

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

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September 2021

"hsc 2021 Kids Camp Report"



Dear *Friends & Family*,

[8/28] Two weeks ago last night I returned home from my 4th & final camp of the **2021** summer camp season. Oh, it hurts to think how very rapidly this year's camp season went by. So much time & effort go into the camps-& every second is worth it, of course. This was my **39th** year of camp work/ministry in some form. It was one of my most stressful & difficult, to be sure. I was engaged in so much pre-camp warfare & intercession-more than I ever remember. The stress-level was off the charts too, re: finding qualified staff, worship leaders [typically we have 1 for the week-this camp I had to use 5!], a nurse [without which we cannot legally do camp. Up until the week before camp we had 3 scheduled & needed 1 more! Thank the Lord for **Cathy Hackman** who came to our rescue shortly before camp & was willing to serve as nurse for the whole week. She had never been. She excelled.]. By the time I arrived at camp the Saturday before with my "Saturday setup crew", I was exhausted & felt as if I had just ended the week versus just begin-ning it! What made this even more of a challenge was that I would be ministering 12X at this particular camp. One of my mainstay camp night preachers, a.k.a., Devin Blankenbiller, could not assist me this year with Kids Camp, as he & his wife Jess would be out of town. Hence, for that & another very important reason, I would be preaching three nights versus my typical one night, vis, Wednesday, including Sunday & Monday nights, the guys' Wednesday a.m. sexual purity talk, 4 staff devotions, & 4 Bible Study Markings & Methods classes.

“TAKEN ABACK BY THE ‘LAW OF PERCENTAGES’?”



Given that we had missed an entire year of **Hopewell Summer Camps** due to **Covid-19** last summer, I naturally anticipated that we would have **50%** of the campers being “**1st-timers**” versus our usual **25%**, i.e., the 2nd graders. I kept telling the staff & many others before my arriving at camp this 50% new-camper statistic-one which caused my shepherd’s heart to churn & swirl even more deeply in me than it already does. I feel very protective of the campers when they’re with me. That protective feeling goes on steroids at Kids Camp-even more so than at the two older camps. Why? They’re *children*! I tell the staff in orientation that they will see “the dark side of the force” of the directors if their campers are not with them-especially at Kids Camp! Next to a parent’s own soul, their most priceless possession in life is their child[ren]. Hence, I take it very, very seriously when said possession is entrusted to my care for five days. Well, while standing in front of the camp on opening day Monday a.m. orientation, I took a hand count (twice) to see how many kids had never been to our camp. I was astonished to see **85-90%** of their hands go up! I felt happy, excited, & yet sobered about it. O God. O God. What a very high yet sacred honor & trust. They were sacred ground to me. Here, at the most impressionable & pliable time of their lives, Jesus brought them to me & the staff. O God. O God. Help us, Lord. Help us.

“THE WORKS, BABY-THE WHOLE WORKS!”



The aforementioned article title is a quote from *Mickey Rooney* in the 1938 production of **BOYS TOWN** when he goes into the Boy's Town barber shop for a haircut. Our family grew up on that movie & I cannot count the times I've watched it. Our daughter Laura told me years ago Boys Town was a major motivation for her to adopt children. Well, that quote basically describes my heart at Kids Camp re: what I strive every year to give to the kids: "The works, baby-the whole works!". And that is what they get.

"A CHRISTIAN 'CHUCK E. CHEESE'"



I've often described my goal in setting up the chapel for Kids Camp versus the other two older camps: "I want it to look like a "Christian **Chuck E. Cheese**". And, it does: **Puppet stages, Bible games, colored signs & banners, rope & Christmas lights, puppets, prizes, costumed characters, a walking robot, a Time Machine, a game-show quiz machine, superheroes, royal courts, a custom-made Bible game Power Switch & timer lights, a vintage TV studio "Applause" light, etc.** That's just the chapel. We have an **airplane** fly overhead out in the ballfield & drop **candy** from the sky, a **Slip 'n Slide**, scooters with helium balloons attached, a massive water balloon fight comprised of almost 1000 "water bombs", a 6-foot diameter **Cage Ball**, etc.



In the 1992 Disney movie *Aladdin*, the opening scene has an Arab market vendor trying to sell the audience a run-of-the-mill-looking brass lamp. He then warns said audience as they walk away from it in disinterest, “Do not be fooled by its common-place appearance”. That is what I say to an inexperienced onlooker to what we do at Kids Camp & how we do it. On the surface it appears “kiddy-kiddy”. Nothing could be further from the truth. These children in 5 days will receive more doctrine, theology, & moves of the Spirit of God than most adults do in the U.S.!

