

Worship services are being cancelled until further notice because of Covid-19. However, we will have worship services through the Internet Zoom platform every Sunday at 10:30 AM in NB, NS and PEI. The Zoom link for this service will be sent to you by email. The telephone numbers for Zoom always remains the same but the Meeting ID and password number change every week.. Please let Mr. Vautour know if you would like to be added to the weekly email list. See the bottom of the bulletin for the contact information

If you have friends or acquaintances who want to join in the worship service, please do not hesitate to share with them the Zoom links to join with us in the worship our great God.

For more information about special activities happening in GCI international, please see the website at [www.gci.org](http://www.gci.org). On the left-hand upper side of the screen, click on “PARTICIPATE”. Click on it. A drop-down menu will appear. Click on “GCI UPDATE”.

Please note that audio and video sermons are available at [www.worshiphim.ca](http://www.worshiphim.ca) and video sermons are now available on YouTube – GRACE COMMUNION INTERNATIONAL-MONCTON (see link below)

**Zoom Prayer Meeting with the Saint John congregation: Thursday, November 19 at 7:30 PM**

Please take note that November 29, we will have services from head office in the USA. Exceptionally, worship services will be at 1 PM on that day

If you have a prayer requests, other events you would like to announce and/or praise to our great God you would like to share, please try to contact Mr. Vautour by email, text or telephone no later than Saturday in the morning.

To see specific prayer requests from the church, please go to [www.worshiphim.ca](http://www.worshiphim.ca) – under “Members Only” and type the password.

- Let us pray for the Church to put first things first which is to love God with all of our heart, with all of our soul and with all of our mind. The secondary commandment and flowing from the first is to love our neighbour as ourselves.
- Let us pray according to God’s will as per his instructions: “1 ¶ First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, 2 for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. 3 This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” (1Ti 2:1-4 ESV)
- Let us pray for all Christians to receive and have the faith, love, and hope to live productive ambassadorial lives united to Christ during this worldwide pandemic of the Covid-19.

**Prayers for Honduras**



Please be in prayer for Honduras. The report below is from Heber Ticas Superintendent of Latin America, on Thursday, November 5

. I have been in contact with our church family and Honduras all morning and the country is getting hit hard with fast-moving torrential rains from hurricane Eta. Below is a report from Pastor Marco Mejia of San Pedro Sula. Their congregation is in an area named La Democracia and is

known for flooding.

“Unfortunately, last night the Ulua river overflowed and flooded the colony of La Democracia where we meet, and our church building is located. Eight families from our church who are members were evacuated and now find themselves in

temporary shelters. There are 12 additional families that are affected. Many of these are not consistent in our church but their children and teenagers are well connected to our ministry. The situation is dire, and the storm is still with us. Homes have been destroyed, and roads and bridges have also been affected. I have attached some videos of when the river overflowed so you can get a better idea. By the grace of God, I don't know of anyone close to us that have lost their lives. We continue to pray asking the Lord for relief and we ask that you join us in prayer as well".

– Marco Mejia

Please join us in holding up our brothers and sisters in prayer.

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**Update: As of Saturday, the water had not yet receded and folks were still in shelters. A damage assessment was not yet possible.**

Heber Ticas *Superintendent of Latin America & National Coordinator for Church Multiplication*

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**Offerings:** you can send your offering directly to the following address: **Grace Communion International- Canada, Suite 203A, 2121 Airport Dr., Saskatoon, SK 7SL 6W5.** If you prefer, you can also call **1-306-653-2705.** Thank you for your continued generous giving to God by giving to this part of God's church, his body.

*From Mr. Bill Hall – GCI Canadian Director "We will continue to process the donations we receive in Saskatoon. Members are urged to mail them directly to our office for the time-being. They can also donate via phone using a credit card, or via Canada Helps using **the donate button** on our website [www.gcicanada.ca](http://www.gcicanada.ca) located at bottom of the page on the right side as you scroll down. We are waving the provision that all donations given via Canada Helps go toward national expenses for the time being. We will credit all donations received via Canada Helps to a member's local congregation, if we can identify where they attend."*

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### **Jesus' Acceptance, by Gary Deddo**

Christians often joyfully proclaim that "Jesus accepts everyone" and "does not judge anyone." Though there is gospel truth in these affirmations, people assign to them a wide range of different meanings. Unfortunately, some of those meanings seem to differ from the revelation of Jesus that is given to us in the New Testament.

We sometimes use the words, "You're included." That simple statement conveys an important point. But it can also be (and has been) understood in a variety of ways. What are we included in? Answering this and related questions calls for care as we, in faith, seek to sort out the related issues so that we are accurate and thus faithful to the biblical revelation.

