

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
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October 2020

"'VIRGIN COUNTRY' IN DOWNTOWN READING, PA"

or

"MEETING THEIR 'FORTRESS' @ THE FORTRESS"



Dear **Friends & Family**,

[9/2] I returned home last Friday afternoon from my last of 2 weeks at an inner-city day camp held by **City Light Ministries** in downtown Reading, PA. It is led by my dear brother & friend **Joe Sclafani**. It's based at a refurbished warehouse on the south side of the city called "**The Fortress**". I had the huge privilege & sacred trust of bringing the Word of God to these precious children every morning in chapel. This high calling is also a very dangerous one given their vulnerability & relative naivete' & innocence. I've written many times in the past re: Jesus' severe condemnation & punishment reserved for those who stumble His little ones or lead them astray. What was especially "delicate & precarious" for me at this event was the high percentage of unchurched kids in attendance. Joe told me weeks beforehand these kids basically knew nothing about the Lord. As the two weeks progressed I did ascertain some of them did have some basic knowledge about the Bible-thank God some of them had been taught! But, for the most part, they were unchurched. To think-for many of them? *Most* of them? àl was their introduction to "things Divine". Typically, I would be with mostly churched teens & kids at this time of the year at **Tel Hai Camp**. However, due to **Covid-19**, my 3 annual camps there were canceled. Hence, I considered it a huge "Divine gold mine" when Joe contacted me this past July with his "dream" to do *something* for these precious needy kids. Joe had no idea how many kids would come, but he told me more than once when-ever he held events at *The Fortress* it always drew a good crowd. However, this was not to be! Joe was surprised & disappointed at the low turnout opening day. Yet-we strove to give them *the works*.

They were fed in the outside lot of the center, which was fenced in & also had garden boxes all around with huge sunflowers & other plants. Joe had bought dozens of backpacks filled with school supplies & necessities as well.

[“CONQUERING COVID-& GIDEON?”](#)



Weeks before, as we planned & prayed on the phone, Joe told me the kids were fearful-fearful of Covid-19 & contracting it-& fearful of all of the racial tension in our country. He set the theme of the camp as “Back On Track” [kind of perfect for **Caboose!**, eh?] 😊 In the light of this I brought my **Caboose!** puppet stage, various street signs & RR props from my camp shed down at Tel Hai Camp. His goal for the camp was to help the kids overcome these fears. He mentioned “Gideon”. As soon as he did my heart leapt as I have done “Gideon” out of my *Time Machine* a # of times through the years. Hence, Day 1 had its plan. Gideon would appear out of the Time Machine with his servant Purah, after which, Joe would give a short message re: overcoming your fears. And we did. On Wednesdays & Fridays of the camp Joe & his leadership team would take the kids on outings after my chapels.

[“OVERCOMING CHICKENS & COMPETING WITH TURKEYS!”](#)



Well, after dealing with the “chicken-heartedness” of the campers via Gideon’s example, on Day 2, after their outing, the plan was to have chapel *after* it instead of the usual plan of chapel preceding it. However, after their return from “**Turkey Hill Experience**” [an ice cream factory about 45 minutes away] about 25 of the 35 kids got off the bus & went home! ☹. Yes-Joe & I were pretty discouraged. We went to prayer together in the chapel. “Lord? If You don’t bring them to us, we can’t bring them to You!”. This was the basic essence of our prayer. I decided not to give my “ground-breaking” planned lesson, vis, “The Value of the Soul”, based on Charles’ Hodge’s February 7, 1864 sermon outline from his *Princeton Sermons*.



In its place, I played a Bible lesson-review game I had made decades before called “Tic Tac Toes”, where instead of hanging X’s & O’s on the Tic/Tack/Toe board, the kids would hang their shoes! I’ll be honest, I was a bit fearful these inner-city kids, & some of them young teens, would not be “into” this game. Yet-they played!

[“BUILD-& THEY WILL COME”](#)



This is a famous line from an old movie. Many have used it. So have I. There is a Divine principle in it. The Lord is not slow to see your labor for Him. We had "built" up *The Fortress*

Camp for several weeks: planning, praying, studying, amassing, purchasing, packing up & loading ministry equipment, recruiting helpers, etc. We were all set. Now? We needed the campers. And, slowly but surely their numbers increased. And, as I always strive to do with people of all ages, I stuffed them as much as I could with as much Scripture & systematic theology as time would allow. Yes-information is just “information”. BUT-when it is The Word of God & you “soak” it in prayer & entreaties for God’s Spirit to move upon it-God’s Spirit-The One Who inspired it in the 1st place-then, & only then-things happen. And, they did. These precious, poor, unchurched for the most part, inner-city kids, were engulfed in the presence of the Lord. As I often do with the young in meetings, I consistently had our ministry team & other adults in the room lay hands on the children as Jesus did when they brought children to Him when He was on Earth. I explained to the kids what we were doing & why & asked them as the leader touched their head or shoulder, to bow their head & ask Jesus to touch them by His Spirit as the leader did.

