

Audio Sermons: <https://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/caboose-ministries/audiopodcast/id506049887mt=2>

YouTube Channel [for dramas, sermons, & puppet shows for kids]: Michael Robert Guertin

Website: [www.cabooseministries.org](http://www.cabooseministries.org) Facebook: "Michael Robert Guertin"

September 2024

"THE UNIQUENESS of hsc KIDS CAMP"



**Dear Friends & Family,**

[8/24] I returned home late last Friday night from my 3<sup>rd</sup> & final camp of the season, vis, hsc Kids Camp. It is my favorite of the 3 camps though I love them all & each is special in its own way. By far, Kids Camp entails the most work for me of the 3. How so? Unlike the 2 upper grade camps, in Kids camp we have **puppets, Bible games, costumed characters**, etc., which all involve my writing scripts for each, & usually, also involves my personal participation in them! In addition to script writing, I must amass &/or acquire the pertinent costumes, compile & edit the pertinent music, buy Bible game prizes (Kim always does this), write morning chapel agendas (I don't do this for the 2 upper camps) which are very detailed. Each day's agenda has 4 headings: **TIME, EVENT, PERSONNEL, & SOUND**. This informs those involved in that morning's chapel what we're doing, when it is happening & how much time it should take (roughly), who is doing it, & what music the soundman should play during said event. All of this involves consider-able labor but all of it is a labor of love. I try to make the Kids Camp morning chapels a "kiddy wonder-land". As always, *we want to play with them before we pray with them*. So, this year we had "**Captain Caboose!**" (yours truly), introduced by my **WCAB** (short for "CABoose!") news anchorman, "**Mike Raphone**" (me again). "CC" flies overhead to ensure the camp is safe. He makes a landing & comes into the chapel to check up on things. On another morning we had my trademark puppet "**Chip**" pop up & be his usual annoying self to the directors. He was interrupted by "**Darth Vader**"-yes, Darth Vader, who wanted to "take him out". When things looked bleak for the rascally rodent, **Darth Vader's Mother** came storming in to save the day. She called for him like **Auntie Em** called for **Dorothy** in **The Wizard of Oz**. However, instead of saying, "Dorotheeeeeeeeeee?!", Darth's mother cried out, "Dartheeeeeeeeeee!", of course to the famed villain's embarrassment! She grabbed him by the ear (in this case, by the corner of his helmet!) & escorted him out! Yes, folks-this is *Kids* camp! To be honest, I know the 2 upper camps would love seeing these skits too! On another morning, "**Chuck Dynasty**", my "Duck Dynasty" puppet, messed with one of our staff counselors who looked a little bit like him! Then, *he* was interrupted (Yes-a well-run a.m. children's chapel is stuffed with *interruptions!*) by a local mountain man, a.k.a., "**Frontier Fred**", who came barging in looking for vermin & also for a woman! Gratefully, the directors were able to get rid of these 2 rascals! On the next day, we had my robot "**M5**", i.e., "**The Master's Multi-Media Monitor Man**", come waddling in to help critique the popular current kids movie, "Inside Out II". He was escorted in by his sidekick "**Ray Gunne**". After M5 went on his merry way, we played the Bible game, "Ezekiel's Wheel". EW is a simplified version of "Wheel of Fortune". I made it out of paneling & an old wheelchair wheel many years ago. We couldn't afford "Vanna White" to host the game, so we used our very own "**Banana White**", appropriately dressed in, yup-you guessed it-a banana costume! Hence, all of this "marvelous mayhem" precedes worship-in-song & the preaching of the Word at Kids camp, unlike the 2 other camps.

**“BEWARE OF THE UNTRAINED EYE!”**



As I said above, all of this “wonderful wackiness” to the untrained eye of an onlooker, would seem light, flippant, kiddy-kiddy, etc. Nothing could be further from the truth. These children all week receive such heavy, weighted, doctrinal preaching re: Christ & Him crucified, including at the morning chapels. But, this camp *is Kids camp!* One thing I have striven to ensure at our camps is that they all are “Text-driven”, versus “emotionally-driven”, which, sadly, I’m afraid, too many other camps are. The other element I take great lengths to make sure is involved in our camps is that its environment is one where both campers & *staff* can feel safe & free to be *children!* Hence, the “Christian Chuck E. Cheese” atmosphere described above!

