

February 1, 2013



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Dear *Friends & Family*, “POMP(ous) AND CIRCUMSTANCES”

Earlier this month, Kim & I had the honor of being invited to the college graduation ceremony of a young man who was once a little boy with me in kids’ church years ago. Once again, as I had been in the past at our youngest son’s commencement service, I was struck by the sight of the train of professors marching in two by two up the center aisle in their respective schools’ robes & colors to the sound of “Pomp & Circumstance”. As it had years before at our son’s ceremony, my mind wandered & pondered re: what Christ’s “Commencement” service, or rather, “Consummation” service would be like. I envisioned the **Lord Jesus** out in front, followed by His **Apostles & Prophets**, both of the Old & New Testaments, followed by the **Early Church Fathers**, & the famous figures of Church history. These would be followed down to the most meager saint—all of them marching in glorious array up to the Father. Often through the years I have pictured the Lord Jesus as much bigger in stature than us, sitting on His glorious throne, but then, when I muse upon the fact that the Scriptures declare Him to be a glorified **GodMan**, that is, the divine *human being*, Who was seen by His disciples at His ascension, the same “size” as us, I surmise that this must be the case. And, this is one of the glories of His condescension & humiliation—that He will retain His glorified humanity forever, not returning to what He was in eternity past—eternal divine Spirit only. My meditation re: this & the blessing that it precipitated was to be short-lived, however. I was quickly grieved when the ceremony began with the singing of the National Anthem, but with no acknowledgment whatsoever of the existence nor presence of God. One might easily & quickly rebut: “But

Michael, this is a secular institution. One cannot expect that in such a setting.” God does. In fact, after having been immersed in the prophet Jeremiah during this time, The God of Israel, though He needs nothing from anyone & is totally & eternally Self-sufficient & completely satisfied with Himself, that is, among the Three Persons of **The Trinity**—yet, He has made Himself “vulnerable” in a very real sense, to the **heart**-affections of humans, but especially so of His people. Ignoring Him places an individual, society, or a nation in peril. He did not give us the gift of existence nor place us upon the earth to ignore Him. He placed us here to live in such a way that when others observe us, they think more highly of Him; and—to enjoy Him forever. So, a seemingly “benign” unacknowledgement of Him, to Him—is a slap in His face. Hence, as I sat there, though I was so happy for my “little buddy” who we came to cheer on, my spirit became quite grieved, as I beheld this pompous display of the “intelligence” of man—yet, coupled with an arrogance that would not even acknowledge their “Reason” for being there. Paul said, “It pleased God in His wisdom that man in his wisdom could not come to know Him” [I Cor.1:21]. **Lester Roloff** said decades ago, “Education without sanctification is an abomination”. To make matters worse, at the close of the ceremony, I heard what seemed to be a hymn being sung with solemnity & devotion to the Creator. I was beginning to feel brief consolation for my grieving heart, only to discover the song being sung was to *the school!* “Michael, you’re just too extreme!” O, if only I were more extreme! When the Lord Jesus returns, the Scripture declares that He will do so to “execute vengeance on those who do not know God & who do not obey the gospel” [II Thes. 1:7]. Did you notice that it doesn’t mention blatant idolatry, immorality, or wickedness that He is coming to punish (though of course, these certainly will be!)? **Punishment** will be rendered to the ignorant & disobedient. Despite my heart-sickness re: this, I was blessed to be there for a young man I had the privilege of “assistant-pastoring” years ago [Note: in God’s eyes, *parents* are the primary pastors!].



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## “AN EMOTIONALLY-STATIC GOD”?

Sometime ago, I attended a meeting where a statement was made, quoting a very famous nationally-known author & ministry leader. The gist of it was that God was happy & joyful over us, His people, all of the time. My first reaction was, “Oh Father, I want so very much to know You like that, & I don’t know You like that. Please, Lord, bring me there”. As is so often the case with me in such situations, when I’m apart from the impressions & emotions of the moment, I give it further reflection, to assess if such statements are really biblically true. In my reading through the Scriptures, I have been for months in the [Prophets](#). In doing so, one does not see the God of Israel as One Who is constantly happy & rejoicing over His covenant people. In fact, I see Him quite often emotionally upset with them! Let me be very quick to say that I realize it was a different covenant than the present covenant of grace. “The Law brings wrath” [Rom.4:15], & a curse if you don’t obey it perfectly [Gal.3:10]. Despite this, one cannot help but marvel at His great faithfulness & loyalty to His people, despite their constant apostasy from Him! However, in the New Testament, we see the Lord Jesus, full of grace & truth, on occasion being angry with His disciples; viz a viz, when they kept the children from Him, when their faith was pathetically weak & small; when they argued re: which of them would be the greatest; when Peter via Satan’s prompting [unbeknownst to him at the time] tried to keep the Lord from **the cross**; when they couldn’t cast **the demon** out of the epileptic boy, etc... One must be quick to say in such cases, Jesus’ **love** for His own had not changed, increased, nor diminished—in *that* respect, He is “static”, praise His Name. Brennan Manning called it “magnificent monotony”

