

Audio Sermons: <https://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/caboose-ministries/audiopodcast/id506049887mt=2>

YouTube Channel [for dramas, sermons, & puppet shows for kids]: Michael Robert Guertin

Website: www.cabooseministries.org Facebook: "Michael Robert Guertin"

May 2024

"MY FAVORITE 'MARTIN'"



Dear Friends & Family,

[4/29] When I was about 8 years old, in 1963, a sitcom debuted on TV called, "My Favorite Martian", about a friendly alien who came from Mars & lived with an

earthling, resulting in all kinds of funny & uncanny escapades. This TV show came to mind while writing this particular article. You see, I have a favorite “Martin” too. This past weekend I had the high privilege & honor to perform a wedding for a young man who is a little brother, friend, co-worker in the Kingdom, & spiritual son to me. This young man is *Martin Elijah Kolb*. One thing that made this wedding so special for me was that I first met Martin when he was 9 years old. He arrived at *Tel Hai Camp* with gleaming blonde hair, & a very unique high-shrilled voice that a counselor friend of mine at the time tried to mimic but couldn’t. All he could do to emulate this little boy’s voice was to whistle!



**[An aside: this counselor friend who would eventually become a director himself, was our beloved Rob Klein. Rob & I were saddened when Martin hit puberty & his voice deepened, as we both would greatly miss that unique little boy voice. And yet, our Lord was both kind & funny to Rob & me! How so? He sent us Martin’s little brother Jonas who looked & sounded just like him! So, we had a few more years of this “little-boy delight”! 😊]

Martin first attended camp in 2006. Over the decades, I remember my camp years via two things-the camp theme, which happened to be “The Fire Place” that year, &, my Director’s Equestrian field dramas, which in 2006 was “Narnia”. This was

Martin's year of arrival. Of the thousands of children, teenagers, & staff that have come through *Hopewell Network Summer Camps* since I first was given the helm, no one has achieved Martin's particular "status". How so? Martin is the only camp alumnus who has filled every possible position in our camps: camper, counselor, gopher, tech man, & director. When I am with him, I feel like a young teenager again-even a child. We laugh, & play, & tease each other like children. And, I don't know how to stop doing it, nor do I ever want to. And yet, I highly respect Martin. If I didn't, he would have never been selected to a director's role, given the huge responsibility it entails, in particular, being entrusted with children & teenagers. In choosing assistant directors over the years, I have had some very fine young, & not-so-young men by my side, I always want to observe how they serve, before I call them to lead. ***If one can't serve, one can't lead.*** Martin was definitely a servant.

"I JUST MET A GIRL CALLED 'MARIA'!"

or

"HOW DO YOU SOLVE A PROBLEM LIKE MARIA??"



Another very special aspect of this wedding was that Martin's bride-to-be was also a Hopewell Camp alumnus, a camp nurse in particular, Maria Dadd. Maria is a relative newcomer to our camps, having first served in 2022. It didn't take long for

me to realize Maria fit right in with us, as, at one of the camps I saw her joyfully sauntering through the Tel Hai Camp dining hall to my traditional *Lawrence Welk* music I have played during meals since 1991. I knew right then & there that she was “one of us”! By the way, since 1991 I have never had a child nor teenager ever complain about our dining hall music. They love it! I strive to keep our camp squeaky-clean in every way possible, including jokes, jesting, & music we play! An added “confirmation” that Maria fit right in, was that she was a bonified punster in her own right! Camps are not camps without tons of puns & Lawrence Welk music! 😊 Speaking of music, the processional music was recorded by Martin & Maria, with Martin on piano & Maria on flute. I did not recognize the song as the wedding party came up the aisle until Maria herself approached. That was when her flute part in the song began. And, it was, “How Do You Solve A Problem Like Maria” from the 1965 multi-Oscar winning movie *The Sound of Music*! I laughed out loud. It was perfect!

“WHOLLY HOLY”



To be asked to marry these two young Jesus-pursuing people, was a privilege & honor I cannot adequately convey. This is especially so, since Martin’s father Joel is an experienced & seasoned pastor of many years, & Martin is his eldest son. To be honest, I felt a bit awkward performing the ceremony in-stead of Joel, but never

once in all of my interaction with him did I feel the least bit reticence from him that I was doing it. This added to it being such a humbling honor to me. For years I have referred to the Kolb family as “My Kolb Family”, & it is true. The wedding ceremony was a reflection of the personal dedication & love of the bride & groom for their Savior. It was definitely one of the holiest, purest, & most wholesome weddings I have not only officiated, but ever attended. Kim was in agreement with this assessment. While standing by me waiting for Maria to come up the aisle, Martin was deeply crying. So was I. I just extended my arm out & placed my hand on his shoulder. Again, he was a cute little 9 year-old boy when I met him!

