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October 2016

Dear Friends & Family,

["COSTA RICAN EXCURSION"](#)



[\\*above is a Costa Rican license plate I bought from some metal-recyclers which I put on my Time Machine](#)

Kim & I returned home last night from a week in Liberia, Costa Rica to visit our daughter & her family who are mission-aries there. I had not been out of the country like this since 1989; Kim hadn't since 1975. Although I travel for a living, I am not a "world-traveler". Kim says I'm high-maintenance. She's right. And yet-this is our daughter-our only

daughter-& our only son-in-law-a man of God in his own right-with 4 of our grandchildren. Hence, we go.

### "A FLYING HENHOUSE"



While sitting outside our gate at BWI airport, we noticed an increasing number of mostly middle-aged women beginning to congregate. The more I observed them, the more intrigued I was as to why they were there. After some guessing to myself I asked. They were also headed to CR but for an entirely different reason than us. For the past 17 years these ladies have taken a week-long vacation to various parts of the globe. They numbered 33 for this trip but have had as many as 58 come along! Given my outgoing personality, I had fun chatting with & teasing them [Hence, my title above-they were chatting like hens in the terminal & so it was safe for me to assume they would do so in flight. They didn't let us down! :0).] However, the more I observed & listened to them, it was obvious this trip of theirs was not a *missions'* trip. It would be spent in leisure, luxury [they were staying at an all-inclusive resort about 30 minutes outside of Liberia], & living-for-pleasure. Each one of them surely paid several hundred dollars for this trip. I began to mourn for them & to pray deeply for them. I've often thought of the verse in Timothy where Paul gives a very sobering warning re: widows who live for pleasure: "...she who gives herself to wanton pleasure is dead even while she lives." [I Tim.5:6]. They are some of the most sobering words in all of Scripture to me. Oh God. Even though in that context the apostle is addressing **widows**, all of Scripture attests to the fact that one who lives for pleasure is on the pathway of **doom**.

## "A 40,000 FOOT VIEW"



Peering out my airplane window at 40,000 feet, I grasped once again how infinitesimal man is. A volcano that erupted in the country's capital of San Jose' just days before looked like a pimple from this height. Trees were less than broccoli stalks. Massive man-dwarfing ships were dots on the water. Humans were not even recognizable. And this was only about 7 & ½ miles up. *God fills Heaven & Earth!* And yet, these less-than-microscopic human beings blaspheme His Name all day long. They arrogantly assert He doesn't exist. If they do believe He exists they ignore Him. They call the Father a liar re: the testimony about His Son. These same humans murdered His Son like a butchered animal & also killed those who love Him who are sent to tell these same enemies of God of His unfathomable love for them. Is it any wonder our Lord used such dreadful & horrific words to describe the fate of those who have done so unrepentantly viz, "He will bring those wretches to a wretched end...He will have them cut in pieces" [Mt.21:41,24:51], etc. (Sadly, much of the American church with its man-centered, watered-down, severity-of-God avoiding doctrines would choke on such things!) They...they...*killed* His Son. Oh God. My gut churned in fear & awe as I pondered what must **the wrath** of this infinite God be like once it's unleashed? Oh God. Man's arrogance reveals his ignorance. His ignorance comes from *his* intelligence. Jesus said unless one humbles himself like a child

he'll never see Heaven. Then, as you ponder this same God chose *not* to crush these less-than-microscopic humans under His feet [after all, the Earth *IS* His *footstool*!] as they deserved, but “spared-not” His one & only Son-it makes you want to curl up in a ball on the floor beneath those same feet in awestruck fear & wonder.

“FROM A PLANE TO A PLOT”



About 24 hours after we landed we found ourselves on small plot of ground outside a little town about 90 minutes from our daughter's. Why? There is a precious brother who is a friend of our daughter & son-in-law

who rents that little lot for \$110 a month. In that poverty-stricken area to me it might as well have been \$110,000! And yet, this brother said it was a good price! Whew. We drove down this partly dusty, partly muddy, partly pot-holed dirt road to get to it. "Shanties" made of corrugated tin walls lined its way. It was a small fenced-in lot-some grass, some damp dirt, & some mud. It had trees surrounding it all around with a few in the middle. Unfortunately, some of these trees dropped their "fruit" on the ground-coconut-like shells but unlike coconuts had a dark, ugly, goopy center. You had to avoid these when you walked around. And yet, this postage stamp-sized plot of ground became to me that Sunday what it surely must have been to God: a prime piece of real estate, more valuable than the acreage of *The Atlantis Resort & Casino* at the Bahama Islands, or the tract of ground the *Trump Plaza* stands on in N.Y.C. How so? Certainly not its location-but then again-yes-its location!

Why? *Children* were there! The brother mentioned above, a.k.a., "Brother Warner", has been conducting a feeding program there for them for the past 8 years! I realize just because children were there doesn't necessarily make it important-though actually in the eyes of God it does-it was doubly important because these particular children were also *being taught the Word of God*. The first thing I did when I arrived was to greet them in my shaky Spanish. Next-I played football with them-*American* football. Their football of course is our soccer. They seemed very interested in "our" version. I taught many of them how to hold & throw the ball. After that we gathered under a makeshift canopy a missions' group had built out of thin trees & corrugated tin. We did motion songs & danced. The kids were then given pieces of cardboard to sit on, given how dirty & muddy the ground was.

"SPANISH SAMSON"



Warner commenced to tell the story of “Samson” [interestingly enough, I had just played Samson in a drama at our church earlier that month-see above pic]. The children ranged in age from preschool to junior-highers. I watched their eyes as they listened to Warner's excellent presentation of the biblical strongman. He used a jump rope that happened to be there as a prop. The two smallest children there all of the sudden started to chatter incessantly during the message, be-ing distracted what I thought were monkeys in the trees. They were *squirrels!* Warner kept going. When he was finished we all worked together on a craft. It was a coloring-book picture of Samson that the kids colored. We then glued strings of yarn to it for his hair & waistband. I was the go-to “Goma [“glue”] Guy”. After the craft we all joined hands in a circle & prayed.

