

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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How are the brethren in
Colombia?
Lou Pressman & Ric Vargas

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The Gospel Trumpet - Part 1 Mark Waters

Joel 1:1; 2:1,2,10. The prophet Joel comes with God's word to His people. It is a word that is described here as a trumpet blast. It is an alarm and it is directed toward Zion, the people of Judah. Judah represents God's kingdom people, the royal seed, a people destined for the throne. They are the people of His high calling. God's highest purpose for man is bound up with His Son and this place called Zion. (Rev.14:1) God is calling a people, into union with His Son and His throne. As Zion, we are His habitation from which He rules in creation.

What a house this is!

In Joel, an alarm is being sounded. It's not to everyone. God is speaking to Zion. What is He saying there? Why a trumpet? What is so urgent? What is it that Zion so desperately needs to hear? Joel is not merely a book about a revival that is coming. There is something deeper going on here than just getting from God a lesson in "Revival 101."

Sometimes you will hear a preacher use the book of Joel to speak about the national crisis our own country is currently in. There may be an application there, but that is not really what Joel is speaking to. There is a greater crisis going on than what we see in the U.S., as urgent and critical as things are here! We don't minimize the crisis our nation faces right now. It is very serious, but there is a greater crisis going on right now than the one we face in the U.S. **The national crisis Joel brings to our view is one that is taking place among the people of God. All is not well in Zion!**

Zion, God's cherished city, lays in utter ruin. There is something very precious to God that has been lost. If you want to see what Zion means to God, read again Jeremiah's "The Lamentations." In that book, God is seen weeping over His loss of Zion. Zion is gone, and God is weeping over it. The people called to the throne are in view here, and look at the state they are in! They are in terrible crisis! **The crisis in the land is not about what man has lost so much as it is that God has lost something very vital and precious to Himself!** Note in **Joel 1:8,9** that he calls our attention to something God is no longer getting and Joel wants us to weep for its recovery, that God can find His satisfaction in His people again. **There has been a massive invasion in the land and everything is gone.** This whole place that was meant to bear the testimony of God's presence and kingdom rule in the earth lies in utter bareness and depravity. **Things have gotten so bad, that it looks like it's all over. God's purpose for His people has appeared to have failed. Zion is lost!** Things are so bad, by the end of chapter 1, we see **creation joining in a travail, groaning and longing that Zion would be restored again!**

It is into this terrible state of things, that Joel blows the trumpet! God has a word for His people in

the gospel and all that that means. THE GREAT NEED OF THE DAY IS FOR A FRESH APPREHENSION AND ENCOUNTER WITH THE LORD HIMSELF. That alone is the answer for the state of things in the land. He wants them to see who the Lord really is. They've lost sight of Him. **God, through His prophet is seeking to bring Zion to a fresh apprehension of the gospel and all it means.** By the term "gospel" I do not mean a bunch of doctrines we need to preach and intellectually adhere to. When that word is used here, it is meant to speak of the Lord Himself. **It is a person we need a fresh apprehension of.** Nothing less than that will do! **Joel is going to bring God's people back to the place where the glory of God is openly revealed.** God has a word for Zion in this tragic time. It is the word of the gospel that brings to us the knowledge of the glory of God in Jesus' face! That word alone is the power of God unto salvation. **It is the only answer for our day. It is the only answer for this thing God longs for called Zion!** The gospel alone will take us where we need to be in this hour that we are in, so Joel takes up the gospel trumpet and lets it's sound be heard in the devastated land of Judah.

Joel 1:1 Note here, that it doesn't say that Joel came with a word, that there was this great preacher that visited the land who, by his charismatic way, changed everything. No! It says the word came to Joel. **The answer to man in crisis is God drawing near to him as the Word!** John speaks of this as the meaning of the gospel in **John 1:14**; "The word was made flesh and dwelt among us..." Something wonderful has happened! Man is in crisis, so what does God do? What is His answer? **He draws near to us as The Word!** God's word is a man. It's a person that has drawn near to us as the word of God, and **He is come to address the situation.** We see this in **Gen. 3:8** where Adam has fallen. What did God do? How did He answer that crisis? It says "they heard **THE VOICE** of the Lord God walking in the garden..." The voice was walking to them. **God visits man who is in crisis as The Word.** The Word is the remedy for the loss that sin and folly has brought. **In the gospel, God draws near to us as The Word.** That's God's answer to man. What is happening here is something more than God giving a prophet a hot message from heaven we all need to hear. **The word came!** Joel's message of hope in that hopeless day is this... **God has drawn near!** The word of the Lord has come to us! Joel is not saying "*I have come with a word.*" He is saying "I am not the answer to the state of things today! You don't need some fiery preacher to come. You need the Lord Himself to come on the scene. **Something very significant has happened that is going to change everything;** **"The word of the Lord has come!" They are going to receive a Divine visitation of the word Himself. Forget Joel! The Word has come on the scene!**