“THE WORKS, BABY-THE WHOLE WORKS! [THEOLOGICALLY SPEAKING]”



From a plethora of speakers that week, the children & staff learned about: **Creation, The Angelic Rebellion & The Fall of Man, Man’s Inherent Depravity, The Law of God, The Wrath of God, The Mercy of God, The Incarnation, The Glory of Christ Jesus, the Perfect Sin-bearer, Propitiation, Imputation, The Trinity, The Cost of Discipleship, The Destruction of Sodom & Gomorrah, a verse-by-verse exposition of Romans 1:16ff that shatters man’s idolatry, evolution, atheism, agnosticism, unbelief, sexual immorality & homosexuality**, Yes-the children & staff got “the works”. **The Holy Spirit**, Who enabled the preachers & teachers to place Jesus Christ as *the Center of Attention* of the camp, also by doing so came & filled the chapel each night with heavy doses of His outpourings. Once again, as in the 1st two camps, our Lord “compensated for Covid”-bless His holy Name.



Below are testimonies of various campers & staff re: the week:

“Love it !!! He [their son] was so pumped to be king [of one of the staff “royal courts”]...Thank you for these camps , [my son] came back changed & was completely focused on Jesus after his time at High School [Sr. Hi.] camp . And all our nieces & nephews said it was the best week they ever had & can't wait until next year.” [Parent & uncle of a counselor & 2 campers]

“Thanks Guerty & Kim for all you do. My granddaughter was at your last camp & she had a wonderful time, I am getting together w/her on the weekend & she is going to tell me all about it!! I know it’s more than just a wonderful time for these kids, you truly speak life into them & where they will spend eternity is decided for some, what a privilege you have in helping make the most important decision in one’s life. Keep up the good work & never grow weary of doing good...”

[My daughter] talked my ear off the entire ride home. She told me about accepting Christ &, as she states, "has the Holy Spirit inside". Never in my life have I experi-enced such joy!!! Hallelujah!!!!!!! [kids camp mother]

Guerty thank you once again for allowing me to serve & for not giving up. Once again it's exactly what was needed in my life. To refocus my life. Thank you, brother. God is so good [kids camp counselor]

Guerty, my kids can’t get done talking! And chapel was the favorite by far! They both met with Jesus this week & felt Him! I love the way Jesus works through you, Guerty! Thank you from the bottom of our hearts! [former camper, counselor, & camp nurse]

Can I just thank you ? Serving at kids camp was such an honor, privilege & blessing for me—truly can’t imagine a greater gift than to serve in that way. [kids camp counselor]

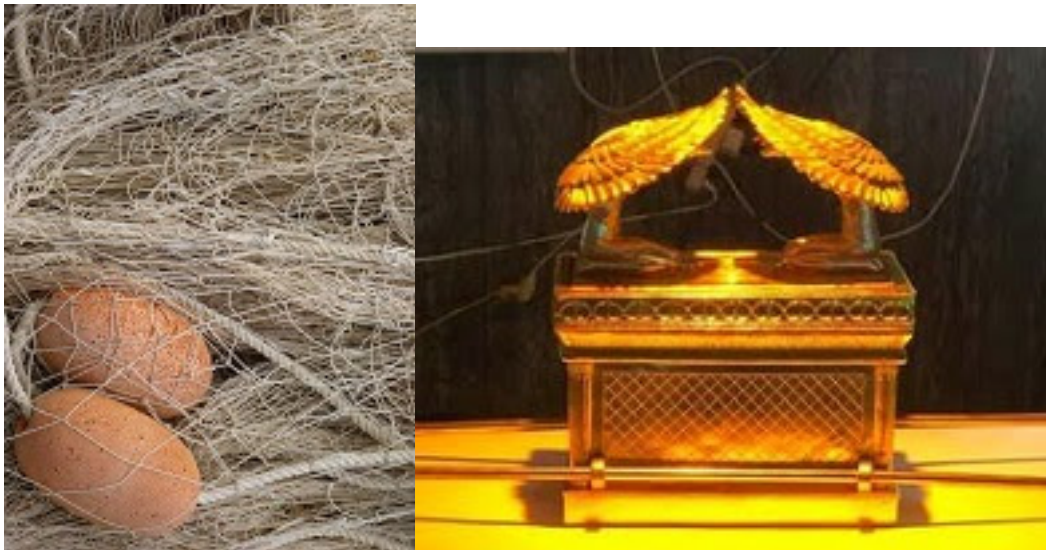
Cathy, the nurse thanked me several times for letting her be the nurse. I thought WHAT! I was begging her to come! She was so touched by the chapels & the kids ministering to each other. She never experienced that before. [Naomi Weaver, hsc camp secretary]

