

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. 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.worshipim.ca and video sermons are now available on YouTube – GRACE COMMUNION INTERNATIONAL-MONCTON (see link below)

Bible Study Thursday, December 5 at 7:30 PM 3 John

Please take note today, we will have services from head office in the USA. Exceptionally, worship services will be at 1 PM on that day. Should you need the link, please do not hesitate to write to Mr. Vautour

The booklet “We Believe” is available on our www.worshipim.ca website under featured articles. The cited scriptures are written out to make it easier to study.

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 if possible.



Honduras is reeling from the latest storm. The Town of “La Democracia” outside of San Pedro Sula, Honduras, flooded again. People are either in shelters or in the streets. Our church building has been flooded for some time now and many of our members are still displaced.

We pray that the rains subside so it can dry out and folks can go back and assess what is left of their home and belongings.

Please continue to pray, Heber Ticas, Superintendent of Latin America
(November 25, 2020)

To see specific prayer requests from the church, please go to www.gcinewbrunswick.org – 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 that God will strengthen his people with faith, perseverance and love during this difficult pandemic period and that the good news of the Gospel will be spread widely.**

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 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."*

Welcoming New GCI Board Members



Greg and Susan Williams

Not too many people get excited about governmental structures and systems. Who recalls civics class as the most scintillating of your educational journey? I suppose that I am a bit nerdy when it comes to church government, and I will do my best to make this article more exciting than the dry class lectures you may dimly recall.

In Grace Communion International we are "Board Governed." The GCI Denominational Board of Directors are a diverse group of elders responsible for overall stewardship of the

Church and the appointment and oversight of the President. The President is responsible to the Board for the general management of the Church, with the help of other officers, managers, and staff to carry out day-to-day operations of the church. (This is the short version for the civics test.)

The Directors operating according to the organization's Articles and Bylaws have 3 fiduciary responsibilities mandated by law: duty of care, duty of loyalty, and duty of obedience. Board directors are called fiduciaries because they are [legally responsible](#) for the high-level oversight of a non-profit entity ensuring that support is raised and resources are spent well in support of its mission.

Duty of Care

Duty of care means that directors are required to give the same care and concern to their board responsibilities as any prudent and ordinary person would. Board members must be active participants in board meetings and committees. Working with other directors, they actively advance the mission of the Church. They fulfill their responsibilities by overseeing and monitoring the Church's activities, including strategic planning, finances, audits, board director development, and recruiting to ensure the Church's long-term goals are achieved.

Duty of Loyalty

Duty of loyalty means that board directors are required to place the interests of the Church ahead of their own interests. Board members do not serve on the board for personal gain but for the benefit of the organization. They must be loyal to the organization by appointing qualified and loyal members to replace themselves as they rotate out of their positions so that the Church successfully operates as a healthy entity in perpetuity.

Duty of Obedience

Duty of obedience means that directors must ensure that the church is abiding by all applicable laws. The duty of obedience also means that directors carry out the mission of the Church.

Board Officers

The Board appoints "officers" to administer the operations of the Church. The Chair, Vice-Chair, President, Chief Financial Officer, and the Secretary of the Board serve in this capacity. Currently, these positions are filled by Dr. Joseph Tkach, Dr. Randy Bloom, Dr. Greg Williams, and Mathew Morgan, respectively. Dr. Williams and Mr. Morgan serve as ex-officio Board Directors in our governance structure, which means they serve as Board Directors as long as they hold their current positions.

Administration

Under the Board's oversight, the President, working with other officers and managers, provides direct management and administration to carry out the Church's mission and is a steward over the administrative functions and day-to-day management of the Church.

In our governance framework, the President, under the supervision of the Board, provides oversight of Superintendents in the US and abroad, providing worldwide focus and collaboration in pursuit of the mission of preaching the gospel and caring for the church.

Board directors and officers carry weighty responsibilities for the care and welfare of the denomination and must have specific requirements necessary to serve. In addition to a willingness to shoulder the duties mentioned earlier, a director must be an ordained elder in GCI, have relevant advanced education, a willingness to work together with other directors to advance the mission of the Church and be nominated and selected by the Board.

It is my pleasure and joy to share the news that Celestine Olive and Jennifer Gregory have been nominated and elected to serve alongside the current Board Directors (Chair Dr. Joseph Tkach, Vice Chair Dr. Randy Bloom, CFO and Secretary Mathew Morgan, GCI President Dr. Greg Williams, Dr. Russell Duke, and Pastor Tommie Grant).