“RACIAL WHAT?”



[City Light Ministries’ Director **Joe Sclafani** with some Fortress Campers]

On the “outside” of this **Fortress** building-now made sacred by the Lord’s presence, people, & Word-were the racial tensions & hostilities of society. But-not in the Fortress! For much of the days I was blessed to be there, I only counted 1 white kid! Most were black & Hispanic. Many of the helpers & workers were either black or Hispanic. I loved it. We were showing the world in this hallowed place what anarchists, riots, protests, false-narratives, etc. will never doàracial unity in the Person of the Lord Jesus & His finished work on the cross. Period!

“WOULD YOU LIKE SOME STUFFING WITH YOUR MEAT?”



Day after day, I kept endeavoring to stuff these kids with all of the biblical theology I could. Why? I know that sound, biblical doctrine is the fuel for genuine biblical spiritual experiences. And nothing else! All else is man-made emotionalism. The Value of the Soul, The 4-Soils of the Human Heart, The Person & Work of the Holy Spirit, The Gospel Elaborated [including Creation/

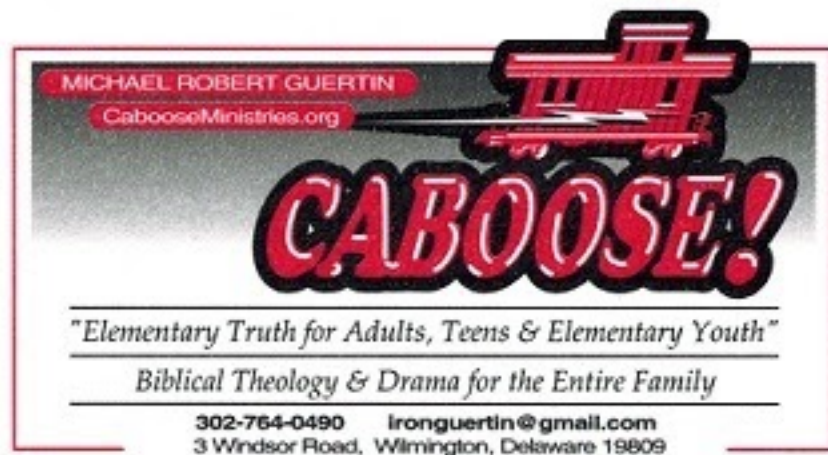
Fall/Depravity/The Law/God's Wrath/Propitiation/God's Freedom & Sovereignty to save angels or men or no one!/The Incarnation/ Imputation/Eternal Punishment, etc.], The Gospel of John's Prologue 1:1-18, Colossians 1:12,13, King Josiah & High Places, etc. These precious children got more sound doctrine than sadly, many adults in America get across the country each Sunday because of the plague of the seeker-sensitive/attraction-model movement! Here is a link showing a video produced by City Light Ministries that I modified for Caboose! <https://youtu.be/Q0l8EwqndAI>

"CONTRA-COVID CAMPS' CAMPAIGN CONCLUDED"



I returned home last week on Labor Day weekend Sunday from the last of my 5-ministry event "summer camps' substitutes" ministry whirlwind. It began on July 18 & ended September 6. It encompassed **5 different locations, 2 states [PA & DE], 22 meetings, & 1,610 miles of driving to do them.** Audiences encompassed church kids, non-church inner-city kids, & whole church families. All five events were various churches & ministries' attempts to counteract the Covid-19 "ministry shutdowns" that swept across our land. Camps that have hosted weeks of ministries for children & youth for decades were all but shut down, including my own 3 Hopewell Summer Camps at my beloved Tel Hai Camp. As reported in an earlier newsletter, our Lord sovereignly opened up numerous & various ministry venues to counteract this vacuum of usual summer ministry. He did so by creating faith in many of His servants among the young to host some kind of event, despite Covid. I was super grateful, honored, & humbled that these manifold ministries invited me to come & supply "the picnic" of God's Word.

"DON'T 'RETREAT' FROM RETREATS!"



