

September 1, 2013



“THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS”

Dear **Friends & Family**,

(8/19) I returned home late this past Friday night from my 4th & final camp of the summer. This was our **Hopewell Kids’ Camp**, grades 2-5. It was my **50th** camp for the Hopewell Network & my **49th** at **Tel Hai Camp** [my **30th summer** overall in camp ministry]. The very first camp for Hopewell back in **1991** had to be conducted in Syria, VA [the only campground we could find so late in the season] as the network had lost the week of teen camp due to poor attendance the year before. I asked the camp administrator at the time, “If I promise by faith to fill teen camp by next summer may we have that week back?” He graciously consented. We’ve been there ever since. We had nearly **100 children** this past week. All three camps [Sr. Hi., Jr. Hi. & Kids] are special to me, but I’ve often said that if I had to choose only one, it’d be kids’ camp. Why? For many reasons actually. All three have basically the same messages & dramas. Yes, the children get the same sermons that the senior high campers get. And, they too respond to the preaching of God’s Word & the power & presence of His Spiritó like nothing I’ve seen on earth. However, unlike the Sr. & Jr. Hi. Camps, the children, in their morning chapels, get puppet shows, costumed characters, & Bible games. It is here where all of the stops come out. We play & laugh with the children becauseÖ well, because-we like to! One of the many reasons that many of the same staff come back to counsel [& for no well-deserved pay, I might add!] year after year, is that they get to become children again. The kids were visited by an

Italian-mobster-sounding little lamb named “**Vinny**”, a cantankerous mountain man called “**Frontier Fred**”, an absent-minded professor a.k.a. “**Dr. Beaker**”, a villainous pirate called, yup’, you guessed it-”**Pittsburgh**”, a puppet who was stranded on earth from outer space, a.k.a., “**Mr. E**” (“Mystery”), a TV news anchorman, a.k.a., “**Mike Rophone**”, & a telephone repair man, otherwise known as the “**Cellular Pun Man**” who reeked with horrible puns, & last, but not least, a real live “genie”, called “**Alabama Pajama**”. Now, when a friend of mine saw a picture of the genie I posted on **Facebook** while I was at camp, his comment was: “Ok-but weird”. I will grant him that. It was one of those “you had to be there” comic routines. But, if you were there, you would have been cracking up seeing it in context. I told our staff later that if one stands on the outside looking in re: what we do & how we do it in our strategy of ministering to kids, their impression *from a distance* would surely be, “Oh, this is all **kiddy-kiddy** stuff”, & walk away. And, *they would miss God*. Yes, we play with the kids because we like to play with the kids [you’ll never know how many times adults have said to me over the years as they’ve observed what we do with kids: “Why can’t we have a camp for *adults*?” But-there is another far more important reason why we relate with the children in this way. A former pastor/boss of mine when I was pastoring children told me that whenever possible, relationship should precede ministry. Hence, I strongly encourage our staff to love-on & play with the kids before we minister to them, & boy, do we minister to them!

“ADULT-SIZED DOCTRINE IN A KID-SIZED CAPSULE”



For decades now, I’ve preached to children in both manner & content basically the same way I do to adults, often with more results! This camp was no different. As with the previous two camps this summer,

they were taught re: **adoption** by God the Father from Eph. 1, the stark difference between the **1st & 2nd Comings** of Christ, & the rampancy & ravages of **idolatry**. In children?! Yes-in children. And, they responded. Night after the night the carpet up front in the chapel was covered with kids on their faces before the Lord. The Spirit of the Lord in that little chapel called **Hemlock Hall** was thick, deep, rich, & sweet. He came in such power because He first enabled the preachers to give **Christ-centered** & exalting messages. The Spirit of God *always* comes with His strong presence when the Lord Jesus Christ is the center of attention. O, help us, Lord! Anything & anyone else being the center of attention is sickening & slaps our God in the face!

