

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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In this edition:

Pages 1 -2, 4
Heroes of Faith

Lou Pressman

Page 3
One War, Two Countries ,
One Body Ric Vargas

Announcements
**REMINDERS TO REGISTER
NOW!!**

Men's Retreat, Athens, PA

Page 4, 6-8
The Life and Ministry of Steve
Wilber by Tom Worth

Page 5
Colombia Mission
Bert Ghilardi

Page 7
Prayer Requests

Page 8
Life and Ministry of Steve
Wilber (cont'd)

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Heroes of Faith Lou Pressman



Most Bibles have a subtitle near or below the chapter number. If you look at Hebrews 11 my Bible has the subtitle "The Triumphs of Faith". Other Bibles have "Great Examples of Faith" or "By Faith We Understand" or "Heroes of Faith" while some Bibles have no subtitle. Yet clearly, in this chapter, there is recorded men and women of faith. Thus, Hebrews 11 is referred to as the faith chapter. The first verse of Hebrews 11 defines not only this chapter but the Bible itself. According to the dictionary, faith is the complete trust or confidence in someone or something; the strong belief

in God.

Starting off in Hebrews 11 we have the names of Abel, then Enoch, then Noah, then Abraham and Sarah. All great examples of faith.

Let's look at Abraham and Sarah. Genesis 12:10-13 "Now there was a famine in the land; so Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there, for the famine was severe in the land. It came about when he came near to Egypt, that he said to Sarai his wife, "See now, I know that you are a beautiful woman; and when the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife'; and they will kill me, but they will let you live. Please say that you are my sister so that it may go well with me because of you, and that I may live on account of you."

Keep in mind that in Genesis 12:2&3 God made promises to Abraham that He would bless him, "And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed." In other words Abraham you will have children, grandchildren, descendants! Yet Abraham is fearing for his life, where is his faith? To make matters worse Abraham causes Sarah to lie. Of course, Abraham's plan backfires, vs. 14-19, and what could have been a great opportunity to see God move, and to be a witness and testimony to the Pharaoh or even Egypt, was blown!

We learn Sarah cannot have children but instead of relying on God, having faith in Jehovah, what does Sarah do? She takes matters into her own hands. She gives her maid, Hagar, to Abraham to fulfill the promise of children, descendants. Of course, that fails as well for anytime we take matters into our own hands the outcome is usually abysmal. Sarah instead of repenting becomes hateful and blames Abraham

for all this. In Genesis 16:6 Sarah treats Hagar “harshly”- as in afflicting her, oppressing her, mishandling her or even doing violence to her, so Hagar runs away.

In Genesis chapter 18, The Lord appears to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre. Abraham lifts his eyes and he sees three people. Abraham senses he is having a divine visitation. He offers to serve them and have their feet washed. One of the visitors who is actually the Lord and says; “I will surely return to you at this time next year; and behold, Sarah your wife will have a son”. Sarah overhears and what is Sarah’s reaction? Is it one of praise, joy, thanksgiving? No, Genesis 18:12 “Sarah laughed to herself”. Laughed in a mocking sort of way, even scornful. In vs. 13-15 “And the Lord said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh, saying, ‘Shall I indeed bear a child, when I am so old?’ Is anything too difficult for the Lord? At the appointed time I will return to you, at this time next year, and Sarah will have a son.” When she is confronted by Abraham, does Sarah humble herself and confess? No, Sarah denied it, lied, saying, “I did not laugh”. Heroes of faith?

How about Barak who is mentioned in Hebrews 11:32. In Judges 4:1 Ehud was a Judge who had a positive effect on Israel but once he was gone Israel once again does evil in the sight of the Lord. Because of Israel’s diso-

bedience the Lord allowed them to be oppressed then attacked by Jabin, king of Canaan, and the commander of Jabin’s army Sisera. Israel had no weapons and the Canaanites had amongst other weapons, nine hundred iron chariots. Because of that Israel cried out to the Lord.

