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December 2016

Dear Friends & Family,

“FROM FOOTBALL TO FREEFALL IN A FEW HOURS”



[11/8] Most of you know by now that I'm slowly on my way out of the worst sickness of my entire life. It was eventually diagnosed, after countless tests, as *Miller-Fisher Guillian-Barre Syndrome*. This milder form of GBS is a possible side-effect of the flu shot, which I received on Oct. 20th. However, it only occurs in 1 or 2 people in a MILLION! So says the CDC, i.e., the Center for Disease Control. Yes-I was 1 or 2 of the million who contracted it! On Oct. 24th, Kim's birthday, I was doing one of my routine work-outs, which I do 3-4 X/week. It included strength-training & kicking & punting my football. I felt a little "funny" while doing it, but persevered. Within a few hours, however, I was a ravaged, ransacked, debilitated man, writhing in my son Caleb's bed [wanted to stay away from Kim in case I was contagious!] with excruciating non-stop shots of pain to the left temple, & eventually the left ear as well. This went on for a week! Night & day! My ribs have shaken before as a God-given instinct to warm the body & circulate blood when a fever strikes, but nothing like this. You would have thought I was doing the old dance the "Hullabaloo"! These were uncontrollable, violent shakes. I was so cold that one night I had on a t-shirt, a long-sleeved t-shirt, a neoprene jacket, a vest, & a very thick winter jacket w/earmuffs on-& I was still cold! I would cry out in pain day & night as the throbs to the head were so severe. Poor Kim. I don't know how she got any sleep either! Incessant queasiness & nausea also set in. I would drink "health cocktails" to try & combat it, viz, *Alka-Seltzer* mixed w/Ibuprofen. I later learn-ed this was not the healthiest brew to ingest! Yes-I was desperate for some relief. You know, "Plop-Plop Fizz-Fizz O What A Relief It Is!"?

"IT GETS WORSE"



After 4 days of enduring this day & night, a serious “surprise” symptom then surfaced. I couldn't walk. When I got out of bed, my feet & legs felt as if they were asleep. They wouldn't support me. I stumbled trying to get around the house-1st backwards, then frontwards. At the behest of some medical friends, we went to the ER at St. Francis hospital in Wilmington. I thought they'd run a few tests & send me home. Not so! After taking my blood pressure, blood, & applying an IV tube, they proceeded to have me lay on my side in a fetal position while they gave me a spinal tap. I didn't know at the time they were suspecting three possible maladies: Multiple Sclerosis, Spinal Meningitis, or Guillain-Barre Syndrome. The doctor conducting the spinal tap, despite the pain, actually flattered me. He said my ligaments were too strong for his needle. All of my working out has paid off! :0). He tried another size needle but to no avail. They wound up admitting me. However, it would be over 7 hours before I could finally get any kind of sleep-& I hadn't slept well in 4 nights!

“DOCTORED OUT”



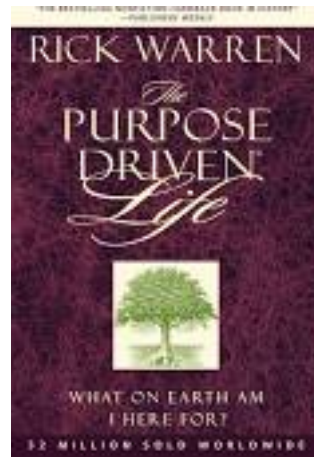
In my misery, I had so many tests & examinations by so many different doctors, all repeating the same questions & conducting the same tests, that I was beginning to get exasperated & frustrated by it all. On the 2nd day, I received my 2nd spinal tap. However, unlike the 1st attempt, I was sitting on the edge of my bed, hovered over a chair next to it, holding its arms. For what seemed like forever, this very gentle doctor kept sticking the needle into me, probing, trying to find that small slit between the vertebrae, in order to get a spinal fluid sample for testing purposes. Both he & I were ready to give up & try again the next day with a radiologist, especially after he stuck me in an area that was not sufficiently numbed (!), which caused me to groan a bit, when all of the sudden he said, “There it is.” Thank our God.

“HOSPITAL 'VISITATIONS'”



Being on pastoral staffs for 14 years before beginning my present itinerant work in 2000, I've done my share of hospital visitation ministry. Now, however, I'd be doing such from “the inside-out”! The Lord moved on my heart to share with this doctor & the movie-star looking male nurse who assisted him, my testimony. Yes, while I was hovering over this chair to support myself with needles getting repeatedly inserted into my back. This was a Catholic hospital. Both these men were Catholic. I grew up Catholic. I had tried to reach this “celebrity”-looking male nurse with my outgoing personality & kindness of Christ since I had been in the hospital. He was not unkind but was kind of business-like & “icy” as Kim put it. However, right in the middle of my testimony, he asked a question that revealed evidence of God moving upon his heart! It was so obvious & melted my heart when he asked! When he went to leave, he said, “The world needs more people like you & your wife.” Jesus! You're amazing, Lord! When he went to leave the room, Kim said to him, “My mother was a nurse, & my grandmother was a nurse. I have a special place in my heart for nurses”, to which he replied the same as he had said to me. Kim later told me she “saw” the ice melting from around this young nurse!

