

August 1, 2009

## **“12 DRUMMERS DRUMMING”?**

Dear Friends & Family,

(7/14) This past Sunday marked a first for me. I have been playing drums for most of my life, having received my first snare drum (it was a blue sparkle!) when I was in Catholic elementary school. Then, for my 8<sup>th</sup> grade graduation from St. Peter Celestine's, my parents bought me my cousin's drum set! I still have a piece from that original set! Over the years, I have played drums for the Lord's work several times twice in a day, but never three times! It happened on Sunday. I played at our church for worship in our a.m. service. That afternoon, I played at a youth rally in the gym of a local Christian school, where our son Caleb led on his guitar. As soon as our worship set was over, I scurried my drums off the stage, packed them up, & scooted back to our church, where we were having a special service that night. Our worship leader did not have a drummer, & he has done so much for me over the years, I just “had” to be there for him! Hence, I got to church about seven minutes before the service started! It's the first time doing so after decades of playing!

### **“FROM PUPPET PREPARATION TO PREACHING ‘PROPITIATION’!”**

Once again the other day, I was “marveling” re: how diverse my calling is, re: the arena of children's ministries. In preparation for our annual Jr. Camp, which hosts about 100 9-12 year olds, I have been spending several hours refurbishing an old puppet stage I had made way back in 1992 that one of my former churches gave to me a few years ago. While doing so & seeing the various “sets” (there are four of them) on this particular stage: a news network radio station, a telephone booth, a candy store, & a back alley, my mind would conjure up ideas re: how to use them, re: puppets & actors. Your heart swells with excitement & laughter as you do so, envisioning the fun & effect it will have not only on the kids in the audience, but also the adult staff! In fact, often, at Jr. Camp, the adults get our very corny jokes & the kids don't! ☺

I then pondered with awe that, in this same setting, where we'll have so much laughter & fun with the kids that week, we'll also be about “The Lord's business” with them, where they will sit under some teachings that sadly, I doubt even most of their parents have heard! For instance, as with teen camp, I plan to preach to them re: “Propitiation”, that “honey to your spirit” doctrine when truly understood, that pertains to Jesus being our Substitute, bearing the fierceness of the fury of the holy wrath of God on the cross, for all of those who would believe in Him. Yesterday, while once again in awe reading John Murray's Commentary on Romans, I saw that Professor Murray referred to Jesus as the “Propitiator”. Oh, what a wondrous title of our Blessed Lord that we never hear! And yet, is there a sweeter title for this “Wonderfully Constituted Person” (Charles Hodge) than this? That is, that Jesus is the One Who “propitiated” God's holy & deserved wrath, took it away, by the offering of Himself (via the Father's behest) & His precious blood on the cross! It is one of the many reasons I love camp so much! It is the “best of both worlds”, so to speak! It is extreme fun all day, then extreme pursuit of God, His Word, & His presence. There is nothing like it to me in all the earth!