Deborah is a prophetess, speaking for the Lord. The command of the Lord through Deborah to Barak is “Go and march to Mount Tabor” but Barak refuses. What he does say in Judges 4:8 “If you will go with me, then I will go; but if you will not go with me,

I will not go.” That may sound noble, submitted, deferring to her position. But it reveals his real motive; if you go with me then I will really know God will protect me. It reveals a weakness in his faith, yet he is listed in Hebrews 11. The result is he forfeits the honor that could have been his and it is the woman Jael who receives the credit and honor in striking down this enemy of Israel.

In Hebrews 11:32 we have Samson. Even before His birth the Lord’s command to Samson’s mother was that he would adhere to the vow of a Nazarite, Judges 13:2-5. Yet when Samson matures he marries a Philistine. She eventually leaves him and later her and her father are killed in retaliation. Then he is with a harlot, then with Delilah. Delilah is actually a confederate of the Philistines and is offered money to find out the secret of his strength. Which she does, Judges 16:16&17.

Trick question; who cut off Samson’s hair? It was not Delilah, vs.19a. Delilah “called for a man and had him shave off the seven locks of his hair.” The word “man” is the Hebrew word ish. The generic term for man. In other words, any man or anyone at this point was capable of disarming Samson. One of the sad points in all this is in verse 20 “But he did not know that the LORD had departed (separated, turned away) from him.”

Samson is ridiculed in verses 21&23 and the Philistines thank their god Dagon for this victory, but the story of Samson does not end there. He repents and God uses him one last time to bring down the Dagon leaders and the Philistine’s leading citizens.

So, when we look at Hebrews 11, when we look honestly in Hebrews 11, many of the people listed lived flawed lives! So how can these people be champions of faith, heroes of faith?

If we read Hebrews 11 as a standalone, without reading the Old Testament accounts, the people in Hebrews 11 sound like superheroes, great possessors of faith. Yet when we read their Biblical account in the Old Testament, we find their lives don’t quite match up. How can this be?

The answer to this dilemma is found at the very end of Hebrews 11, verse 40, “because God had provided something better for us, so that apart from us they would not be made perfect. (Continued on Page 4)

In other words, with us, or like us, being perfected for them is the same way as for us, it is only through Jesus, by His blood. Salvation is only through Jesus. Cont’d on page 4

***...when we look honestly
in Hebrews 11, many of
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One War, Two Countries, One Body

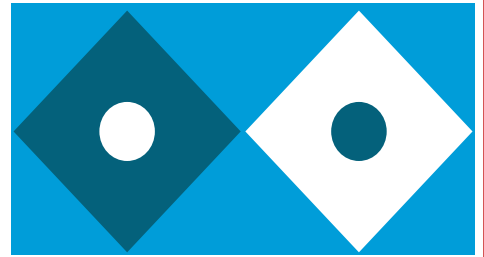
Ric Vargas

At the end of World War II, the countries of Japan and Bulgaria moved in very different directions. Japan suffered the devastation of two nuclear bombs, leading to their surrender and began the process of rebuilding with the help of the very country that brought about their defeat. Japan's post-war recovery made them a political and economic power again. Bulgaria, after first siding with Germany, aligned with Russia in the defeat of Germany; but their price of victory was high, and they suffered under Communism for 44 years. Although Japan has climbed out of the devastation and humiliation of war, the Church and the Gospel message has remained small and seemingly ineffective. The Bulgarian church, on the other hand, has not only endured, but has borne much fruit. Lou Pressman and I were recently privileged to visit both of these countries.

Japan has been open in many ways but the culture still has a closed, suspicious view towards 'outsiders.' The Church is mostly made up of older members, true disciples that hunger and long for The Lord to bring revival to their country. It's estimated there are between 1 and 2 million Christians, or about 1% of the population; the majority being in Western Japan. The Lord's saying, "the labourers are few" is a very true reality there.