The Word has come! That is what Joel is looking to impact God's people with. John, in his gospel goes on to describe that Word that has come to us... "*And we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the father, full of grace and truth...*" Joel does this too. In Joel the word has come, but it doesn't end there. He wants us to see this one called The Word! Look how He is described in **Joel 2:13**. The prophet wants to bring God's people to a fresh apprehension of who God really is. He wants them to see afresh the glory of God as it is revealed in the face of Jesus Christ, God's Living Word.

It looks like everything is over! Zion is lost! It is gone! There's nothing left. It is a hopeless hour. The thing most precious to God has been lost. Things are pretty bad out there, but, **despite what we see or don't see, it's not over yet!** **Joel 2:11**. God as The Word has drawn near, and look how Joel describes Him! **"For He is strong who executes His word!" This is who has come on the scene in this hopeless hour!** In a day where it looks like we've lost, it can't possibly happen now, The Lord has drawn near to watch over His word to perform it. **It's not over!** God will bring His word to pass! The Living Word Himself has come into the crisis we are in to do in us and for us what we cannot do for ourselves. This word that Joel speaks of is focused on Zion. "Blow ye the trumpet **IN ZION.**" There's a word regarding Zion today! It is this; The Lord Himself, as the word, has drawn near! God has come to us as the living word, and He is described as one who is STRONG to execute His word. In a day when it looks like it is over, it is not over! God's word over Zion will still come to pass. The Lord Himself has come on the scene to watch over His word to perform it. Zion will be restored. That is Joel's message!

To be continued...

Our Gathering Together November 1-3, 2017 Synopsis of the Fall 2017 Conference

It is a great joy to report on our Fall conference at Tuscarora Inn 7 conference Center, Mt. Bethel, PA. As always we were received warmly with godly character and helpfulness by the staff of Tuscarora. The fellowship in the services and around the dining tables was of high order of love and unity. All were refreshed and blessed by the oneness of the brethren. As always it was an open heaven in the worship services led by Gary Rose and an anointed worship team. Ric Vargas shared a very encouraging word on Wednesday night called "Under the Juniper Tree". Ric brought out after intense warfare between Elijah and the Baal prophets, a discouragement and a desire to die came on Elijah. God has a mission to get him to the Mount of the Lord. Elijah receives a double portion of God's presence, protection and provision. While he was sleeping the hand of the angel (the Lord Himself as it were) was upon him and the servant of God wakes up and goes where he needs to be.

On Thursday morning Lou Pressman taught on the meaning of being brought to the household of faith. John 14:1 is often taught futuristically that one day we will die and get to our heavenly mansion and then we will receive the full blessing of God. Lou taught that the reality of Passover is to bring us to His grace, provision and the full riches of the kingdom of God NOW.

Thursday evening we heard the best message of the gatherings through our brother, Mark Waters. It was called "The Gospel Trumpet" from the book of Joel. The truth of Zion is not for all believers. Joel heralds a time of judgment, deliverance and restoration. Mark shared that Zion or God's true church will be reduced to zero first, then the Lord will restore. Friday Morning Bert Ghilardi gave a closing message on the God of Increase. Man's efforts will never bring God's final harvest. Only God's process of planting and watering will bring the increase. The last message made it known that the Lord's word will not return to Him void.

We welcomed new pastors into our midst: Joe and Janis Csontos of Allentown, PA; John Murray of Plymouth, PA; and Wayne Mitchel from Luzerne County, PA. We had a surprise visit from Ralph Cotterill who flew in from the state of Kansas. Ralph is planting a Bible college in Kansas. He shared his vision and made an appeal for teachers.

Wonderful unity and purity among the brethren continues in our new setting.



Hope to see many of you in April 2018 conference.

