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June 2023

“JUNE ‘BUGS’”



Dear *Friends & Family*,

[5/23] I returned home yesterday from a rapid, whirlwind ministry tour in **N.Y.**, where I preached **3X in 25 hours** at two different locations, driving about **500 miles** for said ministry. Something very noticeable to me at these two locales was the zeal to press into the Lord, a tender receptivity of His Word, & a **heartfelt** desire to repent. Sadly, this was in marked contrast to what I have been seeing in my travels at some other gatherings of the Lord’s people. Sometime ago, after I had preached re: the severity of God, via His immediate, numerous, & severe punishments levied on the human race after the biting of a piece of **fruit** by one man, one time, I became dumbstruck. How so? After hearing such heavy, weighty, sobering truths from God’s holy Word, I was deeply distraught re: how very quickly His people resorted to chit-chat re: other things after the service had ended. I myself, in pouring over these truths in preparation, would often be smitten by their weight. I could only read a few words or lines before I would have to pause & either worship, adore, or repent! And here, I had just poured out a plethora of these truths to this group of people & how very quickly they seemingly moved on to other things. I was so very deeply distraught that as the last few people exited the room, I actually went up to the front of the chapel & knelt down close to the floor near my object lesson table just to mourn & intercede for this group of His people.

### “FAMILIARITY BREEDS CONTEMPT?”



Yes, I have been with this group of people over the years to know they love God & serve Him consistently & faithfully. And yet, what has happened to us, the Lord’s chosen, that we are not moved anymore in holy reverence & awe when we hear the unfathomable truths of His holiness & the depths of His love & grace graphically exhibited on the **cross** of Calvary? What is it in so many groups of God’s people that we so quickly & easily “transition” to “other things”? I am reminded as I type of the sin of Hophni & Phineas, the high priest’s Eli’s sons, who “treated the Lord’s offering with contempt” (1Sam.2:17).

### “PACE & PRAY ‘PART 2’”



Kim & I will often pace & pray around the bottom floor of our house the night before a ministry event. Well, the night before this particular ministry trip I was too exhausted to do so. But, when I returned home that Sunday morning from this preaching event, I walked in the front door & said to Kim, “Honey? Remember when I told you last night I was too tired to pace & pray? Well, we need to do it now.” And, so we did. I had studied, meditated, prayed, & proclaimed God’s truth but due to this seeming lack of response & indifference, I felt my work

for this particular event was not over. I felt very strongly I needed to “finish the work” with more prayer for this group *after* the event.

### “DON’T FENCE ME OUT”



Decades ago, there was a famous country & western song entitled, “Don’t Fence Me In”, re: this cowboy needing the wide-open spaces & plains of the **American West**. I remember as a child seeing a TV commercial that showed a small boy from the ghetto behind a chain-link fence with the end caption read-ing, “Don’t Fence Me Out” which was an obvious play-on-words reversal to this popular song. After this **heart**-rending ministry experience at this church, that song & TV commercial came back to my mind. How so? This particular church seems very, very guarded against any kind of phenomena that might even mildly hint of a move of the Holy Spirit. Sadly, I have observed in myself, in individuals, & in various express-ions of the Body of Christ over the years that sometimes-sometimes, ***the very thing you strive to fence out & guard yourself against is the very thing you need!*** And, by doing so, you greatly rob yourself of more of God & so very poignantly stunt your spiritual growth!

### “IT’S A ‘PACKAGED’ DEAL”



Another very sad trend I have witnessed for years in my travels & exposure to various expressions of the Body of Christ are churches whose Sunday morning services seem so very, very “packaged”. Every Sunday it is the same procedure, the same agenda. Yes, I do believe in decency & order & there is a thing to be said for liturgy in services too-something too often lacking in the gathering of God’s people. But too often I have seen 3 songs sung, with no “response” to what was sung at the end, & then everyone sits down. Immediately the host/emcee/pastor goes on to other things. I felt I was involved just then in more of a “Sing-A-Long” than a worship time. ☹️ **Many people praise, some worship, few adore.**

**“I’M SORRY FOR TALKING-WHILE YOU’RE INTERRUPTING”**



I’ve come to the place-sadly come to the place-that too many people in the Lord’s Church don’t know how to worship. This is very tragic, indeed. It is so very deeply grievous to me, that so many times, after singing (supposedly to the Lord!) one song, the worship leader or some other church leader, will immediately chat about other things non-related to singing to God face-to-face, which is what worship is supposed to be! Oftentimes, said chat is about an upcoming event, or about how to give to the church, or a church info/connect “plug”. Can you imagine, Beloved, how our dear Lord must feel, Who (amazingly!) delights to inhabit the praises of His people (Ps.22:3), when they begin to sing to Him, only to turn their attention to *man* for several seconds-sometimes minutes, then “come back” to the Lord, & commence singing again? How would you feel if someone you were intimately interacting with did this to *you*? O, my dear

fellow-saints, these are things I can barely endure. And, I confess I myself am a constant creature of distraction! ☹

**“AND NOW, FOR A SHORT ‘COMMERCIAL BREAK’”**



This way-too-common practice among God’s people is in essence interrupting what is supposed to be an intimate interface with the Father for a short, oftentimes, man or church-centered “commercial break”. O, may He refine His Church leaders in this area so that He gets our full attention in our gathering times around His presence!