It is a "Welcome back" to Celestine, as she has served a previous term on the Board. She is now retired from GCI employment and serving actively as an elder in the Lancaster, CA, congregation. ([see her attached bio](#))

Jen will be coming on as a Board Director for the first time. She serves side by side with her husband Anthony as they pastor the Grove City, OH, congregation. Welcome Jen! ([see her attached bio](#))

I think we all can appreciate the quote from the late Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg – "Women belong in all places where decisions are being made. It shouldn't be that women are the exception."

It brings me great joy to have the presence and voices of Celestine and Jen on the GCI Denominational Board of Directors.

I would be remiss not to mention that Dr. Charles Fleming and Elder Wendy Moore just completed their terms of service and have cycled off. A big thank you to Charles and Wendy for their dedicated service.

Please pray for the health and wisdom of the GCI Board of Directors, and that the Lord will continue faithfully guiding our journey forward.

Greg Williams

Grace and Obedience, by Gary Deddo

Even after centuries of debate, Christians still have not settled on how best to speak about the connection between faith in God's grace and obedience. Biblically grounded Christian teachers recognize that salvation is God's work and that it is received by faith. They also recognize that the resulting life with Christ involves obedience. The problem arises in how to affirm the one without denying (or severely qualifying) the other. The challenge is avoiding either lawlessness (antinomianism) or works-righteousness.

Both-and?

Most recognize the validity of both grace and obedience (faith and works). Rather than going the "either-or" route, most embrace some form of the "both-and" approach. However, this approach typically has little to say about the "and"—about how grace and obedience are actually connected. The result is that grace and obedience are artificially laminated together or stacked on top of one another. It is as if they are put into a room together and told to "get along."

Following this approach, efforts to correct perceived errors on one side typically involve emphasizing the other. If the perceived problem is too much works, then grace is emphasized. If it's too much grace, then obedience is emphasized. In similar fashion, various ministries emphasize one or the other, depending on which they think is more dangerous or prevalent. The result of this approach is a "seesaw theology" where the connection between law (works) and grace (faith) remains vague if not altogether absent.

In contrast, the Bible deeply relates and integrates grace and obedience as fundamental to Christian faith and life. For example, in [Romans 1:5](#) and [16:26](#) the apostle Paul says that bringing about this integration was the goal of his ministry. In [14:23](#) he says that any obedience that does not spring from faith is sin! [Hebrews 11](#) offers illustrations of people who obeyed God "by faith." In [1 John 5](#) we are told that God's commands are not burdensome because of the victory of faith in God's grace ([verses 3-4](#)). Jesus reminds us that his burden is easy and his yoke light ([Matthew 11:29-30](#)) and that we are God's "friends," not his slaves. In Galatians, Paul tells us that "faith is made effective through love" ([5:6 NRSV, footnote](#)).

The nature of "AND"

There are dozens of places in the New Testament that clearly establish this connection between grace (faith) and obedience (love for God and for others). But how does the connection work? What is the nature of AND? It is found in the person of Jesus, who alone embodies fully the character, mind, attitude and purpose of God. The object of our faith is

Jesus Christ, and the essence of that faith is trusting in Jesus as God in person according to who he is and what he has done. Faith is our response to who Jesus is in person, word and deed. We put our trust in God because of who Jesus Christ is. He himself is the grace of God towards us.

Jesus is the gospel. He is our salvation. We receive all the benefits of who he is as we trust in him and cast aside (repent of) all rival objects of trust. We then enjoy union and communion with Jesus as our Lord and God. Our lives are united to him and we share in his life, participating with him in all he is doing and will do in our relationship of trust (faith). We have our being by being in fellowship and communion with Jesus, receiving from him all that he has for us, and he taking from us all that we give him. In that union and communion we are transformed, bit by bit ([2 Corinthians 3:18](#)) to share more of Christ's glorified human nature, his character. We can count on this on-going gracious work of Christ by the Spirit even if much remains hidden ([Colossians 3:3](#)) and we remain mere earthen vessels ([2 Corinthians 4:7](#)).

Our view of Jesus

The problem is that people have too small a view of Jesus and thus a restricted faith in him. Though they may trust him for future salvation (getting into heaven), that's pretty much it. However, when we look closely at Scripture, we see that Jesus is both Savior and Commander. Jesus saves us by grace and also commands things of us.

Our obedience to his commands does not earn us salvation, so why is obedience important? Perhaps we think that we must obey simply because our Commander says so—because he is big and powerful and we had better obey or else! Approached in this way, obedience becomes an act of will in response to the might and seemingly arbitrary will of God. This is the obedience of a slave.

