

Michael "Guerty" Guertin "HAPPY NEW YEAR!"

January 1, 2010

Dear Friends & Family, "CABOOSE! NEWS & REVIEW FOR 2009"

After 9 years of considerably busy itinerant work on the home mission field, the workload dropped quite noticeably for 2009. However, we still feel "all systems go" & new doors of ministry have opened for me for 2010. The venues of ministry for me this past year encompassed Sunday morning family services, children's services, youth retreats, a nursing home service, a wedding, summer camps for one teen & one child, an addictions-recovery group, & our own church's annual "Via Dolorosa" event, the 2nd biggest event of the year for me. These ministry events took me to DE, PA, NJ, NY, & VA & included expressions of The Body of Christ such as: Elim Fellowship, The Hopewell Network, Urban Promise, Independent, & 47 different churches represented at camp last summer. I beheld by our God's gracious hand, moves of His Spirit upon young & old, even to the point of tears, as they heard the Word of His sovereign grace. May I prove faithful in the year ahead to continue the much-needed work of preaching His gospel. A burden I've carried for years & that drives me in my work is how unfamiliar so many of God's people are with the basic tenets of the gospel & its applications: justification, propitiation, imputation, etc. It is my ache to preach, teach, & elaborate on these in my travels. I'd have to agree w/the staggering statistic of 57% of the American population being biblically illiterate. May Jesus help us to reverse the trend, starting w/the churches!

"THE YEAR 2009: LITTLE DID THEY KNOW IT WOULD BE THEIR LAST..."

(12/21) My weekly custom has been on Monday mornings to read the obituaries of Sunday's paper. This morning was no exception. And, relative to it, with this being the end of both a year & a decade, I continued my annual tradition (via the internet) of perusing the celebrity deaths for that particular year. 2009 took many. I'd guess I spent an hour & a half at the computer doing so last week. Both traditions always leave me with the same emotions & impressions: sadness, sobriety, fear, & dread for those who apparently died in their sins. As usual, I always hope I am wrong with such fearful conclusions. The obituaries more often than not list what the deceased were "devoted to": their interests, hobbies, recreational pastimes, etc. More often than not few references are made to living for the glory of God. More often than not religious affiliations are cited, so often with an air of "presumption" that Heaven is a "given" for them, since they were devoted to family & were basically a "good person", & because they were born into such & such religious denomination. In these obituaries where this most often occurs, the said religious denomination is one that reeks with a "justified-by-works" righteousness. Hence, I have very little hope for these deceased & tremble when I ponder the thought of them standing before a holy God, splendid in the beauty & perfection of holiness, expecting to "get in" because of belonging to such a denomination. "Oh God", I can only moan, "Oh God". One notable author died, famous for writing gruesome horror-movie scripts. Now, for him, if he died without Jesus, the ultimate horror movie begins, which never,

never ends. Another was known for being a “Martini” lover. In fact, his cremated remains were placed in martini shakers until his memorial service! Another young actress, only 32, died this past weekend. In a moment, the adoring fans & paparazzi, the parties, the travel, the fame, the wealth, the luxury & comfort, the being the center of attention, etc., is gone, all gone—forever. And now, again, if she died in her sins, she now stands naked before a holy & just God, Who gave her His all, but Who was ignored.

“THEY JUST DON’T GET IT.”

One of the saddest aspects of all of this, is that each generation produces more aspiring “wanna be” celebrities. They do not learn wisdom, by observing the rich & the famous of the past. Their focus remains on the here & now. The young & beautiful stars, singers, & crooners of the past all got old, sickly, unlovely & all too soon were forgotten, as others always arise to take their place. No wonder Solomon said wisdom cries out in the streets, but to no avail to the foolish (Pr.8:1ff). No wonder she says that all who hate her love death (vs.36). Once again, I close this section with the main reason I keep these traditions of observing the foolish & their end: “Lord, teach us to number our days, that we might become wise” (Ps.90:12). In the light of these tragic events that happen daily to the famous, & not-so-famous, oh, what is The Church doing in these days, re: preaching the gospel? Scan too much of Christian tele-vision, friends, if you can stomach it, & observe what is being “preached” under the guise of so-called “gospel” ministry. Once again I retort & groan, “Oh God, Oh God”. It only firms my resolve to stick close to the gospel: Jesus’ Person & work, the cross, God-centered preaching, & the glorious freeing doctrines of grace. “Oh Heavenly Father, please keep me from all else!”

“THE ‘GLORIOUS DANGER’ OF ONE LYING IN A MANGER”

Being in the Christmas season, I purposed to center my preaching on Christology, i.e., the study & doctrine of Christ. In recent ministry, I expounded on a choice Christological portion of Scripture, Phil. 2:6-11. I memorized it years ago. Few passages in Holy Writ expound on the mystery & glory of the Incarnation as this one does. Observing “things in Heaven, on earth, & under the earth” bowing their knees to Jesus one day at the mention of His Name, I was put once again in holy awe, fear, & adoration of the Son of God, as it should be, through the Written Word. When one scans the Scripture, re: the vast menagerie of angelic beings that encompass God’s throne & inhabit Heaven, not to mention the “entities of darkness” that roam the earth, & some of which are imprisoned “under the earth”(?), a.k.a., in “Tartarus” (II Pet.2:4), in the Abyss (Rev. 9:11), i.e., the “shaft of the bottomless pit” (Rev.9:1), etc., one cannot help but stare in holy fear—even terror. Seraphim, Cherubim, 4 Living Creatures, Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, 4 angels that hold back the four corners of the earth who had the power & authorization to kill 1/3 of the earth’s population, the angel/king of the Abyss, a.k.a., “Abaddon”, “Legion”, Satan himself, the archangel Michael & his holy angels who are stronger than Satan & his angels (Rev.12:7,8), the strong angel who not only bound Satan w/a chain but threw him into the abyss (Rev.20:1-3), the angel w/such great power & authority, whose glory illumined the earth, that John the Apostle, who should have known better, was so dazed by him, that he fell down & worshiped him (Rev.19:10), the

demonic/locust-like creatures released from the pit to torment men (Rev.9:3), etc... All of these entities, & so many more, numbering in the hundred of millions (!), will ALL bow to Jesus on that Great Day, when His Name is mentioned! Any one of these awesome &/or horrific creatures, if we saw them in person, would put us in cardiac arrest & make all human renditions of them, either via art or cine-ma, seem paltry in comparison, & even laughable! And yet, Scripture says two things about them: JESUS created them all (of course, the evil entities He orig-inally created holy), & that He, Jesus, is GREATLY FEARED by them as they surround Him, The Father, & the Holy Spirit in Heaven! (Ps.89:7). As I ponder these things, my heart shudders with fear & sober terror for those who take His holy & one-day-to-be-revered-throughout-the-universe Name in vain! More than once, while preaching, I've placed a "nuclear light" object lesson in the manger with the baby doll depicting Jesus & saying, with all reverence, "This 'Kid' was nuclear". He was destined to cause the fall & rising of many in Israel (Lk.2:34). I pray, Beloved, you now see why. May the Lord help us to hold His Name more reverently for this coming year. Kim & I sincerely thank you all for your prayers, encouragement, & support through 2009. As always, may we prove worthy, of course, by His great grace alone.

Michael

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