"IT GETS BETTER"



This same nurse came into my room the next morning. He asked me, “Have you ever heard of a book called 'How To Live Your Life With A Goal', et al, or something like that?” I replied, “Do you mean 'The Purpose-Driven Life'?, to which he retorted, “Yes—that's it.” I told him I had [I've never read it]. But he had! I told him Rick Warren had made \$65 million dollars from that book & that he gave it all away. He was a bit taken-aback. He then told me he was trying to read through his Bible & asked for advice! He also asked about any authors I'd recommend! I told him Kevin DeYoung & John Piper off the top of my head. He gave me his email address too! When I got home I also dug out a couple of books for him from my library.

“ONE SUPRISED CHAPLAIN”



In the middle of the afternoon, while I was still feeling so very exhausted, a Catholic priest walked into the room. To be honest, my 1st thought was, “O Father, he's the last person I feel like talking to.” All of the sudden, seconds after having this attitude, I felt the boldness, joy & graciousness of our Lord's Spirit come upon me. I proceeded to tell this priest my testimony, how Jesus introduced Himself to me at a Catholic high-school boys' retreat-*in a convent!* The priest just seemed to be enduring me. I told him when he proceeded to leave, “Thank you, Father [I don't believe in calling Catholic priests “Father”, but it just came out in my efforts to reach him.] for coming to see me”, to which he retorted, “It's my job”. I think he wanted out of there a.s.a.p.!

“HOLY GHOST HUDDLE”



While we waited for what seemed like forever for my MRI, a nurse came into my room to take my blood pressure. When we told her we had been waiting so long for the MRI, she proceeded to leave the room to continue her rounds. While she was leaving, Kim boldly exclaimed aloud, “We are believing for a miracle!” At this, she turned a-round, came back into my cubicle, took mine & Kim's hands, & started to pray in the Spirit. We joined her! This was so encouraging to Kim & me. We concluded the MRI was delayed on purpose in order to have this blessing of this impromptu God-ordained meeting. This would happen a 2nd time with this precious sister-in-the-Lord the next day!

“GUERTY'S GURNEY”



When I got to the MRI room on my gurney, I kept passing out during the test because of the morpheme-based pain medicine they gave me. Meanwhile, Kim was praying for & chatting with the MRI technician when she could. The same aid who wheeled me there brought in another patient who was to be examined after me. This was a very frail, elderly woman. I saw only one tooth in her mouth when she talked. Little did I know that Kim was chatting with & praying for her while I was undergoing my MRI. When I was wheeled out of the examination room, upon seeing her, I was immediately filled with compassion for her when I learned she had recently had 2 strokes & a heart attack. “Oh God”, I thought, “This woman is so very close to eternity!”. I started to ask her questions. My heart was so very relieved when I heard she attended 1st Baptist Church in the Wilmington area.

“HIS WILL-OUR THRILL”



Despite this very discouraging debacle, Kim & I found comfort in the Lord's promise that He works all things after the counsel of His Own will [Eph.1:11] & for the good of His people [Rom.8:28]. In this we stand. It was thrilling to be used by Him despite my dire condition. We pray you & yours have a very blessed Christmas season-each year filled more & more w/the knowledge of Him & His grace, & less filled with the “vain trappings” of this world. Amen.



Caboose! on the Loose!:

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

- Nov. 16: New Covenant Community Church, Audubon, NJ: Elim Fellowship area pastors' mtg.
- Nov. 20: The Rock Church, Pitman, NJ: pickup puppet stage//Mullica Hill, NJ: dinner mtg. with spiritual parents
- Nov. 30: Maranatha Christian Fellowship, Moorestown, NJ: youth service
- Dec. 2: IC, Wilmington, DE: IC Seniors' luncheon: attendees
- Dec. 4: Maranatha Christian Fellowship-Berlin Campus, West Berlin, NJ: Sun. a.m. service
- Dec. 6: Petra Church, New Holland, PA: hsc board mtg.//Network pastors' annual Christmas luncheon mtg. Shady Maple, E. Earl:attendees
- Dec. 9: Wilmington, DE: IC Leaders' Christmas Dinner mtg. attendees
- Dec. 14: New Covenant Church, Audubon, NJ: Elim area credential holders' mtg.
- Dec. 17-26: daughter Laura and family arrive from Costa Rica
- Dec. 18: Hockessin Evangelical Chinese Community Church, Hockessin, DE: Sun. a.m. English service

*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. [https://www.denarionline.com/DONORSERVICES/TEMPLATEPAGE.ASPXCOMP_REF= ELIMFEL&SID=vjywxzcot0d5c5pnrq1f0rnl&CONTENT=MISSIONARY &MISSION_REF=E8668ABEC7](https://www.denarionline.com/DONORSERVICES/TEMPLATEPAGE.ASPXCOMP_REF=_ELIMFEL&SID=vjywxzcot0d5c5pnrq1f0rnl&CONTENT=MISSIONARY&MISSION_REF=E8668ABEC7)

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