“AN AISLE-ON THE ISLE”



From the outset, Martin & Maria’s dream was to be married at Tel Hai Camp, where so many of their deepest & richest experiences together in the Lord occurred. Tel Hai’s policy typically does not include being a venue for weddings &

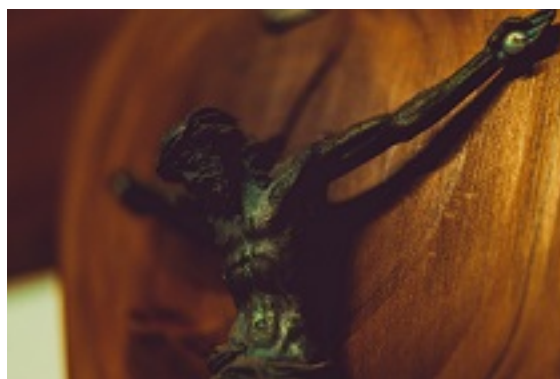
their accompanying receptions. And, this restriction is totally understand-able as Tel Hai is a Christian camp dedicated to the service & glory of Jesus Christ. Way too frequently, sadly, tragically, wedding ceremonies that are solemn & sacred are followed by receptions that are anything but. They are often rowdy, with vile music & excessive drinking. So often wedding receptions dour the sweetness of the wedding ceremony. Yet, because Tel Hai administrative staff knew Martin, & the quality of man he was, they gave special permission for this particular event. To add to “the magic”, Tel Hai also granted Martin & Maria’s request to be married on Tel Hai’s island on their pond. Hence, they would have an “aisle on the isle”!

“IT’S GREEK TO ME!”



Yet another unique aspect of this wedding, was that Maria's mother's side of the family is Greek. Because of this, the wedding couple requested that the Greek Orthodox tradition of the "Stefana" be incorporated into the ceremony. Stefana are woven crowns connected by a ribbon. During the ceremony the officiant blesses the Stefana in the Name of the Father, Son, & Holy Spirit. He then takes the 1st Stefana & places it on the head of the groom saying, "I crown you king of your home". He then does the same to the bride, crowning her as "queen of her home." Afterwards, the couple places the Stefana in a prominent place in their bedroom for the rest of their lives.

"AS CHRIST LOVED THE CHURCH"



My message/homily for the wedding was called "As Christ Loved The Church", from Eph.5:25. I was allotted 10 minutes for the message. This is understandable, as this "starry-eyed", "twitterpated" couple was anxious to get married! 😊 Yet, for

me, a miracle was needed to pour out to the guests in 10 minutes the weight & glory I received while preparing re: the fiery, fierce, loyal, & jealous love of the Lord for His Bride! I began by saying that two of the most profound & effective ways for a young Christian man to extend the Kingdom of God & spread the knowledge of God throughout the earth are: **1.** Preach the gospel: proclaim the excellencies of the One Who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light (I Pet.2:9). **2.** *Marry a woman* (Eph.5:25). When a man loves his wife just as Christ loves the Church, God's people are comforted & blessed by seeing this "living object lesson". In addition, when sinners see the Divine Bridegroom's love demonstrated by His servants, if God should graciously touch their hearts, they will exclaim, "If that is how Jesus Christ loves His Bride, His people, then I want to become one of them!". When the Lord set His affection on His first Bride, a.k.a., Israel, it was *exclusive* (Dt.7:6,7, 10:14,15). He chose Israel, & Israel alone, above all, & instead of *all other nations*. Various Bible translations say, *He set His affection on them, He fastened His heart on them, He attached Himself to them,* etc. He exuded a love to Israel (& of course later to The Church) that was different ***in kind & degree*** compared to His overall beneficent love He has in general for the rest of His creation, including the angelic hosts, those who are not His people, & the rest of animate creation. The nature of this love is described in Song of Solomon as being "strong as death" (8:6). I told the wedding guests, "**Christ loved His Bride to death.**" (Jn.15:13; Phil.2:8). When the Lord sets His affection upon a people, it is fierce; it is intense-even "the very flame of the Lord" (S.O.S. 8:6c). This was displayed with Israel when she played the harlot with other gods. Many people fail to realize when they observe Old Testament texts where the Lord is dealing severely with His people, that His fierce anger comes from His intense jealousy ("jealousy is as relentless as the grave" S.O.S. 8:6b). And, His fiery jealousy is directly proportionate to the depths & degree of *His love*. This task is impossible for Christian men to achieve, yet they are commanded to love their wives as Christ loved the Church. I hope to post the message on my YouTube channel & website as soon as I acquire it & finish post-production on it.