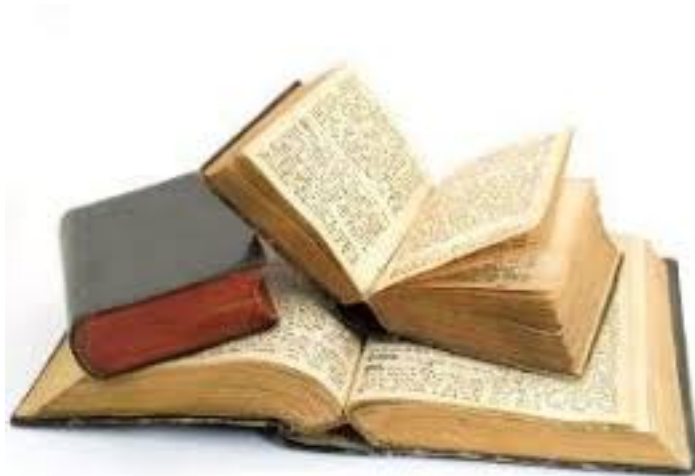
While en route home from a wedding of two of my camp counselors recently, I shared with Kim an idea that came to me “inspired” by the whirlwind ministry tour I had just completed which I wrote about above. Our Lord graciously came through as I wrote in one of my summer newsletters re: opening up doors of ministry despite Covid & all 3 of my camps being canceled. Well, sadly, due again, yes, to Covid-19, camp & retreat facilities are all closed until next Spring! © “However”, as we always say at camp when my two assistant directors are giving camper cabin inspection reports, this needs not be! The “whim” that came to me was to host “in-house” retreats this Fall & Winter at any churches that might be interested. **Caboose!** ministries would bring the retreat to you! Holding in-house retreats at the church, Covid-19 safety measures could be more easily practiced, expenses would be far lower given that retreat facilities’ expenses, travel costs & time, etc. would not be an issue. In addition, by holding the retreat at the church less chaperone personnel would be required. **Caboose!** ministries conducts **children’s, youth, & men’s retreats**. For a children’s retreat, I would bring “the works”: puppet stage, Bible games, costumed characters, Time Machine, & illustrated sermons. For

youth & men's retreats, Time Machine dramas & illustrated sermons would be on the menu. ALL 3 kinds of retreats would be replete with Scripture & systematic theology. I would both train & use some of your church people to help me with sound/tech & Time Machine dramas. A typical schedule would be a **Friday night, Saturday a.m. & p.m. service.** If the church so desired, I could do a "whole-church-family" service on **Sunday a.m.**, which is my "specialty", as far as the grace & giftings our Lord has given me. The host church would have the option of having activities, snacks, meals, etc. throughout the rest of the day on Saturday until the Saturday p.m. service, OR, the children, youth, & men could just go home until then. During Covid, "flexibility" is the key. With this idea & "mode of ministry", vis, in-house retreats, ministry to these 3 groups can be continued throughout the Covid crisis. Another possibility too is to have some other churches in your area join your church in a **group-church retreat**-of course being conscientious to employ Covid safety measures. If you have any interest in possibly hosting one at your church, feel free to email me at ironguertin@gmail.com for more information. Thank you. Here is a YouTube link of me explaining what I mean: <https://youtu.be/C-xsPv07S0A>

"I NEED A REAL PICKUP 'PICK-ME-UP'"



PS-We have continued to look for, pray for, etc. another ministry vehicle. So far our Lord has not brought anything our way. Preferences? **Pickup, 6 cyl., crew {preferably} or extend cab, 2WD.** My present truck has served me well. However, it's almost 21 years old, has high mileage, & without a miracle in 2 weeks won't pass inspection. The engine work it needs to pass inspection-my mechanic of over 20 years says it's not worth it.



***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: "The scribes & Pharisees sent themselves to Hell just by saying 3 words [in Greek]: "He [Jesus] has an unclean spirit." {Mk.3:30} [M.R.G.-2/20/2020]



Caboose! On the Loose:

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

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

Sept. 18: Tel Hai Camp, Honey Brook, PA: puppet stage pickup; attended Tel Hai Camp fund-raiser

Sept. 21: Children's ministry video production tutoring class

Sept. 23: New Covenant Church, Audubon, NJ: Elim area pastors' mtg.

Oct. 6: Petra Church, New Holland, PA: hsc board mtg.

Oct. 4,11,18,25: Chip Sunday Show video productions

Oct. 7,14,21,28: TabTalk/Caboose! Commentary video productions



*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. **Any gift no matter how small would be greatly appreciated!** Thank you! [click here](#)

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