

November 1 ("All Saints' Day"), 2008

"ONE IN A MILLION? TRY 2-3 HUNDRED MILLION!"

Dear Friends & Family,

(10/16) On this occasion of my 53rd birthday, I thought it pertinent to write you concerning a "revelation" I received this past September from a medical doctor in OH. He is our oldest son & daughter in law's physician. We were with him on the occasion of an ultrasound for their soon coming *twin boys* to be born. As a teenager of about 15 years of age, I remember vividly sleeping outside of our house in S. Jersey, where I grew up. I'd sleep next to the air conditioner, as I liked the "white noise" it offered, re: sleep enhancement. I would lie there, look up at the stars, & wonder to myself, "What if someone else had been born, instead of me?" I had a very strange feeling come over me as I pondered such things. I believe now that it was the Holy Spirit putting thoughts of eternity into my head. I was not a Christian then. It would be another three years or so before the Lord introduced Himself to me & apprehended me in a convent in Missouri! For the past number of years, when preaching to young people especially, I would on occasion relate to them that at the time of their conception, there were 999,999 other people who could have been born instead of them, as the father's "seed count" is approximately *one million*, compared to the mother's usual *one* egg. I had a teenager come up to me after a meeting about two years ago & correct me. He said that it was *five* million, not one million. From time to time, I have had kids in kids' church who *were* smarter than me, so, I purposed after that to find out for sure! At the risk of embarrassing our oldest son & daughter in law, I asked their doctor. He said that the usual male "seed count" at conception is **two to three hundred million!!!** My heart swelled with awe, brokenness, & wonderment when he said it. My eyes started to water. I thought of all of the other people who could have been here instead of me, should the Sovereign Lord of all things great & small have so decreed. He determined when & where all human beings would live (Acts 17:26). He also determined *who* would exist, & who wouldn't (Ps.139:16; Jer.1:5). My feelings were filled with aching thoughts of, "Oh God, Oh God, are You still glad You chose to have me exist instead of the 300 million "others", who "didn't get the chance?" Seeing how I have lived my life, is Your heart filled with pain & regret, as at the Flood, & You now wished You would have ordained for another to take my place, who would have been more pleasing to You?" A deep resolve fomented in my soul, not to "let God down", not to disappoint Him, not to fill Him with regret, because I wasted my life by not living for His glory. I saw in my mind's eye 2,999,999 "others" standing in line behind me, "waiting for my spot to open up". I cannot begin to tell you, Beloved, what this one statement of scientific fact by this doctor did to me in such a brief moment of time. Do you want even more love for & awe of God to well up in your soul? Then, ponder this: despite the fact that our God knew exactly how you would live your life, spending not only moments, days, weeks, months, years, & even decades in futile, sin-loving & indulging waste, ignoring God & caring nothing for Him nor His glory, He STILL chose to have YOU exist instead of the hundreds of millions of others who would have given anything to have your spot, if they were offered the chance. The chance—the chance to *live!* And yet, it was not the Lord's choice & sovereign good pleasure to have them exist. Rather, for reasons you will never know, deep in the inner recesses of His mysterious, secret, decretive will, formed in eternity past (Eph.3:11), it was His decision that YOU exist; YOU; ONE of hundreds of millions. If your heart is sinking while reading & pondering these things, that is good. That is wisdom. That is numbering your days. That is the fear of the Lord. If your heart does not "quake" with awe under such things, may it do so. The world is drunk with a party spirit. Thoughts like these sober us, & focus us on God, as is proper, & what we exist for. May He help us, may He help us. By His grace, & entirely by His grace, of course, I want our God to be happy that He made me, instead of

those countless others...those countless others...may we never hear them crying out against us, saying that we wasted our opportunity, that they would have gladly taken, & “done better”.

“ROBOTS, PUPPETS, slaves, or ‘Free’?”

