

October 1, 2012

\*Welcome **Shiloh Grace Guertin** to the Family!

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Dear **Friends & Family**,

(9/6) I returned home this past Monday, Labor Day, early in the morning from a youth retreat at Cape Henlopen, DE. In 29 years of camp ministry, I could not recollect a time when I was more exhausted than this. It was only a 2-day retreat for me too. Why then this debilitating fatigue? I soon realized that in about the space of 24 hours, I had preached long & hard 3X, & performed one of my most intense & draining Time Machine dramas, a.k.a. Pontius Pilate, right before he approached the Great White Throne of Jesus Christ. The ministry room for the retreat was also not air-conditioned. It was hot & very humid. Even in ideal climactic conditions, Pilates costume of heavy cotton [his tunic], leather [his outer military tunic], & steel (his breastplate & helmet) is both hot & burdensome. I was sweating profusely & was surely dehydrated. Before, after, & included within this 24 hour period {roughly} I packed, unpacked, loaded, & unloaded huge amounts of ministry cargo & equipment, & drove over 200 miles, & of course, interacted quite emotionally with a room full of teenagers {I tend to get excited & emotional in a room filled with children &/or teenagers! . There is (was?) a very popular television show called 24. I've never seen it, but a friend of mine a few years ago said my acting style reminded him of the main character of this show. I want to recollect the actors name is Keifer Sutherland. This came to mind as I pondered the 24 hours I put in (& more!) for this past weekend. To be honest, despite the fact that I have had the honor & privilege of ministering at camps, retreats, & youth meetings for many years, I felt somewhat intimidated by this one. Why? This youth group was part of a very big, popular, sound, & growing church. I was told by their churchs worship pastor, who is a dear friend of mine, that this was their big event for the year. Someone else told me that Sunday night of the retreat was the big night of the weekend. I emailed my friend back & said, Greató the pressures on. When I went before the Lord about it, re: my intimidation, I said, Lord? I cant live up to anyones expectations. I can only give them what You have given to meó those precious truths & doctrines of Your Word that put me in awe. Thats all I can do, Lord. I kind of felt an impression in my spirit that the Lords reply was: That will be enough. So, I gave them what I

had: The gospel elaborated in great detail, involving the doctrines of [Creation](#), [The Fall](#), [Depravity](#), [Inability](#), [Imputation](#), [Substitutionary Atonement](#), & [Gods sovereign grace](#), both provided & applied. The next meeting, I preached on [Propitiation](#), & how the Father appeased His Own just wrath against His people by sending His Son to endure His holy anger against their sins in their place. This was followed by [Communion](#). On Sunday night, they saw [Pontius Pilate](#) come out of the Time Machine after the [Grim Reaper](#) [this was a dramatic/visual way of showing the audience that Pilate was dead]. Pilate was escorted in chains by two holy angels dressed in white who neither responded nor reacted to his various & sundry emotions of terror, denial, & rage. This was followed by a very detailed teaching on Judgment Day, the knowledge of which Paul said was a major motivation on a regular basis for Christians to strive to please the Lord, & also to witness to the lost (II Cor. 5:8,10).

### FREEDOM BOUND?

Having worked with young people for many years now, & also having had considerable experience on worship teams, both as a leader on guitar & as an accompanist on drums, I have noticed for decades the tendency in both old & young, to equate spiritual freedom with a certain style or various expressions of worship, such as very prolonged worship, often with a seemingly tirelessly repeated chorus or line, exuberant worship accompanied with dance or raised hands, with banners & flags, or with dramatic flair. Admittedly, if there is no emotion in our worship, I doubt it is true worship. Often for me, I can barely stand in worship. My first inclination is to get on my face or knees. I must admit though, Ive been troubled for years re: this, as these expressions are too often equated with freedom, rather than just being expressions of true freedom. The Scripture says that it is truth that sets human beings free. Biblical freedom for a Christian consists in freedom from the demands of the Law as a condition for eternal life, & its penalties of the curse (Gal.3:13) & death, as well as freedom from the bondage of sin (Rom.6); in addition, Gods people have been set free from bondage to Satan (II Tim.2:26) & servitude to his kingdom (Col.1:13). We can exude all of the manifestations of freedom above, but if they are not rooted in sound, biblical doctrine, they are just emotions, styles, & dare I say, traditions? It has not been uncommon in the Body of Christ to hear such groups or individuals given to such expressions declare that anyone else who doesn't do the same in the same manner is bound. I have no doubt this is & can be true<sup>o</sup> but not always. One

