

January 1, 2014

"HAPPY NEW YEAR!"

"CABOOSE!" END OF YEAR REPORT 2013"



Dear **Friends & Family**,

This week will mark the completion of **28 years** of full-time ministry, and **14 years less a month** of living-by-faith itinerant ministry as an **Elim Fellowship** home-missionary. Once again, as in previous years, **2013** encompassed traveling thousands of miles to minister in various states, which included **DE, PA, NJ, NY, OH, & Washington, D.C.** I *preached 38X*, plus taught a number of times in addition to that, & drove over **5,000** miles just for preaching ministry [Note: preaching engagements were down from last year but driving mileage was considerably up]. This did not include many more miles for non-preaching ministry-related meetings & events. **Venues of ministry** included Sunday morning whole-family services, senior citizen meetings, young adult services, youth services, youth retreats, children's services, youth & children's camps (four last summer), a Christian school's spiritual emphasis week, a [Amish-Mennonite Rooted] camp fund-raising banquet, two different addictions' recovery ministries, a 4-night "Passion of Christ" drama, an inner-city children's out-reach, senior citizens' group, & a non-stop praying-for-revival service ministry. Expressions of the Body of Christ I ministered to were **Elim Fellowship, Hopewell Network, United Church of Christ, Christian Missionary Alliance, Black Pentecostal, Independent [Wesleyan orientation], Italian-Pentecostal, Chinese & Charismatic**. Once again, I could not help but notice the Father had me share "the basics" to His people, i.e., the doctrines of grace, the supremacy of Christ versus idolatry in His peoples' hearts, the coming harvest, judgment, & retribution, the

exclusivity & indispensability of the gospel, Christ's deity, & this particular summer, His triumph at His 2nd Coming. As with 2012, this past year showed occasional involvement in **worship leading** for adults, youth, & most frequently with children.

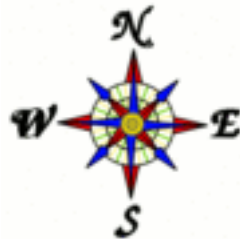
"FOR THE 'RE-CORD'"

Having begun in the ministry in 1986, with several years of that ministry venue being children's church & camps, perhaps 99+% of my sermons have never been recorded. What sermons I do possess have been stored in a box in my basement for almost three decades now. During a recent preaching ministry lull, I felt a strong purpose-a drive if you will, to get these sermons "out". My feeling was that, if I couldn't preach "live" at the time, at least I could get these various & sundry messages posted to my iTunes' account, in the hopes that the general public would avail themselves of them. Their primary though not exclusive content?-the gospel of grace elaborated, reverence for the things of God, & vision for children & ministry to them. There are even a number of recordings of me being interviewed on various radio stations, both in OH & PA. These contain content re: vision for ministry to children, & the "how to" re: starting up a children's ministry from scratch. If you think your children's pastor &/or workers in your church could benefit from them, it'd be a deep blessing to me.

"THE BIG TURN-OFF"

I had a rare & unusual phenomenon happen to me this past Thanksgiving. Typically, given the vision & burden I carry, my strong, zealous, & consistent desire is to preach anytime, anywhere, to anyone-of any age (most of you know this is what I do on a regular basis). However, at this time, it was as if the Lord turned off my switch. After almost 28 years of doing so, my desire to preach had "flat-lined". I still had tremendous hunger for God & all I wanted to do was study & pray. And yet, inexplicably, the usual burden to proclaim what I had received from the Lord from such times was absent. In addition to this, Kim told me around this time that our finances were significantly down from the same time last year. Plus, to make matters even more perplexing & dismaying, the **phone** stopped ringing, re: open doors for ministry.

“Feelings-wise”, all I wanted to do was work at the **North Pole in Santa’s workshop**, making Christmas bulbs [I told you in the beginning of this article it was a “rare & unusual” one! J]. Wow. What in the world does a preacher do when going through something like this? Well, to be honest, I avoided possible preaching engagements & was relieved that one multi-meeting event was canceled! I told my pastor [& others that I trusted] re: this that I didn’t feel like I was getting “spanked” [a.k.a., “disciplined”] by the Lord. My pastor agreed. It “felt” [& yes, I’m very aware how deceptive feelings are!] as if the purpose for which the Lord called, ordained, & equipped me for was over. I had done what He wanted me to do. Others told me that what I’ve done & how I’ve done it for the past several years was over—that God was retooling me to do something entirely different & in a different way. Obviously, given the way I’m wired, this didn’t sit well with me. I love what I do & how I do it. But, above that, I wanted God’s will, whatever it was. Of course, my next question was, “Now what?” However—something deep inside said, “This isn’t over.” Why?



