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YouTube Channel [for dramas, sermons, & puppet shows for kids]: Michael Robert Guertin

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July 2023 "MY 'PARTY LINE' 'BUGGED'"



Dear *Friends & Family*,

[6/4] Some of you may recall last month's newsletter's opening article, vis, "JUNE 'BUGS'", where I wrote concerning many burdens/grievances, etc. I had been carrying for the Body of Christ as I attended various churches & went about conducting my itinerant ministry. I came close more than once to not publishing that newsletter. In fact, when I decided to do so, as I had nothing else in my heart that was burning at the time, I truly thought Kim, my newsletter editor-in-chief, would suggest I write something else-& understandably so! I was truly amazed that she didn't. She has "caught" so much over the decades of editing my writings that needed either editing, tweaking, or deletion! Hence, I hit "send" & out they went. It has been quite a long time since I received so much feedback from a newsletter. It was as if these topics burdening my heart "brought out of the woodwork" & resonated with so many folks I had no idea even *read* the newsletter! Here are some of the comments:

"Thank you. Agree. Just attended such a church...Flashing lights, smoke machine, etc. good teaching but out there in so many other ways it made us sad...appreciate your speaking about it." [B.D.]

"Amen, Michael, Amen!!! May God prepare the way for you as you minister with His might & power & in His Holy Name -- challenging His people to "be holy as He is holy." [R.G]

“Oh my goodness, Michael, praise God that you no longer "hold your peace" in these matters. And these are just so many points, so many I've seen, & you've basically described...what I see is such a lack of attention regarding a great many things, including this coldness.” [G.P.]

“Michael, I was able to read some of your most recent newsletter & was really struck with the thoughts in "Smile for the Camera!"... I appreciate your burden for the Lord.” [Michael]

“YES YES YES!!!!!! My heart also has been grieved! It's hurry up & get it done! I have a hard time with LOUD music that repeats itself over & over and over & over & over! AND LOUD MUSIC with lights, turned way down! God took me out of darkness! I don't worship Him in darkness! We can see the words for years we don't need the dark! But yes, I agree 100% with you...I grieve that there's not prayer offered at the altar for people come searching for help & prayer & GOD!!! It's like watching a TV show. Father, forgive me. But I just so know your heart, Michael, & I so agree. We're so hungry for Heaven! With the Lord!” [K.C.]

“Thank you, Michael. Fight on (in the Spirit).” [T.R.]

“Hi Guerty, I just read your newsletter & it struck such a cord with me. I was just praying last night before bed for the fear of the Lord to be present within not just my generation & I, but with God's people again. That we would recognize we worship a holy, holy Lord. I feel like that has been forgotten & put on the back burner. My heart was just pleading with God that He would set that longing in us to ADORE Him again. I loved how you said “many people praise, some worship, few adore”. That was so spot on, & I am guilty!!! As I was praying last night, your teachings were replaying in my mind -And then to wake up & read your news-letter, it was definitely God. Just wanted to share!” [A.N.]

“Your June newsletter was spot on!! The world is in desperate need of the Word of God. We need hearts changed, we need sins forgiven, we need things untangled that only the Holy Spirit can untangle. We need to fall on our knees before our Holy, Righteous Father” [T.S.]

“Wonderful newsletter Guerty....thank you....I am COMPLETELY guilty of distractions all day, every day & I WANT to worship Him more & know Him more, hear Him & truly live a Spirit led life....Ahh, Jesus, help me & help us all....” [J.C.]

“Good Morning my friend... I just read June "Tracker" (newsletter) & give you a hearty AMEN! I am totally with you on this! Even (my church) has fallen into this pattern for many years. Every Sunday I feel like I'm at a Christian concert / sing-along...I copied & pasted your comments on a document file & I'm praying about how to give this to the powers that be at (my church). [D.H.]

Beloved? How does this not look like I'm patting myself on the back? And I'm sure there is some of that element in posting these comments. BUT, I cannot help but take comfort in the fact that I don't appear to be hallucinating re: these concerns & burdens I've carried for so long. Yes, one

can always find others to agree with them with anything. However, the zeal & fire in my heart re: these inner aches isn't for *my* fame & glory-but HIS. I will not rest until He is our all-consuming Fire. Amen.

"WHAT IS YOUR NAME, #41?"



