

**December 18, 2006**

## **A Great "Last" Night In South Africa**

On December 7, I wrote, "I am really getting excited about going home for a visit. I leave in just 13 days! Now that is good news!" Then I proceeded to tell you the good news of two baptisms. As I write this letter, I will be leaving tomorrow, which is really good news to me, and yet I have some even better news! Tonight, Brendon Fismer was baptized into Christ at about 9:15 PM, Central African Time – 2:15 PM Eastern Standard Time. What an excellent parting gift Brendon has given me!

Brendon is engaged to Bianca Calder, a long time member at Keam Road, who lives in nearby King Williams Town. They are in their late 20's I think. They will be married here at the building on January 6. I regret that I will not be able to enjoy the big day with them in person, as I will be in the USA for a visit. Nevertheless, I will certainly be with them in spirit.

Brendon and I actually spoke in earnest and studied for the first time one week ago today. He never expected to learn so much so fast, and normally I would choose to move just a bit slower. But my rapidly approaching time of departure was looming large in both our minds. Our first study lasted over 3 hours. He returned with Bianca the next day, Tuesday, and another more than 3-hour study ensued. He left that evening in an uneasy state of concern for his spiritual well-being. However, it was too soon for him to take the step. In just those 2 days, Brendon had transitioned from one who was mildly curious on Sunday morning to one who was sincerely seeking the Lord on Tuesday. This may be the fastest change I have experienced.

Tonight, Brendon came to meet with me for the third time in just one week. He had already decided to obey the gospel. We talked for just a bit. I could see that he understood and was ready for the commitment he was about to make, and I happily baptized him into Christ. Brendon and I have similar natures. I had only 3 studies with Richard Powlus, each of them a "grueling" session of over 5 hours each. It took me just one week to make the decision to obey the gospel – just like Brendon. January 15, 2007, will mark 24 years since that wonderful occasion. Brendon wanted EXACTLY and ONLY the facts - no frills and no apologies. He was open to the truth of the gospel and soaked it up like a dry sponge.

Whenever someone decides to be baptized just before they wed a member of the church, there is normally a reasonable concern for their sincerity, understanding, and commitment. In Brendon's case, I think there is no reason for such concern. He was converted to Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior. He was baptized to be forgiven of his sins and to please no one but the Lord.

Brendon is a wonderful addition to the body of Christ at Keam Road, and he and Bianca are about to embark on a lifelong journey of joy and commitment to each other and their Master. Tonight the angels in heaven are rejoicing greatly. I look forward to many years of fellowship with Brendon and watching him grow in the Lord.

We gladly welcome you into the Kingdom of God, Brendon. Thank you for giving me such a nice "going away" present.

*Bill Elliott*