In our ongoing series of “Christian Myth Debunking”, we will address the very popular adage that has been quoted by countless Christians, all of whom, as usual, were sincere, meant well, but again, didn’t think things through. **Myth: “The Holy Spirit is a Gentleman; He won’t ‘force’ you against your will; we are not robots”**. Yes, given the incredible & infinite power of the Holy Spirit, Who along with the Father & Son was so very active & involved at Creation (Gen.1:2), given that He, being the Third Person of the Trinity/Godhead, also shares, along with the Father & Son, divine omnipotence, it is an imperative that He be a “gentleman” with microscopic, frail, fragile, & so very weak (but oh, so very proud, despite their microscopic state!) human beings. If He didn’t condescend as our Blessed Lord Jesus did at His incarnation, veiling to us so much of His divine glory, we would all be dead, even as The Holy Spirit approached us! However, we must not forget our sinful, helpless, hopeless, pathetic estate before He came to regenerate us. Never forget that our understanding of salvation by grace is directly proportionate to our understanding of the depraved human condition. Our sinful wills, coming from an entirely sinful nature with absolutely nothing good in them (Rom.7:18), could only choose & follow three things: the ways of the world, the will of Satan, & the desires & thoughts of our inherited evil nature (Eph.2:1-3). We were slaves of these three things; slaves don’t do what *they* want to do. They obey *their master*, whomever he might be. Not only were we slaves to Satan (I Jn.5:19), but also slaves to sin (Rom.6:17). We were hostile to God (Col.1:21). Our sinful human nature, our flesh, was against everything He was for (Gal.5:17). We neither obeyed His Law, nor were we able to do so; we didn’t have the ability to please Him, despite our most fervent “religious” efforts (Rom.8:7,8). We were His enemies (Rom.5:10). NONE sought for God (Rom.3:11)—you don’t look for Someone you hate by nature. You don’t trust Someone you hate by nature. This all being true, & so much more, Jesus said that even when He so graciously called lost sinners to Himself, NONE could come (Jn.6:65). NONE wanted to come (Jn.6:44). They all “began to make excuse” (Lk.14:18). We could not receive the Holy Spirit, Whom we so desperately needed to be reborn! (Jn.14:17). We did not, & could not receive the things of the Spirit, believing them foolishness (I Cor.2:14). Unfortunately, the gospel is the “thing” of the Spirit! (II Cor.3:8). You see, Beloved? We *WERE* “**robots**”, controlled by sin & Satan! In the light of this, though we never sensed, saw, heard, or felt it, the Holy Spirit HAD to be VIOLENT, & the farthest thing from a “gentleman”, in order to break these bondages we didn’t know we had, in our ignorance (Eph.4:18) & blindness (II Cor.4:4). He had to “thrust” upon us, if you will, a new heart *first, so that we could believe & trust the Lord in love!* Prior to this, we had NOTHING to love & trust Him with! You see, we truly are saved by grace, thru faith, & that—not of yourselves (Eph.2:8,9)! I hope you can see more clearly why Jesus said, “You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you...”!

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[Please make all tax-deductible gifts payable to: Elim Fellowship, 1703 Dalton Rd, Lima, NY 14485. Thanks!]

[Michael is an ordained Elim Fellowship itinerant home missionary, endorsed by his local church he is a member of. He supports his family & his ministry by faith in the Lord & His provision through His people.]

Ministry/events for NOVEMBER & those not listed in last month’s newsletter:

Oct. 21: Tel Hai Camp, Honey Brook, PA: Association Members’ business mtg.

Nov. 1: Spring City Fellowship, Spring City, PA: youth outreach

Nov. 4: Hopewell Christian Fellowship, Elverson, PA: camp board mtg//network pastors’ mtg.

Nov. 7-9: Full Gospel Family Life Center, Lagrangeville, NY: youth mtg.//Sun. am. Family service

Nov. 13: New Covenant Community Church, Audubon, NJ: Elim area pastors’ mtg.