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December 2023 “MERRY CHRISTMAS” !

Dear *Friends & Family*, “SAVED FROM A DAM-& THE DAMNED”



[11/4] I cannot leave this year, vis, 2023, without writing about my 50th anniversary. No, it’s not the 50th anniversary of my marriage, nor of the number of years I’ve been in ministry. Rather, **October 16th, 2023** [my birthday] was the 50th anniversary of not only being spared from possible death, or, at the least, permanent disability, but the 50th anniversary of my possibly being spared from eternal perdition! I was reminded of this recently via a Facebook post I had written 10 years ago. I will copy & paste it here: **“HE SPARED ME FROM A DAM & THE DAMNED”: 50 years ago today [Oct.16th]**, on my 18th bd, I was a senior in high school in Missouri. My parents were out of town on business. My best friend {Paul Meeseey} & I skipped out of school & went to the lake my Dad & my uncle owned that we lived on. It had a 35 ft. dam at the end of it. We were on top of the dam throwing trees & branches off of it left there from

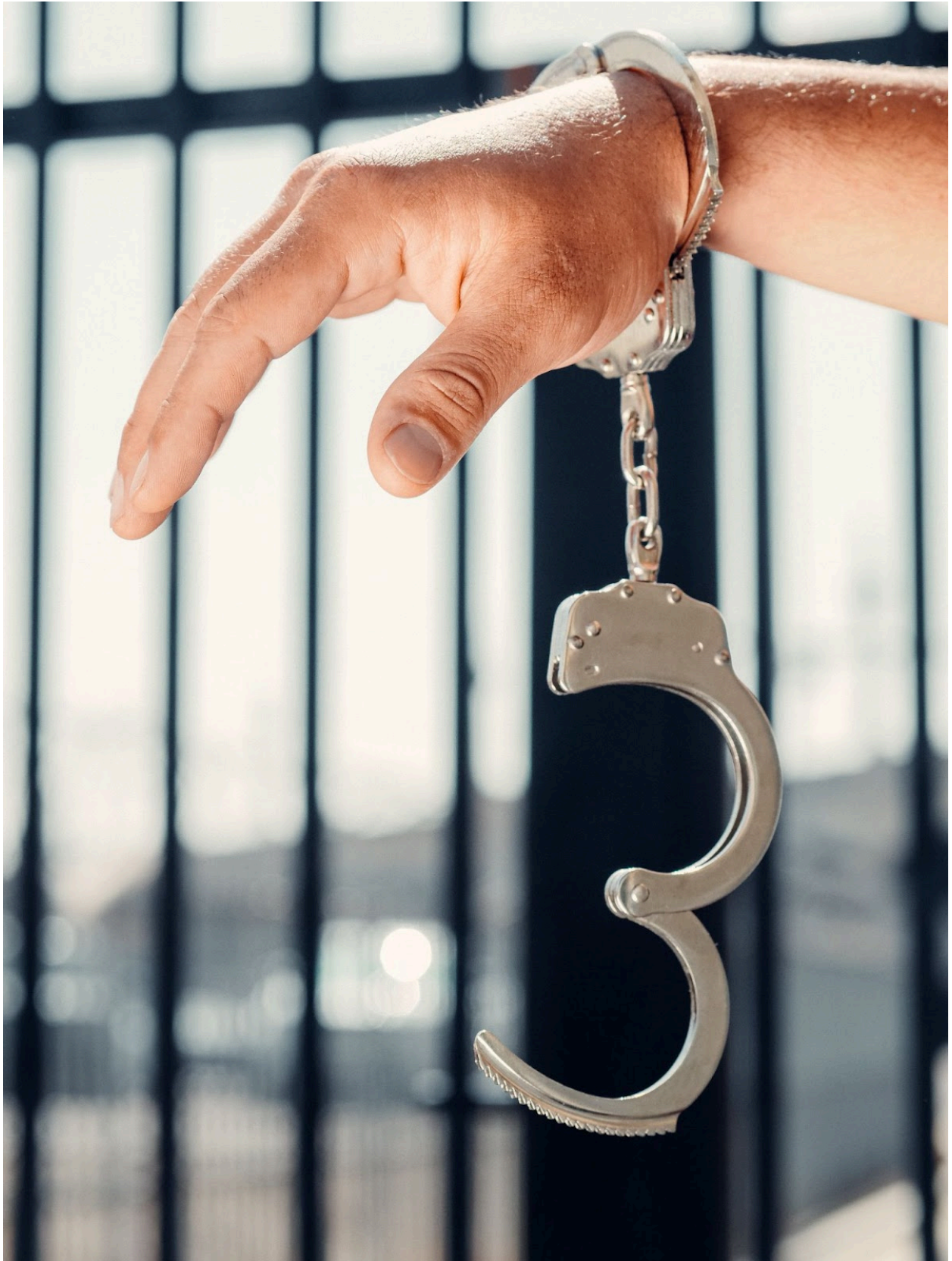
high water. While doing so, one of the trees' branches came up behind me as it was sliding over the dam & took me with it! I fell 35 feet. If I had died, my "plunge" would not have ended at the bottom of **Lake Killarney's** dam, but would have continued into **Hades**. I didn't know Jesus then. I knew a lot about Him, going to church every Sunday. I would have died in my sins while going to church. ☹️ He spared me. About 6 months later, He apprehended me for Himself & His work in a nearby convent, where retired nuns lived, while I was on a retreat. "He Who didn't spare His Only Son" chose to spare me twice. Thank You, dear Father, Son, & Holy Spirit-thank You!"

