

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

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"NUN' OF THE ABOVE"



Dear *Friends & Family*,

[11/6] Kim & I look forward every year at this time to attending a nearby flea market at a Catholic church within walking distance of our house. I'm glad, to be honest, when I don't have a ministry event on this weekend as this annual excursion is a special "date" for Kim & me. When we arrived the parking lot & streets were packed with cars. We had a relatively long walk to the buildings where items were being displayed & sold. Speaking of buildings, this was the first in several attendances of this event that the church parish's former convent was used to exhibit wares. Having lived near this parish for 26 years, this would be my first time in its convent-& rightly so! Upon entering the convent, my heart & mind were swept up into this parish's own little "Time Machine". I became more interested in the history of this building than I did in the many trinkets they were selling. I couldn't stop thinking of the countless women who once inhabited this building. O God-an army of women who had denied themselves marriage & children to devote themselves, as best they knew how, to the Lord & His service. Their "ghosts" seemed to be everywhere as I meandered through the complex. Evidences of those who once lived here seemed so pressing upon my heart, mind, & emotions as I maneuvered among the crowds of bargain-hunters. I'm reminded as I type of a scene from the 1970 musical "*Scrooge*". When Scrooge is brought back to his past by the *Spirit of Christmas Past*, he sees & calls out to his childhood friends. He can't understand why they don't reply, to which his ethereal escort replies, "They cannot hear you-they are but shadows of things that have been". O God. That is how I felt moving through the building.

"IT'S ABOUT THE CHILDREN"



This past summer, in July, I recorded a video re: “**Vision For & Mission To The Young**”. My hostess, **Jess Blankenbiller**, who invited me to do so & filmed me also entitled the message, “**Why Children’s Ministry Is The Most Important Ministry**”. <https://youtu.be/4nEiA1Th3hQ> These nuns who once inhabited this impressive edifice, apparently believed the same. For decades, a school was operated upon the parish grounds. These sisters were its servants. Day & night, day in & day out, they were immersed in educating children. Now, the nuns, & the children, are all gone. They have all departed into the mists of history. This beautiful stone complex is now a virtual ghost town. In years prior, when I visited this flea market, the parish used to implement the former school classrooms as “sales floors”. O God, O God. Now, they too, are & have been empty for many years. Where once religious instruction was imparted to the young, now the beautiful hardwood-adorned classrooms have been “converted” into sales booths for trinkets & knickknacks. As it has in the past every time I have attended this event, my **heart** once again yesterday sank in grief & mourning. This religious & educational complex was not erected decades ago to be used as a flea market. I have daydreamed many times of resurrecting it & seeing it filled once again to instruct the young in the gospel.

“SINKING SHIP”



This parish has been sinking for many years. Several years ago it merged with another parish in the area in an attempt to save the school. It was only a year or so after this that both schools closed down. When I visited the main church fellowship hall where books & food were sold, I saw a quite elderly priest sitting at the first table. He was the only clergy person I saw at the entire event, & Kim & I were there for quite a while [I even returned a 2nd time to purchase an item I initially passed by]. This was surely symbolic of the entire parish. It had aged & was slowly dying. Now, & may I say, for several years now, it has had to hold this flea market & other fund-

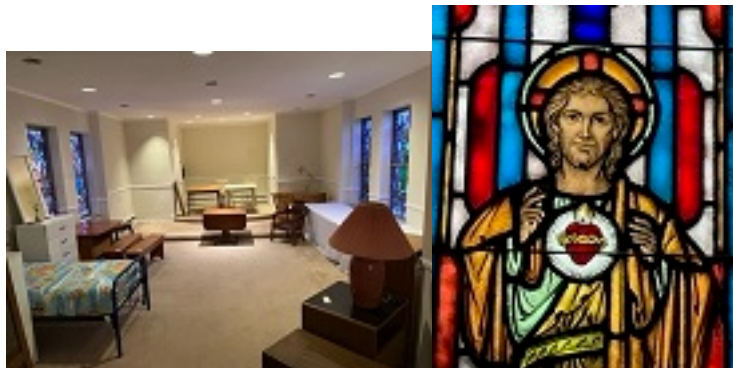
raising events [eg. Bingo] to attempt to stay financially afloat. My mother-in-law told me many years ago, "If God hosts the party, He flips the bill." There apparently was something radically missing from this institution & may I say, drastically missing, as the Lord is always pleased & zealous to support His work. ***When you lose your young-you've lost.*** I can barely type those words, Beloved. As one who "lives" for the young, when your classrooms & hallways are strangely silent, God has left the room.

