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January 1, 2016

"HAPPY NEW YEAR!"

Dear Friends & Family,

"CABOOSE!" END OF YEAR REPORT FOR **2015**





{Pic above right: my first year in the ministry, 1986, in my 1st children's pastorate in Rochester, NY at Bethel Full Gospel Church-now called Bethel Christian Fellowship.}

This week will mark the completion of 30 years of full-time ministry, and 16 years less a month of living-by-faith itinerant ministry as an Elim Fellowship home-missionary. Once again, as in previous years, 2015 encompassed traveling thousands of miles to minister in various states: DE, PA, NJ, MD, NY, VA, & NH. I preached/taught 60+X, & drove 6,895 miles just for preaching ministry. This did not include many more miles for non-preaching ministry-related meetings & events. Venues of ministry included Sunday morning whole-family services, a senior citizen luncheon meeting, young adult services, a young adult retreat, youth services, youth retreats, children's services, 4 youth & children's camps, a men's retreat [my 1st], a pastors' mtg., home groups, Christian school chapels, a camp staff banquet, & a 5-night "Passion of Christ" drama. Expressions of the Body of Christ I ministered to were [Elim Fellowship](#), [Hopewell Network](#), [United Church of Christ](#), [Assembly of God](#), [American Baptist](#), [Independent Pentecostal](#), [Charismatic](#), & [Evangelical Chinese](#). Once again, I could not help but notice the Father had me share "the basics" [Heb.6] to His people,

i.e., the doctrines of grace, the supremacy of Christ versus idolatry in His peoples' hearts, the nature of the Word of God, the Incarnation, the exclusivity & indispensability of the gospel, & The Person of Christ. As with 2014, this past year showed occasional involvement in worship leading for adults.

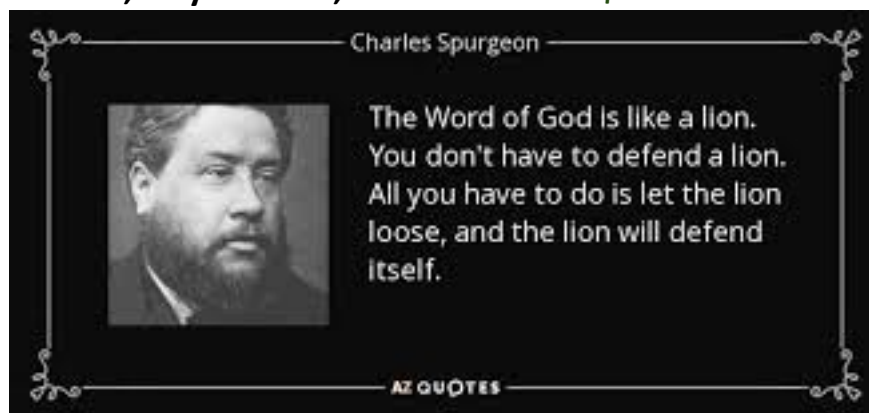
"ST. PAUL 'II'"



Through the many years I have written these newsletters, I've often mentioned *Paul Johansson*, whom I deem a very influential man in my life in the Lord. I first met him 40 years ago at Elim Bible Institute, my alma mater, when he was Dean of Students. Many times he pulled me through very difficult times in my life, via his knowledge of the love & grace of God & the gift of wisdom God has given him. I've often said of him, "He's the only person who has ever corrected me & set me free.", via that same grace & wisdom, versus many who have "laid a word on me" & absolutely decimated me. He has been a mentor, teacher, elder, "father", & friend. I'll never forget my freshman year at Elim. I had to be the flakiest student on campus. I wanted so much to be like "Brother Jo", as many affectionately call him. And yet I was so unlike him. He was & is a model of Christ's grace & truth to countless folks like me. I've also often said that if Elim, & what it stands for, could be encapsulated into one person, it would be him. I think many of my fellow alumni would agree. I recently texted him & said, "The more I hear myself preach, the more I hear you in me." Well, Brother Jo is turning 80 this month. I shouldn't be surprised that when I recently contacted him he was overseas ministering! It's just like him!