The church in Bulgaria, since the end of Communism 30 years ago, is growing and even beginning to influence recent political decisions. Because of the rapid growth and need for leaders, many people were thrust into ministry with little experience or training. They recognize this need and are hungry and desirous for teaching.

Lou and I were humbled and revitalized by being able to strengthen and encourage The Lord's 'One' Body in two very different cultures as they endeavor to shine forth the Light of Truth in the midst of darkness. Please remember to continue in prayer for your brothers and sisters in Japan and Bulgaria.



Save the Date The CMF Fall Gathering

**Wednesday, October 30—
Friday, November 1, 2019**
There's a place for you!

Tuscarora Inn & Conference
Center, Mt. Bethel, PA.
For more information call Mark
Waters 570-888-1055 or
CMF7001@gmail.com
*Pastors and workers are
welcome.*

*If scholarship is needed
please, let Mark know.*

**Men's Retreat
September 20, 21 2019**

**at Bethany Christian
Fellowship, Athens, PA.**

**"Men whose eyes have seen
the King", "Pinching in"**

**The registration deadline is
September 7. Put yours in
the mail today. Cost is \$30.**

See attached Form.

**Send articles for the "Clarion"
to arleneghildi@gmail.com by
October 15.**

Heroes of Faith continued from page 2

Matthew 1:21 “you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”

In other words, with us, or like us, being perfected for them is the same way as for us, it is only through Jesus, by His blood.

Salvation is only through Jesus.

What does Scripture say? Hebrews 8:12 “For I will be merciful to their iniquities, And I will remember their sins no more.” The emphasis is mine but with this in mind what does God choose to remember about Abraham? Read Hebrews 11:8.

What does God choose to remember about Sarah? Read Hebrews 11:11.

Jacob who manipulates Esau's birthright for just a bowl of stew and fraudulently obtains his father's blessing. What does God choose to remember about Jacob? Read Hebrews 11:21.

What does God choose to remember about us? Only the best!

One of the things I have discovered about God is how he sees us. We see our lives as a movie. Every detail, every nuance, every intention is shown, as compared to a snapshot. We all have those photo albums or old photos in a shoe box. When we look at a particular old photo, we instantly remember the time and place of each photo; a vacation, visiting relatives who are long gone, a scene or house we grew up in and a smile may come to our face. That is how God chooses to see us; our new life as series of snapshots. He sees us in the best light, as part of His new creation, because of Jesus!

That is why a loving, just, but forgiving God rightly placed them in Hebrews 11 for He chooses what to forget and He chooses what to remember. Thus the good news or even great news for us is that what God did for them he is doing and will do for us as well. He is choosing what to forget and what to remember. Therefore, the names listed in Hebrews 11 are being expanded and if you love Jesus and if He is centered in your life then you are included. Ephesians 1:7 “In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace.”Ω

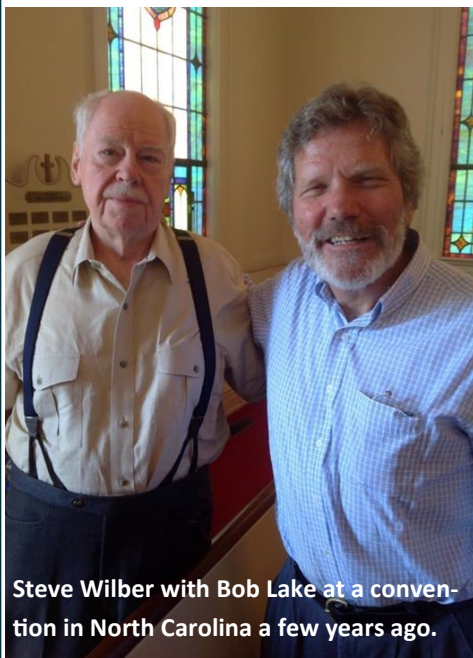
Lou Pressman, Pastor, Montrose Christian Fellowship, Montrose, PA

What does God choose to remember about us?

Only the best.