[6/22] A line from Ben Hur [1959], winner of 11 Oscars, comes to mind as I write this particular article. [Anyone who knows me well knows Ben Hur is "Guerty's movie". Years ago, when I turned 41 years of age, I even had a custom t-shirt made with the #41 on the back with "Ben Hur" over it!]. The Jewish prince Judah Ben Hur had saved his Roman captor Arius from drowning after the latter's ship was sunk by Macedonian pirates. Stranded on a piece of wreckage in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea, Arius asks Judah, "*What is your name, 41* [Judah's galley slave number]?" The Hebrew prince replies, "Judah Ben Hur". I say that to say this-in two days, about this time, I will head out for my **41st** season of camp work/ministry. How could I not think about this "41" connection?? 🤔 Every Saturday setup day for every camp I traditionally wear my "**Caboose! Team**" shirt, but this year I shall don my "**41**" shirt. My camp experience began in **NJ** when I was 19, & has expanded into **NY, OH, PA, MO, FL, VA, MD, & MI**. One summer years ago I ministered at **7** different camps in one season. To be honest, the realization of this dumbfounds me. I vividly remember asking the Lord many years ago while serving as pastoral director of the **Hopewell Summer Camps**, "Lord? May I please get in **10 years** of doing this before my time here is done?" And this summer will be my **33rd year** in that capacity! [Although in 2020, Covid closed Hopewell Camps at Tel Hai, yet I still stayed at Tel Hai for 3 weeks while I ministered at mini-camps held at various Hopewell Churches]. Every camp, every year, it feels as if it will be my last. The pressure, stress, anxiety, & "press" of camps is always the same, no matter how many years & camps I complete. It never gets easy. Why this weight? You're dealing with the eternal destiny of human souls-young human souls. The enemy of their souls is fierce, relentless, & tireless. I'm a firm believer in absolute, without exception, Divine sovereignty over every atom in the universe at all times. If this isn't true, God is not GOD. The devil cannot even *think* of a Christian without God's permission, & hence, His ordination. Therefore, every demonic assail, attack, scheme, etc. is God-ordained to bring about more of

His glory than if He prevented them! They also serve to make the Christian more like Jesus (Rom.8:29) & are all for his good (Rom.8:28). These are my golden anchors in such times. Another press of camps is exactly that-the “weight”, the “cabod” (“glory”, literally “heavy” or “weight” in Hebrew) of God. You immerse yourself into God’s Word, meditating on it day & night-you press into His presence. Compared to His immensity & blazing holiness, a human being is less than microscopic. And yet, our Lord calls us to Himself. Hence, these are regular, yearly elements of camp season. Every camp season I am worn down before I even arrive on site. This has been the pattern over the years. I dislike it very much. It often depresses me. Just ask Kim, whom our Lord often uses, as He did with Katarina Von Bora, Martin Luther’s wife, to bring me up out of my pit.

“GLORY BACK GUARANTEE!”



And yet-& yet-this is our Lord’s “Guarantee Policy” that He shall get all of the glory when He moves at said camps. “When I am weak, then I am strong” (II Cor.12:10). “If I brag, I shall brag about my weakness that the power of Christ might rest upon me.” (II Cor.12:9). “We have this Treasure in earthen vessels, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God & not to us.” (II Cor.4:7). I tell every camp staff every year, “The weaker the vessel, the more glory God gets for using it.” “It has pleased the Lord to bruise Him” (Isa.53:10). That was said of God the Father re: Jesus during His passion-#1 reason for the Father’s pleasure in bruising His Son-He would achieve & receive more glory for both Himself & His Son versus sparing Him from the dreaded crucifixion. And so it goes with us, His children-His pleasure abides most in using His servants He has “bruised”-those He has caused to suffer. This is His insurance policy re: His Own glory. Suffering presses His children to Himself-their greatest good! It purges the dross of disgusting “self” from them, which is always the greatest hindrance to effective Christ-exalting ministry. Hence, the weight of camps!

“SAMSON SYNDROME”