Jesus welcomed all into his presence and offered himself and his teaching to all who came toward him. He told his listeners that he would draw all persons to himself ([John 12:32](#)). We find no instances where Jesus rejected someone, turning away from or refusing someone who was seeking him. More than that, Jesus received and even shared meals with the sorts of people who were being rejected by many of the religious leaders of his day.

What stands out in the biblical record is that Jesus welcomed and interacted with lepers, the lame, blind, deaf and dumb. He interacted socially with women (some with questionable reputations) and did so in ways that ignored religious regulations of the day. Jesus also spent time with adulterers, Jewish tax collectors working under Roman direction, and even with fanatical anti-Roman political activists.

Furthermore, Jesus spent time with the Pharisees and Sadducees, religious leaders who were his most severe critics (including some who plotted his execution). The apostle John tells us that Jesus did not come to condemn, but to save and rescue people for God. Jesus said, "**whoever comes to me I will never drive away**" ([John 6:37](#)). He also instructed his disciples to love their enemies ([Luke 6:27](#)), forgive those who wronged them and bless those who cursed them ([Luke 6:28](#)). Jesus also extended forgiveness to his executioners ([Luke 23:34](#)).

What comes across in these examples is that Jesus came to benefit all—he was "on the side" of everyone, he was "for" everyone. He is God's grace and God's salvation for all. The rest of the New Testament outside of the Gospels summarizes what we see lived out in Jesus' life. Paul indicates that Jesus came to atone for the sins of the ungodly, the sinners—those "dead in their sins" ([Ephesians 2:1](#)).

The attitude and acts of Jesus demonstrate God's love for all human beings and his desire to be reconciled to all and to bless all. Jesus came to give life and to give it abundantly ([John 10:10](#)). God was in Christ reconciling the world to

himself ([2 Corinthians 5:19](#)). Jesus came as a ransom to free captives of sin—to free them from their own sins and from the evil done against them.

### Jesus had a purpose

But there is more to the story—a “more” that should not be viewed as contradicting or in tension with what we just surveyed. Contrary to the view of some, there is no necessity to think that there are contrasting or conflicting aspects within Jesus’ heart, mind and purposes. There is no need to see some sort of internal balancing act, now tipping one way then correcting and tipping the other. There is no need to think that Jesus is trying to accomplish two divergent things at the same time, such as love and righteousness, or mercy and holiness. Such imagined tensions might exist within us in our fallenness, but they do not exist within the heart of Jesus or his Father.

Jesus, like the Father, welcomes all people. However, he does so *with a particular purpose in mind*. His love has direction to it. He engages all who will listen to reveal something that is generally hidden. He came to give something in particular—to serve all in a way that points in a particular direction, that has a certain goal or end in mind.

Rather than an end point, his welcome to all is the starting point of an ongoing relationship. That relationship is one of his giving and serving and of our receiving what he offers. Jesus does not offer any old thing or serve us in any old way (including the way we might prefer). Rather, he offers us only the best that he has—and that is himself. In offering himself, he gives us the way, the truth and the life. Nothing more. Nothing else.

Jesus’ attitude and acts of receiving and welcoming call for a certain response to his self-giving. In essence, it calls for receiving what he offers. In contrast to that receptive response, there is the response of rejecting what Jesus offers, which means rejecting Jesus himself. By Jesus drawing all people to himself, he is looking for the response of reception. That response requires a certain attitude, a certain approach toward him.

Jesus thus announced to his disciples that in his presence the kingdom of God had drawn near. All of the kingdom’s blessings are available in him. However, that truth and reality calls for a response – as Jesus said, “Repent and believe in the good news” of the kingdom’s arrival. A refusal to repent and put faith in Jesus and his kingdom amounts to a rejection of Jesus and the benefits of his kingdom.

### The response

Jesus offers his gift before any response is made. It is the offer of the gift that calls forth the response. Repentance and belief are the responses of reception to what Jesus has already offered. Those responses are not behaviors or attitudes that pre-condition Jesus’ offer, or determine to whom he makes the offer. Jesus’ offer is for the sake of its reception—not for the sake of its rejection.

The receptive attitude Jesus is always looking for in response to his offer of himself is indicated in a variety of his sayings: “**The Son of Man came to seek and save the lost**” ([Luke 19:10, NRSV](#)). “**It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick**” ([Luke 5:31](#)). “**Anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it**” ([Mark 10:15](#)). We must be like the soil that “receives the word” of the sower “with joy” ([Luke 8:13](#)). “**Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness**” ([Matthew 6:33](#)).

Receiving what Jesus offers, and therefore benefitting from what he gives, requires acknowledging that we are lost and need to be found, that we are ill and need a physician to heal us, that we come to Jesus to receive with empty hands, rather than hoping to make an exchange with him. For like a child, we do not presume to have anything that he needs. This is why Jesus indicates that it is the “poor in spirit” who are receiving the blessings of God and his kingdom, not those who regard themselves as spiritually rich ([Matthew 5:3](#)).

