

The Clarion

of

Christ Ministerial Fellowship

-a non-denominational communion of ministries with the purpose of mutual encouragement, like minded fellowship and love toward one another.

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The Function and Calling of Christ Ministerial Fellowship

Bert Ghilardi

There is a new day for all Christ Ministerial Fellowship (CMF) brethren. The Lord is moving us all on from the past. I would like to use this opportunity to explain our message and some of the reasons why we have been called together as a ministerial fellowship.

The Message

We thank God for the message of maturity (Ephesians 4:11-13) and the message of His glorious Church (Ephesians 5:24-26) which gives us all fresh hope and possibilities for what God wants to bring the Church into both now and in the future. May we always be thankful for those spiritual fathers that spoke a present word to deliver us from religious confusion and hopeless goings and who placed us on a path of glory. So may the message of spiritual maturity and the glorious Church be heralded from the roof tops and heard by all those that find themselves in the valley of decision.

The Lord has dealt with the messengers of God that represent CMF that it is proper to redefine *God's way into* maturity and His path to God's glory. It is through the **person of Christ**. In 1 Corinthians 3:10-15 the writer states that no person will be able to stand in the day of the Lord that has not first made Christ the only foundation. This means the Lord will not allow in His Church a doctrine, or good message or a spiritual hero of the past to replace the **centrality of Christ**. 1 Corinthians 2:1-5 declares our message must also be **Christ and Him crucified**. Besides constantly preaching the eternal purposes of God, we must continually bring God's people back to Christ's work of the cross and the provision that is available to us at all times. If we do not preach the purpose of the cross with the work and provision of the cross we will produce a prideful and legalistic people that will fall short the mark. So may we as CMF preach the centrality of Christ and Christ crucified so that spiritual maturity can be realized.

In 1 Corinthians 1:9, 10 Paul the apostle encourages the Church to remain free of division and be perfectly joined together. Does this mean that we blindly accept all who come our way? In no way. We as CMF could never be joined to those who believe false doctrine or who condone unrepentant sin. We do however, respect the diversity of ministry and operations of the Holy Spirit among us however different from our own

(Continued from page 1)

way of ministering they would appear. We do not seek to use our personality or knowledge to force others into our mold. We are joined in the Spirit because we hold true to sound doctrine and we have the same love for the truth. We as brethren are called to bring the Gospel of the kingdom to all nations. To win souls is good and to bless the people in a material way is necessary. According to Matthew 24:11-14 the message we bring overseas must address spiritual conditions and help prepare the true church to endure to the end. Hopefully in the future, many others will hear God's call to bring His word abroad.

The Function

We enjoy our gathering together at the semi-annual retreats but CMF is meant to be much more than a couple of gatherings year and then we all go our own way. People have asked over the years if CMF can be a spiritual covering to God's churches. We know in religious systems the members are required to adhere to doctrines, and creeds, and render unwavering obedi-

The enemy of our souls is not picky about the food he eats. He can devour a solitary sheep or a loner shepherd.

ence to people that have the titles of "Apostle", "Bishop" or even "Doctor". In these circles politics and strong-arm tactics are used to shepherd God's people. We as CMF believe in the autonomy of the local church and are willing to be advisors and a source of fellowship for those that feel they stand alone. Often in the past in our churches and at CMF we have seen that when a corrective word is given many leave the ranks of the Lord. May we be like Peter who said, "Where can we go? Only you have the words of eternal life." The enemy of our souls is not picky about the food he eats. He can devour a solitary sheep or a loner shepherd. May we even receive the word of admonishment and warning from the heart of a friend who is joined to us and is looking out for our personal welfare and the testimony of the Lord.