**“ONE WITH THE ‘SHOW’, THIS IS IT!”**





I remember watching several times as a kid the *Bugs Bunny Show*. At the commencement of the program they would have a Broadway-style song & dance routine entitled, “On With The Show, This Is It!”. The seeker-sensitive movement in the Church of our Lord for the past **35+ years** has done seemingly irreversible damage to His Kingdom & gospel. It too often has produced a “show”, commonly including sanctuaries filled with fog & very distracting artificial LED lights. It makes one feel they are at a worldly concert versus a worship/adoration gathering of the Most High. These “shows” at times just begin-with no prayer or Scripture reading beforehand to focus & calm God’s people’s minds. Why is this so crucial? They are commanded to approach Him in holy reverence & awe (Heb.12:28). People need worship-in-song prefaced by these sacred means of grace as all of them have been immersed all week in a sea of culture that is totally contradictory to & hostile to the God they have gathered to adore!

**“SMILE FOR THE CAMERA”**



As if these all-too-common practices weren't enough, there is perhaps an even more grievous one, Beloved-that of having roving cameramen filming the worship team & congregants during said "worship". Why? Why, when it is a common struggle for all of God's people to keep their minds locked on Him while singing to Him, would you want to see on the big screen the worship team members? The camera crew are already distracting enough, but to behold in larger-than-life images the musicians & singers throughout the entire worship time? Beloved? This should not be done. Sadly, we not only have countless celebrity preachers, but also celebrity worship leaders. There should only be "One Celebrity" before the eyes & in the minds & hearts of God's people-The Triune God Himself.

**"PACING & PRAYING FOR A PURGING"**





After having viewed sometime ago several music videos of various worship venues throughout the world, I was so deeply grieved by some of the phenomena mentioned above while watching them, that I had to go before the Lord in deep mourning & entreaty. I pleaded with Him, even begged Him to send His *fire*-His purging fire, among these worldwide super-popular worship groups. I saw very little or no brokenness, no repentance, no mourning, etc. More often than not, every one of them involved only the young-the hip, cool, “relevant”, young. Many on stage &/or before the cameras seemed overly-concerned with their persona, their style, their image. Others seemed to be more about giving an exhibition to everyone re: their vocal styles, ranges, & improv abilities. Again, it seemed so very much like a concert than a worship service to our Lord. I could not help but beg our God to refine these worship venue “movements”. “...He shall purify the sons of Levi, & purge them as gold & silver, that they may offer to the Lord an offering in righteousness” (Mal.3:3).

### **“THE SUFFERING SERVANTS”**



One of our Lord Jesus’ titles inherited from Isaiah’s prophecy re: Him in the 53<sup>rd</sup> chapter of his book is “the Suffering Servant”. As I paced & prayed for these massive youth-led worship venues, I could not help but implore the Lord to “send His sufferings” to them. Why? Because I don’t love them? Of course I do! But I love the Lord more & strive to see His Name & glory held in the highest esteem! Suffering seasons - softens, sobers, & strengthens us. All of these qualities resulting from suffering are so very needed by those who represent the Lord in public venues, whether in person or via a screen. Again, may our Lord refine His Church for the purity of His public display.

### **“I WARNED YOU”**



Beloved, if you've read this newsletter up to this point, you may recollect the opening title of it was "June Bugs". Yes. I decided to write for my *June* newsletter the numerous & various things in the Body of Christ I have beheld for years that have "*bugged*" me. Hitherto, I have, for the most part, basically held my peace re: these things. But I can restrain myself no further. It is my deepest hope that these very deep concerns in my heart are not just Michael's criticisms. Rather, I pray they are grievances birthed in my heart by the Spirit of God in His zealous protection of the Lord's glory-& His alone. I also pray that these burdens & grievances bear witness in your heart too, for those of you who mourn for the Lord to glorify & manifest Himself in these very evil days. May it be so. For this purpose I daily strive & labor. Sincerely, **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: "People often reveal their ignorance-by their arrogance." MRG 5/19/23



***Caboose! On The Loose!***

1. **Ministry/events for JUNE & those not listed in last month's newsletter:**
2. **May 16: Charity Chapel, Pensacola, FL: pastoral meeting**
3. **May 21: Full Gospel Center, Lagrangeville, NY: Sunday a.m. service**
4. **May 22: Transformation Life Center, West Park, N.Y.: addictions recovery ministry**
5. **May 23: Tel Hai Camp, Honey Brook, PA: hsc directors' meeting**
6. **May 28: Full Gospel Center, Lagrangeville, NY: Sunday a.m. service**
7. **June 6: Petra Church, New Holland, PA: hsc board meeting**
8. **June 25-30: Tel Hai Camp, Honey Brook, PA: Hopewell Network Sr. Hi. Camp: pastoral director**



**\*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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