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May 2023  
STORY

“THE PROCURATOR” VIA DOLOROSA SEASON 19 HIS-



Dear Friends & Family,

[4/17] I must confess it is with deep sadness I tell you that my 19<sup>th</sup> season of *Via Dolorosa*, in some form or fashion, is over. For the first 16 years of Via, it was at **Immanuel Church**, as many of you know. **Covid** hit in 2020, & halted Via at IC-along with everything else in the country. Due to circumstances beyond all of our controls, Immanuel was unable to pick it back up again. At the suggestion of Bill Breon, the creator of Via, I went to Chris Dito, pastor of **Parkview AG Church**, whom I had never met. Pastor Breon told me Chris was very much into outreach & evangelism & that he might be very interested in hosting Via at his church. I was so very grateful to learn that Chris was. However, due to the very-present Covid issue at hand, Chris & I morphed Via Dolorosa significantly from its original format, confining the event to his sanctuary, versus several classrooms at Immanuel. I also trimmed the size & length of Via drastically, from 11-12 “stations”, down to 3, vis, “*The Sanhedrin*”, “*Herod’s Palace*”, & “*The Fortress Antonia*” episodes. The 3 main players in these rooms were of course, **high priest Joseph Caiaphas**, **King Herod Antipas**, & **Procurator Pontius Pilate**. Hence, I renamed Via “*The Villains of Via*”. “Villains” ran for 2 years at Parkview. Then, last Winter, Pastor Chris informed me after a prolonged time of prayer, that he felt not to host Villains of Via a 3<sup>rd</sup> year. His church had been

experiencing substantial growth, not to mention expansion of their various outreaches. Yes-this made me very sad. But I love Chris & know from personal experience he fervently seeks God.

### **“THE MORNING AFTER”**



In my sadness, I sought the Lord. I just couldn't bear witness in my spirit that Via's time was over for good. Having portrayed **Pontius Pilate** since the late 1980's, not to mention also having had portrayed countless Bible & historical figures out of my **Time Machine** for decades, I was aware this "feeling" could just be "me". I kept submitting my will to the Lord's. Yes-this was in a very small way (yet huge to me!) my own "Garden of Gethsemane" moment. I began to pace & pray around the bottom floor of our home, as Kim & I do from time to time [A # of them are on my YouTube channel, vis, "**Pace & Prays**"]. I remember asking our Lord, "Father, can't I just do the Via "Pilate" episode somewhere locally, at least, if Via Dolorosa is over for good?". As far as I can recollect, *the very next morning* I received a phone call from a dear pastor/brother/friend of mine, **Chuck Roland**. Chuck has pastored **Grace Church** in North Wilmington for several years. He said, "Could you do a drama for me on **Good Friday** night?". Of course, my heart leapt when he asked me! And, as I often do when I'm excited, I started to dream, whim, & imagine things-BIG things! I asked Chuck if we could do TWO nights, to which he immediately concurred. Many, many-most? of my prayers are not answered for *long* periods of time, as our Father teaches me to wait on & trust Him. So, you can imagine how I felt when this particular prayer was answered the morning after!

### **“A GROUP EFFORT”**



Chuck informed me that this particular event was to be hosted by a group of pastors & their churches that he is in fellowship with throughout the rest of the year. **Pastor Edward Cross of**

*New Community Church, Pastors Erick Adams & Clarence Stevens of One in Christ Community Church, & Pastor Bob Jones of Shellburne Bible Church.* All four churches would hold their Good Friday service together at Chuck's church. In the light of that, given that Chuck was more than happy to also add Thursday night to the event, I asked the fellow host-pastors if they would encourage their people to attend the production on Good Friday. This would make more room for the general public on Thursday night, since most churches hold their own Good Friday service.

### "A NEW NAME, WRITTEN DOWN..."



I realized with this new venue to perform Via Dolorosa only involving *one Via episode* as stated above, versus 11-12 at Immanuel & 3 in *Villains of Via* at Parkview, I had to change the name. Since of course, I was portraying only *Pilate* this time, I settled on the name "**THE PROCURATOR**". The primary responsibility of a Roman governor of one of the Empire's many provinces was to keep order & to "procure" taxes. Hence, these officials were called "Procurators". Hence, Via Dolorosa's new "metamorphosis". But-in my typical whimsical & daydreaming/visionary "modus operandi", I wasn't finished. Some of you may recollect if you attended Immanuel's Via production, that immediately after I performed Pilate's role in "The Fortress Antonia" episode, I would basically follow the audience into the next room, vis, "The Dungeon". The Dungeon was one of the most graphic & intense rooms in all of Via. I just *had* to include at least a small part of it in THE PROCURATOR-&, I did! I spliced a third of the Dungeon episode right into the middle of the Via Pilate episode-&, it worked!



