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YouTube Channel [for dramas, sermons, & puppet shows for kids]: Michael Robert Guertin

Website: www.cabooseministries.org **Caboose!** Facebook Site: "Michael 'Guerty' Guertin"

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"NEW YORK, NEW YORK-IT'S A 'HEAVEN' OF A STATE!"



Dear **Friends & Family**,

[11/27] I returned home the other day from a **530 mile** ministry trip to the **Poughkeepsie, NY** area. Within a **48 hour span**, **I preached 4X in 3 different locations**. Said locales included a **local church**, an **addictions-recovery ministry**, & a **Christian school** chapel. Because the events of this trip were in such rapid-fire succession, with little recuperation time in between, I found myself going to bed at night between **6:30 & 7:30 p.m!** Given the nature of the ministry the Lord has given me to do, of course it is not as simple as traveling to a given location & just bringing my Bible. I have many visual aids & object lessons to setup. Hence, given pre-event setup & post-event teardown, my time consumption for events is considerably longer than an average preacher. After I finish setting up, I try to walk among the chairs/pews, laying my hands on each one, praying for the immortal soul that will sit there during the service. Whenever I go to this particular area, I typically stay in the worship team office/room of the church. Said church would be more than happy to put me up in a hotel, & in the past they did, though I only stayed one night. Why? It was too far away for me. I strive to keep focused & mentally "on-mission" on such trips. In order to do so, staying on site when possible is always the most advantageous scenario. This also saves my host church money as well. **"THEY WERE READY"** The host church mentioned above was **Full Gospel Center** in Lagrangeville, NY, just east of Poughkeepsie. I have been going to **FGC** for over 20 years. **Rick Leonardi** & his church family have always been so receptive & honoring to me & what I serve them from the Lord. This trip was no different. I gave them the

message the Lord gave me last summer for my three summer camps' staffs. The "life" is still working in me from the truths in that message. I can't walk away from it. I feel it is more than for my camp staffs. I feel it is for the Body of Christ at large. I could feel the people in the 1st service resonating & bearing witness to the truths & texts of the message. One woman became an impromptu on-the-spot living object lesson, as, while I was preaching on an aspect of adoration & the glory of Jesus, she began to do so-adore Jesus, that is!

"MOVING THINGS AROUND A BIT"



When I ended the message, someone gave announcements. Given the nature of the message, I felt it needed more time for a response from God's people. And-they wanted to respond. I asked Pastor Rick in between services if we could do the announcements earlier in the service so that his people could respond at the end. He kindly consented. When the invitation was given to come forward at the close of the 2nd service, some people did. Some knelt at the altar. One woman crouched on the steps of the altar. I laid on the floor. Rick's mother & a friend just sat there for several minutes near me in their seats as my background music continued to play. My hosts were waiting to take me out to lunch but I couldn't leave. I told Rick's mother & her friend I could just stay there all afternoon. I love it when I study & preach myself into adoration.

"FROM ADORATION TO ADDICTIONS"



The next morning, after loading up my truck, I headed about ½ hour west to West Park, NY, to **TLC [Transformation Life Center]**. TLC is an addictions recovery ministry just north of

Poughkeepsie. **My older sister Kate** used to cook there. That was my original connection. This was the 4th or 5th time I would minister there. Each time was unspeakably precious. These poor souls have been ravaged by alcohol, narcotics, sex-obsession, etc. And, in each case, they all got burned by these fleeting pleasures of the world Satan constantly holds out to the sons & daughters of men. Enticing at first, & even pleasurable, but O, so very bitter in the end. From experience over the years I have noticed ministering to addicts is very similar to ministering to children. They relate to my manner of preaching, which I learned from preaching to children for 14 years. With many of their minds beset from the damage of foreign substances they've placed in their bodies for years, my visual aids in my sermons also greatly help their attention spans.

“ROCK HARD-BUT PRE-BORED”



Yes, over the years in ministering to addicts, I have met my share of those who are hardened by said sins. Even while pouring my heart out re: the grace, mercy, forgiveness, & love of God, there are those who can leave, seemingly, with said preaching having little or no effect. But, not with this group. As I strove to relate to them as they entered the chapel & as I prayed around the chairs before the meeting began, I could tell the grace of God was already working in a number of them. I couldn't help but apply this realization later to the landscape I passed en route to TLC. I had to cross the **Hudson River**. Upon doing so, I noticed I was driving through what used to be a *mountain!* Decades prior, someone had drilled countless bore holes deep down into the gray slate rock. The boring was necessary before the slabs of hard rock could fall. The drilling/boring I'm sure required much time, sweat, & hard work. But, sooner or later, when enough bore holes were drilled, the massively weighty rock slabs came crashing to the ground. I knew this was what happened to these men. Someone else had been drilling them with the Word & Spirit of God, so to speak. I had the thrill of watching some rock slabs fall. I enjoyed the fruits of other workers' labors in the "quarries" of the Lord! Well, I was told the day before due to an oversight, that there would only be about 6 men there. The rest had gone home for the **Thanksgiving** Holiday. The ministry leader felt badly about this. He had forgotten. I told him it didn't make a difference. In fact, in this very area many years ago, I had prepared for days to

