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October 2017

“FRONT & REAR VIEW OF YOUNG SOULS”



Dear **Friends & Family**,

[8/25] It is impossible to last in ministry, i.e., in *effective* ministry, without vision. This is especially true in working with children. On the surface, many would retort, “Why bother?”. I do so many things to keep my heart sober & burdened for kids. I listen to kids’ movie music, particularly the songs that are “young & tender”-sounding. This causes me to ponder their relative innocence & their high value & preciousness in the sight of the Lord. I ponder from time to time the very severe punishment the Lord will levy on those who stumble children. I’ve also pondered as I’ve worked with children through the decades what they will look like in just a very few years, as they reach adolescence, teenage years, young adulthood, & even their senior years. What makes this meditation even more sobering is how very quickly these precious young will enter these later stages of their lives. One of the benefits of being at Tel Hai Camp so long [27 years; 65 camps] is that I’m around to watch the generations come & go. My first year there in 1991 a 9-year-

old camper who used to stick out her tongue at me in jest, now brings her two daughters to camp as campers. And yes, one of her daughters does it to me now! I look ahead, so to speak, re: the “front view”. But another vision-producing activity I have done for many years is to watch the children as they watch & listen to the various preachers. It’s similar to watching someone watch television. Have you ever done it? Have you watched them take into their minds the various & numerous rapid-fire images via their eyes? And watched them receive all kinds of verbal messages into their minds via their ears? I have done it for many years & most of the time it makes me weep inside. Oh God-this precious human being is watching & listening to a “sermon” right now. What they watch & listen to will inevitably affect, & oftentimes *permanently affect*, their hearts & lives. With so much of what is viewed on screens this day diluting & polluting God’s people, it is so very hard not to ache, mourn, & weep over it. I have sat to the side in so many camp chapels & done this. I look at their little heads & contemplate that their young brains are right now taking in words, words that they will process, words that they will either accept or reject, etc. It is one of the most moving activities of my life, as I watch them take into themselves, into their *relatively* clean slates, their highly impressionable tender minds, words from the preacher. I wonder as I watch, “Oh God, these tender little ones, immortal-since-conception human souls, will spend eternity somewhere. Oh God, & now they are in the arena of listening to Your Word. Oh God, there are so many obstacles & enemies in & outside of them that would seek to prevent this from happening. Oh God. Please help them receive them, Lord. Please.” This is why I do what I do. If our Lord should ever take me from ministering to the young, I hope His plan is to take me Home. I cannot conceive of not ministering to children & teens.

“CHILDREN-& ETERNITY”



Another huge & major vision-for-children imparted to me that I constantly ponder upon is the fact that every single person who winds up in the Lake of Fire for all of eternity-with its constant, conscious, unfathomable torment-will at one time have been a *child*! This soul-sobering & stirring fact of life & theology drives my preaching, my evangelism, & my life! O God. I can't hardly take it in. Hitler, Stalin, John Dillinger, John Wilkes Booth, Madeline Murray-O'Hare, etc. were all once *children*. **“HOLY GROUND”** In the light of this, O children's minister, take off your shoes. You are treading on holy ground when you enter the minds & hearts of children via your preaching! Take care, O preacher! “Watch your life [children learn far more by *your example than they do by your words!*] & doctrine [children are much more naïve & easily persuaded than adults. Hence, they are easily “won” by either Kingdom! May our lives & doctrine be of the most pure nature in working with them!] closely.” [I Tim.4:16]. It is at this O, so tender time of their lives when they are most receptive, susceptible, & impressionable. And yet, how few, how so very few adults want to work with them. 😞 Let no man deceive you- it is the highest calling our God ever gave a man or woman, given the delicacy of the age group & eternity of the issues!

“THE KIDS CAPSULE”



To the untrained eye, if one frequented one of our kids' a.m. chapel services, they might be presupposed to judge it as frivolous, shallow, & entertainment-oriented. Nothing could be further from the truth. We *play* with kids, that we might be able to *pray* with kids. The outer trappings, viz, the “capsule”, may encompass anything from a “robot”, to Mexican villains looking for a puppet, to a Time Machine, to a Bible game similar to Wheel Of Fortune, but instead of being hosted by *Vanna White*, it involves “Banana White”.



We do all of this because, #1: We like to! One of the draws of staff to return each year is that they get to become a child again! #2. We relate & play with the children so that we can more effectively minister to them. One of my former pastors told me that relationship should always precede ministry years ago & I've never forgotten it. Hence, the outer "capsule" of kids ministry.

“THE FRUITS OF THE LABOR”



While looking through my Bible the other day in preparation for a funeral discussed below, I came across two notes from campers at my 4th & last camp of the summer. I had forgotten about them & had never read them till I found them. As always, given the preciousness of the “original autographs” [as with biblical manuscripts!], I retype them as they were originally written: ***“8/15/17 HI Guerte, I like evening chapel with you. I learned new things at Monday’s night chapel, like your soul is most valuable item. With-out it we will die. I also learned the Devil wants to devower our soul but I will follow God and not let the devil devower my soul. that is what I learned at Monday nights chapel. I want to learn a lot from you Guerte and want to learn more...from COLE”***. And another: ***“8/17/17 Dear Gertie, You are an amazing pastor. You know kids & know how to deal with them. When you get this look up Isaiah 41:13 & Psalms 17:13, they will help you are feeling alone. Gertie, you are proof that God is real! Thank you so much for ever thing you tought me. Love, Thomas Watt”***. This is why I do what I do.