[11/29] The December issue of the newsletter has yet to go out, but as is the case with writers such as I, I must write when things are "fresh". This month [Nov. at the

time of this writing] entailed the most intense & concentrated time of ministry & travel I have experienced in 30 years of ministry, which I celebrate this month. It definitely is in the top three. **Within the space of 16 days I preached 10X, in PA & NY, in 5 different locales, entailing 1,400+ miles of driving as well.** In such frequency & intensity of ministry, not to mention untold hours of packing & loading, unpacking & setting up, only to do it all over again in each location, one grabs every second one can to refill, refresh, replenish, etc., before he pours out again. I also strive in such regimens to protect myself from as much distraction & "pollution" as possible. This includes just about every kind of media venue that isn't relative to my mission. I even request from my ministry site hosts to stay at the church if possible. This helps me avoid such distractions, stay focused, & save the host \$.



Because of the intensity of ministry mentioned above, if I wasn't preaching The Word, I was praying, studying, or meditating upon it. As Charles Spurgeon once said, "The Word of God is like a lion-let it out & It will do what lions do." It did. It more than ever before fixed my mind on things eternal, on the eternal destiny of souls [& I have pondered & been driven by these sobering truths for years!].

"HEART-SITE WORK VIA 'SIGHT'"



Besides recently preaching twice re: *Judgment Day* [A soul-catharsis doctrine in itself!], & *The Eternal Word Becomes the GodMan*, for at least a year now I have also

been preaching a message called **“Adoration Versus Idolatry”**. One can't do so without being affected by it. There is that **“lion”** again. It entails the origin of idolatry-both in **demons** & men, the process of idolatry, the severity of idolatry, & the cure for it. By immersing myself in that message & its truths so many times, it has sobered, pointed, cleansed, purified, & intensified my hatred for anything that competes against God for adoration. I have seen a zeal for God & a **burning** jealousy for Him re: the affections of His people's hearts like I've never had before. I have watched long over due & needed changes occur in my own **heart** as I have preached to others. I've become much more sensitive to children's Christmas specials that I have owned, loved, & watched for decades. Now, I cannot stomach the ones that glorify **Santa** & take the focus off of **Jesus**. I've also seen these same truths I've been preaching push out my half-a-century-old affinity towards the NFL, & particularly with my favorite team. Though I have not watched games for years, I still couldn't free myself from wanting to know how "my team" did. When I found out, their performance would control my emotions- instead of **the Spirit of God**. It was a bondage, Beloved. Now, from the principle of Ps. 73:17-"...I didn't understand, until I entered the sanctuary of God..." [my paraphrase], & also via the apostle Paul's experience of jettisoning the world & all of its accolades & cargo via "in *view of*" [the key!] the surpassing value of "seeing" Christ, I have seen Thomas Chalmer's adage come to pass in my own life-the principle of the "expulsive power of another affection". Being in the presence of Christ & "seeing" Christ via His **Written Word**, is the catalyst that sparks new desires-higher desires-stronger desires-for things eternal. I have found it also breeds a holy hatred inside for the world's system & all it spews against the Person & face of Christ. Too many people are "seeing visions" of Christ. They scare me. These kinds of visions were given to relatively few in the Bible. By pursuing these type of visions of Christ one marginalizes the written Word of God, *which is God's primary vehicle of revealing Himself to His people*. The Lord's Word is the vehicle/means/mode He uses to convey His innermost Being-His thoughts-His passions-His emotions, etc. to humans. The more you give yourself to His Word, the more His presence infills & engulfs you. In His light [knowledge & understanding, viz, the way things really are], we see light [Ps. 36]. The more of the Lord you have in you the more of His desires fill your heart. I found I began not to care how my team did. It had no bearing on eternity. And yet prior to this cleansing & "sitework" in my heart I observed myself & so many of my Christian brothers spout off stats, defend our team, get emotional for our team, advertise ["witness"] for our team, give countless hours to our team, etc. It was idolatry, Beloved-plain & simple. The very sad thing re: all of this? When we give our eyes, ears, time, \$, affections, emotions, etc. to the things of the world, we're *not* giving them to the Lord, His Kingdom, & His Kingdom's work. O! And the need is so great to preach the gospel. Judgment Day is barreling towards us, when the incessant filth of the American airwaves, like the non-stop BP gushing oil well in the

