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October 2024

“4th ANNUAL ‘TRIANGLE TRIP’ IS HISTORY”



Dear *Friends & Family*,

[9/27] About 10 days ago Kim & I returned home from our 4th annual “Triangle Trip”. I gave this yearly excursion that title years ago because we drive from **DE to AL to OH to DE** which encompasses a very massive “triangular” route which encompasses almost **2,600 miles** of driving in exactly 2 weeks. Why not fly? I enjoy driving, & when we flew to AL a couple of years ago for a granddaughter graduation it seems we spent nearly as much time waiting in airports! Why embark on this trip each year? Well, 2 of our 3 children live in those distant states, along with 9 of our 14 grandchildren! (1 is in Heaven). Hence, Kim & I consider it so very worth the time & expense it entails. Plus, we know sooner or later we won’t be able to make this trip so we want to continue going as long as possible; in fact, we are planning on doing it again this coming May as 2 of our other granddaughters are both graduating from high school then!

“MY TIME MACHINE DONS ANOTHER ‘PLATE’”



While in Alabama, I had the privilege & honor to minister the Word of God at one of my granddaughter’s high school **Fellowship of Christian Athletes’** early morning meeting. Abbi told me I had 7 minutes to do so as the group had very limited time before heading to their first class. The message I planned to bring could & has in the past taken much more time than that! Yet, I was so very grateful for the opportunity. I would be with the young, & I would be in a *public school* setting! I cannot recall the last time I had such an open door. I’m sure it’s been decades. Speaking of decades, for over 2 decades now my **Time Machine** on one side of it is “wallpapered” with license plates. This is not for decorative purposes. Instead, the plates indicate the states &/or countries I have ministered in. I had not added a new plate to it since 2015 when I ministered in Costa Rica. I was happy & grateful my son-in-law Nathan had a spare Alabama plate in his garage, which he happily bequeathed to “the cause”. 😊

"A HEART WITH FAT AROUND IT"



I have written before about the sad & tragic debacle I have witnessed for 50 years now among God's people, including myself. It is a spiritual malady, an often unseen & undetected heart condition that often slowly creeps up upon God's people, especially those engaged in areas of regular, routine service in Christian institutions. They may & often do include church staffs, worship teams, Christian schools, seminaries, & Bible schools. There is something about the nature of the human heart, that when it is around "the holy things" & in a Christian environment on a regular basis, that a sinister familiarity creeps up upon it. It is a very grievous thing to me, & also a terrifying one. In this case the old adage, "Familiarity breeds contempt" most certainly applies. Two prime examples from the Scriptures both involved relatively young people-**Nadab & Abihu** (Lev. 10:1,2), & **Hophni & Phineas** (I Sam. 2:12ff). All 4 of them were sons of a minister, & a very prominent & prestigious minister at that! They grew up in church. They basically *lived* in church. They both heard & saw the Word of God & the sacred things on a daily basis. Yet, these divine elements became routine, familiar, might I even say, "boring"? The fear of God had definitely "lifted" from these young men a long time prior to their premature deaths, via execution by the Lord of Hosts Himself. "Now the young men would not listen to their father's rebuke, because it was the will of the Lord to put them to death" (I Sam.2:25). Had these young men known what disastrous fate awaited them, they surely would have striven to keep a healthy & constant fear, honor, & reverence of the Lord. This they did not do. When it comes to the point that God Himself, either directly via fire from Heaven as in the case of Nadab & Abihu, or via secondary causes, vis, the Philistines, puts people to death, you can be sure it was a long time coming. How so? Because of Who He is. "The Lord, the Lord God, compassionate & gracious, *slow to anger*, & abounding in lovingkindness & truth..." (Ex. 34:6). Their blatant irreverent & disregard for the honor of the Lord surely was a slow process-a gradual, yet constant one. This is the spiritual fat that sinisterly slithers its way around the human heart. If it is not detected & slain, it can prove deadly. Symptoms of it are flippancy,

