

Sent: Monday, February 06, 2006 9:39 PM

Greetings to All, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,

I keep waiting for the right time and opportunity to send a "proper" report. Instead, there always seems to be something else more important to do. I have written a number of individuals who have either written me first or provided financial support. I should have just compiled the verbiage from those emails, but then the report would be HUGE. Unfortunately, many of you may get more than one copy of this email. If you do, please just delete one of them. I'd rather get you more than one than miss anybody. Please share this with anyone who does not use email, but would like to hear from me. If it really bugs you to get more than one copy, let me know, and I'll try to take you off of overlapping email lists.

In any case, things are going well here at the Keam Road church in East London, South Africa. I have been received most graciously, just as I expected from past experience. I am currently teaching both Sunday and Wednesday adult Bible classes, preaching both sermons on Sunday, and teaching a Thursday evening 1 1/2 hour class on Personal Evangelism for the Eastern Cape Bible College (ECBC). I currently have a regular study on Tuesday night and several others in the works, including neighbors to members, another granddaughter of the congregation, and a woman along with her husband who believes in evolution. Beginning this week, I will be coordinating the youth and young adult activities, which regularly meet on Friday night. Mike Baisley already works to mature the new Christians, evincing the very important recognition that they need intense teaching as newborn babes in Christ. I am very pleased about this.

One day last week, a colored man (polite description here of a mixed race individual) who was raised in Cape Town as a Muslim came by the building. He says he believes in Jesus and wants to learn more. I gave him a little help and attention, and to my surprise he returned for evening services yesterday. He is supposed to start a job Tuesday as a "panel beater" - a paint and body man. He seemed very excited about that. He said he learned a lot from last night's sermon. Please pray that Neville Julius will be a sincere seeker of the truth and will obey the gospel soon.

I mentioned ECBC earlier. It is a work of the Keam Road church primarily. It is a non-government endorsed, outreach effort and educational opportunity for members of the church. Most of the classes are held here at the Keam Road building. I am excited to have 18 in my class, with expectation of about 22-24 beginning this week. The good news is that nearly half of the class are not members of the church, but many are church leaders of denominations. We have the very real potential to convert whole churches to the truth through them. I sincerely ask your prayers in this effort, as it is both a very great opportunity and poses a very real potential for a volatile situation. ECBC also offers classes on Monday (Hermeneutics by Johan Smulders), Wednesday (Church History by Dan Harding), & Friday (The Barnabas Factor - Encouragement by Chester Woodhall).

I must share a bit of my joy with you all. I have had many come up to me following sermons and Bible classes to tell me how much they appreciated the lessons. A composite of the statements from the older people said things like, "That reminds me of the kind of sermons we used to hear from American preachers like Leonard Gray. It's been a long time, and I really like it. Thank you, and keep up the good work." Or, "I really needed that lesson. I've been struggling with that problem." But better than that, I have received favorable comments from some of the younger members who said things like, "I've never heard preaching like that before!" Also, before last Sunday's sermon I talked about the 4 young ladies who were baptized Monday night and asked them to stand briefly. They were all sitting together in one row. This is apparently not normally done here, so they were a bit embarrassed, of course. But afterward, they said they felt really honored. Oh, and their Moms, Grandparents, & Friends just thought it was the greatest. I charged the church to help keep them growing and on the strait and narrow.

There is currently a buzz about the congregation. They are optimistic about the future, which I gather is somewhat of a change. I am told that attendance is up, especially on Sunday and Wednesday nights. New blood seems to help with that sort of thing. I could go on and on with details, but I will not. I may have already lost most of you by now anyway. In trying to decide what to report, I decided that attaching the last 3 weeks bulletins would give you a good picture of the church here and my ministry up to now. I believed that providing a clear and firm foundation of what I believe and teach was very important. So I began a series of lessons on the subjects of "truth" versus "falsehood, lying, & deception." If you do not have PowerPoint, I just learned that one can download a free PowerPoint Viewer application. If you cannot do that, let me know, and I will send my part of the bulletins in MS Word.

Sunday evening sermons have been about glorifying God and making Him your King, based mostly on 1Samuel 8 & 12. Last night I had no dilemma about missing the Super Bowl. It didn't start until 1:00 AM here. Unfortunately, I don't have ESPN or anything, only 4 (usually very poor) free channels. Adriaan Le Roux tried to record the game for me. Perhaps I will get to see it sometime, but I don't know when! Nevertheless, please don't tell me who won, just in case I do get to see it sometime. Of course, it really doesn't matter that much, since the Redskins lost the week after I left. But at least the Cowboys didn't make the playoffs.

We are studying 1Corinthians in the Wednesday Bible class. On Sunday mornings, I am doing something a bit unusual for me - I am teaching from a prepared lesson book. It is an excellent one entitled "Heart Diseases and Their Cure" by Wendell Winkler. It deals with overcoming our natural tendencies toward things like unforgiveness, envy, discontent, fear, worry, pride, prejudice, fault-finding, etc. Aren't you glad you don't struggle with these things?

The church here is a great encouragement to me. I already love them dearly, and I fit into their culture better than my own. They love to laugh and kid others, and they do not look for hidden meanings. They just send and receive it the way I do, just for fun. They love to laugh, and they love the Lord. I am enjoying my work immensely. If Debbie were here, it would be perfect.

Yours in Christ,
Bill Elliott

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