The problem with this approach to obedience is that it reflects a shrunken conception of Jesus and what he offers. We need to see all of who Jesus is and all of what he offers if we are to grasp all of what we can trust him for. We begin by understanding that Jesus is Lord of the whole cosmos, the entire universe; Lord of all reality, and he has a good and loving purpose for it all. He is redeeming all things and will renew heaven and earth. He is Lord and Savior over every aspect of human life and has a purpose for every dimension of our existence. It is all to be a channel of his blessing to us and through us to others. All of it, every relationship, is meant to lead to life and life abundantly. Even our eating and drinking is to reflect the glory of our life-giving God ([1 Corinthians 10:31](#)). Every relationship is to be a fruitful gift exchange that contributes to a fullness of life and a fullness of love.

Jesus' authority extends into every aspect of created existence, into every dimension of life at every level: mathematical, physical, chemical, biological, animal, human, social, cultural, linguistic, artistic, judicial, economic, psychological, philosophical, religious and spiritual. All this has its origin in fellowship and communion with God through Christ. This relationship with God through Christ works its way into every avenue of life under his redeeming lordship. God's grace has to do with everything. That's the foundation of a Christian worldview.

Everything we receive from God we pass on to others to contribute to God's universe-wide purposes. This is especially true in our relationships. We receive forgiveness of sins—renewing grace to start again with hope. We receive God's generosity, providing us all the fruit of the Spirit. We receive comfort, love, transforming power, purpose and direction in life to be a sign and witness to the grace and goodness of God. We become witnesses to the truth and holy loving character of God. All these things point to eternal life—life with God as his beloved children in holy, loving unity.

Trust and obey

Our faith is a trust in God through Christ for all these things, not just for “going to heaven” or “being in the kingdom” someday. Every command of God and every act of obedience is keyed to some aspect of what we can trust God for:

- We forgive because we have been and will be forgiven.
- We love, because we are first loved by God.
- We love our enemies because God first loved us and also loves (wants his best) for his and our enemies.
- We can be generous because God is generous with us.
- We can be truthful and honest because God is truthful and honest and will bring out the truth in the end.
- We can be creative and helpful because God is creative and helpful to us.
- We comfort others in their grief because God comforts us in our grief.
- We can be patient because God is patient with us.
- We can be peacemakers because God is a peacemaker.
- We can pursue justice and right relationships at every level, because God is just and righteous.
- We can be reconcilers because God is a reconciler.

All our doing by faith is participating in what God is doing through Christ and in the Spirit. That means everything we do is fellowship and communion with Christ. We never act alone—because we are never alone but are united to Christ as his brothers and sisters and members of the family of God.

Imperatives flow from indicatives

We obey by faith when we see all of who Jesus is in any given situation, trust him to be faithful in that situation and then act as if he will be faithful. That is, we act on our faith in who he is. Connected to every command in Scripture is some kind of reference to who God is and what he can be trusted for. Seeing the connection between what God can be trusted for and what he then directs us to do generates the obedience of faith.

James Torrance said that every imperative of grace is built on a foundation of an indicative of grace.^[1] There is always a connection, because all of God's commands to us (the imperatives) arise out of his own character, heart, nature and purpose, including everything he has done for us in Jesus Christ (the indicatives). God is not arbitrary—his will for us always is informed and controlled by his nature and character as the Triune God who came to us in Jesus Christ so that we might have fellowship and communion with him in holy love.

Faith in God's grace arises out of a trust in God because of Jesus Christ, and obedience to the God of grace arises out of a trust in God because of Jesus Christ. Faith and obedience have the same source—the faithfulness of God in Christ. They both are a response to who Christ is. They have the same Trinitarian, Incarnational theological source. Both are the fruit of a trusting relationship with God through Christ in the Spirit.

Guidelines for preaching/teaching

Here are guidelines that I've developed to help keep grace and obedience together in Jesus:

