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"CHIP MEETS 'TINKERBELL'?"



Dear *Friends & Family*,

[7/2] I returned home late last night from my 1st camp of the summer, but I wanted to share something first with you that is priceless to me. My adopted "pet" chipmunk, a.k.a., "Chip" has been around since 1991. Many of you remember it was Kim's idea to start posting weekly Chip videos in 2020 for kids who were Covid-quarantined. I did so virtually every Sunday for almost two years. But, from time to time, Chip will also send a video greeting to children for their birthdays. Once such little angel who received one from him was "Noelle", whose maternal grandparents have been some of Kim & mine's dearest friends since we were newlyweds together decades ago. She sent Chip a thank-you card shortly thereafter in the mail. It read: "Dear Mr. Guertin, thank you for sending me the personalized birthday movie from Chip!! I have watched it again & again, laughed & smiled many times. I celebrated my 7th birthday with a Tinkerbell theme. Please show this picture to Chip & tell him I said thank you very much for thinking of me & my birthday! (these are my cousins too). Love, Noelle". I was still dealing with post-Covid fatigue when I had Chip send her this greeting. I almost didn't. I would have missed a precious, priceless window of history in this little cupcake's life. Thank You, Jesus! 😊



Noelle's grandmother shared the following with me recently re: her other granddaughter, Noelle's cousin, re: Chip: "I was just sitting here & talking with Adele. Mike [her grandfather] was showing us pictures of the Tel Hai camp. Adele said she was Mr. Guertin's biggest fan & how much she loves you :-) I thought you would like to know about your fan club here in Northern Virginia." Speaking of little girls, while I was away at my recent hsc Jr Hi Camp, I

received this message from the mother of a camper who so very much wants to be a counselor: "My daughter looks forward to camp more than **Christmas!** She says just being there is the best thing in the world. She can feel God just walking in. I will have her fill out a form next year, although she turns 16 in the middle of summer next year. Thanks for the info!" And yet, another "little girl" story-**Kassia Cox** was a former little girl in kids church with me decades ago here in DE. Her husband, Steven Cox, was also one of my little boys in "**Diamond Mine**" as well. They have 3 of their own little "campers" now. 😊 I asked if they could lead worship for Kids Camp this month. Here is Kassia's reply: **"Thank you for the honor of asking us. We miss camp (& you) so much! My favorite place on earth. Kassia"**



To add another quote from our "little girls on parade", another former little girl {& camper & counselor!} from **Caboose!** in Reading, Pa decades ago commented on a **Facebook** post I shared recently, vis, my **Caboose!** Time Machine that is being used in N.Y. now: **"It always amazed me what came out of that machine. It brought me to greater revelation of God. It took stories from the Bible & made it come alive. Very thankful for your creative heart that God set aflame in you."** **Lauren Ritz.**



Speaking of little girls who have grown up, **Jill Klein**, a dear sister & friend in the Lord, blessed us with her presence as our "Camp Mom" last week at Jr Hi Camp. Jill's husband, **Rob**, was one of my dearest friends on Earth. Rob was the one remaining staff person from my first year of directing the **Hopewell Summer Camps**, vis, **1991**. Well, last year, our Lord wanted Rob to come Home. He went to **Heaven** a year ago this past June. The Lord brought Jill to Kim's mind when we were looking for a Camp Mom for this camp. Jill came. Here is her take on last week: "Good Morning Guerty & Kim! I have had a few days to process some of the thoughts I have from camp, & wanted to share something with you. First of all, I am so thankful that the Holy Spirit put it on your hearts to ask me to be camp mom for Jr. Hi camp! I wasn't sure if it would be too emotional for me (& at times it was!!), but I was so blessed to be there! I met so many amazing young people with a heart for Jesus, & left Tel Hi renewed & refreshed-even though I didn't get as much sleep as I normally do! It was a beautiful week, filled with sunshine, new friendships, &

laughter. I really needed that!! Every evening at chapel was awaited with eager anticipation of waiting for the Holy Spirit to "show up" & I was so glad to be in that place... I have always had a heart for worship, & was rejoicing in singing & dwelling in that place. From morning devos, to meals, to swimming with the girls, to participating in the "shenanigans" of camp, I was smiling. I absolutely adore every one of those counselors, & their dedication & love for their campers. I'm pretty sure Rob was cheering us all on!..."



Zach Sclafani

And, lest we leave little boys out, while I was preparing for my **City Light Fortress** inner-city camp this past week, its leader, Joe Sclafani, sent me a precious text. He told his youngest son Zach that I was coming to the **Fortress**. Here is their conversation: "I came home after Tuesday night. My youngest, Zach, happened to be at the house. I told him we were with you. I asked, 'Do you remember Guerty?' He answered, 'Do I remember Guerty?!!! What a stupid question! Of course I remember Guerty!' Then he said, 'He brought Bible characters out of a Time Machine! I was little, I really thought it (the Time Machine) was real!'. I told him it was real. He agreed. Good Night." (Joe) One more-a former camper posted on **Facebook** recently re: camp: "Missing camp a lot recently. Was a big part of my childhood and wish I could re-live it all over again." [A.J.]