CMF offers 2 ministers/workers conferences a year plus one women's retreat and one men's retreat per year for mutual comfort, edification and accountability. It is up to the members of CMF to utilize the full function of our group. Through these gatherings we can begin relationships. After these gatherings are over and we go home we can foster these relationships through diligent communication and effort made to visit and host our new friends. It takes love and trust and lots of effort to foster a relationship to the point where spiritual accountability can be achieved. Accountability cannot be forced, but it must be encouraged. When is the last time we called somebody for encouragement or godly advice? Proverbs 11:14 and Proverbs 24:6 says that there is safety in a multitude of counsellors. Sometimes even pastors feel they should go to various people until they get a word that pampers them and gives them what they want to hear. David went to three trusted men for counsel and those three he knew would give him a pure word and in some cases correction. David was clearly a prophet. He surrounded himself by men who were of his same calling and stature so that he would receive their wisdom and impartation. His ministry was birthed and nurtured by Samuel, Gad and Nathan.

Brethren, individually and corporately we need to be open to receive God's word through his messengers. Many times over the years we have had brethren leave our midst without being blessed in their going and sent out. This attitude exposes a false joining based on false motives. At times as God's shepherds or as God's sheep we get an inkling to look for greener pastures and we take a new direction for our lives and ministry. It would be humility and proper submission to have our direction confirmed by brethren. There are times in our lives when we have been hurt by people and in some cases by shepherds. The enemy would love us to isolate ourselves because of these hurts from the right brethren that could help us stay on the straight and narrow.

Besides the message of maturity and overseas missions, we at CMF strongly see the importance of being rightly joined to the local Church. In the local church we learn healthy submission to God's government by submitting our lives to godly authority. We learn in a practical way to be fitted in with others and work out our differences to the glory of God. All five ministry offices are called to be shepherds to God's people. How can we be called shepherds or ministers if we ourselves are not part of a local church? In Acts 1:8 and Acts 13:1-4 Jerusalem and Antioch were the sending bodies for the world-wide church. I know the Lord wants to move us from a retreat mentality to an apostolic network where many brethren can be covered and be properly inter-related to the establishing of His Kingdom purpose. May we make every effort in these dark and perilous times to be more fully joined to the people with whom the Lord has called us.Ω

His Habitation

By Sergio Valori

"Behold the tabernacle of God is with men and he will dwell with them, and they shall be His people and God Himself shall be with them and be their God." Revelation 21:3

The Bride is to be the habitation of God in fullness. God, who is Spirit, has ever desired to find expression in a many membered Body. First, the charge was given to Adam and Eve to multiply and replenish the earth. Had they not sinned, they could have become a family reflecting the image of God. Thus, the picture concerning God's purpose in creation is not that of two people caring for a garden, but a vast family, populating the earth and giving expression to all that God is.

In his selection of Abraham, God revealed He would make him a great nation that would bless the ends of the earth. Israel, therefore, was given opportunity to become God's vehicle of expression. But, only temporarily, and that in a natural way, did Israel become the instrument God wanted. As we fleetingly pursue the historical record, we find the same purpose being passed on to the church. The Apostle Paul, in his excitement over God's new man, the church declares:

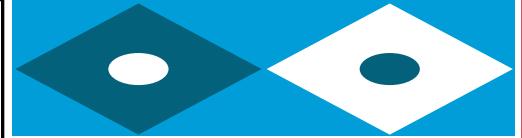
"To the intent that now unto principalities and powers in heavenly places might be (made) know by the church the manifold wisdom of God."
Ephesians 3:10

And again in Ephesians 3:21:

"Unto Him be glory in (though) the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end."

God's purpose has always been that the glory of the Lord fill the earth as the waters cover the sea. And this glory will not come as a cloud or blanket out of heaven. It will come through a people that have been made in the likeness of Christ. In spite of all the man-made counterfeits in the religious world today, we declare there **will** emerge a Church that will qualify as His habitation and be an expression of His glory!

