

January 1, 2011 [Happy New Year!]

“CABOOSE!” 2010 YEAR-END MINISTRY REPORT

Dear Friends & Family,

This week marks my **25th** anniversary in full-time ministry. I began my calling at Bethel Full Gospel Church in downtown Rochester, NY as their children’s pastor. My family & I went from a small struggling storefront church in a small town about 25 miles away to one of the largest Assembly Of God churches in New York State, with well over a thousand people—in a matter of one week! My first Sunday in ministry was on **Jan. 5th, 1986**. I remember preparing that week before & wondering, “How in the world am I going to fill up 90 minutes w/100 or so children?!” My dilemma quickly turned to becoming one of *not having enough time* every Sunday for all we stuffed into the agenda, along with the much longed-for, anticipated move of God at the end, where He would convince the children’s hearts re: the message from His Word they had just heard. **For the next 14 years**, I would go on to pastor children in three other churches in three different states, **OH, PA, & DE**. In early 2000, we embarked upon this live-by-faith itinerant ministry up until the present.

Caboose! in 2010:

This past year took me to **DE, PA, NY, OH, & NJ** w/over 5,000 miles of driving just for preaching-related ministry events, which included Elim Fellowship, The Hopewell Network, Presbyterian, United Church of Christ, Evangelical Free, Assembly of God, Church of God, & some independent churches. **“WHAT’S ON THE VENUE?!”** Venues of ministry included family services, youth meetings, children’s meetings, youth retreats, a youth & children’s camp, a young adults’ meeting, a pastors’ meeting, Christian school chapels, youth & children’s Sunday School classes, a funeral service, a camp fund-raising banquet, & two Caleb Guertin Band concerts. I attended several non-preaching ministry related events again this year, which included monthly Elim Fellowship & Hopewell Network camp board & pastors’ meetings. For the 7th year in a row, I oversaw the *“Roman Quarters”* at our own local church’s massive yearly event, a.k.a., *“Via Dolorosa”*. I portrayed *Pontius Pilate* & directed & costumed several other cast members; this included weeks of prep, setup & teardown. I assisted our church where & when needed, usually in the area of worship ministry, either leading on guitar or drumming. 2010 was to be in a way, a “dream come true” for me, as I have envisioned riding into our sanctuary as *“Pontius Pilate”* on a horse since 1997. My pastor made my dream come true—well, almost! He had me portray Delaware’s Revolutionary War hero, a.k.a., Caesar Rodney, on Sunday, July 4th, & ride into the sanctuary in a drama that introduced his sermon! Neither I nor our church members shall ever forget that “ministry moment”!

“NO PREACH OUT? THEN REACH OUT”

(12/26) For whatever reason, I had a lapse in open doors for preaching from Oct. 3rd until Dec. 22nd. This has been a relative rarity over the past 10+ years. When it has, I’ve endeavored

to keep seeking the Lord to commune with Him & to fill myself up via The Word, theology books, & prayer—to be ready when He eventually does open doors for preaching again. In addition, I felt I was to “reach out” when the doors weren’t open to “preach out”—to be zealous for good works—to always be abounding in the work of the Lord. This translated for whatever reason into numerous & various “senior-related” events, including home Bible studies, visitations to hospitals, a nursing home, & a rehab, a “senior luncheon connection”, etc. I attended events related & important to two brothers in the Lord who assist me at camp each summer, a camp-fundraising association members’ banquet, a ministry-retirement banquet, a worship CD debut concert, our own church’s men’s re-treat, a luncheon w/a youth pastor in PA, spent the greater part of a day delivering a wheelchair to a brother in the Lord in Midwestern PA, visited an Elim Fellowship church, & “scouted out” a Christian coffee house in hopes of *The Caleb Guertin Band* playing there in the future. I attended the funeral of a 22 year-old young woman, who was the mother of a five-month-old girl, whom I had lunched with just three weeks prior! Hence, by God’s grace & enabling, & I don’t say that lightly, I endeavored to be about His busi-ness this past year, even when it wasn’t *the most important business*, i.e., of **preaching the gospel**.