The Life and Ministry of Steve Wilber

April 10, 1937—June 14, 2019



Steve Wilber with Bob Lake at a convention in North Carolina a few years ago.

Stephen S. Wilber was born in Mount Union, PA on April 10, 1937. Then his family moved to Clearfield in central PA, where he grew up and lived for 28 years. Steve's father, Stephen Sebastian Wilber, died when he was 4 years old. His mother remarried when he was nine. However, strange as it sounds, he never considered Ray Condon to be his father or as having raised him. He was a good man but very shy and talked very little and did not interact with Steve much at all. He never adopted him either. There was not a bad relationship between them but rather little communication or interaction because of his personality. Steve was an only child. Steve's mother contracted tuberculosis when Steve was about 12 years old. His mother spent close to 3 years in a TB sanatorium. So these two diffident souls were left to their own devices, looking after themselves in that household while Steve's mother was away in the sanatorium. On rare occasions she was allowed to come home on a weekend but spent that time in bed and Steve could not get near her. He was not allowed in her bedroom. *(Continued Page 6)*

Recent Trip to Colombia

Dear Friends and Co-laborers,

We arrived back home safely at the Wilkes-barre/Scranton Airport at 11 p.m. on July 9th after a 12 day trip that was very fruitful. The Lord was gracious and moved in each church we visited. We give God the glory for His anointing and keeping power. We were warmly received with open doors and open hearts by our hosts and dear friends Cony Rojas and Fabio Diaz. Cony set up our whole itinerary, put us up in their home and drove us wherever we had to go. the life and servant-hood of this sister greatly impacted us the whole time we were there.

We spoke in Cony's home church, El Camino which means 'The Way', in four services. The first night there was a move of the Spirit in response to the message on having an open heaven with the Lord. Many people came for prayer and in three 'teams' Bert and Maria Paula (our interpreter), Arlene with Alejandra Diaz, (Cony's daughter), and Cony Rojas. Again, by God's grace we were able to minister to the people directing them to hear from God themselves who is the Solver of every problem.

Our next ministry took place with pastors Sergio Londono and Nayibe Martinez, parents of Maria Paula, with their church Transformando el Mundo, 'Transforming the World'. They held a weekend retreat from Saturday night through Monday. Having come out of the Baptist denomination scarcely two years ago, Bert taught on the Work of the Holy Spirit in the Church and Arlene taught on the Work of the Holy Spirit in the Life of the Believer. There were 4 sessions each topic. Each session was over an hour. The people were hungry for God's word and the Lord was gracious. Some received the Baptism in the Holy Spirit for the first time and others broke before the Lord renewing their commitment to Jesus Christ.

We then traveled north east 3 hours to Pereira which is in the heart of coffee country. There we had two services in El Renuevo, 'The Renewal', pastored by Julio Cesar and his wife Esperanza a very loving couple. We had two services there. One of them was a ministry to marriages where many couples renewed their vows to Christ and to one another.

We finished up our time in Colombia by ministering in the home meeting at Mahanaim, the home of Fredy Lopez and Gloria Osorio, our hosts for 6 days. For a few months Fredy, Gloria, Alejandro and

Maria Paula, have been gathering to seek the Lord for their life and ministry. We spent all day Sunday with them ministering the word, hearing their hearts and there was prayer and prophesy for each of them at the end of the day. We thank the Lord for the life and ministry of our dear interpreter and her husband Alejandro who also interpreted in many situations for us.

We wish to thank all those who prayed for us and gave love offerings to support this trip. We were very conscious of your prayers and sacrifice on the altar of the Lord to make this a 'mission accomplished'.

We remain yours in commitment, Bert and Arlene Ghilardi



(The Life and Ministry of Steve Wilber Continued from Page 4)

He spoke to her at the doorway.