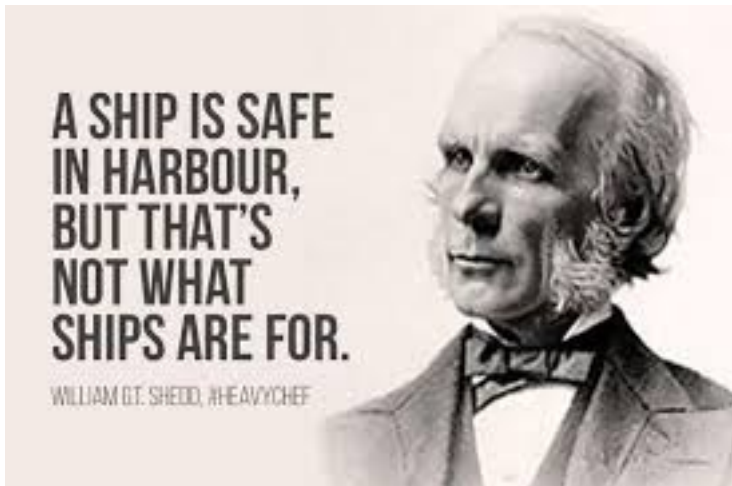
Gulf of Mexico a few years ago, will be stopped-& forced to give an account. But in the meantime, it distracts, dilutes, & pollutes God's people. Most of the world, according to the Divine Savior, is **hell**-bound, & the gospel must be preached. In the light of these things, O how my heart aches to be a "vessel fit for the Master's use".

"A REAL 'DIVE'"



I saw on a theology blog the other day that someone commented re: **Jonathan Edwards**, "He thought about **hell** a lot." I do too. **The Rich Man** [according to some traditions named "Dives"] & Lazarus is deeply in bedded in my daily psyche. After preaching at Elim Bible Institute a few years ago, one of its professors asked me what drove me re: my ministry. Since I was a baby Christian my soul has been constantly concerned & burdened for the plight of the lost. That teaching of Jesus is a **major** impetus that has caused me to be so.

"LET ME 'SHEDD' SOME LIGHT"



This deep-seated fire has burned even more brightly courtesy of a paragraph from Wm. G.T. Shedd's *Dogmatic Theology*, Vol. 1, {19th cent.}, where he is discussing God's attribute of *eternity*. He writes of a certain woman in doing so: "The following from Frances Kemble Butler's *Records of Later Life* is striking. She is describing her experience from a fearful storm at sea. 'As the vessel reeled under a tremendous shock, the conviction of our impending destruction became so intense in my mind, that my imagination suddenly presented to me the death-vision, so to speak, of my whole existence. I should find it impossible adequately to describe the vividness with which my whole past life presented itself to my perception; not as a procession of events, filling up a succession of years, but as a whole—a total—suddenly held up to me as in a mirror, indescribably awful, combined w/ the simultaneous, acute, & almost despairing sense of *loss, of waste, so to speak, by which it was accompanied. This instantaneous involuntary retrospect was followed by a keen & rapid survey of the religious belief in which I had been trained, & which then [at the moment of her impending death] seemed to me my only important concern.*'" [boldface mine]. This precious woman learned, too late, in an instant what the precious doctrine of Judgment Day can do for us presently if we give ourselves to its sobering, soul-cleansing truths. I believe it was Elisabeth Elliot who penned: "Only one life, will soon be past; only what's done for Christ will last." In this New Year, may our God grace us in our daily living in the light of this sobering reality Frances Kemble only realized in a crisis. O dear Lord, please make it so! Amen.

Ministry/events for **JANUARY** & those not listed in last month's newsletter:
CABOOSE! on the LOOSE!:



Dec. 9: IC, Wilmington, DE: Tabernacle of David worship leader
Dec. 21-23, 30-Jan. 6: our daughter Laura & family home from Costa Rica!
Jan. 12-18: Bay Village, OH: visiting our oldest son & family.
Jan. 16: Christian Assembly, Richmond Heights, OH: Sat. p.m. service
Jan. 20: New Covenant Community Church, Audubon, NJ: Elim area pastors' mtg.

***Michael** is an ordained **Elim Fellowship** itinerant Stateside 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 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, please make all tax-deductible gifts payable to: **Elim Fellowship**, c/o 1703 Dalton Rd., Lima, NY 14485, marking it "Preferred-Michael R. Guertin" or https://www.denarionline.com/DONORSERVICES/TEMPLATEPAGE.ASPXCOMP_REF=_ELIMFEL&SID=vjvwxyzcot0d5c5pnrq1f0rnl&CONTENT=MISSIONARY&MISSION_REF=E8668ABEC7

If your church would be interested in ministry by Michael, please feel free to contact us. www.cabooseministries.org