Now God is very particular as to where He dwells. His dwelling place must be a proper habitation. He demands holiness, righteousness and purity. He will not dwell in an unclean vessel nor with unclean spirits. The temple of God must be suitable and solely for Him. This the Bride must be cleansed and purified to become a Holy City. It is spoken of her: *"And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie..." Revelation 21:27.* even in the time of type and shadow, God made it clear that when His habitation became defiled, He would leave it: *"For the Lord thy God walketh in the midst of the camp, to deliver thee, and to give up thine enemies before thee; therefore shall the camp be holy; that He see no unclean thing in thee." Deuteronomy 23:14.* When the temple of God had become utterly filthy with countless abominable things, He caused Ezekiel to view it and said: *"Son of man, seest thou what they do? Even the great abominations that the house of Israel committeth here, that I should go far off from my sanctuary?" Ezekiel 8:6.* The narrative in the book of Ezekiel gives us a sad picture of the gradual departure of God's glory from His sanctuary.



Men's Retreat

Fri., March 31– Sat., April 1
Lighthouse Fellowship
West Pittston, PA

The cost is \$20. For more information call Shane Nichols 607 348-6381

The CMF Gathering

Wed., Apr. 26–Fri., Apr. 28

Tuscarora Inn & Conference Center, Mt. Bethel, PA. The registration deadline is April 6.

For more information call Mark Waters
570-888-1055

Pastors and workers are welcome.

Women's Retreat

Fri., June 2—Sat., June 3

At Trinity Memorial Church,
44 Main St., Binghamton, NY. Please,
register by May 15th. The cost is \$30.

For information call Arlene Ghilardi
607 754-3709.

Visit

www.christianmaturity.com

We just received word from our hosting company and hope to be live in the next couple of weeks. Thank you for your patience. Meanwhile if you need information don't hesitate to call Bert Ghilardi at (607) 754-3709, or email Mark Waters at CMF7001@gmail.com

by mail write:

Christ Ministerial Fellowship

c/o Pastor Mark Waters

25 Warren Street

Sayre PA 18840-2925

God's standards remain the same. He will not tolerate defilement in His Church habitation. Those who practice sin habitually—as referred to in 1 John 3:9—will not qualify as members of the Bride. Some are bound by carnal and unclean habits and give little or no thought to becoming pure and holy vessels fit for the Lord to dwell in. Let us note the strong indictment God pronounces against those who defile the temple of God: *"If any man defile the temple of God him shall God destroy (bring to ruin—Knox) for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."* 1 Corinthians 3:17. In Matthew 13:36-43 we find a reference to a work I believe God is performing even now, the removal of tares from the wheat. In this awesome operation of the Spirit, God will "...gather out of His kingdom all things that offend and them that do iniquity..." His objective, as seen in verse 43, is an outshining of His glory from His Kingdom! Beloved, the Bride will not be involved in any unclean thing, no matter how gratifying. She will be careful to keep herself a virgin, untouched and undefiled by flesh or spirit. Many voices cry out for revival today. Oh, indeed may there be revival, a restoration of holiness!

HAVING HIS GLORY

*"And he...showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem descending out of heaven from God, **having the glory of God**, and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like **jasper stone**, clear as crystal..." Revelation 21:10,11 "And he that sat was to look upon like a **jasper stone**..." Rev. 4:3*

When we consider the above passages together, we get a clear insight into what God will produce in His Bride, the true Church. In Revelation 4:3, the one who occupies the heavenly throne is the Lord Jesus Christ, the Bridegroom, and his appearance is likened unto a **jasper stone**. Then in Revelation 21:11, the glory of the Bride, the Lamb's wife, is also described as being like a **jasper stone** identically the same as the glory of the Bridegroom! O, beloved people of God, may we see what God is after! He is after a church which will be holy as He is holy and pure as He is pure! No compromises, no lowering of any standards! In her will be found no blemishes! In fact, the phrase 'without blemish' is used only twice in the entire New Testament. Once it is used of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Peter 1:19) and once it is used of the Bride (Ephesians 5:27). Again we see that the condition of the Bride will be comparable to that of the Bridegroom! **She will be like Him!** Isn't that what this so great salvation is all about? To be like Him? When we see the magnitude and awesomeness of God's work, we could be overwhelmed and draw back in unbelief. But may we be encouraged! We are abiding within the context of His word and we are trusting fully in His ability to do it! Let us not attempt to reason how we can measure up to such a high calling, but in faith, like Mary the virgin, we say, *"Be it unto me according to thy word."* Luke 1:38

