

**Prayer of Thanksgiving:** That God hears our prayers. **“Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise.” (Jas 5:13 ESV)**

Please do not forget to pray for all the shut-ins and isolated brothers and sisters in our congregations Mrs. Jack and C. Campbell (Fredericton) and J. Steffes (Caribou, Me), Mr. Ross Bathurst, P. Ward (Saint John) and others.

**Open Hand Food Bank – Moncton** - is in need of grocery plastic bags to give out food to those in need. If you are interested in donating your unused grocery bags, you can bring them to church and someone will collect them and bring them over. Those who want to bring food to give to the **Open Food Bank** may do so by bringing to church and giving it to **Michael M.** of the Moncton congregation.

---

**ACTIVITIES FOR THE MONTH OF October 2018**

**Friday, October 5 and Saturday, October 6** – Thanksgiving celebration same venue as last year – **Congregational Christian Church of Moncton, 1530 Ryan St, Moncton.** On Saturday morning, at 10:30 AM, there will be a presentation by Mr. Bill Hall, GCI Canadian Dir. the church door will open at 9:30 AM when will have hot beverages and some “morning food” will be provided. This is meant to be a time of fellowship.

This will be followed by a meal at around 12 PM.

Worship Services will be at 2:15 PM or 2:30 PM.

Times of worship services: **Moncton** – 10:30 AM every Sunday except for October 7 -services are cancelled.

**In Saint John**, worship services will be October 14 and 28.

**Communion**- on the second and fourth Sunday of the month.

**Address: Moncton**—70 King St. —Sage building;

**Saint John**—50 Newport Cres., Portland United church.

**We will continue with the discipleship groups in Moncton in the month of October with dates yet to be determined.**

---

**Prayer suggestions:**

**The good news of the gospel is a message to be shared with others.** Please pray that God will give us the love and wisdom to be able to share this message with others in a loving, clear and confident matter as we participate in his missional work on the earth in our generation.

**“5 ¶ Conduct yourselves wisely toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. 6 Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.” (Col 4:5-6 ESV)**

**Please pray** that God will put an end to the senseless violence happening in North America continent and other parts of the world.

**Pray that we will see the good works that God has prepared for us in advance** so that we can enthusiastically participate in the on-going work He is doing now on this earth in bringing people in relationship with him in Jesus by the Holy Spirit.

**Please pray, as per Jesus instructions, the disciples prayer, “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.**

**<sup>10</sup> Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven” (Matt 6:9-10)** as our world is suffering so much and in need of complete restoration by the King of kings, Jesus. As we are his royal priesthood, let us proclaim the excellencies of him who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light, as we are instructed in 1 Peter 2.

**Pray for the world and for all people:** we live in a world that does not know the way to peace. Important to pray as we are instructed by the apostle Paul — **“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,” (1Ti 2:1–3 ESV)**

---

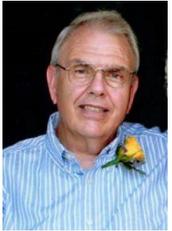
**THIS IS MY STORY**

Posted by GCI Update on September 12, 2018 under From the President |

**“From the President” this week is by GCI Vice President, Greg Williams.**



Greg Williams



Dean Williams

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

My father, Dean Williams, provided my first link to GCI (formerly WCG). While serving as a lay pastor in a small Advent Christian church in Dana, NC, dad began studying WCG literature. Then in 1974, he contracted Ankylosing Spondylitis, a crippling form of rheumatoid arthritis that caused his vertebrae to begin fusing, resulting in terrible pain. As a result, he was bedridden for a year. He used that time to study WCG's 58-lesson *Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course*.

Though lacking formal Bible training, my dad had always been a dedicated student of the Bible. So, after completing the *Correspondence Course*, he had many questions. In 1975, he contacted WCG headquarters in Pasadena, CA, and was put in contact with Hugh Wilson, the WCG pastor nearest our home. When the two met, my dad wanted to discuss the book of Romans. My dad's contention was that in Romans, grace wins out over law. Pastor Wilson countered with WCG's belief that God's law was still in force since the church lives in the time between the old and new covenants (with the new not fully in force until Jesus returns).

Acquiescing to Hugh's argument, dad led my family in leaving the Christian Advent church to become Sabbath-keeping WCG members. Every Saturday we would travel 30 miles to attend WCG church services in Asheville, NC. This meant that I was taken out of the normal routine of a 17-year-old who had been active in school life as a three-sport athlete. Instead, I became an active participant in WCG's Youth Opportunities United (YOU) activities,

driving across state lines to attend family weekends in places I had never visited before. I excelled in YOU track and field competitions, going from regional to tri-regional events, and then to the 1978 YOU national track meet in Pasadena, CA. I was then invited to attend a National Youth Leadership weekend in Pasadena. These activities solidified my desire to attend Ambassador College. There I met a co-ed named Susan Lang. We attended Ambassador from 1979 to 1983, and were married in 1984.