"IT'S ABOUT 'TIME'"



[11/8] "Sorry it's all late but I wanted to share this before I forgot. I just read re: Genesis 3 from a devotional & it's crazy how vividly I can still see the **Time Machine** skit you did from camp. Really was a great way to understand better, especially as a kid. I think it almost helps me even more now with how bad my focus is. Thank you." ["Billy"-now a young adult]

"A PRE-SERVICE 'SEIZING' MOMENT!"





[11/26] “Bro Guerty, Thank you so much. Your ministry with us was Kingdom building. And man-way to dive into prayer warrior mode when Eduardo's brother went down. It was a blessing to see everyone act so fast & together to help. He made it back to CA on Tues & is doing well, thank God.” [Pastor Ed]-This text was sent to me by the host pastor of a church in Maryland which I ministered at for the first time. My connection to the church was via a former **Hopewell Summer Camps'** camper who also eventually counseled as well. I had set up my various & numerous object lessons & portable speaker. I was standing in the back of the church with the rest of the church family leadership team. We had formed a circle to pray for the service. Just before Pastor Ed finished his prayer, we all heard one of the metal folding chairs crash to the floor. The man seated on it was having an epileptic seizure. I had never witnessed one in person. A number of children who I assume were this man's own & some of his nephews & nieces began to cry. All of us, of course, were surprised & taken aback. I felt to take a posture of reticence deferring to the pastor's leadership in the matter. I held out my hands before the Lord & began thanking Him for His sovereignty & love in the situation. After some time, I noticed the pastor was assisting other people. I walked over to the man & stooped down. His brother, a member of the church, who happened to be an F.B.I. agent, was stooped over him. A woman (either the man's wife or sister-in-law) was on the phone with 911. I could tell they were asking her if the man was still alive. I laid my one hand on his brother's back & my other hand on the

leg of his afflicted brother. I kept thanking the Lord. The afflicted man rolled over & looked around & eventually looked at me in the eyes. He was “there”, but, in a sense, wasn’t “there”. I smiled at him with tears in my eyes, feeling Jesus’ deep compassion for him. I told him “Jesus had him”. I sensed no demonic presence at all. Eventually, about a half dozen firemen/paramedics arrived & gathered around him. He was taken out on a stretcher. Of course, his family & his brother’s family all left the service with him. **“HEAVY DOCTRINE & LITTLE CHILDREN”** I had hoped the very young children would not be in the service given the heavy & serious biblical doctrines I had to convey. However, the children who left via this unforeseen incident were all elementary-aged. Regrettably, the very young ones still remained! I entreated the Lord, THE “Great Communicator”, to give me His ability to preach these soul-stirring truths from His Word in the light of that. He did. Pastor Ed repeatedly thanked me for bringing the Lord’s blessing to his people that morning & wants me to come back. The Lord be praised.