Thank you, my friend. I had an amazing summer this year. HSC camps were one of the many high-lights ...God blessed [me] with 6 camps this year! Serving with you, Jeremy & the crew renewed my spirit. (I’m still whistling “Happy Days Are Here Again [our traditional Friday lunch time “train” song]). I watched the "Abraham & the 3 Visitors" [Time Machine drama] the other day...I always felt that the dramas were one of the most unique & compelling parts of your ministry. [Walter Huss, Sr. & Jr. Hi camp nurse]

“Praising the Lord with you, Michael. Camp=a different environment, a focused objective, a defined time frame, a passionate leader, a pliable camper, a transformative truth.”

[Keith Yoder, a Hopewell Network Overseer-sent to me after last month's newsletter. Coming from a brother like Keith, this was very humbling & huge to me.]

"HOPEWELL 'NET-ARK' CAMPS"



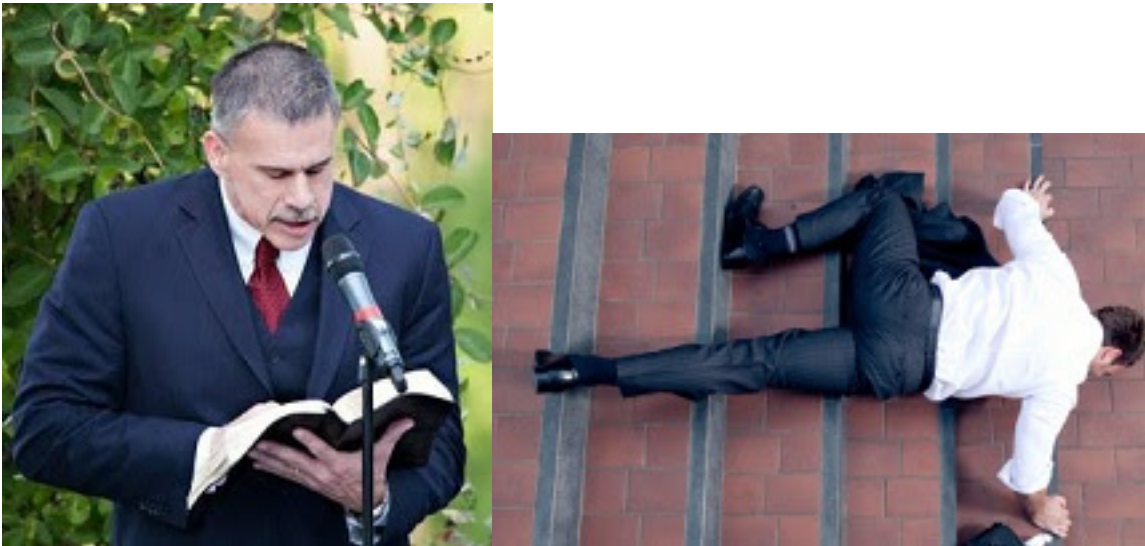
Every Sunday evening of every camp each summer, I meet with the camp staff to impart vision to them for the week & to encourage them. All of them need both, as do I. Near the end of the illustrated message I brought out two object lessons-a fishing net & a realistic-looking replica of *The Ark of the Covenant*. Prior to this I had shown the staff a small vinyl window that I keep in my camp shed throughout the year & use from time to time. Why? It is our “window of opportunity”. I told the staff the statistic I have heard for decades now, vis, **“85% of all people who will be saved & go to Heaven are saved between the ages of 5 & 14 [one statistic has 18].”** Hence, a person’s chance of being saved after 14/18 years of age statistically is **15%**. I quoted some Scriptures to them re: God & youth, vis, II Tim.2:15, Prov.3:3,4, Eccles.12:1, etc. I then told the staff what they all already knew & agreed with: “The older one gets the harder one gets” [minus the working of the Lord in their life]. These precious children will only get more hard, proud, critical, poisoned with false teaching, & cynical by the hard trials & “burns” of life, etc. And, our Heavenly Father has given to us the HUGE privilege of pouring the knowledge of His Son & His gospel into them for 5 in-tense days. Here they are sitting before us in the most tender stage [naturally] of their lives. And they’re ours. For five days they’re ours. And that “window” is slowly closing. O God. O God. May we take our shoes off in our hearts. This is truly “holy ground”. I can think of no higher nor more sobering calling in life. In the light of this, & the fact that a vast majority of the campers will never have been to camp, I told the staff on our opening Monday night chapel I was going to preach the gospel & “throw out the net”, as we have no idea what these precious little ones know & where they are or are not in the Lord. And I did throw out said net-& left the fruit & results of it to **the Lord of the Harvest.**