The driving force in my life was still there—the 4 points of my life-compass, which I recently wrote about in another newsletter: #1. One’s only life is meant to be spent for the glory of God. #2. Jesus said that the majority of the human race was going to hell. #3. The gospel must be preached. #4. And-Judgment Day was barreling toward us. In addition to these four, my heart’s cry was still: “What else is there? Woe is me if I don’t preach the gospel!” So, in the light of these still-extant burdens so inextricably-entwined in my soul, I continued to seek the Lord. Well, in the course of one email from an Elim Fellowship “father” to come & minister at his small church, a fiery zeal was kindled in me that I could not put out. My mind began to race re: seeking potential open ministry doors to buttress this pastor’s event at his church. This strange experience was almost like our Lord putting His cap on my usual **volcano**, allowing its **lava** & resultant **pressure** to build up in order for more to pour out when the time came. Another lesson I

learned from all of this was how, O, so heavily dependent I am on our Lord for *everything*. I've quoted our Lord many times through the years, both verbally & in writing: "Apart from Me, you can do *nothing*." O, how I felt this in this strange season of "inability" He led me through. Could Kim & I truly be home-missionaries who "live by faith", if the Lord didn't bring us through such times to test that faith & reveal His faithfulness? I think not. Such is the pattern for His servants throughout Scripture. It was a painful, though sweet reminder that the call, vision, burden, mental & physical ability all come from Him. I'm reminded as I type how the Lord made His prophet Ezekiel *unable to speak* until the appointed time [Ezk. 3:26]. His gifts & callings are without repentance. This overwhelmingly-gracious truth melts this preacher, causing him even more to want to pro-claim the excellencies of Him Who called me out of darkness into His marvelous light. May it be so.

(12/30) "THE SATAN-CLAUSE"

Decades ago, when I was a baby in the Lord, I had one of my first spiritual fathers point out to me in his concern re: the grip *Santa Claus* had on the hearts & minds of most of the American populace, both saints & sinners, that his name was very close in spelling to "Satan"-that it was just a matter of the location of the "n". I thought he was a bit weird in pointing that out & still do. And yet-at this time of the year, when I see the obsession of our culture with this mythical figure [yes-"mythical", as the man who is sung to & about at Christmas is *not* in the hearts & minds of those doing so the historical personage who once lived in Europe], I don't believe this father of the faith was that far off in his assessment. Throughout this Christmas season, as in past ones, as songs to this imaginary Santa have aired innumerable times over the radio, internet, & in stores, re: his omniscience, benevolence, *seeming* omnipresence, his "coming", etc., my spirit has been grieved, sickened, & angered more than it ever has. I see Satan use Santa to dilute the power of the message of the Incarnation, detract from Jesus' incomprehensible glory through it, & distract the human race's heart-affections from Him by doing so. I'm sure this has to do with my heightened sensitivity to it given the extra amount of time I've spent with the Lord in His presence & in His Word. That is always the case. The principle of Ps. 73:17 is so very powerful when one experiences it: "Until I entered Your sanctuary, *then* I understood their end...".

Like smoke from a fog machine driven away by a fan, so the nebulous cloud of syncretism & ambiguity quickly disperses & that sharp distinction between the profane & the holy emerges after gazing at the Savior through the texts of **Scripture** illuminated by **His Spirit**. A holy hatred rises in such a person for anything or anyone who tries to compete with Him re: His much-deserved “monopoly of adoration” **due** Him from the human heart. May He help us to see. Kim & I are strongly desirous to be about our Father’s business in this coming year as He graces us to do so.

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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, or health insurance-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. Thank you! *You can do so more easily now via the "donate" button at the bottom of the page.*



***Ministry/events for JANUARY & those not listed in last month's newsletter:**

Dec. 18: IC, Wilmington, DE: Tabernacle of David worship leader
Jan. 3: IC home fellowship group, Hockessin, DE: worship leader & teacher
Jan. 4: Lancaster, PA: Kuch/Bohner wedding: attendee
Jan. 5: IC, Wilmington, DE: Warehouse youth group: worship leader & ministry of the Word
Jan. 7: Petra Christian Fellowship, New Holland, PA: hsc board mtg.//Hopewell Network pastors' mtg.
Jan. 15: New Covenant Christian Church, Audubon, NJ: Elim area pastors' mtg.
Jan. 16: EMF pastors' mtg., Wilmington, DE
Jan. 18: IC, Wilmington, DE: DEHOP worship team: drummer
Jan. 25: Friends of the Cross Christian Church, Corning, NY: Camp Victory banquet: one of the speakers
Jan. 26: Friends of the Cross Christian Church, Corning, NY: Sun. a.m. service

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