professor at [Elim Bible Institute](#) many years ago asked who is the more boundó those who dont express themselves in such a manner, or those who feel such people have to do so, or, theyre not really free? In my striving for freedom, another Elim leader told me once in his office, Youre bound by your desire to be free. Wow. Of course, I was floored. L He was right! The longer I live, the more Im convinced that worship is only as free & fragrant to God as [the doctrine](#) one believes is accurate & sound that it is based upon! When I saw these precious teenagers respond like they did to these heavy but indispensable doctrines, I joined right in with them, loving every minute of it. Huhó I just had this thought: Uh, maybe this is another of the many reasons why I was so exhausted when I got home! There was something very precious about this particular group of young people, & how they worshiped from their hearts. I was sitting in the back of the meeting room Sunday morning before I was to preach on [Propitiation](#), that is, the removal of [wrath](#) by the offering of a sacrifice. The worship was so sweet, rich, & tender, that obviously, Gods smile of approval was upon it. All I wanted to do for about an hour & a half was go up front where there was some floor space & lie down & adore our Lord. This was not to be, however, as they were expecting me to preach & feed them, & understandably so. I thanked the youth pastor & his team for doing such an excellent job of feeding & shepherding these young people. I was humbled by the honor of being invited to be with them for a weekend. My heart was so very blessed, that I told him in front of everybody, that if something came up where they couldnt give me a dime, Id still come.

### [1 DOWN, 2 TO GO\\_](#)

Now, my ache is to be ready for my next youth retreat tomorrow. It is the same church as above, except this time it is their Jr. Youth group. I refuse, by Gods grace, ever to succumb to what I call [Samson Syndrome](#). God had graciously given him various & sundry victories over his enemies. He became presumptuous. Having given in to his weaknesses of vanity, lust, quickness to anger, & pride, he lost his hair, & hence his strength, to what Victor Mature, who portrayed Samson in [Cecil B. DeMilles 1949](#) production [Samson & Delilah](#), called the oldest trick in the bookó a silk trap baited with a woman. He presumed, when he heard his enemies were upon him, I will go out as before. He did not know, however, that his strength had left him. I never want to preach Gods Word, unless I myself am once again, in awe of Gods Word. This takes time. It takes prayer, study, & meditation, upon which, [John Murray](#) [one of my favorite theologians]

once wrote, are visions of the mountains of God. I have to fight for these. I have to fight distractions & deterrents both within & outside of myself. It is a constant battle, even when my ministry & office are based at home. May He help me to proclaim the excellencies & perfections of Him Who called me, for Jesus glory alone. Amen.

I thank you for taking the time to read this. I pray it touched your soul.

Sincerely,

Michael & Kim

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\*[Michael is an ordained Elim Fellowship itinerant home 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 full-time. Since 2000, he & Kim have lived by faith, having no salary, retirement, or health insurance-yet this is their calling at this season of their lives. Michael preaches Gods Word & systematic theology, using both visual aids & drama, to all age groups either separately or combined, as the Lord opens doors. To help support this work, please make all tax-deductible gifts payable to: Elim Fellowship, 1703 Dalton Rd, Lima, NY 14485].

Ministry/events for OCTOBER & those not listed in last months newsletter:

9/20-Life Community Church, Newark, DE: local EMF pastors mtg.

9/23-Metro Alliance Church, Cleveland, OH: preached & drummed for 2 Sun. a.m. services

10/2/12-Petra Christian Fellowship, New Holland, PA: hnc board mtg.//Network pastors mtg.

10/16,23,24: My birthday, our 35<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary, & Kims birthday (respectively)

10/18/12-Brandywine Valley Baptist Church, Wilmington, DE: EMF pastors mtg.

10/26,27/12: Tel Hai Camp, Honey Brook, PA: ICs youth retreat: canceled & combined with another next month

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