

March 2017

Dear Friends & Family,

“FROM 'AGE TO AGE' THE SAME”



[3/1] Two weekends ago [& again this coming Sunday] I had the extraordinary privilege to minister to a small group of young children, ages 4-upper elementary school. Many, including me decades ago, would have called the task “dreary”, even drudgery. This is inevitable when one has no vision for children. Those with this attitude have not yet seen the young as Jesus does. That was me. When it was my “mandatory” turn to serve in kids church, inside I felt an “ugh” & wanted to get it over with. I preferred to be in the adult service. Now, I call the opportunity *extraordinary*. These precious young souls sitting in front of me, every single one of them immortal since conception, have “clean slates” compared to adults. Their hearts, minds, & souls have yet to be smeared, even infected with sin's cold-heartedness, cynicism, deadly indifference, & even open hostility to the things of God that our sin nature “naturally” breeds. And yet like myself years ago, most adults don't want to work with them. Here they sit, “naturally” humble, relatively innocent, teachable [I'm ashamed at my level of UNteachability], etc.-little sponges that a teacher, given the children's natural vulnerability, has the pow-er to influence them-& influence them deeply-for *either* kingdom.

“WARNINGS RE: WAIFS”



Here they sit-these precious young spiritual “waifs”-even at this tender age needing to hear of the Savior, looking up at you. They'll believe almost anything you say-hence, our Lord's severe warning to those who would stumble them. One of the most serious in Scripture? Surely. Jesus said of Judas, given the treachery he would yield himself to in life, that it would have been better for him that he had never been born [Mt.26:24]. Peter said of a person who was once enlightened to the holy things of God & tasted them, who then returns to his sin, viz, his own vomit, that it would have been better for him that he had never come to the Lord [II Pet. 2:21]. The author to the Hebrews said that those who have tasted of the heavenly gift & then return to their life of sin & dependence on the Law for their salvation, that “no sacrifice for sins is left”, but only a fearful expectation of judgment & **raging fire** that will consume God's enemies [Heb. 10:26,27]. These are very sobering truths that makes one's heart cling to God. And yet-Jesus' stern charge to those who would lead His “little ones” astray & hinder them from coming to Him [yes-this would encompass young believers too] is one of the most bone-chilling in all of Holy Writ. “It would have been better for him to have had a heavy mill-stone hung around his neck & be thrown into the depths of the sea” [Mt. 18:6]. Precious Savior. Isn't He wonderful, Beloved? Thoroughly wicked spiritual entities who exponentially excel in strength & power over us humans go into an absolute panic whenever He comes into view. And yet-this very same Savior, Whom demons tremble at the sound of His very Name, cares so very much for the souls of the young.

“A VERY HIGH CALLING”



In the light of these truths, one realizes that contrary to much “ministerial mindset”, those who work with the young have a very esteemed position in the Kingdom. They are God's “rear guard” so to speak—the Sword in one hand, a shepherd's crook in the other, & His vision in their hearts, they will lay down their lives for His lambs. Ministers to the young are often pigeon-holed & confined to ministry in that sphere alone. Yet—it has been said & it has been my experience many times, that ministry to adults is relatively “easy” for one who can minister effectively to children. I can never thank the Lord enough for the huge blessing, honor, & privilege He granted to me to work with them these many years. I bow my head, heart, & knee to Him.

“FOCUS-FAILURE”



One week after being with these young children, our Lord once again graced me to minister to another age group-this one was a group of young teens for their annual retreat. Having done countless youth retreats, I could tell these “juveniles for Jesus” had been well-shepherded. They were humble. They were hungry. And God met them. One of them came up to me after a session & confessed that despite his best attempts & repeat-ed efforts through the years to pay attention to sermons [a very high character trait for a teen!], it was to no avail. Yet-he said I kept his attention. [If so, of course we know Who riveted him].

“FROM 'TEENIORS' TO SENIORS”



One week later I was with a small church comprised mostly of elderly saints-& some quite elderly. My caption at the top said “From Age To Age *The Same*”. What's the same, Michael? From very young children to aging, ailing seniors, the *message* is the same: the text of Scripture-not toned or watered down else it lose It's “effect”. And, in my particular case, given the creativity our Lord has blessed me with, the *method* is the same: visuals & object lessons. I do *anything* I can to enhance attention-span & retention of the Scriptures. The power of The Word Itself, much prayer & meditation upon It beforehand, the zealous avoidance of sin & distractions, both to please our Lord & to ensure His much-needed anointing, background music that bespeaks the tone of the subject I'm preaching on, dimmed lights over the audience [what a person cannot see cannot distract him], etc. And, just as with the precious little ones discussed above, the Lord moved upon His precious aged ones.

“THE LAST LEG OF THE RACE”



I describe my *Caboose!* ministry as one that “ministers to all age groups-either separately or combined”. I absolutely love what I do. His *fire* is still in my *heart* to do this itinerant work & how I do it. Now that I am in the 4th quarter of my life, should our Lord so grant, I would be extremely blessed & grateful for more years of this calling. I do realize I cannot do it forever. At present, since late January, I have been having trouble with my knees, legs, & feet. At first I suspected a knee-sprain, as I was doing one of my usual workouts via punting my football. However, as we have sought various treatments for it, we're suspecting it is lower-back issues affecting the nerves from the legs down. I'm scrambling re: diagnosis & treatment as *Via Dolorosa* is rapidly approaching, as well as my four summer camps I serve at each year. May our Lord show us His face, pleasure & will through all of this. We have been praying for a miracle. I want to be where & doing what will bring Him the most glory. May it be so. **Michael**



Caboose! On The Loose:

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

Feb. 12: IC, Wilmington, DE: Prime Time children's service

Feb. 22: IC, Wilmington, DE: Tabernacle of David: worship leader

March 5: IC, Wilmington, DE: Prime Time children's service

March 7: Petra Church, New Holland, PA: hsc board mtg.//Network pastors' mtg.

March 10: Sonrise Tax Service, Lebanon, PA: annual Christian taxman mtg.

March 12: Hockessin Evangelical Community Chinese Church, Hockessin,

March 15: New Covenant Community Church, Audubon, NJ: EF credential

March 25: Hopewell Christian Fellowship, Pottstown, PA: men's retreat speaker

March 26: Hopewell Christian Fellowship, Pottstown, PA: Sun. a.m. service

March 26: IC, Wilmington, DE: "Via Dolorosa" setup begins!

DE: Sun. English service
holders' 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 Robert Guertin" or you may click on the link below to give directly.

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