I have dreaded with deep fear for decades what I have termed “Samson Syndrome”. The Danite had been used by the Lord several times to decimate the Lord’s enemies. Samson, in the light of this, became slothful- & *presumptuous!* He began to trust in past victories-that they would be his insurance for future ones! “He awoke from his sleep and thought, “I’ll go out as before and shake myself free.” But he did not know that the LORD had left him...” (Jud.16:20). And, he was deadly wrong! Hence, every year when we go to prayer in our beloved Hemlock Hall chapel at Tel Hai Camp, I pray against this precarious spiritual malady. “Lord? You have come to us in this precious building for so many camps for so many years-yet, we do not presume upon You doing so again, but we humbly entreat You to do so. Please, Lord Jesus, come. Come.” Speaking of this undeserved long tenure with the Hopewell Network @ Tel Hai Camp since **1991**, I recently received a text from a dear brother, Dean Weiler, whose daughters have attended/served at camp with me. Dean also serves as a board member of Tel Hai Camp: **“Morning Guert...I met Mandy Johnson Ramos yesterday at Petra. She came to Hopewell summer camp 25 years ago. She asked about you specifically to see if you were still doing camps. I told her absolutely that you are! She couldn't believe it...said that you had a dramatic impact on her life. Thanks so much for what you are doing. You have no idea how far & wide your ministry has reached. Just wanted to encourage you this morning ..1 Corinthians 15:58. Blessings to you!”** Notes like these never cease to astound & humble me. To be serving at camp with young men & women who were former little boy & girl campers &/or little kids in kids church with me decades ago is beyond words. I can ask for nothing more. One of my deepest aches in all of life? That this may continue for many years to come. His will be done.

“BIGGER ISN’T NECESSARILY BETTER?”



[7/1] I returned home late last night from my first of three camps this summer, vis, hsc Sr Hi Camp. This is always our smallest camp every summer because it is our “newest” camp. How so? Since 1986 when Hopewell Summer Camps were inaugurated by Dean Landis, there were two camps—a teen camp & a children’s camp. In 2012, a big rental group at Tel Hai Camp pulled out & went to another camp. For decades they had 3 straight weeks rented on Tel Hai’s calendar. As soon as I learned of this I dove at the chance to procure one of their 3 weeks for the Hopewell Camps. My strategy was to divvy up our 2 camps into 3: Sr Hi, Jr Hi, & Kids camp. The camp board unanimously agreed. In the light of this we extended our age limit for the upper camp from 16 to 18 years of age. Hence, we’ve been steadily trying to build up the attendance of this oldest camp. To be honest, I’ve been oftentimes saddened that this oldest Sr Hi camp has not expanded numerically in the past decade past 71 campers—our highest attendance since its inception. Last week we had 61 campers for the week. Yet, in a way, this may be a blessing in disguise. As I stated above, despite the Sr Hi camp being the smallest, it is the most difficult as it is the first of the season. The sermons & dramas are given for the first time. We haven’t done a camp in 10 months, etc. So, perhaps it is the mercy of the Lord our 1st camp is smaller.

“TEENS IN ‘EMERALD CITY’-IN PENNSYLVANIA!”



As is the case with every senior high camp, the teens come every year with issues, struggles, insecurities, etc. And, every year, we strive, in a very real sense, to bring them to “Emerald City” in the Land of Oz. If you remember the scene from this 1939 classic film, after a long, arduous, & dangerous journey (being pursued by an evil powerful witch!) from Munchkin Land to Emerald City, Dorothy Gale & her 3 companions are given “the royal treatment”. Dorothy is given a hair-do, & manicure. Ditto with the Cowardly Lion. The Scarecrow is stuffed with fresh straw & the rusty Tin Man is oiled & buffed to a brilliant shine again. In a very real way, this is exactly what happens at camp spiritually to our campers. We lavish shepherding care & attention on them, we listen to them, we give them many hugs & affection, we preach to them & teach them the whole counsel of God-His kindness, & *severity*. We enter into worship with them which ushers us all into the comforting & transforming presence of God for lengthy periods of time. By God’s grace, via these Divine means of grace, like the 4 weary travelers in Oz, we are restored, revitalized, & refreshed to serve our Lord again in gladness. We saw before our very eyes these teens melt inside. They humbly confessed their sins, idolatries, pride, etc., & Hemlock Hall became Heaven on earth—a realm of love & unity with God & each other. I truly cannot conceive of anything else in life I’d rather do. May it continue. Very sincerely, [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: *“When we think of idols, we see statues & golden calves, which are easy to see & hard to make-but the idols in our life are often easy to make & hard to see.”* [Maggie Thorpe-Sr Hi camper last week]



Caboose! On The Loose!

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

June 13: Tel Hai Camp, Honey Brook, PA: hsc directors' prayer & planning meeting

June 18: Mt. Pleasant UMC Church, Colora, MD: Sun. a.m. service

July 6: Petra Church, New Holland, PA: hsc board meeting

July 6: Tel Hai Camp, Honey Brook, PA: hsc Jr Hi camp directors' prayer & planning meeting

July 15-21: Tel Hai Camp, Honey Brook, PA: hsc Jr. Hi. Camp: pastoral director

July 22-25: Bay Village, OH: gathering with our 3 children & their children: a rarity!



*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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