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PUTTING ON THE GLORY

Putting on the glory of Christ is at the very heart and core of the working of the New Covenant in Christ. We find in 2 Corinthians 3 that both the Old and New Covenants came with glory, but that the glory of the New Covenant far excels. (See 2 Corinthians 3:7-11) The glory of the New Covenant is found in Christ, the glorified and anointed one, He who is the *'brightness of His glory and the express image of His person.'* (Hebrews 1:3) The Holy Spirit's ministration of the New Covenant is summarized in 2 Corinthians 3:18: *"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord."* Also, a marvelous verse confirming this ministry is found in 2 Cor. 4:6: *"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."* And again in Heb. 10:16: *"This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts and in their minds will I write them."* Taking on the glory! First of all, what is the glory? It is nothing short of **the sum-total of all the moral and spiritual virtues and divine attributes found in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ!** What words can describe it? Wonderful, marvelous, awesome? Yes, but also far more than that! Far beyond what any words can describe. Think of it, that wretched sinners filled with hate, lust, envy, covetousness, and all kinds of corruption can be saved and take on His holiness, righteousness and all the attributes of His divine nature!

Now let us explore further this work of putting on Christ, or the glory of Christ. It must be fully and purely the work of the Holy Spirit. It occurs only when we are operating in the realm of revelation. The speaker must speak in and by the spirit of revelation and the hearer must receive by revelation. Or, if one is reading or meditating, he will experience a sovereign impartation by the Spirit apart from the natural processes of reasoning and deduction. He will suddenly *'see something'*! And in this seeing

is conveyed to the (human) spirit something of the essence of the glory of Christ. This is the reason why Paul prayed that we might receive *‘the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him’* (Eph. 1:17) Only that which is imparted by revelation can carry the substance of the glory of Christ. The impartation of head knowledge or the dead letter will not produce it. Putting on the glory will be a transaction from the Holy Spirit to the human spirit, not from the natural mind to the natural mind. **The human spirit, not the mind or soul, is the receiver of all spiritual things.** When God deposits His life in us, it is deposited into our spirit. From the spirit, then, are the soul and the body gradually impacted and converted (saved). The natural man no matter how intelligent, cannot receive the things of God. Since the things of God are spiritually discerned, they are but foolishness to him. (See 1 Cor. 2:14).



It is also in this context that we can better understand Jesus' statement to Peter, *“...upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it”* Matthew 16:18. Peter had become by virtue of the revelation he received from the Father. And it is always with such 'living stones' that the true church is built. All such individuals will have touched and appropriated something of the glory of Christ into their beings. At the time of completion, when the Holy City will be ready for the earth. It is these who will be referred to as the Bride, the Lamb's wife, having the glory of God!Ω

This article is excerpted from Sergio Valori's book "The Glorious Bride". Our brother and founder of CMF passed from this life into the Lord's presence June of 2015. We were blessed to have been tutored by him and to receive an impartation of the glory of God that he encountered on many occasions during his earthly pilgrimage.

Something Brand New

By Clayton Weller

I found great joy being a follower of Jesus, to spend time in His presence and worship with the saints. I have also found much satisfaction in considering the events in Jesus' life as described in the Gospels; His mighty deeds, words and accomplishments!

Many modern Christians have a problem with God which could be summarized by this statement: "The old guy retired, his son took over and everything is so much better." This misunderstanding of God can be directly attributed to a lack of knowledge of the Old Testament. People do not know the scriptures and in many places they are not proclaimed and taught as they should be.

Biblical narrative paints a picture, allowing us to fill out the scene and become witnesses of the events. Recently, on a Wednesday night, I revisited the early part of Mark's Gospel, and took great pleasure filling out the events. My hope is that you too will find these observations enjoyable.

In Mark's Gospel I found the fulfilment of the second exodus promise described by Isaiah. Jesus is not the brand new replacement God of Marcionism or the lesser, inferior God of Arianism. Jesus is the, "Behold your God" God of Isaiah 40:9. In Mark, YHWH has arrived on the scene just as promised in Isaiah.