It was during this lonely time that Steve began to read the Bible and seek the Lord, all on his own. In that rural atmosphere, and growing up as an only child around adults who were born either in the 19th or at the turn of the 20th century, many of Steve's sentiments were formed which were more closely kin to the 19th than to the 20th or 21st centuries. Like John the Baptist, he grew up in the wilderness, and he was always nourished by time spent in the woods and fields. But he was an excellent student and was at the top of his class in high school. I expect school work must have occupied him some during that lonely time when his mother had TB. He also played clarinet in the high school band. But his thoughts began to turn more and more toward the Lord Jesus during these formative years. When Steve was about 15, he spoke to his mother through the doorway on one of her rare visits home from the sanatorium, and talked with her about the possibility of being healed by God. He said to her, "If God can make a world, He can heal a body". They heard about Kathryn Kuhlman. So they made the trip to Pittsburgh to one of Kathryn Kuhlman's meetings. Although she would risk hemorrhaging to death, she decided to lift her hands to the Lord in the service as others around her were doing. During that posture of worship, she felt like oil was being poured over her head. She was miraculously healed of TB. Undoubtedly, this miracle further strengthened Steve's faith. For a season, he and his mother, as they prayed and fasted, saw others they knew, miraculously healed. Steve began to listen to radio preachers such as A.A. Allen and all the full gospel preachers of that era. He often spent eight to nine hours reading the Bible and praying on the mountain behind their home and would come down the mountain in the evening to eat. He walked 15 miles to get to a little country church. (They would not let him drive the family car).

He heard on the radio about being filled with God's Spirit. He bought a bus ticket to Phoenix, AZ where there was a tent meeting being conducted by A.A. Allen. He only had enough money for a bus ticket but no money for food but his desire for God was so intense he only knew he wanted to be where God was moving. The meetings turned out to be historic in his life. Steve was there from August of 1957 to January of 1958. He was 20 years old. Not long ago, Steve told me about how God met him late one night toward the end of one of A.A. Allen's meetings. About eleven o'clock in the evening a ball of fire appeared at the top of the tent and went rolling through the air and hit Steve broadside and knocked him into the tent wall. There he lay in the sawdust trying to get up and could not. He said to himself, "This must be the Holy Ghost." And there he wrestled with the Lord. (Another man from California who attended that meeting told Steve later that he saw that ball of fire come down from the ceiling of the tent and hit Steve and knock him down.) Steve told me that his experience was like J. P. Priestley's short story called "The Other Place."¹ In this short fantasy story the main character steps out of a dismal and rainy November through a portal into a place where the people he knows are the same but the place is one of beauty and eternal spring. Steve told me that when he was struck down by the Lord in Phoenix, it was as if he stepped into that Other Place. Steve told me he has been operating from that Other Place ever since. When he finally managed to get up off the sawdust, he was transformed. Like Saul, after he had met with the prophets, Steve "was turned into another man." He came back to Pennsylvania, a changed man filled with God's Spirit. Steve said to me, "You don't know what I was like before that event, because I have been another man ever since."

When he returned, he walked the 15 miles to that little country church, expecting to worship with the believers there, as he had done in the past. But, without checking with him, they announced to the congregation that Steve was the preacher that day. It was news to him! Up to this point he was not a speaker. Even though he was at the top of every class in school they did not have him speak at graduation because they knew he could not do it. He was too shy and could never have spoken at his graduation. But now, he

***'As the
mountains are
around
Jerusalem, so
the Lord is
round about His
people from
henceforth even
forever.
Ps. 125:2***

Prayer Requests

Joe & Gloria Nieves-
Allentown, PA

Phyllis Fischer, Green Bay WI

Fredy Lopez & Gloria Osorio;
Alejandro & Maria Paula
Holguin: ministry in Pereira
with Mahanaim Home
Fellowship

Ric Vargas, Lou Pressman:
Blessing on Ministry Trips,
including Colombia in
September-Pastor's
conference.

Youth of our churches:
personal encounter with God
that will bring them into a
solid walk and fellowship with
Jesus.

rose to the occasion, and preached his first sermon, on the spot. All heaven came down and God moved in a mighty way. That was the beginning of his ministry.