"I'M PARTIAL TO CONVENTS"



[[Ursuline Academy, Arcadia, MO](#)]

As I stated above, I returned a 2nd time to the flea market to purchase an item I initially passed by. Upon doing so, I had to walk through & around the convent again. Why? I got saved in a convent! [[Ursuline Academy](#) in Arcadia, MO]. I have written about that in previous newsletters & you may email me if you'd like to see that account. I wanted to take my time this time & ruse, ponder, & meditate upon this sad state of affairs. I wanted to learn from it. I wanted to be warned from it, so that I myself might do all I possibly can to avoid such a tragedy from happening to ***Caboose!***



After I picked up the item I passed by the 1st time, I headed for one particular room that was used to sell furniture at the sale. It was the former convent *chapel*. Besides the sanctuary, I cannot think of a sadder location at the complex used to sell wares than the chapel. It was small

& quaint, & its walls were bordered by stained glass windows of the Lord & His saints. With my “purchased bargain” in my hands, I sat down in this former meeting place with God for the nuns in a chair that was also for sale. Now, there were no nuns, no services, no prayers, no confessions [one of the event workers pointed out the chapel confessional booths to me as I sat there meditating & mourning]. There were only pieces of furniture to be sold, with countless bargain-hunters parading into the room to peruse its wares. Most of them hardly noticed if at all the history & purpose of the room as they scurried to find material goods. Beloved? I cannot adequately convey what this “debacle” did to my spirit.

“IT’S ALL ABOUT DOCTRINE”



I was dedicated to the Virgin Mary as a baby. I was named after a priest—a colleague of my father’s at **Catholic University** in Washington, D.C. I attended Catholic grade school for 8 years & wore uniforms throughout its entirety. My parents were intent on sending me to an all-boys Catholic high school as well. I whined, complained, & entreated them for two weeks before they finally gave in & allowed me to attend the nearby public high school [Now, to be honest, I wish I had attended the all-boys school!]. During those parochial school years, we Catholic kids were definitely sinners like everyone else, but I couldn’t help but notice a difference in general between us & the students who attended the nearby public schools. Why? I believe it was because, unlike them, we were constantly exposed to & reminded of the existence of God—whether we wanted to be or not! We regularly heard about **the Holy Trinity, the Deity of Christ, the reality & tragedy of sin, the need for the repentance of said sin, the crucifixion, & as we recited every time we went to Mass, “He will come again in glory to judge the living & the dead”**. I am forever grateful for these precious foundational biblical doctrines that were inculcated into me week in & week out by the nuns in the classroom & priests in the Masses. And yet, just as with my neighbor & friend up the street, another “Michael”, who, like me grew up in the same religious system of instruction, a.k.a., Mike Loughery, I was never told, as Mike put it years ago, “that I had to ask”. Ask for what? To be saved. We assumed, even if subconsciously, that we were “automatically in” via being baptized as infants. We were members of “The True Church”, & everyone else was “on the outside looking in”. Infants cannot exercise saving faith, the prerequisite to enter the Kingdom of God.

“THE DRAMATIC IRONY OF IT ALL”



In the light of what I've written above, re: my Catholic heritage & experience, it is ironic that I have & will be portraying **Martin Luther** out of my Time Machine 3X in the space of about 2 weeks! Yesterday, "Luther" was sitting in a Catholic convent mourning over its demise! [btw- Luther married an ex-nun!] Luther was saved in a Catholic university, & as I said earlier, this "Luther" was saved in a Catholic convent! It is quite pertinent re: this newsletter's discussion what Luther wrote centuries ago: **"I am much afraid that schools will prove to be great gates of Hell unless they diligently labor in explaining the Holy Scriptures, engraving them in the hearts of youth. I advise no one to place his child where the Scriptures do not reign paramount. Every institution in which men are not increasingly occupied with the Word of God must become corrupt."** I take this quote very seriously & have striven for decades for it to be the earmark of cabooseministries.org & the [Hopewell Camps](#).