Christian teaching has summarized this attitude of receptivity to what God in Christ freely offers to all his creatures as one of humility. This is an attitude that admits that we are not self-sufficient but must receive life from our Creator and Redeemer. A willingness to repent requires an attitude of humble receptivity. That is what Jesus is looking for in extending his welcome, his acceptance. It is only through humility that we are able to receive what Jesus offers.

The opposite of such a trusting and receptive heart has been called pride. In the context of church teaching, pride is an attitude that asserts autonomy from God, a trust in oneself, a confidence in one’s own adequacy, even in the face of God. Such pride is offended by the suggestion that one needs to receive anything significant from God, most especially his forgiveness and mercy. One result of pride is a self-righteous refusal to receive anything essential from God, particularly those things you think you can provide for yourself.

Pride insists on paying its own way, getting what it thinks it deserves. It insists that it does not need grace or charity from God—that it can provide itself with life sufficient for its own purposes. Pride refuses to “be beholden” to anyone or anything, including God. Pride says that nothing really needs to be changed in us. We are fine just as we are.

In contrast, humility recognizes that one cannot give oneself life. Instead, it admits its need not only for help, but for the transformation, renewal, restoration and reconciliation that only God has to give. Humility acknowledges our

inexcusable fault and our utter helplessness to renew ourselves. We need total grace from God or we are lost. Our pride needs to be put to death that we might receive life from God himself. Receptivity to receiving what Jesus has to offer and humility are inseparable.

### Discernment

In the end, Jesus welcomes all in order to give them himself. His welcome is purposeful. It leads somewhere. His purpose necessarily includes a positive response, that we receive what he gives.

Jesus tells us that he has come to enable the worship of his Father ([John 4:23](#)). This is his most comprehensive way of indicating the purpose of his welcome and acceptance of us. Worship is a way of indicating a total response to who God is as the only one who is worthy of our ultimate trust and loyalty. Jesus' self-giving leads to a true knowledge of the Father and a receptivity to his Holy Spirit. It results in worshipping God alone through the Son and in the Spirit, that is, to worshipping God in truth and in spirit.

In offering himself to us, Jesus gives himself to be our Lord, our prophet, priest and king. In doing so he reveals the Father and sends us his Spirit. He gives of himself according to who he is, not according to who he is not, nor according to our wishes or imaginations.

This means that Jesus' way involves discernment—it does sort through and notice the kinds of responses made to him (and to all that he is). Jesus discerns those who are rejecting him and his word, those who are rejecting a true knowledge of God and right worship. He discriminates between those who are receiving and those who are not receiving. However, this discrimination does not mean that Jesus has a different attitude or intention other than that which we described above. There is no reason to suppose that Jesus' love is diminished or contradicted by his acts of discernment. Jesus does not condemn those who reject his welcome and invitation to follow him. But he does warn them concerning the consequences of such rejection. Jesus' acceptance and love calls for a particular kind of response, not giving no response or any sort of response.

Jesus' discernment of the various kinds of responses made to him is evident at many points in Scripture. His parable of the sower and the seeds (the seeds being his word) makes this obvious. There are four distinct soils, and only one represents the receptive response that Jesus is looking for. On numerous occasions, Jesus talks about receiving or rejecting him, his words/teaching, his heavenly Father and his disciples.

Jesus' initial initiative towards people is expressed in his invitation to “**come, follow me**” ([Mark 1:17](#)). There is a difference between those who follow and those who do not. Jesus likens those who follow to those who act on an invitation to a wedding and contrasts them with those who refuse the invitation ([Matthew 22:4-9](#)). In like manner, a difference is noted in the refusal of the elder son to join in the feast celebrating his younger brother's return, despite his father imploring him to come in ([Luke 15:28](#)).

There are strict warnings to those who not only do not follow Jesus but who actively reject his invitation to the extent of preventing others from following him, some even plotting to have Jesus executed ([Luke 11:46](#); [Matthew 3:7](#); [23:27-29](#)). These warnings are severe—indicating what Jesus does not want to happen, not what he hopes will happen. Warnings are given to those whom we care about, not to those for whom we have no concern. The same love and acceptance is exhibited towards those who accept Jesus and those who reject him. However, such love would not be loving if it then failed to note the difference of response and the corresponding consequences.

Jesus welcomes and invites all to respond in a receptive way both to him and to what he offers, which is the reign of the kingdom of God. Though the net is cast wide and the seed is sown everywhere, receiving, trusting and following him call for a particular response. Jesus likens it to the reception of a child. He calls such receptivity faith, belief or trust in him. It includes repenting of putting one's ultimate trust in anyone or anything else. It is summed up in worshipping the Father through the Son and in the Spirit. The gift is offered freely and extended to all. No pre-conditions are set out to limit or restrict who might benefit from it.