Word got out about this young man and he was invited many places to speak. For 9 years his walk with God was filled with fasting, praying, reading God's Word and preaching as doors opened to him. One of those invitations found him in a church in McKeesport, PA, where a young woman, a graduate of Zion Bible Institute, happened to be in the congregation. Her name was Roberta Boyd. He was 28 years old in June of 1965 when he married Roberta. From December of 1965 to August of 1975 the Wilbers lived in Detroit, MI. There the first three children were born, Stephen, Tanya Rose, and Eric. I remember his mentioning that working in that auto factory was like working in the land of Mordor. But their family life was a blessing and Steve ministered faithfully in his own house church. In 1975 Wade Taylor, along with Joe Nieves, invited Steve to join the faculty at Pinecrest. Steve and Roberta took a trip to Pinecrest to investigate and left their children in Detroit in the care of a babysitter. They both became convinced that this was the next step for them. While on the faculty at Pinecrest, Steve would travel to various churches, conventions, and camp meetings, preaching in the power of the Spirit, the unsearchable riches of Christ. He was in high demand as a conference speaker and was a major reason why many attended Pinecrest in the 1980s. It was at Pinecrest where Marsha and I got to know the Wilbers after I joined the faculty in 1981. I noticed from the start that Steve was well regarded. I also observed that Roberta, as Registrar, a part time teacher, and a counsellor to many, was the glue that held the place together. Both Steve and Roberta were gifted in the care and cure of souls. Many are here today at this funeral (or wish we could be) because we were cured and cared for.

In August of 1992, the Wilber family moved to Atlanta, GA, in order for Steve to become the pastor of Hebron Christian Fellowship in Decatur, GA, where he served for nine years. Since that time he has continued to serve the Body of Christ as a prophetic pastor and preacher. Steve and Roberta have endured their share of trials and challenges, but by the grace of God, they are still as winsome as ever. The home of Steve and Roberta has become an oasis for thirsty souls.

When Steve could not come to them, these thirsty souls have come to him and have found renewal and refreshing. How many of us have made the pilgrimage to Steve and Roberta's? And even during these last months of his life he would talk on the phone, just as sharp and profound as ever. I think that one of reasons why we all have loved Steve was that he was free to be

himself. It set us free to be ourselves. He accepted us as we were, just as he had received grace to accept himself. We all knew he was eccentric and we loved him for it.

Time would fail me to tell of his ability to launch into a discourse in almost any field of knowledge, or his appetite for mushrooms which would surpass any hobbit's, or his love of languages and proper pronunciation, or the sense that he inhabited a world of superlatives, or that he knew the botanical names of all the exotic trees and shrubs he had planted around his house. I could go on and on. Did the Lord use Steve's eccentricity as cloak? As I reflect on it now, and after listening to Roberta's testimony about Steve, it dawned on me what a truly good man Steve was.

What we saw was the tip of the iceberg. What buoyed up that tip was what we did not see: the nine tenths of integrity, honesty, goodness and prayer. But when we heard from Roberta about the countless hours he spent in prayer, perhaps for many of us, and the unseen good deeds, the generous way he was with people, his ability to give attention to both the high and low and treat each with the same dignity and respect—why were we not surprised? We did not know it—but that part of us which resonates with the Spirit—knew it all the time. Rick Joiner remarked that Steve was the last great orator of the charismatic movement. But the best way to measure Steve's impact on people is how widely and deeply he is loved. And now he has passed into the loving arms of Jesus, perhaps awaking in "a far green country under a swift sunrise." Ω

(This shortened version of the Life and Ministry of Steve Wilber is used by permission from the author, Thomas Worth, Pastor of Community Covenant Church, Manlius, New York. The full and more detailed version is available upon request from the Clarion editors. The picture below was taken by Tom on a visit to Steve and Roberta's a couple of years ago.)

Footnote: 1 J. B. Priestley, *The Other Place, and Other Stories of the Same Sort* (London: William Heinemann, Ltd., 1953).