glibness, indifference, lack of response to God's Word (God holds in high esteem those who tremble at it. Isa.66:2), excessive levity, a lack of soberness when in the presence of God, etc. Very often, this is easily noticeable in large churches. Huge crowds (which can easily & often result in "crowd dynamics", which are regularly assumed to be visitations of God), lots of excitement, lots of money, lots of activity, lots of programs, etc. It is easy to equate "bigness" as a sign of God's favor & blessing. I have seen countless churches & ministries get "smug", arrogant, & falsely secure, assuming *God* has brought this expansion in size. Sadly, & way too often, it was not the Lord Who increased their numbers, but their "marketing" strategies, their catering & pandering to the lost (when biblically, church gatherings are primarily for the saints), their succumbing to worldly tactics & amusements to "bring people in". A pastor friend told me years ago re: this way too common tragic phenomenon in so many American churches, **"It is hard to examine oneself in the arena of 'success'"**. How very, very true this is. Hence, I felt to begin my message to the FCA students that morning with the above warning, but in a much more highly condensed way. I followed this with my **"Process of Illumination"** message, which challenges God's people to seek the illumination/understanding of the Scriptures via the Holy Spirit Who originally inspired the authors of the Sacred Text. Once He opens up the Scriptures to us, as the Lord Jesus did for the 2 disciples on the Emmaus Road after His resurrection, our hearts "burn within us" (Lk. 24:32). This "process" is what ensures that that sinister spiritual fat mentioned above does not wrap itself around our hearts, which, by the way, it is always striving to do! May He help us.

"STARING AT THE FLAME"



When we arrived in OH on the 2nd leg of our Triangle Trip, we had some very historical family meetings with our oldest son Matthew, his wife Devon, & their 5 children. The gatherings had to do with their major decision to switch Christian schools for 4 of their 5 kids. So, a couple of times while we were there, Matthew would call the family to gather on the backyard patio, which had a circle of lawn chairs around a stainless steel fire pit. After Scripture reading, being given response handouts for all of us to read & fill out later, prayer, & much discussion, the kids would one by one file out & go their separate ways. Matthew, Devon, Kim, & I remained & chatted some more. After some time elapsed, my mind wandered from the conversation & just stared at the flames of fire in the fire pit in front of me. I began to ponder & meditate on the so-hard-to-believe & conceive reality of **Hell, Gehenna, The Lake of Fire**. I thought to myself how excruciatingly painful it would be just to insert my hand into this flame for a few seconds. My mind & heart could not take in the following thought that there will be an unfathomable score of human souls who will spend eternity in this "eternal nightmare". **Dante** in his "Divine Comedy" said of Hell, "**Abandon hope, all you who enter here.**" I can barely type these thoughts now. My heart & soul are sinking as I do so. This, Beloved, is the fear of the Lord. It is pure. It is clean. It is sobering. It doesn't drive you away from God, but *toward* Him! THIS is one of the means He uses to keep that "heart fat" from engulfing your heart. And, if it is already present, to remove it. But my meditation didn't end there. I thought to myself, "O God, O God, how very, very holy You must be, that You must *burn forever* those who hate You, who hate all things righteous, who love & embrace sin & wickedness. We don't 'get' You, Lord. We just don't

'get' You." Actually, when you stumble at the reality & severity & eternity of Hell, you must rush to thoughts of the immensity, infinitude, blazing & blinding holiness, & depths of the love of God-even the death of His Son in place of sinners. Jesus was beaten, wounded, bruised, scourged, pierced, slapped, spat upon, despised, & rejected by men. Remember, Beloved, this was GOD they were doing this to! Yes-given the infinite magnificence of His Person & dignity, if it weren't created by the Lord Jesus Himself, I would say Hell isn't hot enough, or long enough, for those who hate Him. And yes, but for His great grace, there go I.

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: **"The severity of the punishment is directly proportionate to the magnificence of The One sinned against."** [M.R.G. 9/27/24]

"Caboose! On the Loose!"



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

Sept. 25: Converge Church, Moorestown, NJ: local area pastors mtg.

Sept. 29: (a.m.) Hopewell Church Telford: "Super Service" re: Kids Ministry: visitor

Sept. 29: (p.m.) Hopewell Community Church, Pottstown, PA: Via Dolorosa meeting

Sept. 30-Oct.1: Dove Rivers of Life Church, Strasburg, PA: Elim Fellowship regional

Oct. 5: Immanuel Church, Wilmington, DE: Sara Thompson memorial service

Oct. 8: Sight and Sound Theater, Strasburg, PA: "INSPIRE" event for ministry leaders

Oct. 10: Shady Maple, East Earl, PA: Hopewell Network leaders banquet/meeting

Oct. 13: Hopewell United Methodist Church, Port Deposit, MD: Sun. a.m. service

Oct. 22-27: Springfield/Herndon, VA: care for Kim's mother & Michael sibling reunion

Oct. 16, 23, 24: Michael's birthday, Michael & Kim's 47th anniversary, & Kim's birthday

***Caboose!* A Live-By-Faith Ministry**



*Michael is an ordained ***Elim Fellowship*** itinerant Stateside missionary & ***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 this link to give directly: <https://elimfellowship.org/missionary/michael-guerty-guertin> **Thank you!**

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