“MY ‘MASS’ APPEAL”



{actual picture of Catholic church I spoke in.}

This has been a season of funerals for Kim & me. First, my father's in May, then her father's last week. A few days prior to Kim's dad's service our 88 year-old neighbor, whom we have lived across the street from for the past 21 years suddenly passed. It was to be a routine procedure that went wrong. His wife is "Ma" to me, his stepson like a little brother. I was blessedly surprised when the stepson asked me to share at the funeral service! First, he asked if I would read his memoirs of his stepdad as he didn't think he could handle it emotionally. I was happy to oblige. He then asked me to share "something religious" too, "about the Lord", as he put it. I was so stunned as this has not been my understanding nor experience with the Catholic Church, re: non-Catholics sharing. In fact, a dear brother who succeeded me as kids' pastor at our church years ago was not even allowed to share thoughts re: his mother at her Catholic funeral! Needless to say he was furious & understandably so! Hence my shock when my neighbor asked me. I had many fears. My neighbor's memoir list was so long I was afraid to try & share a homily [Catholic name for sermon] after it as requested, would have been too much. I even thought just to read the memoirs. And yet, I ached to take advantage of this gold mine of an opportunity. I entreated the Lord for a transition from the memoirs to the message. He gave it. He reminded me of something the deceased had said to me many years ago that I've never forgotten & that I've quoted many times to audiences all over the place in my itinerant travels. I will give it below. Even so, my heart was beating fast right before I went up. However, I felt His Holy Spirit come upon me as I did. I was able to share my very Catholic background & testimony: 1. Baptized as an infant 2. Dedicated to Mary as an infant 3. Named after a priest 4. My Dad went to Catholic Univ. 5.

Catholic school 6. Altar boy 7. Considered priesthood more than once [but I forgot to mention it] 8. Related how I got saved at a Catholic high school boys' retreat at an Ursuline Academy Convent when I was 18. I then related that for the past 20+ years the Lord has had ME doing youth retreats! The quote the deceased said to me mentioned above was: "When I was 35, 65 looked so far away. But now that I'm 65, it went like that!" [he then snapped his fingers]. I shared re: the brevity of life, that remembering that is one good thing about funerals. I then shared how I teach the gospel of grace to teens & children, via the "switching of the [moral] report cards, vis, our F- one for Jesus' A+ one. I was glad the singer had sung Amazing Grace earlier in the service, which enabled me to quote re: my "convent conversion experience", "How wondrous did that grace appear the hour I first believed". I made sure to refer to the priest who was there & to things he had shared earlier, plus pointing back to the crucifix. A number of people told me later it really touched them. Marco, my "brother/friend" who asked me to share, said, "Father so & so is ok, but there is something different when you spoke", etc... I know of course it was the Holy Spirit, as again, I was scared to death. I pray our Lord waters the seeds that were planted this a.m. I still can't believe it happened. Things like this are SO RARE!

****Caboose! Commentary Corner:***

[My 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 various Bibles I have studied from.] "If you disobey God's warnings, *you* become a warning for others from God, via what He did to you! [Num.26:10; 8/12/'14] "Men go to Hell for their sin-& for *their* righteousness!" [8/28/'11] "Since the Fall, the whole human race is living on borrowed time." [11/5/'13] "Jesus, Lover of men's souls, also referred to some men as dogs, swine, wolves, & foxes!" [1/30/'15]



Caboose! On the Loose:

**Lookin' out for the little guys...*

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

Sept. 6: Immanuel Church, Wilmington, DE: Tabernacle of David: worship leader

Sept. 11: St. Anthony's Catholic Church, Wilmington, DE: Peter Cipolla [neighbor] funeral: speaker

Oct. 13-14: Celebrate Family Church, Leicester, NY: 1-day Kids' Workers' Summit: ministering 5X

Oct. 15-16: Warsaw Community Church, Warsaw, NY: Sun. a.m. service//p.m. mtg. with kids workers

Oct. 18: Bay Presbyterian Church, Bay Village, OH: Bay Pres youth group

Oct. 22: Bay Presbyterian Church, Bay Village, OH: 2 Sunday a.m. services

Oct. 28: Full Gospel Center, Lagrangeville, NY: men's mtg.

Oct. 29: Full Gospel Center, Lagrangeville, NY: 2 Sunday a.m. services

Oct. 30: Upton Lake Christian School, Clinton Corners, NY: school chapel

Oct. 31: Transformation Life Center, West Park, NY: addictions' recovery chapel

Oct. 16,23,24: My birthday, Mine & Kim's 40th anniversary, & Kim's birthday (respectively)

***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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