### "A SQUEEZED-OUT TOOTHPASTE TUBE"



Because Kids camp involves the above plus so much more, all I am in anointings, giftings, & personality come out in this ministry setting more than any other I have ever known. And, I have known numerous & various ministry settings over the decades! Packing, loading, driving, unloading, lifting, setting up, preaching, teaching, counseling, praying, puppeteering, acting, incessant talking with adults & children, with the latter group often involving highly emotional interaction, vis, teasing, joking, laughing, etc. all comprise my workload at camp. In addition to the usual high-level duties/regimen of Kids camp, I had an unexpected task come up at this one last week. Wednesday at all 3 camps is always my busiest day, as it entails my Bible study/ marking/quizzing class, my boys "**Purity Talk**" [Kids camp only-on my YouTube channel, entitled, "Cooties & Barbies" <https://youtu.be/wzZoOu3lav0>], & setting up for much of the afternoon for that evening's **Time Machine** drama & chapel, where I act & also preach. Despite being exhausted from this long day, getting to bed way past my usual bedtime when I'm at home (8:30), I still wake up (it's more like "pop-up"! ) at 4-something the next morning! This isn't my choice [& I miss our Wednesday morning staff devotions] but I consider it the Lord's "gift", as I MUST have the chapel torn down & packed up from the previous night before Thursday morning's chapel! So, while the rest of the camp is still in bed, I'm down at the chapel around 5 a.m. doing so. Again, this too, is a labor of love. This time in the very early morning on Thursday at each camp is also very special to me. At every camp, I ask the Lord while packing up if I can come back next year. I tell Him, "Lord? If You keep me healthy & keep the fire burning in me, I'll come." Well, this particular morning I had a dear friend/brother scheduled to preach for me. I

texted him that morning making sure all systems were “go”. I’m so glad I did so! He had forgotten to inform me he couldn’t make it due to an unforeseen emergency he was dealing with! A man he had been ministering to was “going to Heaven” that day. Of course, I understood. But, the morning chapel was rapidly approaching! I guess I was “it”! I texted my 2 “gophers” to set up my object lessons & a table a.s.a.p. So, despite running on fumes, I preached again the next morning, immediately after which I began tearing down more of the chapel. One sad but necessary aspect of our camps, &, especially at our Kids camp, is that we must start tearing down & packing up the camp *while it is still running!* If we don’t, a massive snowball effect occurs from which there is no recovery! Needless to say, I missed lunch again, but this is the nature of camp. By that time, I felt I had given all I had. I truly felt like a fully squeezed-out toothpaste tube! BUT-there was still so very much for me to do before camp closed on Friday evening.

### “AN ADDED UNSEEN ‘SURPRISE’”



In addition to the usual camp fatigue I encounter every year, at this particular camp it seemed *unusually severe*. I was drinking my usual morning coffee, taking an “Alert” pill, eating pieces of energy chocolate, & for the 1<sup>st</sup> time ever drinking hydrogen water. Nothing seemed to work. I’d either plop on my bed or the floor of my room when I could to “lay & pray”, just trying to get a few moments of respite & refreshment. It wasn’t until I arrived home that I learned that one of our staff tested positive for *Covid!* I recollected that I myself started feeling “symptoms” late Thursday afternoon of Kids camp. I was to attend one of our little boy camper’s baptisms that next Sunday morning. This little guy was really touched by the Lord at camp plus his Mom & Dad

were former kids in kids church with me decades ago & former campers, counselors, & camp worship leaders as well! I felt like I just had to be there! Well, to be safe, I took a Covid test, & voila'!, I was *positive!* Ugh! Argh! BUT-this did explain a lot!

### “THAT LATE-NIGHT PHONE CALL”



Tuesday night of camp, after I crawled into bed, I called Kim. My heart was very broken & troubled. The children had been hearing solid, biblical teaching. The Spirit of the Lord was present, but-something wasn't happening. I just knew it. I felt it. I felt as if I wanted to have a baby but the baby wouldn't come. Many of the children would come forward at night chapel & lay before the Lord. Yet-something wasn't happening. I felt so deeply that we needed a breakthrough-a spirit of repentance, of brokenness, of a heartfelt desperation for the Lord. I had planned all along, of course, to perform my *Time Machine* drama the next evening & preach its accompanying message, as I do at all 3 camps each year. However, while I lay there crying while trying to explain to Kim what I was feeling, while at the same time praying to the Lord, "Lord? We only have 2 nights left? Lord? This is *Kids* camp. Lord? It's only once a year, Lord. We've just got to have You move!", et al. I wondered if I should change my message. We gave it to the Lord.

