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September 2023

“SEASON 41-IS DONE”



Dear Friends & Family,

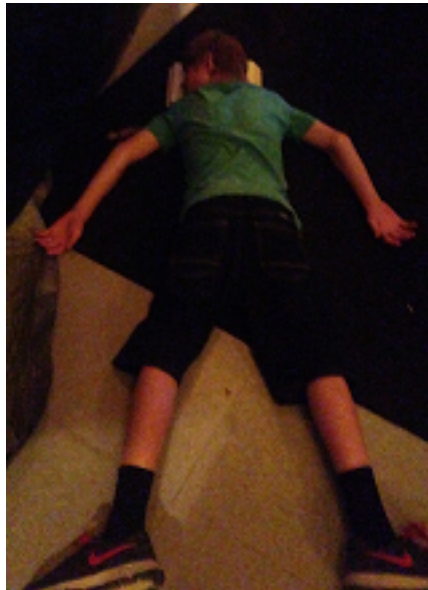
[8/28] I returned home today from a post-camp season directors’ meeting. I told my dear little brothers, friends, & co-workers in the Kingdom that my head was spinning re: how terribly fast this particular camp season rushed by-my **41st** overall. I cannot recollect a previous season that came close in doing so. I vividly remember last Winter presenting the camp theme for this summer, vis, “**DEEP**”, to the camp board for their approval. And, now, **Tel Hai Camp** is empty, the campers have all gone home, all of our equipment, supplies, props, decorations, costumes, etc. are all put away. The **candy drop** helicopter (a **1st** !) has come & gone. The 11 time travelers in this year’s production of **THE PROCURATOR** are all back in their own time zone now, vis, **1st** century Jerusalem. **M5**, the “Master’s Multi-Media Monitor Man” robot, has done his biblical critique of “The Barbie Movie”, & has gone back to his galaxy with his assistant “**Ray Gunne**”, **Chip, Mike Raphone, Chuck Dynasty, & Mr. E** have all exited from their puppet stage, most of which will not be seen for another year. The “wonderful raucous” in the camp pool with the boys, the marvelous mayhem, so to speak, has quieted. The pool waters are still now. It hurts just to type these words, Beloved. It truly hurts. Life is but a vapor-a vapor. All that was said, all that was done, at all 3 camps this summer, is now written in the history books of Heaven. “The books”, as the apostle John put in in Rev.20:12-will be opened on That Great Day, when all will be examined in the burning light of God’s pristine, exacting holiness. I have told my camp staffs many times over the years that the sermons they hear at camp, they will hear again. The preachers & teachers will be judged re: what they taught & their motives for doing so [I Cor.4:5]. The staff & campers will be judged for what they did with what they heard. Yes-this sobers you, to the point of being stunned, if you give your mind & heart to it long enough. And, that is exactly what the doctrine of Judgment Day is supposed to do to you-instill in you the fear of the Lord, but also the desire to please Him [II Cor.5:9,10].

"THE WORKS, BABY-THE WHOLE WORKS!"



One of my favorite actors is the young **Mickey Rooney**. Our family has grown up together on his movies. In fact, his classic Oscar-winning role as *Whitey Marsh* in *Boys Town* [1938], was partly responsible for inspiring our daughter Laura to adopt children when she grew up. In that movie, Whitey is sitting in a barber chair. When asked by the Boys' Town resident who worked there what service he wanted, he replied, "Give me the works, baby-the whole works!". In a very real way that has been my philosophy with the **Hopewell Summer Camps** for all of these years. I have striven to give the children & teens experiences in 5 days of camp they don't see or hear the rest of the year-and, all of this on a very low-budget! Hence, I've gotten grieved, or angry (!) many times when someone would suggest for our evening special event that the campers play soccer! Argh! Ugh! Our nation's youth & families are DRUNK with soccer! I've told my assistants, "Hey, they can & do play soccer all year round! Let's have them do something for special event that they *don't do* all year round! Hence, that accounts for my list of activities/events/"guests", etc. in the list above.