“THE ULTIMATE PURPOSE OF HSC CAMPS”



I've often described **hsc** camps' ultimate purpose in the following manner: "To train & groom children & teenagers how to spend long periods of time in the presence of the Lord-& *enjoy it.*" Hence, during the Sunday night staff vision-casting meeting I debuted for the first time my model of ***the Ark of the Covenant*** that a friend had given me. When I pulled the sheet off of it & displayed it to the staff with a yellow downlight shining upon it, the staff was in awe. I then quoted I Samuel 3:3: "...**Samuel** was lying down in the Temple of the Lord *where the Ark of God was...*". It was in this setting that the Lord first revealed Himself to Samuel via His Word. Hence, my goal & "ache" to see the Father pour out His Spirit upon the campers after hearing a doctrinally-sound, Christ-centered message from the text of Sacred Scripture. I long every year at each evening chapel service for the campers to respond to the preached text of the Bible. It was commonplace in Scripture for a man, when he had an encounter with the living God, to fall on his face. So many of these rookie campers testified during the Friday a.m. testimonies' chapel that that was their favorite part-of being up front [on the floor] & praying for each other. May fruit remain. Amen.

"HE PREACHED ME TO THE FLOOR"



Speaking of the Ark of the Covenant, my very dear friend, brother, & mentor, a.k.a., Pastor **George Bowen**, has been preaching re: I Samuel for several weeks. Recently he preached re: the Ark of God being taken by the Philistines in battle. The Lord allowed this & other humiliating punishments due to Israel's priestly leadership being so profane & unfaithful-they had treated the Lord's offering with contempt [I Sam.2:30]. Eli, the high priest & judge of Israel's two sons, **Hophni & Phineas**, themselves priests as well, we both slain in battle due to their blasphemous handling of their priestly duties as well as their sexual promiscuity in the House of the Lord! When the latter's wife was giving birth to their son after learning her husband had been slain, she named the newborn "**Ichabod**". In Hebrew this means "the glory has departed". The glory... has departed. O God. There are fewer more tragic words spoken in Sacred Scripture. The glory has departed. God moved on. He left a place that He once considered sacred to Him. I can barely type these words, Beloved. This has been the fear that has hung over me during the three decades I have overseen the **Hopewell Summer Camps**. And, it's a fear I don't want to abandon! I fear what I call "**Samson Syndrome**", vis, "...he thought to himself, 'I will go out as before', not knowing his strength had left him" [Jud. 16:20]. It's undeniable, Beloved-God has & does move on from individuals [I'm talking re: individuals if actually saved in the context of using them for His service, not their eternal salvation], churches, denominations, movements, etc. of His people that once were out in the forefront of what He was doing. I do realize this can be a normal divine process in the flow of Church history, but oftentimes it happens due to some kind of unfaithfulness on His people's part. I have striven to never assume our Lord will show up & manifest Himself as He has done in years past at the camps. Every year an ache surfaces for Him to "appear" again. **Isaiah** lamented in his day, "Your holy people possessed Your Sanctuary for a little while..."



“For a little while”. “For a little while”. O God. O God. The next part of the verse goes, “Our adversaries have trampled it down”. You all have seen former churches that are now antique stores or coffee shops. It makes me sick to my stomach. You all have seen once formidable conservative denominations in America who now are “woke” or condone homosexuality. “The glory has departed”. The prophet **Ezekiel** saw the same in a vision where the glory of the Lord departed from the Temple [Ezk. 10:18]. George’s words from the Lord in his message that Sunday moved me to get off my chair & get onto the floor, mourning over the thought of this happening back then & just the thought of this ever happening to **Hopewell Summer Camps**. May He help us. May He help me. I have repeatedly thanked the Lord for another summer at **Tel Hai Camp** with the **Hopewell Network Camps**. May I never take them for granted. And yes-once again I have asked Him more than once already if He would allow me to return next year. I never take that for granted either. May it be so. Amen. 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]: “Our worship of God should be ‘unconditional’”. [M.R.G. 2/24/2019]



[Caboose! On the Loose!](#)
[Looking Out for the Little Ones](#)

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

Sept. 5, 12, 19, 26: Chip Sunday Show video productions' postings

Sept. 7: Petra Church, New Holland, PA: hsc board mtg.//pastors mtg.

Sept. 8, 15, 22, 29: Cab!Talk verse-by-verse Bible expositions postings

***Sept. 15-27??: Daphne, AL & Bay Village, OH: visit our daughter & oldest son & families??**



***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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