"COVID-CRUSHED"



[7/4] I returned home very late last Friday night from my 1st of 3 [or 4!] camps this summer. It was our Hopewell Summer Camp Sr. Hi. Camp. [This summer commenced my **40th year** in camp work/ministry overall; my **32nd year** @ **Tel Hai Camp**, & **31st year** pastoring the **Hopewell Network Summer Camps**]. I hobbled into this camp. I was suffering from severe post-Covid fatigue I just couldn't beat. I bought expensive supplements, consulted with numerous &

various health professionals, etc. Nothing seemed to work. My pre-camp weeks are almost as intense as the week of camp itself—studying, packing & loading, administrative work, constant communication with staff, preachers & teachers, airplane pilots (!), Tel Hai Camp staff, etc. All I wanted to do though in the midst of all of this was sleep! I had to make myself get off the bed, couch, or floor to keep going. I'd lay on my face awaiting our Lord to infuse His Spirit's strength in me again. I even prayed aloud in front of Kim one night asking our Lord if this was His way to end my season of camp ministry. Kim quickly nudged me & said, "No!". That is how this year's pre-camp season has been. I even told the camp staff at our Sunday afternoon orientation that I would try to "stay in the game" as much as possible with this going on with me physically.

"RIPE & READY"



To my surprise, in spite of all of this, I was on my feet the entire day & late into the night of our "Saturday Setup Day" with the rest of my setup crew. I taught four staff devotions, four Bible/Marking/Quizzing classes, preached twice, & performed a Time Machine drama! This was on top of all of the manual labor of setup & teardown, & of course, constant interaction with several dozen campers & staff! He giveth more grace! The campers—69 of them, only 3 of which were first-timers, came "**ripe & ready**". Sadly, it is a very common practice in The Church in America to hype up young people {& not so young people!}. Worship (cheer) leaders & pastors use tactics, expressions, music, slogans, technology, etc. to get them all emotionally excited & "pumped". It's akin to inflating a balloon. However, when the campers or youth group kids are disconnected from these human means of "inspiration", they quickly deflate. It is not uncommon for young people, if they are not constantly connected to these "inflators", when said "inflation" is absent from their lives, to walk away from the faith. Like the fog machines used in countless youth groups, so this methodology of ministry is sadly, basically, a smoke-screen. In the light of this, I have striven for decades to ensure our camps are **text-driven**. As I've often said, "**The Life is in The Text**". The words of the Bible were inspired & God-breathed by the **Holy Spirit**. Hence, when reverently approached & read or listened to these words of life "secrete" the life of God. There is no need for emotionally hyping humans up. If they are given the Scripture in context with sound exegesis, God will be pleased to pour out His Spirit's blessing upon the hearers thereof. Then, when the campers go home they have "The Fountain" with them right in their hands—their Bibles.

"LOW-HANGING FRUIT"



Because so many of these teens had been coming to camp for so many years, they came knowing what to expect. They know they will get no-holds-barred hard-hitting messages from the Word of God that will tell them the unvarnished truth [years ago when young people were polled re: what they wanted to hear in church, this kind of preaching was the majority's preference], followed by the Divine cure-**Christ & His Cross**. They come hungry for prolonged times of sitting/laying before the Lord & having sweet fellowship with their fellow campers in His presence. Hence, from the very 1st night after **Ryan Diffenderfer** preached re: human depravity & the righteousness of Christ, they were ready to respond! Ryan's presentation was so crystal clear I was the 1st one up on the floor on my face before the Lord! **Gary Buck** on the following night preached re: Elijah & the prophets of Baal from I Kings 18, challenging the teens re: having idolatrous syncretism in their lives. On Wednesday evening I performed a Time Machine drama re: **"The Death of Nadab & Abihu"** followed by a message re: the privilege & dangers of approaching a holy God via the Tabernacle in the Wilderness & the Heavenly one Jesus entered on our behalf as High Priest. On the last night **Devin Blankenbiller** preached re: John 15 & how essential it is to abide in the Word & presence of the Lord 24/7-not just at camp or other at other special events. Each night the floor was "covered with carpets & campers". These campers "fell" quickly & easily because of years of so many laboring in the vineyards of their hearts. Jesus Christ be praised.

"TIME FLIES WHEN YOU'RE HAVING A GOOD TIME"



I'm deeply awed & grateful re: how "easily" our Lord moved among the teens at this camp. One older guy camper came to camp as an agnostic on Monday & shared at Friday a.m. testimony time that he was leaving camp with his faith back again. Another older guy camper as

well came to camp endeavoring to make his faith his own, versus his parents'. After I preached on Wednesday night he & I had a long talk re: the purpose of the Law of God in the plan of salvation. He had many questions. They seemed more & more resolved the more we shared. He too shared at Friday a.m. camper testimony time. Besides this being one of the most powerful camps I have ever been a part of for the Hopewell Network, sadly-very sadly, it seemed to be the fastest! ☹️ Is it my age? They do say time speeds up the older you get. I'd like to believe that it was being so consistently in deep, rich times of the love & presence of the Lord that sped things up. It's an ache that camp went so fast. My only consolation is that I still have three camps yet to go! Jesus, come.