### The cost

However, the reception of the freely given gift always involves a cost to the recipient. That cost is to give up one's entire life and hand it over to Jesus and the Father and the Spirit with him. The cost is not something paid to Jesus to enable or incline him to give himself to us. It is the cost of emptying our hands and hearts to receive him for who he is, our Lord and Savior. What is freely given is costly to us to receive because it involves dying to the old and corrupted self in order to receive new life from him.

The cost to us to receive God's free grace is referred to throughout Scripture. In the Old Testament, we are said to need both new hearts and new spirits that God himself will give! In the New Testament we are told that we need to be born again, from above, that we need new natures, that we must stop living for ourselves and begin living under the Lordship of Christ, that we must die to our old natures, that we are to become new creations, that we are to be

regenerated, that we are being renewed according to the image of Christ, the new Adam. The day of Pentecost indicates not only God's sending of his Spirit to indwell his people in a new way, but our need to receive and be indwelt and filled by his Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Jesus, the Spirit of life.

Jesus' parables indicate that the response he is looking for, the response that indicates that the reception of what he offers us involves a cost to us. Consider the parables of the pearl of great price or the purchase of a field in which there is a treasure. Those who respond appropriately must give up all they have to receive what they have found ([Matthew 13:44, 46](#)). Those who place other things as a priority, whether they be lands or home or family, are not receiving Jesus and his benefits ([Luke 9:59, Luke 14:18-20](#)).

Jesus' interactions with people indicate that following him and receiving all his benefits calls for the abandonment of anything we might value above Jesus and his kingdom. That includes abandoning the pursuit of material wealth. The rich ruler did not follow Jesus because he could not part with his goods. Consequently he was unable to receive the good that Jesus offered him ([Luke 18:18-23](#)). Even the woman caught in adultery was called to set out in a different direction of life. Receiving forgiveness was to be followed by her sinning no more ([John 8:11](#)). Recall the man at the pool. He had to be willing to leave behind his place at the pool as well as his diseased self. **"Get up! Pick up your mat and walk"** ([John 5:8](#)).

Jesus welcomes and accepts all, but a receptive response to Jesus does not leave anyone where Jesus finds them. Jesus would not be loving if he simply left them in the condition in which he first encountered them. He loves us too much simply to leave us alone, as though he merely empathizes with us or feels sorry for us. No, his love is a healing, transforming, life-changing love.

The New Testament consistently declares that the response to the free offer that Jesus makes of himself, including all that he has for us, involves denying (dying to) ourselves. It involves giving up our pride, our confidence in ourselves, in our religiousness, in our gifts and abilities, including our ability to manage and give ourselves life. In that regard, Jesus shockingly declares that compared to following him, we must "hate" our father and mother. But more than this, following him calls for hating our own life—the false idea that we can give life to ourselves ([Luke 14:26-27](#)).

When we accept Jesus, we cease living for ourselves ([Romans 14:7-8](#)) because we belong to another ([1 Corinthians 6:18](#)). In that sense, we are "slaves of Christ" ([Ephesians 6:6](#)). Our lives are completely in his hands, under his provision and direction. We are who we are in relationship to him. Because we are united to Christ, **"it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me"** ([Galatians 2:20, ESV](#)).

Jesus accepts and welcomes everyone. He died for all. He is reconciled to all. But he does this as our Lord and Savior. His welcome and acceptance are an offer, an invitation that calls for response, for receptivity. That acceptance and receptivity necessarily involves receiving exactly what he has to offer according to who he is. Nothing more and nothing less.

This means that responding to him will involve repentance, getting rid of anything that blocks receiving what he has to offer, that blocks communion with him and the enjoyment of life in his kingdom. Such a response is costly to us—but a cost well worth it. For in dying to our old selves, we receive a new self. We make room for Jesus, receiving with emptied hands his life-transforming, life-giving grace. Jesus accepts us wherever we are in order to take us to where he is going, which is to be with his Father in the Spirit now, and for all eternity as his healed, whole, regenerated children.

**Who would want to be included in anything less than that?**



**Gary W. Deddo** received a PhD from the University of Aberdeen in 1991. He is President and Professor of Theology at Grace Communion Seminary.

**GCI principle website and Moncton Websites**—a) [www.gci.org](http://www.gci.org) , b) [www.worshipim.ca](http://www.worshipim.ca) , c) <https://www.facebook.com/GCIMoncton> ; d) Grace Communion International-Moncton <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCgKazyWhmKMDZy69vJcFfPg>  
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