Even more, I see Jesus doing very God like deeds. He confronts and defeats satan in the wilderness. There is no record of satan personally confronting Jesus again. Instead he found others to do his wicked works for him. Returning to Galilee Jesus enforces this victory by driving out the unclean spirits, healing the sick and forgiving sins. All of which are signs that God was truly in the midst.

All of this action caught the attention of the religious authorities and it appears that a delegation of Pharisees were dispatched to check things out. Arriving on the scene they find Jesus- the life of the party! Please excuse my play on words, but He really was the life of the celebration in Levi's house. The centre of attention, sinners and tax collectors (perhaps even a gentile) were drawn to Him, enjoyed His company and even became His followers! Forgiveness, acceptance and inclusion have a way of melting even the hardest of hearts.

Questioned about His contact with such unclean people, Jesus responds in a very God-like way that His mission is for those who truly want and need Him, the admitted sinners, lost and separated from God, and not for the presumed righteous who see no need for help.

All of this activity leads to the portion I am really interested in. Jesus, why aren't you fasting? People had taken note that Jesus and his disciples were not fasting. The Pharisees were fasting and from the scriptures we understand that it was their practice to fast twice each week (Luke 18:12). John's disciples were fasting, probably for his deliverance from prison and in expectation of the climatic conclusion he had announced. They were preparing their hearts for the one coming! (cont'd on page 9)



Clayton & Judy Weller (outside)
with Lou & Theresa Pressman

Ezra, An Instrument of Divine Recovery

by Dan Beaulieu

My church experience was imposed upon me as a child. My view of God and His church was formed by those who raised me. The traditions passed from one generation to another became mine and I believed them as truth. So it was in Jerusalem for every Jewish child. The traditions of their forefathers became their belief system. Temple life had its “ups” and “downs” according to the Kings and Priests who were in office at the time. We discover in the reign of young Josiah that something was missing in the way they worshiped God. In the eighteenth year of his reign, he set his heart to repair the House of the Lord His God and restore worship. In the process, Hilkiah the High Priest uncovered the Book of the Law of the Lord given by Moses. Through the years of their “traditional” worship, the Torah (Pentateuch) was misplaced. The written word of God (the “pattern” given by God) was forgotten and a great mixture of foreign gods entered into their tradition. Enter the Prophets. The spoken word of God confronted their form of worship and told them the truth. In spite of what the prophets said, the leaders in the Temple had a security that as long as they identified with the Temple that they were in good standing with God... They were wrong! Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the Temple and brought the Jewish community into Babylon, separated from their land and heritage. I can only imagine the process of disillusionment, devastation and depression they experienced. It is truly a sobering day when our religious experience confronts the truth...especially when we’ve been doing it wrong for so long.

The prophetic voices of Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel gave the hope that Israel would return to their homeland and be restored. The decree of the Persian king, Cyrus, began the process of some key leaders that would rebuild what was destroyed. Certainly, the impact that Zerubbabel and Joshua had to rebuild the Temple and restore worship in Israel was great but the mixture and influence of the inhabitants of the land infiltrated the leadership once again. Enter Ezra. Ezra was the grandson of Hilkiah (the High Priest who discovered the “book” during the reign of Josiah), born in captivity,

raised under the influence of Baruch (Jeremiah’s scribe) in Babylon and restored the heritage of the “Word of the Law” in captivity. He was responsible for establishing synagogues in the midst of a foreign land and culture. With the blessing of King Artaxerxes, he returned to the homeland to do what he did best...declare the Word of the Lord.