“STAGGERED BY THE THOUGHT OF CHRIST”

(12/30) I love coming to the place in my understanding of the grace of God, where it seems just too good to be true. As I have often written, I believe when you arrive at this realization, you are coming close to truly understand-ing the gospel! Another place I love to be brought to via the Spirit’s illumination of the Written Word, is where you see Jesus in one of the countless facets of His glory. When this happens, I feel an overwhelming sense of “not being able to take Him in”. It is a mental & heartfelt “overload”, a blown fuse, if you will, where His magnanimity just dwarfs my comprehension of Him. His grace, glory, & humility are just so awe-inspiring, that you relate to the apostle John dropping dead at the glorified Christ’s feet! I recall three such instances. The first came years ago while studying Christ’s incarnation, where it came to me that after He finished His redemptive work as a Man, He did not return to His pre-incarnate state as a divine eternal Spirit. Rather, He retained His glorified *humanity*. Be-fore the incarnation, He was God, i.e., God the Son. Now, & forever, in His unfathomable condescending love & identification with His people, He will forevermore be the God-*Man* ! He is not “going back to” what He was before in eternity past! Then, it happened once again in 2009, while studying re: the Queen of Sheba. While meditating re: Solomon’s divinely-endowed wisdom being reflected in the care & honoring of his servants, to the point where they could have easily be taken by the queen to be his *children*, I saw via The Scriptures Solomon being a type of Christ, Whose wisdom he was filled with. How so? In Luke 12:37 Jesus tells His disciples that after His return to earth, when they are all seated at table (at the Wedding Feast of the Lamb, I assume), that after dinner, HE will get up, & serve them! I remember my heart being immediately “repulsed” by this thought when I first “saw” it. “No, Lord! You have had Your time of humility, degradation, condescension, etc. while on earth! You shall *never* wait on me!” my heart cried out. Once again, I could not “take Him in”. Once again Jesus was too much for me! And then, this morning, while preparing to minister at a wedding next week, it happened again! While studying re: the well-known portion of Scripture dealing

with marriage, a.k.a., Eph. 5:22ff, I “saw Him” again. And, as before, I could not take Him in! When it speaks of a man leaving his father & mother & cleaving to his wife & they become one flesh, Paul then speaks of *the wife’s* body as if it was the husband’s *very own*, i.e., because he is now one with her via marriage & the marriage act. When he cares for her, he’s caring for himself, as if *he* has become “body-double”. So close-knit is this new union, that when the husband nurtures his wife, he’s nurturing himself! The two shall then become one (vs. 31; Gen. 2:24). What put me in awe afresh was vs. 32: “This mystery is great, *but I am speaking with reference to Christ & The Church*” re: all Paul had just said re: the husband & wife! I guess I had subconsciously thought more often than not re: Christ’s Body that it was a “body” of people, called His Church, & that it surely is. But the great (Grk. “mega”) mystery here is that our union with Him is so close, so intimate, so integrated, that He has chosen for all eternity, via the behest & ordination of the Father, not only to have a glorified human body, but to be eternally connected, & eternally “confined”, if you will, to this mass of people, whose number no man can count (Rev.7:9), like a head to a body! The Church will be “one person” with Him, so to speak, re: the “oneness” of a husband & wife, where Paul even says that the Church, His Body, is the “fullness” of Him. Wow, I don’t “get” all that I just typed, as it is, as Paul says, a “mega”-mystery, but I think I’m on to something, & once again, I am in awe of the Savior. Oh, may it continue! If I have one longing re: the ministry that our Lord does through me, it would be that I could move in, & somehow “impart” this awe of Him to His people & the lost in the coming year, & until the day I die! Oh, Father, may it be so, for Jesus’ glory alone! May 2011 be the most fruitful for the gospel all of us have ever had.

Sincerely,

Michael and Kim