This addition was important to The Procurator for 2 reasons: 1. It added a very intense scene where Pilate & his Dungeon foreman “Pollonius” discuss the horrific flogging of the Lord Jesus. After doing so, the “man with the flagellum”, vis, “Fornias”, suddenly emerges from the Dungeon into the room. A towering man, face charcoaled from many hours in the dark, dank Dungeon-he holds his dreadful Roman scourging device, the flagellum, in his hand, eagerly awaiting to tear to shreds the back of the humble carpenter’s son from Nazareth. [Note: you may view these performances on my YouTube channel, vis, Michael Robert Guertin, & type in the search box “THE PROCURATOR Good Friday Night Performance”, & also “Maundy Thursday & Good Friday Night performances”.] During this scene, you can cut the air with a knife-& rightly so when you ponder the horrific spectacle of the “Altogether Lovely One”, spotless & innocent, being “bruised for our iniquities”. 2. Another side benefit to adding this portion of the Dungeon scene, was that it lengthened the drama considerably, which in my opinion was needed. How so? In the original Via production at Immanuel, we actors were on a strict 8-minute episode schedule. Why? Because every 10-15 minutes or so a new group of about 25 people would enter our room to see the episode. If we took much more than 8 minutes to perform our given episode, the groups “down the line” would begin to back up. Needless to say, when this happened, the Via coordinator would come to us behind the scenes & tell us to pick up the pace! For THE PROCURATOR, however, these extra added minutes enhanced the production.

#### **“A NEW ‘PROCURATOR’ PRIVILEGE, & PRESSURE!:PREACHING!”**



In addition to all of the pressures that come upon me during my annual *Via Dolorosa* season, such as, recruiting & training actors, amassing costumes, writing &/or tweaking scripts, editing & compiling music, countless hours of transporting sets, props, & costumes to the production site, setup, rehearsals, etc., a new task was added to my Via “job description”. Chuck asked me to *preach* each night after the drama! In 19 years of Via involvement, I have never done so, & understandably so! In fact, during so many years of Via when Pastor Breon would conduct the cast devotional on opening night before the first group of guests began to walk through the building, he would have to send someone down to fetch me from “Rome”. Why? Since I was the chief costumer not only for all of the Romans involved, but for a number of Herod & Caiaphas’ personnel, etc., I had to wait for late-arrivals to make sure they were dressed properly. So, while preaching is the highest calling God can confer on a man, & it would be by far the most

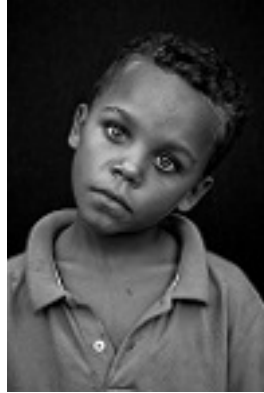
important part of THE PROCURATOR, I must confess in addition to all of my other responsibilities, it did lay on me “the weight of preaching”, re: preparation & proclamation.

