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## November 2017

Dear *Friends & Family*,

### “ROBBING THE CRADLE?”



[10/2] My **October** newsletter just went out two days ago with much of it devoted to children & ministry to them. However, I just had to share something in this month's newsletter that I saw posted on Facebook this morning. My wife Kim's testimony was "the record" in my experience re: one of the youngest-aged conversions I'm aware of. She was 5 & ½ year old, living in Memphis, TN at the time, the place of her birth. She had been under conviction of her sin for weeks. She was listening to a gospel record. While doing so she came again under the sweet conviction of the Holy Spirit, Who in His Own gentle way convinced her, that she, at that tender age, was a sinner & needed the Savior. She called for her mother who was in another room & Mom prayed with her to receive Jesus. Kim has never looked back. Unlike me, I have never seen my bride of 40 years waver, fear, tremble in her boots, etc. that God might not love her. It's one of the many qualities of my wife I wish so very much I had.

Well, a very dear sister/friend in the Lord who, along with her husband Mike, serves Jesus & His young in Romania, a.k.a. Ana Dascalescu, shared a quote from my October newsletter on Facebook. Another sister/friend in the Lord who attended one of the three churches I served [all at the same time on a rotating basis] in Reading, PA prior to us moving to Wilmington, posted the following in response: *"[You were] God's instrument and led our Abby to accept Jesus at Camp Mensch Mill when she was four years old - June 20, 1990!... You & your team had presented Noah's Ark in a very unique way. You presented the gospel. I was near the back praying. You said to someone, "You want to give your heart to Jesus." - "Yaaass." - "What's your name?" - "Abby." - "How old are you?" - "Four." - You, then led our Abigail, a blonde-haired, blue-eyed, little girl in the first row in the barn at Camp Mensch Mill, to accept Jesus as her Lord & Savior...Later, you spoke to all the students about giving their lives, or rededicating their lives, to Christ. I was praying & crying with my eyes closed (thanking God for Abby's decision)... This was a time forever in my heart. And you were used in a powerful way by God to impact lives.*

*God is good!*" Wow. I had no idea until this a.m.! It is one of the most precious-& most humbling ministry feedback reports I have ever received-& that 27 years later! Jesus be praised.

## [10/25] "LEAVING AN 'IMPRESS' ON PRESBYTERIANS"



Kim & I returned home the other night from an 11-day, 10X-ministering, 1,228-mile ministry trip to NY & OH. Our oldest son Matthew has been on staff at a large Presbyterian church in the Cleveland, OH area for many years. It has been my dream to preach there on a Sunday morning for many years. Given the denomination's policies & procedures, like so very many denominations, I just assumed it would never happen. But, I still dreamed it-& yes, prayed many times that it would happen. [I have preached there a few times-to the youth, young adults, & at Matthew's ordination service years ago.] Well, several weeks ago I got a call from Matthew, asking if I would preach both services on one of the 5 Sundays in October, each one being dedicated to one of the "5 Solas" of the Reformation, especially so for this year's 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of that watershed event in Church history. I was assigned "Sola Gratia" Sunday, i.e., "by grace alone". This one was "my baby", as I have desperately clung for my very life(!) to sovereign grace for years now. And yet, when the big day finally came, when our Jesus made my "dream come true", I was very scared. I'm not used to "big" re: church sizes in

my almost 18 years of itinerant ministry travels. Also, I had never ministered in a Presbyterian adult Sunday a.m. service before. Presbyterians are known for their intellect & high standards of education for their ministers. My own pastor says I'm "intense". He's right. When God's Word fills my mind & heart & His Spirit comes upon me, I don't know how to be otherwise. How would this group, "flavor", & "DNA" of God's people receive me?

## "PREPARING THE GROUND WITH 'YOUTH & LUTHER'"



Before this huge event (at least in *my* mind), I did have the chance to minister to some of this church body a few days before, preaching to the youth & the many adults workers re: "The Value of the Soul" & then the following night via a last minute impromptu meeting of all ages re: how to study the Bible with a special highlighting/marking system I've used for decades. I taught our own three children this method when they were very young. I believe this helped both me & at least part of the church re: what to expect from me. I sat in the front pew next to Matthew. I kept telling the Lord how scared I was. Then I prayed, "Lord? I'm scared. But-You're not!". This gave me boldness & faith I didn't have moments before as I ascended the platform. The following are some feedback my son & I received from various & numerous people in the congregation afterwards. I don't know what to say but, "Jesus? You're so very gracious to me, & O! so very amazing!". "Dear Shepherd [Matt], PLEASE THANK your earthly father for his teaching for us today. I thanked our Heavenly Father all the way home. It's a 20-mile drive...I could hardly keep my eyes dry. Giggling and the comfort of His truth...I'm still thanking Him. Wow. Now I know where you get the fire in your belly-like a young Billy Graham. Is there any way we could have your father on staff? I'm serious. Please tell your father how powerful his teaching is. Please thank him & your mother for doing such a good job on their son as well..." [Val] "Matt: A couple of things. First off, I would like for you to tell your father that he gave the most memorable