In Nehemiah 8:1-12, there is a scene that moves my heart deeply. V3- “Then he (Ezra) read from it (the book) in the open square that was in front of the Water Gate from morning until midday (6 hours) before the men and women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law.” V5 – “And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people... and when he opened it all the people stood up.” As Ezra read, there was a group of scribes to the right and left of Ezra who helped the people to understand the Law; “So they read distinctly from the book of the Law of God... and helped them to understand the reading.” (vv 7-8) According to v 9, the response to the reading of the Law is that everyone started weeping. Ezra responded, “This day is holy to the Lord your God; do not mourn or weep.” “Do not sorrow, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.” I have always interpreted “the joy of the Lord” as something that I could possess but in this context I get a sense that it is the joy that the Lord has when his people are responding to His Word. Verse 12 is the desire of my heart whenever I preach. “And all the people went their way to eat and drink, to send portions and rejoice greatly, because **they understood the words that were declared to them.**”

I loved my Bible School experience. I met my God profoundly through visitation and prophetic revelation. His awesome Presence, the message of overcoming with a strong emphasis on the “manifestation of the sons of God” and a worship that would leave you built up and awestruck at the same time literally changed my life. I, like Peter, would have liked to have built a tab-

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ernacle and stay in that for the rest of my life. After my Bible School years, I entered another school... "The School of Hard Knocks". I went from Zion to Babylon in one year. Due to my experience of living in a foreign land and a culture that was diametrically opposed to everything that I thought was the "norm" of being "in Christ" (at the Bible School), disillusionment, devastation and depression set in. Enter the ministry of Ezra. I found myself really getting into the Book more than looking for a new experience that would sustain me. I am truly thankful for that season in my life. It was there that I discovered my call as a pastor. One who would "sit where people sat" and give encouragement that came from truly understanding the word as opposed to just giving "pat answers".

After thirty five years of pastoral ministry, I have discovered something about the Church. The Church (ekklesia - the called out ones) was designed by God to be a visible expression of the invisible God. This expression comes forth from being "in Christ" and Him "in us". The life of the Cross becomes the way we live, the love for His Word makes us wise, and the empowering of the Holy Spirit reveals our inheritance.

There is a quote that has made its way into my journal: "Ninety five percent of today's church activities would continue if the Holy Spirit were removed from us. In the early Church, ninety five percent of all her activities would have stopped if the Holy Spirit were removed." Could that be true? I think church history has revealed time and time again that not only is it possible but it seems like the Lord is on the outside knocking, looking to be a part of what is going on within for centuries.

When the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, He came to His own. He saw how His own worshiped. Like the prophets of old He confronted their definition of worship with the truth. Tables were turned over, self-righteousness and hypocrisy were exposed, and the authority of God's word was manifested, exposing the emptiness of their form.

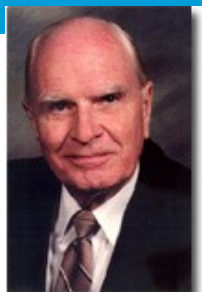
Our church has been doing a study on the Book of Acts for the past few months. The church is being redefined as I walk with Paul through his missionary journeys. I see a church that is different from the one I see today.

Oh, may the heart of Ezra arise in the church. Please read Hebrews 4:12-13 and Psalm 119 thoroughly and may our lives be according to His word.Ω

Dan and his wife Joan live in Torrington, CT and pastor Fellowship of Believers for the last ten years.



A TRIBUTE TO A SPIRITUAL FATHER



It was with sadness that I discovered recently that DeVern Fromke passed on to be with the Lord October of 2016. DeVern Fromke was a seasoned Bible teacher that authored spiritual masterpieces such as The Ultimate Intention, Unto Full Stature, and No Other Foundation. DeVern Fromke was a close friend and advisor to Pastor Sergio Valori, the founder of CMF. Bro. Fromke was mentored by T. Austin-Sparks and traveled in ministry with Stephen Kaung who was disciplined and trained by Watchman Nee. I sat under Bro. Fromke's ministry a few times and my life was greatly impacted by the humility and character of Christ in this vessel. In a season of great trial he counselled me and listened to me privately for 2 hours. I will not easily forget him for he spoke into my life. Bert Ghilardi

"DeVern graduated from Seattle Pacific College and served in the ministry for 70 years. He traveled extensively as a teacher and author. His life work was God-centered and people focused. He was well loved and will be missed by many." <http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/indystar/obituary.aspx?n=devern-frederick-fromke&pid=182336168>