**“PILATE the ‘PUPPET’, THE PASSOVER, THE PASSION, & PROPITIATION”**



Pilate was a procurator, but he was also a “puppet” in the Lord’s hands. As with **Pharoah**, whom God raised up to use for His Own holy, just, & wise purposes [Rom.9:17], the Lord used the wicked, ambitious, virulent, idolatrous Roman governor, along with Judas Iscariot, Caiaphas, Herod, & the Messiah-rejecting/Barabbas-preferring mob for His eternal salvific plan [Acts 2:23]. In the understandably limited time I had for the message, I strove to get to the glorious doctrine of “Propitiation” as quickly as possible. Romans 3:25 is surely one of the most powerful, pregnant, potent passages in all of Sacred Scripture. I could immerse myself in just one clause from this precious text for hours & that is exactly what I did in preparation for **The Procurator**. God’s Lamb, the Lord Jesus, must needs be sacrificed for the sins of His people. And yet-He could not kill Himself, as that would be suicide & thus nullify His sacrifice, due to the obvious “blemish” of said sin. How did our Sovereign Lord do this? He used the evil wills of men [listed above], Satan [Lk.22:3], & of course, a host of teaching [1 Tim.4:1], Christ-hating, inciting demons. In citing Jesus saving His people from their sins [Mt.1:21], I expounded how saving us from sin saves us from all of the concomitants of sin: death, slavery to sin & Satan, judgment, condemnation, sin’s pollution, The Law of God, the curse of the Law, & the wrath of God. [viewable on my YouTube channel: “A Case for the Cross”, & God’s Wrath Appeased”, et al.]. “**Propitiation**” is one of the most beautiful words in the English language, despite the fact that it is difficult to pronounce-& spell. “The removal of wrath, by the offering of a sacrifice”. I gave numerous examples of “outbursts” of God’s wrath from the Old Testament, without which one cannot truly understand His greatest outbreak of wrath-on the Person of His Own Son on the cross of Calvary.

**“THE PROCURATOR-& A LITTLE BOY-& A NOT-SO-LITTLE BOY”**



After the production was over, Kim told me about a little boy in the audience. She had asked him what was his favorite part of ***THE PROCURATOR***. One would think, given his age, he would say the Roman soldiers, or their armor, or their weapons. On the contrary, he said to her, “All of the things he held up”, meaning my plethora of object lessons I used to illustrate the message! Another little boy came up to me after the message, along with his mother & brother. His mother told me he had a question for me. He asked, “How can we believe in Jesus when we’ve never seen Him?” Having never been asked this before, my first impulse was to grab his arm & squeeze it. “Can you feel that?”, I asked, to which he replied, “Yes.” I then told him that when Jesus was on Earth, He was like one of us. We could touch Him [1 Jn.1:1], that He was seen physically by over 500 people at one time [1 Cor.15:6], etc. I continued that when Jesus comes back for us, we’ll be able to touch Him then too. His mother asked him if that answered his question. He smiled & nodded. 😊



Some days after the event, I received the following text from one of my cast members: **“Had a gentleman at my church approach me this morning. (He came to see Via on Thur). He told me that he really enjoyed the performance. But most importantly your teaching caused him to pick up his Bible for the first time in a while. He is hoping you will come teach at [our church] soon. All that being said though. God used you & your teaching to bring someone back into their Bible. I am confident that if we did Via this year for only that, we have done it to the approval of our King Jesus. Because sometimes it is just about the one person who needs to be touched. Let His Name be proclaimed! To His Glory”** [One of my Roman officers in the drama]

It is my very sincere hope that our Lord would grant to me yet another season of **Via Dolorosa**, come next **Easter Season**. I told Kim I cannot conceive of this most blessed time of the year without performing in it & pointing both saints & sinners to the most glorious event in all of history-& eternity-The Crucifixion of the Son of God. It was there that God most gloriously & manifestly showcased Who He is to all intelligent beings, both human & angelic.

**“RED AND YELLOW, BLACK AND WHITE (& BROWN)”**



In the space of two back-to-back weekends, I had the rare blessing & privilege of ministering to a very diverse group of God’s people in the Body of Christ. For THE PROCURATOR production, I was given the blessed opportunity to minister to a white church, a black church, a merged black/white church, an Hispanic family, & a Chinese church! All I was missing was some “red” people! I have desired to minister to Native American Indians for decades & pray our Lord one day opens that door before my time is through.

**“THEN COME CAMPS...”**



Now, for me, as is always the case this time of year immediately after Via season, I rush full-speed ahead into my summer camps’ season. This will be my **41<sup>st</sup> year** in camp work/ministry in some form or fashion. These two ministry seasons/events of the year are the most exhibitivive of who I am in calling, gifting, & personality. I pray it is our Lord’s will to continue these venues for years to come-for His glory alone. [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: "In order to understand the wrath of God at Calvary, one must understand the wrath of God in history." [MRG 4/4/23]



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

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

April 19: New Hope Community Church, Audubon, NJ: Elim area credential holders mtg.

April 25: Morgantown, PA: hsc directors' meeting/// P.M.: Abundant Life Church, Birdsboro, PA: ministry interview

May 2: Petra Church, New Holland, PA: hsc board mtg., Hopewell Network Pastors' meeting

May 3-6: Springfield/Leesburg, VA: family wedding

May 10-17: Daphne, AL: granddaughter high school graduation



**\*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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