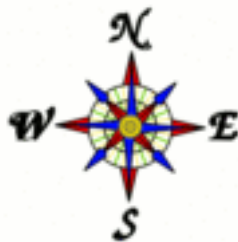


“THE LOWER THE AGE, THE HIGHER THE RISK”

The Lord Jesus Christ, Creator of Heaven & Earth, & **Hell** (!) absolutely terrified **demons**, just by walking into an area where the latter were, & that from a distance! These very powerful **evil entities** would BEG Him not to torment them [their ultimate fate in the **Lake of Fire**] & earnestly entreat Him for permission. And yet, the **demons’** “Worst Nightmare” was *adored by children*. A **single demon** could crush & destroy countless human children, but here they were, these precious little ones, while Jesus was on earth, in His arms. His disciples obviously didn’t know Him too well when they tried to keep kids from Him. After He had a child brought to Himself, He warned in the most solemn manner that if anyone stumbled one of these little ones who believed in Him, it would be better for that person if a **heavy millstone** [the one turned by a **donkey** at a mill] were tied around his neck, & that he be

cast into the depth of the sea. We know the deepest part of the sea is the *Marianna Trench in the Pacific Ocean*. It is **7 miles down!** *The Titanic* is only 2 & ½ miles down. O, what a sacred trust comes to us every year at camp in the form of little children! I feel this high responsibility for all three camps, but I feel it most acutely at kids camp. It is the most precious but also, because of this factor, the most *dangerous*. They're the most innocent [as far as outworked sin], the most vulnerable to being misled, the most undiscerning, the age group most devoid of wisdom, etc. Hence, **the punishment** is so much more severe if one causes them to stumble from believing in, following, & loving our Blessed Lord. The Scriptures only mention that specifically *children's* angels behold the face of the Father in Heaven [Mt. 18:10]. Yes-I understand that angels are sent to minister to *all* who will inherit salvation [Heb.2:14]. But nowhere else in the Bible is this description of angels given except in the context of *children*. Hence, in a very real way, children must be ministered to & handled with "white gloves". As with too many things re: God's Kingdom, they way things really are are actually the opposite of the status quo. Too often in churches children's ministries direly lack personnel, facilities, & attention/promotion from the leadership. Au contraire, you need to have your best people working with your children. Willie George, a.k.a., "Gospel Bill" once said many years ago, "If you can minister effectively to a child, adults are easy". I have found that to be so. May He help us.

"ENCOMPASSED ABOUT"



I recently had the honor of dedicating our newest grandson, a.k.a. "*Isaiah Fitzum Norman*", adopted from Ethiopia. As I pondered this sacred event, my spirit was very sobered by it. I have never felt the

intensity of burden re: dedicating a child before. I wished when doing so at church that a.m. that I had a big “compass” object lesson. There were four points on Isaiah’s compass of his life I prayed the Lord would impress upon himó that they would be guideposts throughout his life. For retention purposes, I tried to have them all begin with a “G”. #1. That Isaiah would live his life for the **G**lory of God. #2. The **G**ehenna of God: Jesus, Who created hell for **the devil & his angels**, also clearly said that the majority of the human race would be going there (Mt. 7:13). #3. **G**od’s Throne: one day Isaiah will stand before **the judgment seat** of Christ to give an account to Him re: everything he did while on earth. #4. The **G**ospel of God: that Isaiah would **G**o: the Gospel must be preached to **the whole world** before the end comes. I entreated the Lord in tears as I touched Isaiah that He would not allow the boy to waste his life. I related a quote by the ancient **Egyptian physician "Sinueh"**, who in the 1954 movie, "**The Egyptian**", wrote at the end of his life, "I am the poorest of men, because I have wasted my life". I shared with the congregation that anyone who does not live with these “**4G’s**” in mind indeed does so. I could not help but wonder if the above intensity was due to times he will grow up in in our rapidly deteriorating society. May the Lord continue to enable this grandfather of his to continue reaching it with His gospel. Amen.

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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 to speak of, or health insurance-yet this is their calling at this season of their lives. Michael preaches God’s 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], denoting it for the home-mis-sion work of Michael Robert Guertin.**



***Ministry/events for SEPTEMBER & those not listed in last month's newsletter: "*Caboose! on the Loose*"**:

Aug. 4: IC, Wilmington, DE: worship team: drummer

Aug. 6: Royers Ford, PA: hsc 2013 kids' camp directors' mtg.

Aug. 11: IC, Wilmington, DE: Isaiah Fitzsum Norman baby dedication

Aug. 18, 25; Sept. 1: IC, Wilmington, DE: Father's House Children's Church worship & testimony leader

Aug. 21, 28, Sept. 1: IC, Wilmington, DE: Tabernacle of David worship leader

Aug. 25: IC, Wilmington, DE: Warehouse youth group worship leader

Sept. 3: Petra Christian Fellowship, New Holland, PA: hsc board mtg.// network pastors' mtg.

Sept. 6-16: Bay Village, OH: visiting our oldest son & his family.

Sept. 19: Petra Christian Fellowship, New Holland, PA: "Pulse" young adults' group

Sept. 22: Reading, PA: Hope Of The Nations Church: Sun. a.m. service