Divine Connections

Rodger Smeall

Dear friends in Christ,

Eighteen years ago we moved to a river town that sits alongside the Delaware River. The move was not arduous or long but it was to be one of the most challenging times of our lives. By our lives I mean the lives of Gayle, my faithful loving wife, and I. No matter the situation, God equips those He calls and goes before us making divine connections. The eternal outcome of His work is in His hands. He alone is worthy of all praise and glory. Well, last Friday I had a divine connection while having breakfast at a local diner with my friend Charley. We call the diner our new home because it is where the Holy Spirit has placed us as his ambassadors. How do we know this? Well the gospel has become the central message of our communications with waitresses and customers alike. Talking about Jesus doesn't just happen it is orchestrated by our God for the future growth of His kingdom. It would be an unusual day if we failed to talk about Jesus to a waitress or customer. Jesus is a very attractive topic and people want to believe. I find that folks have many personal heart felt needs and they don't know how to express them or who to ask for help. For instance, one waitress asked for prayer for her sick pet on another occasion she wondered how we felt about the new "Shack" film. Why do they come to God's children with these questions? I think it is because God draws them. He knows how to build confidence in the heart of the saved and unsaved alike. People have tried so many ways that never seem to fulfill the offered promise of hope and healing. On the other hand, Jesus never fails. I consider the needs/questions of others as open doors to their heart. It takes but a moment to listen, pray, and respond in an encouraging way. We are always blessed by the light that shines out of the former darkness when the Spirit of God has opened the eyes that were at one time unable to see.

This introduction is by way of saying that we need to be ready to share the gospel whenever and wherever God directs us. He is preparing the heart of the hearer to receive the peace that transcends all understanding. [Read Luke 10] Part of Jesus' orders to his disciples in Luke 10:5-7 says this; "When you enter a house, first say, "Peace to this house". If a man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; if not it will return to you. Stay in that house, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house." NIV 1984.

I don't believe that Jesus meant to go to a house and say only the word, Peace. I think a conversation would have begun in the town center; something like this: **Hi! Where are you from?** We are about our Master's business and we are going ahead of him to Jerusalem. **Why are you here?** He sent us to this specific village to tell everyone that the kingdom of God is near. **Who is your Master?** His name is Jesus, and he is the Son of God. Perhaps you have heard of his many healings and wonderful authoritative messages. The entire region is enamored with him. They have never heard such a great teacher. **You say He sent you here. But what do you yourselves have to say about this man of God?** We have seen the healings with our own eyes. He has raised the dead, healed the sick, and his teachings are compassionate and true. **So, you believe, then?** Yes, we are convinced that He is the One sent to be Messiah. May we come in for a short visit? It has been a long day and we haven't stopped anywhere to refresh ourselves or to talk with anyone else before we arrived at your village.

PRAYER REQUESTS

Physical Needs:

- ◆ Joseph and Gloria Nieves
- ◆ Steve Wilber
- ◆ Baby Bonnie: granddaughter of Jim and Joann Laws
- ◆ Baby Charlie: grandson of Dan and Joan Beaulieu

Mission Trips:

Missionaries: Bert and Arlene Ghilardi

Cali, Colombia: April 4– April 18

Pray for the pastors and people of:

- Agape Mission Church; Co-pastors Juvenal and Celeny
- Transforming The World Church- Co-pastors Sergio, Nayibe and Youth Pastor, Maria Paula
- El Camino Church- Co-Pastors Jaime and Tatiana

At this point they all understood that something very special was going on. They spoke peace into the man's heart and he reciprocated with a peace filled welcome to his home, his family, and his hospitality. Q & A is a good method to share the gospel.

Is this an unusual passage of scripture? I don't think so because with just a short search I found another similar divine connection in Acts 8. This is the story of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch. Philip became an ambassador for Christ under the power and direction of the Holy Spirit. Just like we are today. The Ethiopian was a very influential person that oversaw the financial resources of his Queen, Candice. He had been in Jerusalem to worship and was on His return home. He was reading a passage out of **Isaiah 53:7-8**.