**“THE NET, THE SICKLE, THE CROOK, & THE SWORD”**



Well, the time came for me to perform & to preach that next evening. The Sunday evening before, in my message to the camp staff to impart vision for the week, I had 4 object lessons hanging on our close to life-sized cross in front of the chapel: a **net, sickle, crook, & sword**. I told the staff we would be throwing out the net all week, to catch *children for the Kingdom!* If our cast was successful, we'd be harvesting them with our sickles. Then, for those who were already Jesus' sheep, we'd be shepherding them with our "crooks". Finally, if the first 3 tools were being used, the 4<sup>th</sup>, the sword, would definitely be used, as the evil one hates anyone who tries to rescue children-not to mention the children themselves! Well, unlike in the 2 upper camps, at Kids camp I began my message by going over to the cross, taking the net, & casting it toward the children, entreating them to get in it-that some of them were not in it. I held up my rubber heart with fat all around it, warning the children that this is what happens to *anyone* who hears the things of God repeatedly but rejects them-a spiritual "fat", a hardness, a dullness encases their heart. And, the most frightening thing about this spiritual malady is that they don't realize it is happening! My heart was broken for them. I preached my heart out (it was truly Jesus'

shepherding heart.). Here is the Sunday night message I preached to the camp staff, vis, *“Rescuing Children Before The Evil Days Come”* on my YouTube channel: <https://youtu.be/0tAqHBVgGJs>

### “SITTING ON A TABLE-WATCHING GOD MOVE”



Our Lord graciously gave this servant of His what He had birthed in my heart—a baby! When I called the children to respond to God’s invitation to become part of His Bride, for whom He laid down His life & purchased at the cost of His Own blood, many of the children came forward to “adore on the floor”. For the first time in the week, I truly sensed a move of the Lord, a release of His Spirit. For a very prolonged time the children either sat, knelt, or lay before the Lord, weeping, & praying for each other. I moved among them, praying for both boys & girls. This was the breakthrough I was longing & aching for. On the next night, after my brother & friend **Darryl Zimmerman** preached (a former camper whom I met when he was 12!), the children once again responded in a similar way. During the altar time this night, I went & sat on a small table up front to the side where the girls were. I just sat there watching them. Again, they were weeping, holding each other, & praying for each other. One girl was maneuvering among the others carrying a tissue box, asking who needed one. Many did. Some girls came up to me, weepy & broken, just wanting a hug from a “father figure”. And, right there in the middle of them on the floor was one of our beloved “Camp Moms”, **Sandy Shantz**. She was on her hands & knees trying to make her way around & through this vast “sea of cupcakes” in her attempts to minister to them. Precious! Just sitting there beholding the young melt in the presence of the Lord, I could think of nowhere else I’d rather be on Earth, nor nothing else I’d rather be doing. I even thought to myself, “If one of my assistant directors comes up to me re: ending the service, I’m going to cross my fingers like a crucifix to fend them off!” This time right now was too precious



& priceless. This is why we do camp. Period. “Lord? If You take me from this, please just take me Home”. In the light of all of this, I just wanted to share some online posts & comments I received both during & after camp, all to Jesus’ glory alone. Amen.

### “CAMP COMMENTS’ CORNER”



...so happy that you’re continuing to do Gods wonderful work with the camps! **I look back on those years as some of my fondest childhood memories.** Hope you guys have a great final camp in August! Stevie K. (former camper)

...I just wanna say thank you so, so much for everything you do at camp-all the effort & energy you put into it not only physically but also mentally & spiritually. I so grateful for how God has used you (& will continue to use you) & camp in so many lives including mine. You & **camp have played a huge part in my spiritual growth/journey!!** So, I just want to say thank you for your “Yes” to the Lord & surrendering to His plan for your life!! Love ya” Alivia (camper & counselor)

-**My girls have been counting down the days since last year’s camp was over.** Thank you so much for your passion & zeal to raise up the next generation. **My kids have been so impacted & changed by these camps.** Tahnya