“FROM HIGH PRAISES TO HIGH PLACES”



The very next weekend I was at a youth retreat in rural Pennsylvania. I had ministered at this same retreat the year before. And, again, this group of young people were on fire for God. They worshiped exuberantly, passionately, & unreservedly. After Kim & I had spent much time setting up my two object lesson tables up front, when my host came into the chapel he said it would be good if we moved the tables off to the side. We were soon to learn why. Many of the kids came up front to jump up & down before the Lord during worship. Yes-the host did me a great favor!

😊 The worship-in-song time was a prolonged one, as I expected-&-it was loud. Very loud. 😊 I was worried for Kim, whose ears are very sensitive to volume. She hung in there, as she was as blessed & excited to be there as I was. Meanwhile, I was in the back of the chapel both sitting on, then kneeling on one of the chair racks praying for the Lord to “come”. As the worship

continued, I eventually moved to the back wall & placed my hands on the shoulder of one of the leaders. I pondered to myself & then prayed, ***“Lord? Do these young people really need my message tonight? About high places & idols in their lives? Look at them, Lord-they’re so on-fire & zealous for You. They don’t need me nor this message tonight. Lord? I’ll be happy to go home if that’s what You want. I won’t regret at all having done all of the preparation this week, the travel time here, & setup we did tonight. It was all worth it just to be here & witness this, & be a small part of it. Your will be done, Lord.”*** Well, eventually, the retreat host/leader went to the mic & closed that part of the service, gave me an over-the-top introduction which I didn’t deserve ☺, & I began. I covered the life of **King Josiah** from 8 years of age to young adulthood [II Chr.34:1-4], & 4 stages of his life: submitting to authority as a child, seeking God for himself, purging the land of high places, & leading others to do so. I could tell the youth & staff were resonating with the message. I was told by more than one leader both on site & later that next week, that the message was exactly what they needed to hear. Once again, the Lord be praised. I constantly mourn re: the age of my body, as inside, I feel as if I myself am still a teenager-even a child. I feel “alive” & that I am doing what I was made for when I’m with the young.

“LITTLE BOYS IN MEN’S BODIES”



The very next weekend I was in N.Y. for a whirlwind ministry tour. In the space of about **48 hours**, I ministered **5X in 3 different locations** encompassing over **500 miles** of driving. The demographics ranged from kindergarteners to senior citizens to men struggling with various addictions. Once again, “High Places” was given in 2 Sunday a.m. services to the whole church family, ranging in age from elementary-aged to senior citizens. I purposely asked the host pastor for the children & youth to be present for this message, as, sadly, some of the worst idolaters on the planet are young people ☺. With my utmost gratitude to our Lord, both old & young “got” the message, & responded to it. The very next morning I drove to **Transformation Life Center**, vis, “**TLC**”, about ½ an hour away to minister to a group of men. I have ministered at TLC several times. And, each time, in a very precious way, I feel as if I’m standing before a group of children.

These men, like me, are really little boys in grown men's bodies. They've been burned by sin, by Satan, & the world. And, they know it. That's why they are at TLC. They realize they need help. Why like children, Michael? The "burns" these men have incurred along life's way have humbled many of them. Not all of them, but many. And, this humility is childlike.

