

October 1, 2014

### ALL IN A WEEK'S WORTH OF CAMP

(8/19) Yes-the date is August 19<sup>th</sup> as I type this. Why so? Given the non-stop whirlwind of my 4 camps' summer schedule, I wrote articles for my newsletters "as they came". I returned home the other night from camp #4. It was a children's camp, comprised of **100+ 7-12 yr. olds**. I preached 3X, taught 8X, came out of my Time Machine as **David** & as a 1<sup>st</sup> century **Jewish shepherd**, portrayed **Pontius Pilate** [on horseback-see attached pic above] for my annual director's field drama, played a pirate & a tap-dancing waiter in the a.m. chapels, & animated "**Chip**", my trademark chipmunk puppet. This was all in addition to hours of packing, loading, unloading, unpacking, counseling, leading services, etc., not to mention fighting for my life in the pool with the boys! I know I can't do this forever, so I'm very deeply grateful to our Lord He has enabled me to do so for another year.

### FLOORED BY A 12-YEAR-OLD



In our Jr. Hi. Camp this past July, I encountered one of the most serious homesick campers in my 32 summers of camp ministry. He was a 1<sup>st</sup>-time camper. He was doing the usual homesick camper moping, crying, withdrawing, etc. He, however, was significantly different from the rest. After chapel one morning, after draining his counselor [that's our cue to send a child home, which doesn't happen often but it *does* happen-2x in kids' camp in August!] to the emotional dregs I'm sure, I had a chat with him. His resolve was to get home at all cost. He started off crying. I asked him what he'd do if he went home. He had his list ready. Listening to him describe his activities in his obviously rural home-setting, I began to envy him! It sounded like a little-boy paradise. Everything in me wanted to send him home, as much as I ache when we do so. Why? Because if a child or teen cannot yield to & encounter God at camp, in such a safe & secure & God-filled environment, where

is he going to? Of course, I know camp is not “it” as far as the reach of the grace of God. I trust you take that statement in context. And yet-despite my own feelings to “save” this kid’s counselor by sending the boy home, something deep in my spirit was telling me not to do so too quickly. I began to talk to him like a nonchalant street vendor. I’m not sure why. I may have done so to take the edge off this camper’s intensity. And-he was intense! He began to get angry. His face got distorted (?) & he threatened that when he got like this in the past he would start to throw up blood. Given my huge & deep-seated belief in the absolute sovereignty of God, extending over every atom in the universe, & Who ordains everything that comes to pass either directly or permissively, I don’t give much weight to the **demonic**.

Oh-don’t get me wrong! I’ve been eaten alive by **the evil one** many times [not Satan personally, to be sure]. I know he far surpasses the entire human race combined re: power, speed, & intelligence. BUT-all he does he is *permitted* to do for God’s Own holy, wise, & just purposes or-he isn’t allowed to do it!

Nevertheless, for a second or two I thought this kid was going to “manifest” something-that there *was* the demonic at work. I was waiting for him to come at me at least twice. My camp tech-man, who happened to be there, when he saw the nature of this encounter, decided to stay with me “just in case”. That was comforting, as he was skilled in martial arts, though, of course, in encountering the demonic, it would have been to no avail. While I was exuding this persona of a confident street vendor, as I said above, deep inside I was entreating the Lord, “Lord-help me! What in the world do I do or say?” All of the sudden the thought entered my mind to ask the boy how old he was. He said **12**. I said, “Hmmm..isn’t that interesting”. I asked him, “How old was Jesus when His parents left *Him* in the temple?” The answer was **12**. I then asked the boy what **JESUS** did when His parents did so to Him? The camper remained silent. I told him, “Jesus immersed Himself in a discussion of the Scriptures”. He just looked at me. I reminded him that’s exactly what we do at camp-we’re surrounded by many to whom the Word of God is central. He then looked up at his counselor & asked, “How many more days do we have here?”, to which his counselor replied, “2 & ½”. He looked at me & said, “I think I can make it”. As intensely as this encounter began-it ended. I embraced him, wept, told him how proud I was of him, & prayed for him. He, his counselor, & my tech-man then proceeded to lunch. I was left alone in the chapel. This was a 12 year old boy. However, whatever “went on” in that intense encounter those several minutes-it drained & broke me. I went up to the front of the chapel & prostrated myself before the Lord & wept. I “won”, but it was a **Pyrrhic** victory. That is, I lost “a lot of me” to procure that

victory. **“POOL PARTY?”** A day or so later, while attempting to relate to this boy in the pool, he thanked me for not letting him go home-that he needed to stay as a growing-up lesson.

