

August 31, 2007

Greetings to all! I hope this writing finds all well with each of you and your loved ones.

I know that many of you have been wondering why you have not heard from me in so long. I apologize for the long drought of correspondence. Perhaps it is partially because we are suffering a severe drought in East Tennessee. We tied a record for heat with 30 consecutive days of at least 90 degrees Fahrenheit. We topped out at 104 degrees, setting an all-time record high for Knoxville. Now, for those of you who speak weather in Celsius, that is 30 consecutive days from 32 to 40 degrees, and that is *really* hot without that nice, East London ocean breeze!

As I reported in May, it was my intention to return to East London in September. Unfortunately, that will not be possible. As many of you already know, I have prostate cancer. It looks like mid-January will be the soonest I can return. I miss everyone in South Africa and the ministries I am involved in there. I am pleased to say that the Leadership Committee at Keam Road has made it very clear that they and the church still want me to return. Therefore, if nothing goes wrong with the treatments and nothing else unexpected develops, I should be able to return in January.

Concerning the cancer treatment, after much research and deliberation, I have opted to take a twofold approach. I think this course of treatment gives me the best chance for a complete cure. At this point, the prognosis for complete recovery is very good. On September 6, I will undergo outpatient surgery to have radioactive Palladium "seeds" implanted in the prostate. About a month or so after that, I will begin External Beam Radiation Treatments (Intensity Modulated Radiation Therapy, or IMRT) for 5 days a week for 5-7 weeks. This means treatment should be completed around the end of November. It is anticipated that I will need several weeks to be able to resume normal activities. I am very pleased to have discovered that I can receive "world class" treatment right here in nearby Oak Ridge. This will certainly help to minimize the financial and other strains.

For those of you who continue to support our efforts in East London financially, we again thank you. I regret that the cancer will force me to spend half the intended time there this year. Any who think they should discontinue their support due to that fact may certainly do so. However, I would like to point out that I will be returning to the work in January, and that we can still use the support, as it actually costs more for me to live here than it does there. I ask you also to keep in mind that, if God wills, we will continue our ministry in South Africa in 2008 on an alternating 3 months basis, just as it was planned for this year.

I must now apologize to the many of you to whom I have not responded individually. I have simply been overwhelmed by the number of emails, phone calls, and cards from all around the world! The outpouring of love and concern shown by those who already knew of my condition has been tremendously encouraging. God has shown me just how blessed I am to have so many who will take the time and expense to express their love and concern. Though you may not have heard directly from me on an individual basis, please know that your kindnesses have NOT been unappreciated. They have brought both smiles to my lips and tears to my eyes. So many have said, "I want to do something to help. What can I do?" Just offering such means a great deal to me. The one thing that you can ALL do that will really help is to PRAY for my family and me. Pray that God's will be done, that my will is in harmony with His will, and that everyone will joyfully accept His answers. "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those that love God, to those who are called according to His purpose." (Romans 8:28, NASB, 1995)

On one final, personal note, today is Debbie's and my 33rd wedding anniversary. As most of you know, it was her sense of the need for God that led me (reluctantly) to discipleship. Debbie saw the opportunity and encouraged me to go to East London and serve, even though she knew she could not go with me. She has been a great blessing to me. I pray that God will bless us with 33 more years of marriage and useful service to Him. May God bless you and yours until we meet again.

Yours in Christ,

Bill Elliott

C/O Keam Road Church of Christ

PO Box 958, East London, 5200, South Africa (or)
20 Keam Road, East London, Baysville, 5241, South Africa
043-721-0398 Bldg; 011-27-43-721-0398 from USA
084-727-8853 Cell; 011-27-84-727-8853 from USA
086-682-6499 Fax; Not accessible from USA

8505 Garrison Drive, Knoxville, TN, 37931-3322, USA
865-531-8505 Home; 001-865-531-8505 from RSA
865-368-8986 Text/SMS; 001-865-368-8986 from RSA
865-335-7222 Cell; 001-865-335-7222 from RSA
865-694-9673 Fax; 001-865-694-9673 from RSA

Bill@ElliottEnterprises.com

<http://www.wecoc.org/missions/eastlondon.php>