### “ONCE-A-YEAR DELICACY”



Brother Warner, who gives so much of himself to undertake this very important work [I saw a church nearby just down the street but was told they have no interest in helping-Oh God.], then began to feed the children what most of us in the U.S. would consider junk food: kids' sugar-cereal. It is so expensive in Costa Rica the children's parents cannot afford it. [And yet, despite the abject poverty all around, some of these kids had *cell phones!!*] To these kids, it is a delicacy. I melted inside as I watched them down Fruit Loops & Cocoa Krispies mixed! Milk is expensive too.

## "A THIEF IN THE 'LIGHT'"



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As the program ended, the children one-by-one came up to me to say goodbye. I was surprisingly blessed-& yet, kids will be kids. Sadly, despite all of the lavished goodness, love, & generosity conveyed by Brother Warner & us to the kids, as I was leaving I tossed a football pass to one of the older boys on a bike, expecting him to re-turn it. That was not his intention. He proceeded to start to ride off with it when another boy got it from him & threw it back, much to the "thief's" chagrin. Oh God. Such is sin nature-in old & young. I never get used to it in children. Thank God the "football savior" boy "got it", i.e.: what this outreach was all about.



## “A LAND & A GOD OF TWO EXTREMES”



My impression of Costa Rica, which my son-in-law Nathan told me was a “developing” country, was one of two extremes. Since its primary industry is tourism, of course it has lavish hotels, sumptuous restaurants, & posh resorts. Yet, I saw so much poverty: shacks & shanties everywhere-mud floors, corrugated tin walls, etc., & barbed wire. Everywhere there was barbed wire & protective barricade bars or walls. As with the land of Costa Rica, so I see our God as a God of two extremes- ***both adorable!***-His kindness & severity [Rom.11:22]. His severity I cited above, re: what He will one day do to His unrepentant enemies. And yet, this same God is also the One Who animates & motivates His servant Warner to faithfully & consistently reach out to a small group of *children* in a small vacant lot in a desolate area in the middle of nowhere. Oh! The inscrutable ways of the heart & mind of the ever-living God!

## **“MIGUEL /N ZURIEL ON ZURIEL”**



Zuriel in Hebrew means “Mountain”. And *Zuriel Evangelistic Center* in Liberia is just that! It's on a mountain! To get to Zuriel you must navigate the creviced, pothole-filled road up that mountain, with the expertise' of a motocross biker! But, we got there-in a VAN(!), thanks to the navigational skills of my son-in-law. It was my heart's desire & prayer to be able to minister while I was in CR. Our Lord opened the door. The pastor of Zuriel was sick. He had another brother cover the a.m. service while we were at the a.m. feeding program. He gave me the p.m. service. Nathan expected about 25 people. We were both surprised to see 75 come. It had been 27 years since I last preached with an interpreter, while on a missions trip to Mexico. I don't think how I communicate works well with an interpreter. This has been one of my many [Though true! But, God was about to prove me wrong!] “excuses” I've given my pastor who has approached me several times over the years to accompany him overseas. Though it was the desire of my heart to proclaim **Jesus & His excellencies** & grace to His Costa Rican people, when it came time to do so, despite spending time ruminating over the text [Col.1:12-19] in prayer in my bedroom at our daughter's house that afternoon, during the worship part of the service, I began to be afraid-terribly afraid. I began asking myself, “What have I gotten myself into?” Then I began to talk to the Lord about it. “This just isn't going to work, Lord. Me & a translator? I talk too fast. And You know I try so hard to stuff as much Scripture & systematic theology into my audiences as fast as I can. I'm so sorry for offering my help for this, Lord!” Then, just like in the States 2,500 miles away, the same sweet presence, comfort, and boldness of the Holy Spirit which had come to me there so many times now filled my heart *here* in Costa Rica & Jesus “took over”. Despite language & culture barriers, hallelujah, His Spirit's presence is so recognizable, & universal! I loved how the people reacted to God's truth, as if they had spoken English. They got it. They laughed. They blessed God. They affirmed. God got glorified-as only He deserves. Amen.



### *Caboose! on the Loose:*

#### Ministry/Events for **OCTOBER** & those not listed in last month's newsletter:

Sept. 18: IC, Wilmington, DE: Sun. p.m. children's ministry

Sept. 19-21: Hurlock, Maryland: getaway/retreat with some camp staff

Sept. 25: a.m.: San Martin, Costa Rica: children's feeding & ministry program

Sept. 25: p.m.: Liberia, Costa Rica: Zuriel Evangelistic Center: preached Sun. evening service

Oct. 1: Return home from Liberia, Costa Rica Oct. 4: Petra Church, New Holland, PA: hsc board mtg.

Oct. 6,7: Morgantown, PA: Hollinger/Berg wedding rehearsal & wedding: officiating

Oct. 8,9: St. Thomas Church, Bernville, PA: Sunday School Rally Day: preaching @ Sun. School Rally plus 2 a.m. services

Oct. 14-16: Camp Haluwasa, Hammonton, NJ: Maranatha Christian Fellowship "Boot Camp" youth retreat: 4 services

Oct. 16, 23, 24: My birthday, our 39<sup>th</sup> anniversary, & Kim's birthday [respectively]

Oct. 29, 30: Hopewell Christian Fellowship Telford, Telford, PA: Sun. a.m. whole-family service

\*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. <https://www.denarionline.com/DONORSERVICES/>

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