**“Slapping God In The Face On the Way Out...”**

One would almost have to be a hermit, not to be aware of the sudden slew of celebrities who have died in the space of just a couple of weeks. Each time I learn of such deaths, my heart instantly sinks & mourns as I “fear the worst”, yet “hope for the best” for them. Given that Jesus said the majority of the human race would not be saved (Mt.7:13,14), & that even the Jewish rulers *who believed in Him*, but would not confess Him for fear of men (Jn.12:42,43), were lost, “because they loved the approval (praise) of men *rather than* the praise of God”, I of course, naturally fear for the eternal destinies of celebrities. They, who have indulged & immersed themselves in the luxury, wealth, travel, excitement, fame, & pleasures of the world, which Jesus said choked The Word & rendered it unfruitful (Mk.4:19), & which He said one had to “deny” to follow Him (Mt.16:24-26) & hence find “his soul” & eternal life, now will stand before a holy God, & give an account for their lives. I mourn & am so deeply afraid that for many of them, “their nightmare has begun”, from which, they will never wake up. They have gone from one “extreme” (the comforts & pleasures of the world: Lk.16:25) to the agonizing torments of eternal perdition. The thought of it is so ghastly that I can hardly type it, & I am a preacher of the gospel! What just absolutely tears my spirit up, is, after their having spent a lifetime of sinning against, offending, violating, & grieving a holy God Who put them here for His glory & pleasure, no one ever mentions this aspect in their accolades & eulogies! On the contrary, several reasons are cited, listed, or “implied” as to “why” they will be in Heaven! One comment I read re: one celebrity who died is that “Heaven has another ‘angel’ now”. Do you see the blatant & arrogant presumption in this? Do you see how thoughts & attitudes like this on the part of wicked men, re: their “good works, contributions, & services rendered” to humanity, being the reason they’ll be in Heaven & even actually “contribute to its “blessedness”, is such an affront to God? It spurns the cross; it demeans, belittles, & trivializes the horrific agonies of the Son of God & His precious blood; it tramples Him underfoot; it says His death was “noble”, but not all that necessary! God forbid! “If righteousness can be attained by good works (of law), then Christ is dead in vain” (Gal.2:21). An even greater travesty is when “preachers” (famous & not-so-famous) say so! While sinners “mourn” for another sinner, I’ve never once in my lifetime ever heard of anyone “mourning for God”, re: how many times this sinner violated His holy, loving, gracious character & made Him grieved that He had made this man or woman (Gen.6:6), who died in their sin, unconcerned & unrepentant towards Him Who loved them so. Rather, accolades & more “celebrity worship & idolatry” is heaped upon them, further either ignoring, presuming upon, or “slapping” God in the face, “on their way out” of this life. I’m dumbfounded how often Psalm 23 is quoted at sinners’ funerals, who look to Him to be their Shepherd in death, when He was not their Shepherd in life! I can barely list the next quote, re: how severe the idolatry is, re: a certain celebrity, not only in the heart of this U.S. politician who said it, but, of course, in several million who agree with her around the world: “...(she)...proclaims him as an American legend, musical icon and world humanitarian. He is someone who will be *honored forever and forever and forever and forever and forever and forever.*” (emphasis mine). “(he)...was greeted by screams, applause and flashing cameras.” If this is not idolatry, Beloved, then I don’t know what is. **Please** do not misunderstand me! I truly hope he is there, along w/the many others like him, who died recently! He takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked (Ezek. 18:23,32). Eternal punishment of the lost is something I am constantly preoccupied with in my thoughts; it has been so since I was a very young Christian. I think about it with virtually every person I come in contact with! It’s as if in my heart I’m crying, “Oh Dear Lord, are they ‘in’? Are they ‘in’?!!”. And yet, our zeal for the honor, glory, & sufferings of the Son of God should be by far uppermost in our hearts! God have mercy on each & every human who has robbed the focus, attention, & adulation of men’s hearts from Him Who alone deserves it! Amen!

Kim & I are sincerely grateful for His enabling grace, & your help, to do His impossible work!

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[Please make all tax-deductible gifts payable to: **Elim Fellowship**, 1703 Dalton Rd, Lima, NY 14485. Thanks!]  
[Michael is an ordained Elim Fellowship itinerant home missionary, endorsed by his local church. He makes his living & supports his family & ministry by preaching God's Word & through faith in the Lord & His provision through His people.]

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

**July 12: IC: worship drummer, a.m.& p.m.//Red Lion E-Free Church, Red Lion, DE: youth rally drummer**

**July 19: HNC Jr. Camp directors' mtg.**

**July 25: New Life Church, Bordentown, NJ: Sat. evening adult service: leading worship (guitar) & preaching**

**July 26: IC, Wilmington, DE: a.m.: worship team drummer; p.m. Flashpoint worship team drummer**

**Aug. 8-14: HNC Jr. Camp, Tel Hai Camp, Honey Brook, PA: pastoral director**

**Aug.19: Hopewell Elverson, Elverson, PA: Network Camps Board mtg.**

**Aug. 30: Living Word Fellowship, Whitehall, PA: Sun. a.m. adult service**