These verses address the injustices placed upon the Messiah. He was oppressed and afflicted but did not complain. His life was taken from him because of the sin of Israel and all other people. He himself had not been violent nor was he deceitful.
(My words not direct scripture quote.)

There is no doubt that these verses make clear that the accuser not the accused were performing an injustice and that the Christ/ Messiah was paying the price.

The eunuch had a question just like our waitress. **“How can I understand this unless someone explains it to me?” Acts 8:31** Now this is not the same question that our waitress asked but a question that required a spiritual answer that could not be answered along the lines of human logic. The answer had to be brought under the lamp of the Spirit to be understood. Please look at these parallels of divine connections: The Holy Spirit directed the meeting. The people had questions in their hearts and needed answers. Someone was there to help them to understand. The question began with a need for understanding and the answer was Jesus Christ: His sinless life, crucifixion, burial, resurrection, and ascension and second coming. **Acts 8: 30-40.** Now our waitress did not get baptized but the process of connection and spiritual wisdom has begun. The Holy Spirit will lead each of us on a personal journey towards the salvation of our souls. While the beginning may be a question that seems irrelevant to us it is never irrelevant to the one that has the question. Our answer may not be a direct scriptural quote but it will be used by God to help the enquirer along his spiritual path to Christ.

John 6:28-29 Jesus said in response to the question, **“What must we do to do the works God requires? The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.”** Really, there isn’t a better person to answer questions than the one that has a personal testimony concerning Christ’s life in them. Don’t be fearful about the questions people will ask. Their questions always have an answer that is rooted in the heart of God. His children are cleaving to that heart and they know that heart. Trust Him to bless you with wisdom, compassion, and courage on the that day when the question is asked. Fear not for I am with you always!Ω

Rodger Smeall – Pastor, Legacy Ministries – Easton, PA

The past 33 years have been full of opportunity to build and strengthen the body of Christ. Rodger studied under the Pastoral Study Program of the C&MA. He worked as a sale manager for Reagent Chemical while planting a church work in Tecumseh Ok .and then helping another church body grow in Oklahoma City OK. Upon moving back to N.J. Rodger and Gayle assisted other pastors in re-growing a local N.J. work. Most recently they planted an inner city ministry in PA.

The CMF Clarion

The Clarion will be published on line on a quarterly basis. Articles will be solicited by the editors and selected among authors of public domain. It is primarily a vehicle of expression for the members of Christ Ministerial Fellowship.

Prayer requests, photographs, and announcements may be sent in no later than July 5th for the next edition, to:
aghilardi@stny.rr.com

Blessings upon all who read.

(continued from page 5)

It is interesting that despite this warning, the 3rd century church chose to pursue this rigorous, ascetic lifestyle of abstinence from the world in the hope of greater spiritual enlightenment. My heroes of the Irish church purposely moved to the most inhospitable places and lived a life of almost continuous fasting for that purpose.

Jesus responds to the peoples’ question with one of His own. How can the guests of the bridegroom fast while He is with them? They cannot so long as they have Him with them. Without stating the reality openly, Jesus has identified Himself as God, the bridegroom of Isaiah 62:5. Like a figure of speech, Jesus is saying that God is here without saying it clearly enough to cause a scene. There would be time for that later.

Keeping this in mind, what follows makes perfect sense. It is not fasting Jesus is interested in, it is renewal. No one, including God, tries to sew a tear with a new patch. Jesus has come not to patch things up. He has something brand new in mind that cannot be contained within the old system; like old wine skins which cannot contain new wine. No, to contain the wonder of God’s Spirit, He came to make a brand new people . . . the blood bought, the Church, the redeemed! I think I am going to enjoy working through Mark!Ω

Clayton, along with his wife Judy and their family have been members and supportive ministry in Durham Full Gospel Church, Whitby, Ontario, Canada for 34 years. They have been in fellowship with CMF for the last 7 years.