Bert Ghilardi

The CMF Spring Gathering

Wed., April 25-Fri., April 27

Tuscarora Inn & Conference Center, Mt. Bethel, PA. The registration deadline is 4/11/18, but if you now find yourself able to join us for all or part of the Conference, we'll find room for you!!

For more information call Mark Waters
570-888-1055



Women's Retreat Save the Date!!

June 1-2, 2018
Bethany Christian Fellowship
Athens, PA

Next youth event

Winter THAW!

March 2-4. \$106 per person. "THAW" is a weekend retreat for middle & high school youth groups. Students and leaders are challenged to experience God's truth through building relationships within their group, fun activities, and focused times in God's Word. The two required forms can be found online at www.RockMountainBibleCamp.org/THAW or contact Dana Rose @ rosedana70@yahoo.com. Youth leaders please give Dana a head-count by 2/10/17. Forms and money due to Dana by 2/17/18.

The Gospel of the Kingdom

Joseph Nieves

The following is an excerpted version of the first part of The Gospel of the Kingdom, a manual for everyday living by our mentor, teacher and brother, Joseph Nieves. *Used by permission.*

“This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world...” Mt. 24:14 There is nothing more exciting than to be awakened to Him and to His purposes for this hour. I believe the apostle Paul would have given anything to be alive today. **...and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born. 1 Corinthians 15:8.** There are some people who would like to go back: “If only I were there when Jesus walked the shores of Galilee.” But I believe that we are unique. This is a special generation. We are those upon whom the end of the ages have come. We are a privileged people. **1 Cor. 10:11** God is preparing to do something fresh and we must be read. We cannot over emphasize the importance of Preparation. In these last days our vessels must be upright and prepared. Mt. 25:10; Rev. 19:7.

How are we to prepare ourselves?

The Sermon on the Mount is the “how” of God. We need a vision in this hour; **we need to know where we are going and how to get there!** Paul wrote in Philippians 3:14, “I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling in Christ Jesus.” We must know where we are going and we must know how to get there. The road map is Matthew 5, 6, and 7. It tells us how to hold our course steadfast to the end, Hebrews 3:6. The Sermon on the Mount gives us principles for everyday living. They spell out the life in the Spirit. They are the measuring rod by

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which we judge our spiritual progress and growth in God.

God is preparing a people to rule and reign with Him in His kingdom. The kingdom of God builds character, and character is very important for without it you cannot reign with Christ. Quality of life determines quality of dominion.

What is the kingdom of God? It is the rule and government of God—first in our lives, then in all the earth. The message of the kingdom is the message of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. It proclaims His lordship. Mt. 24:14. **There are two aspects to the kingdom of God.**

1. **Present:** There is a present reality of the kingdom that we need to walk in and exercise. This kingdom is spiritual and is within and among us (Lk. 17:20, 21; Ro. 14:17)
2. **Future:** There is also the establishing of the kingdom of God on the earth. This is the physical and literal reign of

Christ on earth (Lk. 22:28-30). It is a *qualified people*, who have continued with Him (Revelation 11:15; 12:1-5; 19:15). Rev. 2:26-27; Rev. 5:10-12.

What makes a kingdom?

There are four things that constitute a kingdom. 1. You cannot have a kingdom without a king!! No king, no kingdom. The king is the ruler, the sovereign governing agent.

2. You cannot have a kingdom without a domain. The domain is the territory of the government, the realm or sphere of His rule (Psalm 24:1). The Greek word for “kingdom”, *basileia*, speaks of a domain, realm or dimension. More specifically, it is the realm over which the Holy Spirit rules. 1 Cor. 12:3; 2 Cor. 3:17,18; 4:16-18

3. You cannot have a kingdom without subjects. Those born in the United Kingdom are called subjects, not citizens. The reason is that they have a monarchy, a queen or king. (Phil. 3:20). Our conversation (citizenship) is in the kingdom of God (col. 1:13). We have been delivered out of the kingdom of darkness and transferred into the kingdom of the Son of His Love. We are partakers of the heavenly calling. Heb. 3:1; Phil. 3:20; 2 Tim. 1:9.
4. You cannot have a kingdom without principles. These are laws that govern the kingdom. Without laws there would be anarchy and chaos. These principles are designed both to set us free and to bring us to the place of spiritual usefulness and abundant life. Sin has bound humanity, but Jesus sets us free. John 8:32 And what are we free to do? To be useful in His kingdom!