"ADORE ON THE FLOOR"



And yet, and yet, the entire philosophy, strategy, & goal of every camp day is to enhance the spiritual experience of the campers in the evening chapel service. We stuff them with new, & unusual, & exciting experiences all day as much as we can, to not only bless them, but to *play* with them. We play with them all day in order to *pray* with them at night, so to speak. The whole day is geared as preparation for the time of approaching the Lord at night. My ultimate goal of camp?? ***“Adore on the floor”***. That is what I live for at camp. That is why I continue to do camp. If that didn’t happen, I doubt I’d keep doing them. This marvel of camp continues to happen at every camp, every year. Staff, teenagers, & children lying on their faces before the Lord up front after having heard a sound, biblical, Christ-centered exhortation & challenge from the Word of God. I refuse to have it any other way. Anything else is mere hype, or, God forbid- emotional manipulation! And, it is soooooo easy to emotionally hype-up & manipulate young people! I refuse to do so. I want them responding to the Holy Spirit’s promptings & conviction afforded Him by the means of the preaching of the Word. May it ever be so on my watch at camp.

“SPEAKING OF ‘ADORATION’...”



Below are some correspondences I've received from former campers, counselors, parents, etc. re: experiencing this precious presence of our Lord via His preached Word & Holy Spirit:

“Thank you with all our hearts, I could cry. This camp is where I learned to adore the Lord & I started going at [my son’s] Nathan’s age {Nathan was a first-time camper this summer}. It has been such an integral part of our lives & relationship with Jesus & each other, so much so that Steven [her husband] asked me to marry him there! It’s our favorite place on earth, & we are so excited he [our son] gets to go. Thank you again!” [Kassia, a former little girl in kids church with me, former camper, counselor, & Kids Camp worship team member]

“...my heart, meditations, & memories of Tel Hai & yourself [Guerty] regularly have me revisiting! Sending love from our family!” [Josh-former camper since he was a boy who also counseled for many years too].

“That's was the first time I ever felt God!! Love that room!!! [re: Tel Hai Camp’s Hemlock Hall, where we hold our chapel services]. Jessica {former camper}

“Thanks for posting the YouTube video of teaching your camp staff this year about the ministry to children. It's good to hear your teaching again. It's even better to hear the Truth of the Scriptures come out about this. It pricked my heart about my own children's upbringing. Keep speaking the Truth my friend. “ [Matt-a former counselor]

“I just want to tell you that I was just talking with my Nana about the deep gratitude for how you laid such a foundation in the Scriptures for me. It has shaped me in almost every way, & not every kid who goes to Bible camp receives such a rich treasure in the Word & to value the PRESENCE of the Lord...” [Krystina-a former camper & counselor]

“Thanks for the camp report...It seems like a lifetime ago that Rosemary & I were dropping off much younger versions of Ben and Kristin [their 2 children] at Hopewell camps but I’m still so thankful that they both had those opportunities to experience God’s presence in that way.” [Jim-father of former campers & a camp worship leader]

*"Brother thank you for preaching the Word towards the aim of showing the full, adorable character of God. **Loving Jesus more tonight as a result.** I consider the likelihood high that the enemy may come at you tonight ‘cause I know he didn’t like the message delivered. Praying protection and peace of mind for you tonight...” [Rachel-former camper, counselor, & girls’ purity talk speaker]

“THIS ONE ‘FLOORS’ ME”



The quote below just about stunned me when I read it. How so? It was sent to me by a sister & friend in the Lord whose family I have known for decades. In fact, most of their children came

to camp-for years. Their oldest daughter counseled for many years. Her husband? He has rescued me re: repairing our family & ministry vehicles many times over those years. Why would this particular quote mean so much to me? Chris is on my weekly video/podcast email list. She listened to my camp message, "Jesus Saves Us From So Much". This message entails all He saves His people from by saving them from their SIN: Death, The Law, The Curse of the Law, the wrath of God, the tyrannical dominion of Satan, eternal torment in the Lake of Fire, etc. Chris' response to the preached Word of God is what I've longed for from those who have heard me for decades. I have written in a recent previous newsletter how very, very dismayed I've been when the heavy, severe things of God [Rom.11:22] have been preached & His people seem so unaffected & unmoved & nonchalant about them. God help us. God help us. Chris' response was like a drink of cool water in a burning desert to my soul. Praise His Name. For my hearers to "adore on the floor" has been this preacher's ache for as long as I can remember. And-this ache & longing shall never change. Amen.