Though lacking formal Bible training, my dad had always been a dedicated student of the Bible. So, after completing the *Correspondence Course*, he had many questions. In 1975, he contacted WCG headquarters in Pasadena, CA, and was put in contact with Hugh Wilson, the WCG pastor nearest our home. When the two met, my dad wanted to discuss the book of Romans. My dad's contention was that in Romans, grace wins out over law. Pastor Wilson countered with WCG's belief that God's law was still in force since the church lives in the time between the old and new covenants (with the new not fully in force until Jesus returns). Acquiescing to Hugh's argument, dad led my family in leaving the Christian Advent church to become Sabbath-keeping WCG members. Every Saturday we would travel 30 miles to attend WCG church services in Asheville, NC. This meant that I was taken out of the normal routine of a 17-year-old who had been active in school life as a three-sport athlete. Instead, I became an active participant in WCG's Youth Opportunities United (YOU) activities, driving across state lines to attend family weekends in places I had never visited before. I excelled in YOU track and field competitions, going from regional to tri-regional events, and then to the 1978 YOU national track meet in Pasadena, CA. I was then invited to attend a National Youth Leadership weekend in Pasadena. These activities solidified my desire to attend Ambassador College. There I met a co-ed named Susan Lang. We attended Ambassador from 1979 to 1983, and were married in 1984.



Linda and Hugh Wilson, who now live in Colorado Springs, CO.

In October of 1986 I was ordained an elder in WCG and by the summer of 1987, Susan and I, with our newborn twins Glenn and Garrett, were on our way to Denver, CO, where I served as an Associate Pastor. There we crossed paths again with Hugh Wilson who was now the pastor of WCG's congregation in nearby Fort Collins. Hugh and his wife Linda went above and beyond in making us (a couple with newborn twins!) feel accepted into ministry. We are still grateful for the wonderful way they treated us.

Fast-forwarding now in the story, by 1996 WCG had fully embraced the biblical teaching that the new covenant was fully in force with Jesus' death, resurrection and ascension. This means that the church is under grace, not law. That year I once again crossed paths with Hugh Wilson. Being a likeable and

humble man, he said, "Greg, I guess your dad won that argument we had about the book of Romans!" We had a good chuckle, and when I shared the story with my dad, his heart was warmed.



Fanny Crosby

My dad was a huge admirer of Fanny Crosby. Though becoming blind shortly following birth, she is said to have composed over 8,000 hymns! Fanny's lyrics testify to a believer who, despite physical blindness, saw Jesus with clear, strong eyes of faith. Her hymn, "Blessed Assurance," was my dad's favorite. Its first line proclaims a great truth: "Blessed assurance Jesus is mine!" The chorus then adds, "This is my story, this is my song, praising my Savior all the day long."

My dad's journey, from grace to law, then back to grace, is also my story—one with a conclusion that is the testimony of all believers: *Jesus is mine, and I am his.*

Praising my Savior, all the day long, Greg Williams

---

## Church, Kingdom & Government part 1

Posted by GCI Update on September 12, 2018 under [Church Development](#) |

*Here is part one of The Church, the Kingdom and Human Government—a three-part essay from Grace Communion Seminary President Gary Deddo (click [here](#) for part 2, and [here](#) for part 3).*

### Introduction

Scripture declares that the resurrected and ascended Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior of all the cosmos! This singular revelation, coupled with the whole of the Scriptural revelation, sheds light on everything—on all of life and all history (and beyond!). Who Jesus Christ is, what he has done, is doing and will yet do as Creator and Redeemer, has *everything to do with everything!*

As Christians, we apply this insight to our life together as the body of Christ, the church, and then to the other spheres of life beyond the boundaries of the church. In doing so, we are thinking out of a *Christ-centered worldview* [1]—a way of seeing all spheres of life in accordance with the mind of Christ. A primary challenge in this is to discern Christ-centered answers to two important questions:

- Since Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior of all, what should the message of the church be to the world outside the church?
- As Christians, how should we live in relationship to the spheres of human life that surround the community of the church?

Properly answering these questions necessitates having a Christ-centered, biblically-informed understanding of the nature, purpose and interrelationships of three key spheres:

- The church of Jesus Christ.
- The kingdom of God.
- Human government outside the church.

How we understand these spheres and their interrelationships shapes how we live in the world as followers of Jesus. Sadly, some have misunderstood what the Bible teaches and, consequently, have become cynical or hopeless noting that neither the church nor any human governments are the ideal. Others have compromised their faithfulness to Jesus and the church, seduced by false hopes and catastrophic fears promulgated by worldly ideologies.