What is the role of the Church? Matthew 16:16-18

“Upon this Rock I will build My Church.” The Greek word for “church”, ekklesia, not only means a “called-out” (or chosen) people, but it was a term used in the New Testament times for a ruling class, a legislative body, a governing people. For example, we are all citizens of the United States, but a select group form the governing body of the government. We have a president, legislators, governors, mayors and so forth. God is preparing and qualifying a people who will reign and rule with Him. The call is whosoever will.

In the general sense, everybody who is born again is in the kingdom (Col. 1:13). However, within the kingdom He is preparing a ruling class (2 Tim. 2:12; 3:12; Rev. 1:9; 2:26, 27; 3:21; 5:10; 11:15; 12:1-5; 21:7) Search out these scriptures on the qualifications for overcomers.

God has His kingdom in mind for you and me, but leaders must first be servants-hard working servants. No man putting his hand to the plow and looking back is fit (adjusted, well placed for service) for the kingdom (Lk. 9:62). The kingdom of God is a place of service. There is no room for a lazy people in the kingdom (Ro. 12:11; Mt. 10:37-39).

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How did Jesus begin building His kingdom?

Luke 4:17-19 After His baptism and forty days of testing in the wilderness. Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit (Lk. 4:14-17). He began to preach that they kingdom of heaven is at hand (i.e. it is here, with your grasp).

1. He called His disciples (Mk. 1:14-22). Even so, they were not instantly mature “Microwave Saints.” Jesus began the slow process of developing His kingdom principles in them by discipling them personally, day after day. Later, He commissioned them to preach the kingdom (Mat. 10:2-8). The evidence of the kingdom would be supernatural demonstration from discipled saints.
2. He demonstrated (verses 23-25). Jesus taught only what He practiced.
3. He taught (Mt. 5, 6) Notice that Jesus sat, the teaching position. Disciples came to Him (verse 2) He opened His mouth and taught them. Note the Greek idiom “He opened his mouth.” In the original, this is an untranslatable phrase with much meaning. The phrase means that what Jesus is about to reveal or speak to them is coming out from the heart of God.

Matthew records the greatest sermon ever preached-the one that flowed through our Savior’s mouth straight from the heart of God. It reveals the 21 principles of God’s kingdom. These embody the very desires of God for us-both as overcoming individuals whose cups run over with peace, joy, and love, and as disciplined subjects of His kingdom extending His domain throughout the whole earth. Do we live these words or do we trample them under foot?



Are we a principled people?

What is a principle? It is that which is built within a person that governs his life, conduct, behavior, course of action. God is a God of principles. His principles constitute God's divine rule of conduct in the believer. There is a great difference between principle and law. Law is outward or external demands—"do's and don'ts". Principles motivate, inform, and restrain from within.

Following the principles laid down in the Word of God and applied in our lives, let us press toward the mark for the prize of the high (or the upward) calling. We are to be moving ahead from level to level, from faith to faith, from strength to strength, and from glory to glory. God is preparing a people who are going to rule and reign with Him (1 Tim. 2:12; Rev. 5:10; 11:15; 12:1-5).

It is time for more Christians to become less preoccupied with their future home, Heaven, and more interested in what God wants to do in our current home. God wants to establish His kingdom on the earth, and glory to God, He wants to do it through us!

Joseph A. Nieves pioneered and pastored Emmanuel Fellowship Church, Allentown, PA. He was a Bible teacher and the Academic Dean at Pinecrest Bible Training Center and has traveled extensively as a convention speaker both in the US and abroad.

Joe & Gloria Nieves pictured here with Ric Vargas at Emmanuel Fellowship Church, Allentown, PA in 2017.

Prayer Requests

Let us unite our hearts to pray for a few needs that we are aware of.

1. That our youth will meet the Lord at the Winter THAW retreat event, March 2-4.
2. Pray for Maria Paula Londono (our interpreter in Cali, Colombia) and Alejandro Pareda who are engaged to be married in June.
3. Pray for Helen Raj, daughter of the late Glady Raj, for healing and direction for her life.
4. Lift up Bert & Arlene Ghilardi as they go to Colombia the last half of June.
5. Pray for the Agape Church in Cali, Colombia for strength and grace as they pass through some turbulent times.
6. Pray for the families of our ministers who are suffering various trials and afflictions.
7. Continue to lift up Ralph Cotterill and the Stream of God International School of Ministry.