"MOODY & BLUE"



[7/29] I was a teenager in the 1970's. One of the most famous rock bands in the world back then was *The Moody Blues*. They produced an album called "*Days of Future Passed*". It was & is one of a kind. It was a masterpiece as far as rock band productions go. Why? The album took the listener on a journey through a typical day in the life of a human being. What made the album so unique was that it had several lush, orchestral instrumental interludes in between the numerous & various rock song compositions. These interludes were enchanting, "moody", contemplative, & emotional. The album took the listener to the realization of the vanity of life, the mystery of life, & the brevity of life. In 1977, in the deep winter of Upstate N.Y. while I was a freshman at *Elim Bible Institute*, I took a class re: The Parables. Our class assignment was to take the parable of our choice & make a presentation before the class about it at the end of the semester. I chose *The Foolish Rich Man* from Luke 12. Given I had shot many home movies on my Dad's Super 8mm camera over the years, I decided to make a modern-day version of the parable. I used students & even the vice-president of the school in my production. The perfect music for this project was the orchestral interludes of "Days of Future Passed". I filmed the life story of a man who suddenly received a promotion at work. The sudden prosperity swept up the man into vain, self-seeking pleasures. As a result he neglected his family-& God. He was offered the gospel while at lunch one day, but he smugly rejected it. The last scene shows him being buried in a cemetery after unexpectedly dying from a heart attack. "You fool! This night your soul shall be demanded from you!" [Lk.12:20]. Here is the YouTube link should you care to watch it: <https://youtu.be/tGcmPQ9wJ24>

"A KID TO A CASKET"



How this comes into play with my ministry this past week is striking. I was on my way back to **Tel Hai Camp** to spend the night after my 1st chapel @ **The Fortress** inner-city camp. The children in the service that a.m. ranged from **4 or 5 years old to 15 or 16**. As I was heading out of the city of Reading, for some strange reason, I decided to play said instrumental pieces from **Days of Future Passed** versus my typical pre-& post service music I listen to for my own personal **heart**-preparation. All of the sudden this silver minivan with an **orange** flashing light pulled into the center of the busy intersection I was approaching. Then, it stopped-right in the middle of the intersection. It was the lead vehicle for a funeral procession. While the procession proceeded through the intersection, the very somber, sad, even tragic music from the album was playing. As I sat there in traffic, I pondered, "O God, whoever is in that casket in that hearse right now-was a child at one time. O God. Now? They're in eternity. O God. O God. Did they have opportunity to hear the gospel? If so, did they believe it?" This sight only deepened & sharpened my burden to continue to work with the young. May our Father be pleased to continue to do so with me, as I prepare for my rapidly-approaching **Kids Camp**.

Michael



***Caboose! Commentary Corner:** [Our daughter Laura once said she'd love to have my old Bibles when I passed for all of the notes I have written in them over the decades. This was quite humbling to say the least, especially coming from one of your own children. Hence, I've decided to post each month random notes/comments from Bibles I have studied from]: "The older you get, the harder you get [if left to yourself]" [M.R.G. July 2022]



Caboose! On The Loose!

Ministry/Events for **AUGUST & those not listed in last month's newsletter:**

July 27,28: City Light Ministries "Fortress" Day Camp, Reading, PA: a.m. chapels

Aug. 2: Petra Church, New Holland, PA: hsc board mtg.

Aug. 3-8: Springfield/Herndon, VA: Deck/McCarthy wedding [2 former counselors!]

Aug. 13-19: Tel Hai Camp, Honey Brook, PA: hsc Kids Camp: pastoral director

***Cab!Talk verse-by-verse Bible teaching video productions posted in August when possible!**



***Michael is an ordained *Elim Fellowship* itinerant Stateside missionary & is also licensed to preach the gospel by *Immanuel Church*, Wilmington, DE. *Caboose!* is also an affiliate ministry of *The Hopewell Network of Churches*. For 14 years he served on various local church staffs as their children's pastor. Since 2000 Kim & he have lived by faith, having no set salary, retirement, etc. to speak of. Yet-this is their calling at this season of their lives. Michael preaches God's Word & systematic theology, using both drama & visual aids, to all age groups, from children to senior citizens, either separately or combined. To help support this work [any amount no matter how small is greatly appreciated!], please make all tax-deductible gifts payable to: Elim Fellowship, c/o 1703 Dalton Rd., Lima, NY 14485, marking it "Preferred-Michael Robert **Guertin**" or you may click on the link below to give directly. Thank you! [click here](#)**

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