**“THE GOLDEN ARROW.....DIPPED IN HONEY”**



At kids’ camp in August once more we the staff were hit with the realization of the vast ocean of media, with all of its messages & images, that the average child & teen is immersed in on a daily basis. Not only via its God-ignoring, dishonoring,

& blaspheming content, but also via the exponentially-more amount of time an average kid spends swimming in it compared to his/her comparatively little exposure to the **Word of God** each day, it can be both overwhelming & debilitating to a preacher of the gospel. When I consider the statistic of several years ago, that the typical child spent **23-25 hours** of watching television per week, compared to today, where, if he is not mesmerized in front of a TV or videogame screen, he most likely is wired up with some electronic device listening to musical “sermons”. It almost makes me want to get out of the ministry, as the odds seem too much against us. How can we preachers compete, when the average kid time-wise maybe hears 5% of the Word of God to 95% of the words of **devils** & men on a weekly basis? Think of it, Beloved - each week, again & again & again the child exposes himself to images, words, lyrics, etc. *all* of which convey a message, or “sermon” if you will--& we all know how we all learn the best: visuals, experience, example, & *repetition*. Hollywood is a teacher-a preacher, if you will-& a very effective one at that. What is my hope as a preacher of the gospel to the young? The Word of God. It is sharper than any two-edged sword. It is like **fire**-& a hammer that breaks a **rock** in pieces. It cannot be broken. It cannot pass away. It does what God sends it to do. If ignored it will come back to haunt its ignorers on **Judgment Day**. Hence, it is like a boomerang. I saw an object lesson in my mind the week before kids camp in August as I prepared & it shot down to my spirit, producing intercession. It was a golden arrow. It was an arrow because it pierces. It was golden because it symbolized God’s Word. And, it was dipped in honey. God’s Word cuts-it pierces-going in & going out, but because it’s the gospel of grace, it is dipped in honey. That “visual” in my mind & heart gave me hope that even though time & content were vastly in favor of the world’s messages, the power by far lay in the Word of God. One Holy Spirit sent golden-shafted word from God’s quiver of words can be more effective than years of worldly messages & input! If it didn’t, I would quit. Praise be to His Name.

### **“SMUT PUPPET”** {see pic attached above}

On occasion Kim & I frequent thrift stores. We both enjoy it. She delights buying clothes for the grandchildren. I’m always scouring for more object lessons, props, & costumes-[not to mention that virtually all of my clothes are from thrift stores!]. Recently, I saw a relatively rare item in a “Good-will” [quotes mine] store. It was a hand-puppet. I’ve been doing puppeteering for years, & I know how very expensive they can be. It was \$4. I had never seen this character, tho’ he looked a bit “shady” & suspicious to me-my first thought was that in appearance he resembled a character from “The Family Guy” [No. I don’t watch it], but I wasn’t

sure. So, for \$4, I took a chance. I sent a pic of him to two friends this a.m., asking them if they recognized him. Sure enough-he was from that TV program. My one friend said he was a “dirty” character. It’s just like the evil one-he proliferates his wickedness & smut to the young & not so young-through cartoons. Enough said. This puppet, despite the great price, is headed either for the trash can-or-my fireplace. I haven’t decided yet. But-that’s how much I hate spiritual wickedness in high places, who are bent on perverting children. Jesus? Please keep sending me to them to preach.

Ministry/events for October & those not listed in last month’s newsletter:

**Caboose! on the Loose:**



Sept. 6: Sunday Breakfast Mission, Wilmington, DE: worship team drummer//ministry of the Word

Sept. 24: Immanuel Young Adults group: ministry of the Word

Oct. 4: Cox wedding: attendee

Oct. 5: Ogletown Baptist Church, Newark, DE: “Elliot Caleb Guertin” baby dedication

Oct. 7: Petra Christian Fellowship, New Holland, PA: hsc board mtg.

Oct. 17: Petra Christian Fellowship, New Holland, PA: Hopewell Network Jubilee!: children’s ministry

Oct. 16, 23, 24: my birthday, mine & Kim's 37th anniversary, Kim's birthday

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\*[Michael is an ordained Elim Fellowship “itinerant” home missionary & is also licensed to preach the gospel by the local church he attends, Immanuel Church. *Caboose!* is also an affiliate ministry of the Hopewell Network of Churches. For 14 years he served on various local church staffs full-time. Since 2000, he & Kim have lived by faith, having no salary, retirement to speak of, etc.,-yet this is their calling at this season of their lives. Michael preaches God’s Word & systematic theology, using both visual aids & drama, to all age groups either separately or combined, as the Lord opens doors. To help support this work, please make all tax-deductible gifts payable to:

Elim Fellowship, 1703 Dalton Rd, Lima, NY 14485], denoting it for the home-mission work of Michael Robert Guertin. If your church would be interested in ministry or helping to support our missions' work in the U.S. to both old & young please feel free to contact us. Thanks!