-Always so thankful how much time, love, energy & prayer you put into each one of Hopewell Summer Camps! **It’s always the highlight of our year. My kids always come back home with greater insight about who God is & how deeply He longs for them.** You are truly His vessel & we all love you. Now... go take a nap Dana (former camper & counselor)

-Nick (her son, a former camper) has been talking to his wife about Jesus & reading the Bible with her. He tells her all about your lessons from camp with horses & **making you feel like you were there**. So, Praise the Lord and thank you for being so obedient to Lord”  
Sharon (former counselor)

-Hi Guerty!...I love everything you have done & put into the camps. Because **it changed my life forever & gave me a relationship with the lord that I will always cling to**. Maddie (former camper & counselor)

“As a former camper with kids who still benefit from your tireless outpouring of Jesus & your obedience to His call on your life...that’s an image I’ll never forget. [Your] truck packed after giving all to see **these kids get a taste of the Kingdom of Heaven! Miss those mountaintop moments as a kid & teen! Jesus never ceased to amaze & touch. Glimpses of glory & hugs from Abba that I’ll treasure all my life!** Thank you for being His hands & heart for youth! You’ve helped solidify core building blocks of my faith in Jesus & His sovereignty over all things!”  
Raven (former camper & mother of campers)

-Even as kids we noticed the level of detail & effort, thanks again Pastor Guerty for building such a special space for us to grow. Nathan (former camper)

-From one of our former campers/counselors re: Hemlock Hall: "**Heaven touches Earth in that room.**" Jon

-Dear Brother Guerty, I want to thank you for an amazing experience at camp. **It was such a magical time & I learned so much all week I was there. It really brought back my love for the Lord** & helped me mentally. Before I went to camp I was in a really rough place & was floating away from God. I was losing myself & my hope of getting closer to the Lord. I was struggling with my depression, anxiety, suicidal thoughts, & also self-worth & I was about to hit rock bottom again. But then I went to camp & seeing all the other kids having fun & enjoying themselves helped me. I made a lot of friends & loved listening in Chapel. **Chapel was something I looked forward to & it got me closer to the Lord than I have ever been before. The worship was fantastic & hearing all the kids singing & worshipping to the Lord brought happiness to my heart.** Now that I am home I am continuing to get closer to the Lord & getting better with my mental health. I have gotten so much better thanks to God. **I am so thankful for being able to experience this camp & can’t wait to go back next year!** Thank you for making such a great experience & I hope you have a wonderful rest of your summer. Much love,  
Eleanor

\*{This last camp memoir from a former camper from 2001 (who also counseled for many years) was recently sent to me by his mother, who found it while cleaning out his stuff. I typed it just as he wrote it. 😊)

Day 1

B.H. (his initials)

8/20/'01

"I'm in bed after a great, no, awesome experience at chapel. First, I was touched by God because of Micheal's message. Then, I was on my face crying for God to humble me. Finally, at the end of chapel, God told me a verse to open to. It had to do exactly what our chapel was on. I love camp so far."

*Sincerely,*

Michael



\* ***Caboose! Commentary Corner***: Our daughter Laura once said she'd love to have my old Bibles when I pass 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 Devil can't steal God's possessions (His sheep), but he can steal their affections."** [7/28/24]

**"Caboose! On the Loose!"**



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

**Aug. 26: Morgantown, PA: hsc post-camp season directors' mtg.**

**Sept. 3: hsc camp board mtg.: remotely**

**Sept.3-12: Daphne, AL: visiting daughter & family**

**Sept. 6: Daphne High School, Daphne, AL: teaching at high school Bible Club**

**Sept.12-19: Bay Village, OH: visiting oldest son & family**

**Sept. 22: Cornerstone Christian Church, Broomall, PA: Sun. a.m. family service**

**Sept. 28: Hopewell Church, Elverson, PA: 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary banquet: attendee**

**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 Guerty**" or you may click on this link to give directly: <https://elimfellowship.org/missionary/michael-guerty-guerty> **Thank you!**

**Michael Robert "Guerty" Guerty**

3 Windsor Road

Wilmington, DE 19809-2144

[www.cabooseministries.org](http://www.cabooseministries.org)

**YouTube:** Michael Robert Guerty

**FaceBook:** Michael Robert Guerty

[www.hopewellsummercamps.org](http://www.hopewellsummercamps.org)