minister at a youth meeting. When I arrived from Delaware, which is about a 4-hour drive, I soon learned only two teens showed up for it! Once again, it didn't matter. I poured my heart out to them & their parents who asked if they could stay. Well, after all the residents & staff arrived for this meeting, it turned out to be 16 instead of 6! And this, for the first time, included some women! As with my previous ministry times at TLC, I assumed I needed to be finished by 11 a.m. When I concluded my ministry & handed it over to the TLC leader, he asked me to keep my background music playing while he continued to exhort & encourage the residents. He then asked for those who would like to share a testimony. One by one, a number of them did. They were open. They were honest. They were broken. They were humble. One man, Tim, whom I had used as a sermon illustration [he played Jesus for me. He had long hair. 🥰 I held "Him" closely as I cited a text from Isaiah, viz, "...no one stirs himself up to take hold of You." [Isa.64:7]], wept as he shared of his love & neediness for Jesus. I went up & knelt down in front of him in his chair & held him. He held me closely. Not long after this, he got up & hugged another man who choked up trying to share his struggles & his need for the Lord. It was one of the most precious meeting I've even been privileged to be a part of. I shall never forget it.

"FROM ADDICTIONS TO ADOLESCENTS"



Very early the following morning I headed to [Upton Lake Christian School](#) which was about 20 minutes from Full Gospel Center which was my home base for this particular ministry trip. Of the three previous meetings I had done in the past 36 hours, this one would have the shortest time allocation, as of course, they were on their school schedule. It also happened to be their last day of school before the Thanksgiving Holiday weekend. Did I say "adolescents" above in the article title? Well, this group consisted of children much younger than adolescent age! As with TLC, I had been coming to **ULCC** for a few years. For this particular school chapel, I would have *the entire student body*. The challenge? I would have seated before me kindergarteners [many of whom can't read yet] along with twelfth-graders [who often are thinking about sex!]. And, I had 35 minutes to preach to them from almost 7 pages of notes! [NOTE: speaking of "notes", in 35+ years of preaching, I have *rarely* preached from them! Having learned to preach by preaching to children as I said above, I learned to preach from memory, as I feared if I took my eyes off of the kids I'd lose their attention!]. I was also told by the school principal that there would surely be unsaved students present because their parents forced them to attend. Thank

you said parents! Having this knowledge beforehand, in my introduction I did both encourage & challenge those who were there against their wills & those in attendance who willingly submitted to their parents' wishes. I told them of my findings in **Sacred Scripture** from another message I had given, viz, that so many famous men & women in the Bible were ushered into God's plan for their lives by simply obeying their parents & doing what seemed to be otherwise a menial & mundane ordinary task! The examples are endless: **Joseph, Gideon, Ruth, Saul, David, Elisha**, etc. Then, I gave the students a charge: they, versus their peers in public school, have a great privilege to sit under the tutorship of the Lord via the school's dedicated Christian staff. Because of this, the Lord Jesus, on the **Day of Judgment**, will hold them much more accountable for said privilege. "To whom much is given-much is required." [Lk.12:48]. I told the students this is the same charge & warning I give my campers at all three camps every summer on the last evening.

"RUNNING ON EMPTY"



The students sat there attentively-all ages. They were my last of four groups on this particular ministry trip & I was exhausted & spent from the trip & the three previous meetings I had preached at. When God comes upon me to preach His Word, it is more often than not the case that I am already spent before the event. I am worn out by all of the preparation, stress, weight of the heavy & eternal responsibility & the tragic consequences if God's message given is rejected, etc. When I preach, I pour everything I have into it-physically, spiritually, emotionally, mentally, etc. Before I preach I try so hard to "feel the text". This requires focused meditation on it-which is often difficult for my oft'-racing mind. It wears me out trying to concentrate when I study. It is not uncommon when I preach to dramatically re-enact the Scripture portion. This has been in my blood for decades. Hence, it is very common for me to come to the pulpit "running on empty". To be honest, I hate this. But, I have learned it is much safer than coming "full of Michael". I have marveled so many times through the years how our Lord has come upon me with His fire & what **Judson Cornwall** once called "the burden of the Word of the Lord", when I had none. May I *never* have any "fire" of my own!

