

Please commit to the Lord:

- Hannah's transition to working at BISA and managing her last six weeks as a student.
- Ruth especially, but all of us, adjusting to not having Hannah with us.
- Mukhanyo students as they will be completing many tests and assignments in October and early November and then will write exams.
- Our daily need to trust Him for wisdom, strength and grace to serve well.

Rejoicing in Christ,
Much love,
Greg, Carol, Hannah and Ruth.
Psalm 117