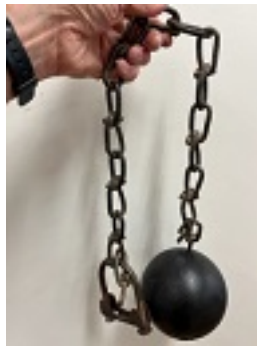
"LUTHER & A LITTLE LAD FROM THE TRIBE OF 'ASHER'"



[11/9] Kim & I returned home last evening from an all-day outing in PA that began with my portraying of **Martin Luther** out of my Time Machine at a church north of Reading. The group I performed for was a homeschooling co-op. The audience was comprised of children as young as kindergarten-aged along with their mothers. Being in ministry since 1986, I have never stood before an audience like this. I cannot adequately convey the preciousness of it. After Luther re-entered the Time Machine to "return to the 16th century", I came out as myself to preach. After my initial prayer, I told this tender audience that of all Luther's Church & world-changing

accomplishments, despite his several, & at some points-flagrant flaws, by far, his most important achievement was that he *saved the gospel*. And, tragically, he saved the gospel from *The Church* of his day! The truth of the gospel of grace had all but been buried & hidden underneath doctrines & traditions of men, steeped in works-righteousness. In preparation for this unique meeting, Kim & I “paced & prayed” once more around the bottom floor of our house. Many times in thought & prayer as the event approached, I envisioned in my mind a precious little boy named “**Asher**” sitting on the front row. He is a son of some dear friends, the mother of whom invited me to come & minister for this event. I believe the Spirit of the Lord was using thoughts of Asher to help me keep the depth of the message “age-appropriate”, given the weight of its content.

“A LITTLE BOY, & A ‘BALL & CHAIN’”



The sermon’s main thrusts were, as with Luther, we Christians today must protect the gospel, & value the gospel. On this 2nd point, I gave several reasons why the gospel is so precious, via how many things it saves us from: the Law, & its curse, the wrath of God, the entrapment of the devil, & sin. To illustrate this final topic, I held up my “ball & chain” object lesson. I only held it up very briefly. And yet, somehow, the Spirit of the Lord used it to impact this little 5-year-old boy. His mother texted me later that evening the following: “I kept thinking about how you said that you kept picturing Asher’s face sitting on the front row whenever you thought about today. Tonight, Asher asked me to read him the story of Jesus’ death on the cross from his storybook Bible & I paused & said, ‘Remember what Mr. Guerty said about our sin?’, & he [Asher] said, “He said we were slaves.” And I said, ‘Yes, & because we all sin where are we going?’, & he said, “Hell”, & I said, ‘Unless what?’, & he [Asher] said, “Unless we ask God to forgive us”, & I said, ‘What else?’, & I told him, ‘We also have to ask Jesus to be in charge of our lives & help us not to keep sinning’, & he got serious & I said, ‘Do you think you’ve ever done that?’ (I know he hasn’t & something we’ve been praying for) & he said, “No, can I ask Him now?” {several crying emojis}...[His mother]: “We’ve been praying for his awareness of sin & need for a savior. He kept talking about that ball & chain (object lesson) you brought...”. My reply to his mother: “Wow. And I only held it up for SECONDS!!!” His mother: “I know! I kept thinking, ‘Why has he mentioned that?’- it was probably two or three times because it seemed like such a minor part of the message but then tonight, again, he mentioned us being slaves to sin-which is exactly what you said when you held it up! He was listening.” The next day I thanked Asher’s mom for

an honorarium her group gave to us. This was her reply: “Of course. It’s something to rejoice over {party emoji attached}. The [home-school] co-op has funds for supplies. This was a much-needed supply that I’d pay for a million times over. Praying Asher isn’t the only one but if he was that’s worth the whole day! I couldn’t stop thinking about you saying that you kept seeing his face. I know it was the Holy Spirit.”

I pray our Lord has been pleased at the end of yet another year of ministry. As I’ve often said, if I left ministry to the young for something else, as far as I’m concerned, it would be a step down-a *demotion*. I cannot conceive of doing anything else. It is what I was made for. May our Lord be pleased to continue it in the oncoming year, all by His great grace.

Sincerely, Michael



PS-Kim & I wish you & yours a very holy **Christmas**. Jesus said of His Father re: His incarnation, “A body You have prepared for Me” [Heb.10:5]



***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]:
“When you lose your young-you’ve lost.” [M.R.G. 11/6/22]



Caboose! On The Loose!

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

Nov. 21: Family Life Center, Lagrangeville, NY: Men's Bible study teacher

Nov. 30: New Hope Community Church, Audubon, NJ: Elim area pastors' mtg.

Dec. 4: Hopewell Christian Fellowship, Telford, PA: children's church service

Dec. 6: Petra Church, New Holland, PA: hsc board mtg.//Network Christmas luncheon

Dec. 20-29: Kim's mother visiting from Springfield, VA

Dec. 21: The Bistro, Haddon Heights, NJ: Elim area Christmas 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](#)

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