- Never call for an act of obedience without first showing how that call to action corresponds to something we can trust God for. Always look for the indicatives of grace that are the foundation for the imperatives (commands) of grace in every biblical passage.
- Always indicate the character of the gracious, saving, redeeming Commander. Never present God as merely a commander with a strong will disconnected from his heart, mind, character and purpose, which we see in Jesus Christ. Always begin by answering the foundational question, Who are you, Lord? Doing so makes our preaching and teaching truly Trinitarian and Incarnational.
- Never simply preach to a person's will or power of choice. Behind every act of will and choice is a desire, a hope, a love, a fear, a trust or distrust. That is, behind every act there is belief or unbelief, trust or distrust in God. Preach to persons' hearts, their affections, their yearnings concerning the character, purpose and heart of God and his desire for our fellowship and communion with him. Preach what God can be trusted for. He can be counted on to keep his promises. Feed people's faith hope and love for God. Obedience will flow out of that.
- Do not preach: "If you...then God." Doing so tempts people into legal obedience and works-righteousness. Instead, preach: "Since God in Christ by the Spirit...then you ____." Or, "As you do x, y or z out of trust, you will be receiving what God offers us in Christ." For example, say, "As we confess our sins, we experience the forgiveness that God has already given us in Christ."
- Present obedience as "going to work with God"—as an act of fellowship with God that involves us in what the Spirit of God is doing.
- Preach obedience as a "get to," not a "have to." Preach it as the privilege of a child of God, not the grit-your-teeth duty of the slave of a God who imposes his will on others.
- Do not seek to motivate others on the basis of trying to close a supposed "credibility gap" between the "reality" of this fallen world and an ideal that we suppose God hopes for. It is not our calling to build the kingdom or to make God's ideal actual. Rather, preach the reality of who God is and what he does (and has done), and the calling we have to participate with God in making visible a bit of that reality. With this approach, our only choice is either to affirm and participate in the reality that God has established in Christ by the Spirit, or to deny and to refuse to participate. We have no power to change that reality, but only to choose whether we will participate.
- Preach and teach the grace of God as a finished work—a reality that we can count on even if it is hidden for now. Do not teach it as a potential that God has made possible if we do x, y or z—God is not dependent on our actions. Rather, he invites our participation in what he has done, is doing and will do. Preach like Jesus: "**The kingdom of God has come near, so repent and believe in that good news.**" Preach like Peter: "**Since God has made Jesus Lord and Savior, therefore repent and believe.**" The desired action is presented as a response to who God is and what he has done.
- Never preach as if God cannot be more faithful than we are—as if God is limited by what we do or don't do. Paul says, "**If we are faithless, he [God] remains faithful**" (2 Timothy 2:13). We may miss out on being involved, but God will still accomplish his good purposes. God does not need us, but he delights in having his children involved in what he is doing. We were created for fellowship (communion, partnership) with God.

- Do not grant reality-making power to human actions, as if what we do makes “all the difference.” Christ alone gets that credit. Our actions, whether they be great or small (as small as a cup of water, or a mustard seed of faith), amount only to a few loaves and fish to feed 5000. They are signs pointing to the coming kingdom of God. We are mere witnesses, and our sign-acts are partial, imperfect, temporary and only provisional. But by God’s grace, the Spirit uses these meager things to point people to Christ so that they may put their entire trust in him according to who he really is.
- Realize that you will have to trust mightily—trust in the unconditional grace of God to bring about the obedience of faith—in order to preach and teach this way and not succumb to the temptation to revert back to making it sound like God’s grace depends on our response (and thus conditional upon our action).
- Know that you, like Paul, will not be able to prevent some people from trying to take advantage of grace (even though taking advantage of it is not receiving it, but rejecting it!). You will be accused by some, just like Paul was, of encouraging sin and disobedience (antinomianism)! But Paul did not change his message of grace under the pressure of such accusations. We must not attempt to prevent this rejection and abuse of grace by changing our message to a conditioned grace or an arbitrary obedience, as happened in Galatia. Making that switch would be a denial of the gospel of God in Jesus Christ.

I hope you can see how this biblical orientation brings together grace and obedience in an organic, personal and integrated way so that there is no “either-or” separation, nor a simplistic seesaw “both-and” juxtaposition of two different things. Those who love and trust God through Christ in the Spirit as Lord of the universe will desire to be faithful to him and with him in every dimension of life here and now, even in our current fallen condition.

[1] These are grammatical terms for verbs. Commands are in the imperative mood; statements of fact are in the indicate mood.



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

Comment from Mr. Vautour: I would encourage you to listen to this most inspiring interview between John Lennox, a scientist and Christian teaching at Oxford University and John Wyatt, a medical doctor.

<https://pillarandstep.com/john-lennox-john-wyatt>

GCI principle website and Moncton Websites—a) www.gci.org , b) gcinewbrunswick.org , c)

<https://www.facebook.com/GCIMoncton> ; d) *Grace Communion International-Moncton*

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCgKazyWhmKmDZy69vJcFfPg>

For a wealth of helpful articles about God, grace and his plan for salvation, who we are, etc., please see the GCI.org website.

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