in his “Ragamuffin Gospel”. But, in each of these cases, He was not “dancing with joy” over them. He exuded the perfect & appropriate emotional response to their said behavior. When I had to discipline our children when they were younger, I would be loving, but firm & serious. I would ask them, “Do you know why you are getting spanked?” I would then administer the necessary discipline, after which I would hold & kiss them & reassure them of my love. But, I was not exuding incessant joy when I was doing so. Can you imagine how this would make our children feel? Once again, as I have so often observed in the past, most biblically inaccurate thinking toward God on behalf of His people is *well-intended*. His chosen, when they teach & promulgate such things, are truly trying to glorify Him. I’m embarrassed when I ponder some of the things I taught in my zeal to honor & glorify my Lord, that were simply just not true of Him! Perhaps I misunderstood the statement made at that meeting, but that was the meaning the quote conveyed to me. I’ve often marveled & grieved how much our Lord allows & tolerates re: what is said of Him, both by His people & the unsaved! He is so patient with us!



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### **“FACEBOOK VERSUS FACE-IN-*THE-BOOK*”**

I have been deeply disconcerted, grieved, & sobered lately as I have pondered various posts on Facebook by former campers—campers who came & sat under sound, soul-convicting biblical preaching & were moved upon by serious moves of the Spirit of God in that precious chapel at **Tel Hai Camp**. To quote a few: “My life would be incomplete

without the Beatles". O, can you imagine what the heart of the Heavenly Father must have felt when He heard this son of His, this son of His who was purchased at such great cost, who He has made complete in His Son? To say his life is incomplete without the music of a group who stole the heart-affections of countless souls, young & old, from the Only One Who deserves them? Surely one of the former Beatles is screaming in agony right now in Hades, as he went into eternity with an Indian guru by his side as his counselor & guide! Another former camper recently posted: "It's 1:18 [in the afternoon]-time to start drinking". Another recently inquired into finding out more about Buddhism! Another was having doubts & dislike re: Christianity & posted a quote from an existentialist philosopher on his FB page. O God—more of "facing His Book", & less Facebook! I thank our God that there are many more stories & testimonies of another nature where former campers are being used in the fields of the Lord & living lives worthy of bearing His Name. But, as pastoral director, my ache is that "not one be lost". I pray He gives us camp leaders fresh **fire** from being immersed in His Word & presence this summer! O Father, & I also pray this for myself for the ever-present "now", as this month I commence my **13<sup>th</sup> year** of this live-by-faith itinerant work!

Thank you for reading this, Beloved. May it bless.

## *Michael & Kim*

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\*[Michael is an ordained **Elim Fellowship** "itinerant" home 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 full-time. Since 2000, he & Kim have lived by faith, having no salary, retirement, or health insurance-yet this is their calling at this season of their lives. Michael preaches God's Word & systematic theology, using both visual aids & drama, to all age groups either separately or com-bined, as the Lord opens doors. To help support this work, please make all tax-deductible gifts payable to:**Elim Fellowship**, 1703 Dalton Rd, Lima, NY 14485].

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

Jan. 4: IC Home Fellowship group, Hockessin, DE

Jan. 5: Immanuel Church, Wilmington, DE: DEHOP worship leader dinner & seminar

Jan. 12: Bear, Milford, Camden, DE: 2 senior visitations; 1 young adults' event

Jan. 17: Bethel Baptist Church, Wilmington, DE: EMF pastors' mtg.

Jan. 19: McCreery & Harra Funeral Home, Wilmington, DE: Marguerite Wysoki funeral

Jan. 19: Immanuel Church, Wilmington, DE: DEHOP worship service: worship leader

Jan. 23: Immanuel Church, Wilmington, DE: Tabernacle of David: worship leader

**Feb. 1: Hockessin, DE: IC home-fellowship group**

**Feb. 2: IC, Wilmington, DE: men's 1 day retreat:worship team drummer; attendee**

**Feb. 5: Petra Christian Fellowship, New Holland, PA: hsc board mtg.//HN pastors' mtg.**

**Feb. 9: New Life Church, Bordentown, NJ: Sat. p.m. church service**

**Feb. 15-17: Tel Hai Camp, Honey Brook, PA: Delaware Valley Chinese churches' youth  
retreat**

**Feb. 20: New Covenant Church, Audubon, NJ: Elim pastors' mtg.**

**Feb. 21: Love of Christ Church, Bear, DE: EMF pastors' mtg.**

**Feb. 24: Living Truth Fellowship, Gap, PA: Sun. a.m. service**