"MY HAT'S OFF TO YA"



After I ministered to them re: "High Places" & how to rid oneself from them, the ministry leader received an offering for me. This is not usually the case at TLC, as these men are here because they're at the bottom of the barrel of life. I don't expect an offering & am so happy & grateful just to be with them & share God's Word with them at my own expense-with joy. So, I was a little surprised this was happening. To be honest, when this offering was taken, as I was tearing down after the chapel & the men were all gone, I was looking for a place to hide it. I was going to text the ministry host that I just couldn't receive it, but that I was super-grateful for it. I tried a number of hiding places but couldn't find a suitable spot. I then prayed, "Lord? Is this You leading me to return this, or is it me?" After doing so, I just took it with me. The unique thing about this particular offering is that one of the brothers had nothing to give, so he gave me his "Transformation Life Center" hat. ☺ The ministry leader used the hat as the "offering plate", & some of the other brothers placed some dollar bills & coins into it. I believe there were four \$1 bills, & \$5 bill, some spare change, & a check from TLC. A pittance? Well, maybe to some. But, to me? Given who these precious brothers are & given the circumstances they're in? It was a treasure chest filled with gold. ☺

“NON-READERS TO RACING HORMONES”



The very next morning my ministry venue was a Christian school about ½ an hour from TLC, vis, ***Upton Lake Christian School***. And, again, I have been to this particular school now several times. This is a precious school to me. It's comparatively small, as far as Christian schools go. It is in a relatively secluded spot, very lovely, with a small pond in front of it & woods behind it. From the very first time I ministered at this school years ago, I could tell these precious students, from Kindergarten to Senior High School, were well-cared for & shepherded. How so? As always, via the quality & caliber of *its staff*. I arrived at the school the afternoon before to set up my two tables of object lessons. I had just preached to the men's addictions recovery group earlier that morning, & also twice the day before to a local church family. I was exhausted. And yet, of all of the groups of people I was to minister to on this whirlwind ministry trip, this particular group was heavy-& sweet, given their ages, on my heart. I just lay there on the steps of the altar before the Lord, thinking of the children I would stand before the next day. I had to teach a men's Bible study that evening in just a few hours, but my heart was so focused on this student body. Why? The children in the front row. The kindergarteners. Their hearts are virgin territory, relatively speaking. They are blank slates, relatively speaking. They can't read yet. They will be trusting what this man says standing before them the next morning to be the truth. Their parents, & the church administrative staff & teachers are also trusting this man to do the same. Our Lord Jesus gave the most severe warning re: those who would stumble such little ones. Their hearts are some of the most sacred ground on earth-***holy ground***.

“RADIOACTIVE’ ‘RUNTS”



In a very real sense children are spiritually radioactive. If you handle them wrongly, you pay the price for it. To add to this very real & present danger, I was going to be addressing the sensitive issue of idolatry in our chapel the next day. Idolatry, Michael? With children & teens?? Yes. Most definitely, Yes. These age groups are some of the most vulnerable & susceptible to idolatry. And, very often, they are led to it by their parents. I, too, am guilty of this with our own children when they were with us. And, the longer I live & draw closer to the Lord, the more deeply I regret it. Well, the next morning finally came. I poured my heart out. I addressed the issue, origins, entrances, & cure for idolatry in the human heart, via the examples left for us in Scripture by various individuals, with the godly example of King Josiah (II Chr.34:1-4). And, at the end, I invited the children & teens to repent of any & every “high place” in their life that the Holy Spirit might be pointing out to them, & to surrender them to the Lord. I leave the results to our Jealous Lord. Amen.

Michael



***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:
“Unless flesh, the Word was made, this same Word-could not save!” [M.R.G. Summer 2023]



Caboose! On The Loose!

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

Dec. 2: Hope for the Nations Church, Reading, PA: Feet on the Street Christmas production attendee

Dec. 5: Petra Church, New Holland, PA: hsc camp board mtg.

Dec. 5: Shady Maple Banquet Center, East Earl, PA: **Hopewell Network** Christmas lunch & meeting

Dec. 6: The Bistro, Haddonfield, NJ: Elim area pastors' Christmas mtg.

Dec. 24: Hopewell Church, Elverson, PA: (2) Christmas Eve Services



*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 this link to give directly: [https://
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