“WINDSHIELD TO HEAVEN”



One of the many notes I recorded from theologians of days gone by for the message I gave four times at the three different locations on this NY ministry trip was by **John Gill**. Gill lived in the 18th century—a theologian from England. His comment re: Isaiah 63:15 was absolutely profound & kept me in awestruck-wonder for days whenever I pondered it. The text reads in part, “Look down from Heaven & see, from Your lofty throne, holy & glorious...”. Gill comments re: this verse, “...the 3rd Heaven, the seat of His majesty, where is His throne of glory, & ***His presence is most visible to angels & glorified saints...***”. [Bible Hub app; commentary section]. As I drove north to NY on 295 through NJ, I kept peering into the deep blue sky laced with white clouds in front of me, trying to also keep my eye on the road as I did. I saw the sky’s vastness & immensity. I was merely viewing the 1st Heaven. As I gazed I kept pondering, “O God—right now You, Your face, is being seen by countless angelic beings & saints who have passed into glory—into Your realm. I can’t believe it, Lord, that one day I, I myself, will also see YOU face to face! I cannot take it in dear Lord. I am filled simultaneously with both terrible fear & longings of love that cannot be expressed. Help me, O God! Help me!”, et al. Seeing the face of God has been called in antiquity “the beatific vision”. And beatific it will be! These ponderings could keep my heart both broken & lovesick for days.

"A HEART DIVIDED"



In moments like these, my heart is torn. I understand to some small degree what the Apostle Paul went through. He said to be with Christ was far better than staying on Earth. And yet-his heart was also yearning to stay on Earth to help God's people. That is basically the daily struggle in my heart, Beloved. I want to live as long as I can, AS LONG AS I CAN KEEP BEARING FRUIT! When fruit-bearing ceases in me, O dear Lord, have mercy & take me home. I often ponder how much gospel-work there is still left to do. This is why I often entreat the Lord to open doors of ministry. There is so much about Him His people need to know-including me. I want to serve & "earn" as many rewards on this side of eternity as possible before He calls me Home. May it be so.

"A TALE OF 2 TRUCKS"



Well, after years of hoping, praying, & looking, Kim & I finally acquired a new [used] ministry truck. My **2000 Nissan Frontier** served me well. I had "her" 15 years & put about 130K miles on her. Most of that mileage was for ministry purposes as I work from my home so she stays parked in the driveway most of the time when I'm not doing something ministry-related. The Frontier ran like butter but it was time. A friend of mine was selling his 2009 Chevy Silverado as he needed a bigger truck for his landscaping business. I have dreamed of owning a Chevy pickup truck for decades as my maternal grandfather owned several of them through his many years. In fact, when we were children, my brother & I would help "Pop" deliver milk from the dairy he worked for, vis, "Blue Ribbon Dairy", in North Jersey when we'd go there to visit him. We'd get up at 3 a.m., go to the dairy & get the bottled milk, then to the nearby ice house. Pop would

shovel crushed ice all over the metal crates of glass bottles. My older brother Jimmy & I would then stand on each of the two side running boards & when we pulled up to a house Pop would tell us how much to deliver. Then Pop many years later bought a 1973 white Chevy pickup & my love for them was sealed.

"A FITTING END"



What better place for my Frontier to spend the rest of her hauling life but at **Tel Hai Camp**, my summer alma mater for the past 31 years! Tel Hai gladly received her. I pray it serves that hallowed place for many years to come.

Very sincerely,

Michael

PS-Kim & I wish you & yours a blessed **Christmas** this month. May the Incarnate Lord enable us to keep our focus on Him instead of the troublesome things happening in our world right now.



***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]: “In Scripture, The Lord destroyed more temples than He cleansed.” [MRG-11/20/2021]



[Caboose! On the Loose!](#)

[Looking Out for the Little Ones](#)

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

Dec. 1, 8, 15, 22, 29: Cab!Talk Bible exposition video postings

Dec. 5, 12, 19, 26: Chip Sunday Show video postings

Dec. 5: Hockessin Evangelical [Chinese] Community Church, Hockessin, DE: Sunday a.m. service

Dec. 7: Petra Church, New Holland, PA: hsc board mtg.//East Earl, PA: Hopewell Network pastors luncheon/meeting



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](#)*

Michael Robert "Guerty" Guertin

3 Windsor Road

Wilmington, DE 19809-2144

(302) 764-0490

www.cabooseministries.org

YouTube: Michael Robert Guertin

FaceBook: Michael Robert Guertin

www.hopewellsummercamps.org