sermon, object lesson, that I have ever heard in my life. It was good and it was true..." [John] "Your dad was amazing! Wow! What a gift he has in telling the gospel story from creation to redemption! Thanking God for both of you," [Denise] "Just wanted to say thank you for asking your dad to preach to us on Sunday. I enjoyed it very much. It was good to see who taught you how to have a passion for our Lord and how to express that to your congregation. You are a lucky man, a blessed man." [Bev] "Dear Matt, What a wonderful message of Scripture proclaiming God's Grace. Please let your Dad know how much we enjoyed his preaching. Guess you are a chip off the old block when it comes to preaching, not so much genetics!!" [Al & Bev] "Hi Matt, Wow! We all thought your dad could be a professional actor. We really loved his cool time machine & his acting rendition of Martin Luther. I felt like I was [downtown] at Playhouse Square! Fabulous! I also got a lot out of the verse that your dad chose in Luke & how to read & mark bible verses. Very cool! Please tell your dad "thank you"..." [Marilyn].// "Hi Matt, Tell your dad I really enjoyed his sermon Sunday. His visual aids really added to it..."// [Bob] "Thanks for today. I usually can contain/hold back my emotion ('cause it's manly not to cry) but it was very difficult today. My lava lamp is moving & hot to the touch!" [Greg] \*{Note: his reference to the "lava lamp" was re: that object lesson which I used to begin the message. It stands for a Christian. Before I plugged it in it was cold, dark, etc., but the yellow lava of "The Holy Spirit" was still in it, at "the bottom". I told the audience it is the message of the gospel, vis, depravity coupled with grace, in that order, that turns the lava lamp "on", gets it hot, & causes the lava below to start rising to the top, vis, the Holy Spirit overflowing out of us!}. What makes Greg's testimony so amazing is that he was a former OSU Buckeye national championship team member!// "Thank you for Thursday & today's message. Just wanted to pass on some encouragement. Today the kids said "Best" preaching ever. Around the dinner table they all talked about their favorite parts of the service. My 16 year-old cousin comes with us on Sundays & on the way out said he really liked the message & said it "felt alive". I think that was the 1<sup>st</sup> time he's heard God's story start to finish. I pray the message sinks in for all of them. As for me, Thursday showed me I have been eating too much icing & not enough cake! {re: my emphasis of delving into doctrine over seeking an "experience"} Thank you for keeping us accountable. I will start searching for oil {i.e., the "oil" of the Holy Spirit found in the Written Word}. Thank you for being obedient to Him!" [Dane]// "Hi Matt, I was down at Morningstar over the weekend & missed Sunday at BPC—[I] listened to the replay & all I can say is unabashedly, powerful and unfiltered TRUTH. [Linda].

**"FORGIVE ME!"**



Dear Reader, I sincerely & earnestly apologize for the seemingly self-congratulatory comments cited above. I just know that I was terribly scared before I preached. I was fighting distracting, sinful thoughts. Before the 2<sup>nd</sup> service I was feeling dry & drained. Hence, how my heart melted & my eyes swelled with tears when in spite of me our Father came upon & blessed me & His people so very sweetly. Again, it was my “dream come true”. I pray you see it in that context. How pertinent that I have been portraying **Luther** a lot. The reason? When he was losing his faith, his spiritual father, **Johann Staupitz**, sent him to Wittenberg to teach theology! When Luther objected, Staupitz replied, “We preach best what we need to learn most.” O, how very true that is for me! I cling desperately to the precious doctrines I proclaim. They are gold to my soul! **Jesus** be The One Who is praised-*forever!* Amen.

**\*Caboose! Commentary Corner:** [My 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 various Bibles I have studied from.] \**“The devil’s incessant quest since the Garden: lift man up & degrade God down.”* [11/28/’10] \**“Lucifer & Solomon were the epitome of wisdom in the angelic & human realms respectively, & both fell!”* [1/22/’15] \**“It is not just idleness that is the devil’s playground-it is ALL of fallen human nature! We give him MUCH to work with! (Mt. 16:23)”* [10/12/’16]



## *Caboose! On the Loose:*

*\*Lookin' out for the little guys...*

### **Ministry/Events for NOVEMBER & those not listed in last month's newsletter:**

**October 27:** Red Christian Academy, Red Lion, DE: Multi-school chapel: "Martin Luther" dramatic portrayal

**Nov. 9-13:** Chattanooga, TN: Sarah Sylvester wedding: participant in ceremony

**Nov. 18:** Tel Hai Camp, Honey Brook, PA: IC Warehouse youth group retreat:

**Nov. 23-25:** Northern Virginia: visiting family on both sides for Thanksgiving

\*Michael is an ordained *Elim Fellowship* itinerant Stateside 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 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, 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.

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