"...listened to your message today from Jr. [Hi] camp, great message, ended up on the floor before the Lord for a bit this afternoon...". [Chris]

"COOTIES & BARBIE DOLLS"



It has been a ***Hopewell Summer Camps'*** practice for many, many years to have a separate-gender chapel on Wednesday mornings of each camp. We do so in order to discuss sexual purity & get down to "brass tacks" re: it. If we don't discuss such hot-topic issues in these formative years in the holy setting of camp, the teenagers will surely get "educated" by the world. Most of them already have. Several years ago, while working in my garage, I had a Christian radio program on. Its venue was in the realm of family ministry. The show's guest that day said that recently a young man had called his ministry & said, "Can you help me? I got hooked on porn via YouTube. I'm 12 years old." While standing there in the garage, it was as if someone punched me in the chest & took my breath away. I spoke aloud to the Lord & said, "Father? We need to go younger", re: our camp purity talks. I had never done one with the kid campers. I have done one ever since. I use a ***Cootie*** toy for an object lesson [to little boys in my generation this is what girls had before hormones set in!]. I also use a Barbie doll. I explain what hormones are to the boys. After doing so, I hold up the Cootie toy & tell them these are girls to you now, but when *God-given* hormones begin to become active, girls will no longer have "cooties" to you, but will look like Barbie dolls! Of course, at children's camp we are much more discretionary re: what we share versus the two upper camps. Never do we share the facts of life. That is the parents' responsibility before the Lord, though many parents are robbed of this historical duty & privilege in their child's life. So many children learn these sacred acts via the wickedness of the culture before their parents sit them down to discuss it. After I teach, we pass out 3x5 cards to the boys, for those who want to ask questions anonymously-& understandably so! Here are some of the questions/comments the boys wrote on their cards:

***"Brother Gurdie, I had times saw something I shouldn't"**

***"What's porn?"** (Do you see the sacred innocence with this one? ☹)

***"Why would a a man want to marrie another man and same thing with a woman"**

***"Why are some people so EVIL?!?"**

***"Can sin kill us?"**

***"What if you were the one in the videos?"**

Remember, Beloved, the above confession & questions are from little *boys* in *KIDS CAMP*. We have work to do. Yes, we have work to do. May our Father be pleased to continue sending me out to this very precious but very vulnerable mission field. I can't think of any higher honor & privilege. Sincerely, Michael

“MEANWHILE, ON A ‘HUMOROUS HORMONAL’ NOTE...”



After camp, **Bruce Gregory**, the *Tel Hai Camp* Program Director, texted me the following about one of the boy campers after our Purity Talk: “BTW- one little guy at Kids Camp was talking to me at the field & said his upper lip was sore. I was messing with him & said maybe he's growing a mustache. He said, ‘No’. Then said he is growing a beard. I said, ‘A beard?’ He said, ‘Yeah, his hormones had started.’” 😊



****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: **"Christ, on Calvary, was enduring His Own curses of His Own Law-The Father doing the inflicting."** (Gal.3:13; Isa.53:10) [M.R.G. 1/26/2019]



Caboose! On The Loose!

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

Aug.28: Honey Brook, PA: hsc Sr, Jr, & Kids Camps' post-camp directors' debriefing meeting

Aug. 30: Sight and Sound Theatre, Ronks, PA: "INSPIRE" for pastors & ministry leaders: "Moses"

Sept. 5: Petra Church, New Holland, PA: hsc camp board meeting & Hopewell Network pastors' mtg.

Sept. 15, 16: Tel Hai Camp, Honey Brook, PA: The Real Church, Fleetwood, PA: men/youth retreat

Sept. 16: Hopewell Community Church, Pottstown, PA: Ben Hoyt [former camper/counselor] wedding

Sept. 30: Voorhees, NJ: Michael's 8th grade Catholic School class reunion



*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 the link below to give directly. Thank you! **[click here](#)**

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