"A LAWRENCE WELK WALKAWAY"



Well, the wedding was solemn, sacred, joyful, & in a number of places-filled with laughter. Another added surprise, &, in being true to his *Hopewell Summer Camp* upbringing, Martin had another surprise for everyone, including me! Their recessional song, performed by none other than Lawrence Welk, turned out to be, "I'm Getting Married In the Morning", from *My Fair Lady*, &, that's exactly what they did! Speaking of Broadway musicals, Lorenz Hart, from the famed musical duo, Rogers & Hart, wrote a song in 1925 entitled, "Manhattan". Its famous line is, "We'll turn Manhattan, into an isle of joy". And, that is exactly what Martin & Maria's wedding did to Tel Hai Camp's isle!

“LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION!-GUERTY??”



Last month, **Kevin Neville**, who is *Elim Fellowship's* "NextGen" Director, asked if he could come to Wilmington & interview me. He wanted to produce a video/podcast of my life story. He wanted to know about my grandparents, parents, siblings, childhood, adolescent years, my conversion story, how I came to be connected to Elim, my wife & children, how I was led into the ministry, & what I was presently doing, etc. He wanted the works! He said I could take as much time as I wanted & go on as many rabbit trails as I desired. Yes-a scary thought! A unique aspect of this interview was that Kevin used to be the children's pastor at *Bethel Christian Fellowship*, the very same church where I started in the ministry in 1986-*as their children's pastor!* [Formerly, during my tenure there, it was called *Bethel Full Gospel Church*]. Kevin had originally told me we could talk for an hour or so, take a break, & then continue. However, as the interview proceeded, I would intermittently ask him if he was OK, if he needed to take a break or eat, etc., & each time, he said he was fine & to keep going. So, I did! When we finally concluded the interview, we had gone *3 hours & 40 minutes*-nonstop! I couldn't believe it. The time flew by. Another very unique coincidental (?) aspect of Kevin interviewing me at this particular time, was that it took place just 15 days to the day after my conversion's "Jubilee year", i.e., 50 years ago. Some of you may recollect I shared about this conversion experience in detail in last month's newsletter, vis, "Apprehended! In A Convent!", or, "Michael Robert **Guertin**'s HIGH NOON!". This approximately 3-minute video is on my **YouTube** channel.

“SUMMER CAMPS-MY PANACEA FOR VIA DOLOROSA’S ‘ABSENCE’”



Now that Martin & Maria’s wedding is commenced & official, for me, it is full-steam ahead with summer camps. I’ll be honest. I have not fully recovered from my deep personal grief that *Via Dolorosa* in some form or fashion did not happen for the first time in 20 years this past Easter season [not including 2020]. It was a love of my life in the same way as summer camps are. As with camps, I poured my heart & soul into Via each year with every gift, talent, grace, & anointing our Lord has ever given me. I feel as if I’ve lost a baby. Yes, it is that deep. Though I keep giving Via & its future to the Lord & *HIS* will, timing, & pleasure, I must confess it’s my deepest desire He has future plans for it. May it be so.

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: **"Jesus loved His Bride-to death"**.
[M.R.G. 4/27/'24]



Caboose! On The Loose!

Ministry/events for [MAY](#) & those not listed in last month's newsletter:

April 12: Morgantown, PA & Tel Hai Camp, Honey Brook, PA: hsc directors' plan & pray meetings

April 15: Wilmington, DE: video recording & podcast with Elim Fellowship rep. Kevin Neville

May 5: Hopewell Telford, Telford, PA: Pastor/Camp Board Head Curt Malizzi's retirement reception

May 7: Petra Church, New Holland, PA: hsc board mtg. & network pastors' mtg.

May 15: Converge Church, Moorestown, NJ: Elim area pastors meeting

May 19: Restoration Church, Gaithersburg, MD: Sun. a.m. service



***Michael is an ordained [Elim Fellowship](#) itinerant Stateside missionary & *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 this link to give directly: <https://elimfellowship.org/missionary/michael-guerty-guertin> Thank you!

Michael Robert "Guerty" **Guertin**

3 Windsor Road

Wilmington, DE 19809-2144

www.cabooseministries.org

YouTube: Michael Robert **Guertin**

FaceBook: Michael Robert **Guertin**

www.hopewellsummercamps.org