To avoid these pitfalls, it is vital that we think carefully about this topic and not *assume* that what we read and hear are true. As of yet, a clear consensus within the church concerning how to put all this together has not been achieved. That lack seems to be due to the failure of much teaching to take into full account the triune nature of God, the return of Jesus (bringing about the fullness of the kingdom), the nature of the church, and the nature of human governments. Thus, there has been a failure to account for the purpose and place of each of the three spheres in God's plan, leading to the blurring of the biblical distinctions between them. This has, in turn, led to the church making these mistakes:

- Losing track of its God-given purposes and proper boundaries.
- Regarding itself as the kingdom (rule and reign) of God, standing within the larger world.
- Setting itself up as the ideal human government, standing over other governments, assuming that the church is the kingdom of God on earth.
- Promoting certain human governments as being the kingdom of God on earth with universal rule over all other human authorities, thus ceding to human government what belongs to God alone.

When these and similar mistakes have been made, the church has lost its saltiness (by which it seasons the world) and its voice (by which it proclaims to the world the true hope of humanity). In this essay, we'll seek to avoid these mistakes by defining the God-ordained roles for and the interrelations of the church, the kingdom of God, and human government. In doing so we'll draw on the insights of several theologians who, sharing our incarnational Trinitarian foundations, articulate a theological synthesis of the biblical revelation concerning the topic. Though it can't address every related issue, we'll seek in this essay to provide a succinct outline of a Christ-centered, gospel-shaped and biblically-informed way to approach the topic. Let's begin by addressing a vital point: *The church is not the kingdom of God.*

### The church is not the kingdom

Though not entirely separate, the church and the kingdom of God are not the same, and must not be confused. Since Jesus is Lord of both, believers (members of the church) do belong to the kingdom. However, they cannot participate in the kingdom *in the same way* they participate in the church, because the fullness of the kingdom is yet to come. In the meantime, the church operates within "the present evil age" ([Gal. 1:4](#)). During this "time-between-the-times" (between Jesus' first and second advents), it does not seem that all things are in subjection to Christ's lordship ([Heb. 2:8](#)). Therefore, the church's basic orientation to the kingdom is one of expectation and hope, awaiting the coming fullness of the kingdom ([Matt. 25: 34](#); [Luke 22:18](#); [James 2:5](#); [1 Thess. 4:15](#); [1 Peter 1:3, 13](#); [Titus 2:13](#)).

For now, the church gathers to worship the triune God. These gatherings include those who have been incorporated into the body of Christ by receiving, as a gift, the "down payment" (or "first fruits") of the Holy Spirit. Believers are "sealed" with the Holy Spirit, who is

given to them based on Christ's finished work. Those indwelt by the Spirit have met the King and are enjoying daily personal fellowship and communion with God through the Spirit. In that way, they are experiencing the first fruits of the coming kingdom, which already has drawn near. They worship God in Spirit and in truth, receiving the fruit of the Spirit into their lives, and serving one another using the gifts the Spirit distributes to the body of Christ as he wills.

The promise made by Jesus of the coming of the Spirit to form and be with the church has come to pass. However, the promise Jesus made regarding the kingdom has largely not come to pass. So, during this present age, the church waits patiently and with great expectation, for Jesus' bodily return to earth to usher in the kingdom's fullness. Because Jesus is now bodily absent from earth, his kingdom is yet to come—his rule and reign are yet to be fully manifested here on earth. That fullness is only possible when he will be personally present to reign. Therefore, the church does not, indeed cannot, experience the fullness of Christ's rule and reign here and now. That is why we pray, as Jesus taught us, "Thy kingdom come" (Matt. 6:10, KJV).

During this age, the church does not yet exemplify the total and final reality of the kingdom of God. Neither Jesus nor his select apostles expected that it would. Rather, the church is being continually sanctified by the ongoing ministry of the Holy Spirit in accordance with Jesus' high-priestly prayer in John chapter 17. As Jesus noted in the parable of the wheat and tares (Matt. 13:24-30 KJV), the church in this age is far from sharing in the fullness of Christ's rule and reign. The assembly of the church includes both believers (wheat) and not-yet-believers (tares)—even some tares opposed to Christ. However, the church does provide concrete (albeit imperfect) witness to Jesus, proclaiming the sure, future coming of his kingdom in all its fullness.

The kingdom: *already-but-not-yet*

Though the fullness of the kingdom is yet to come, it is present already in a limited way. Through knowing Jesus and being, by the Spirit, in a right relationship with him, the church experiences something of Christ's rule and reign in this age. In this way, the church is said to be a "sign" (or "parable") of the coming fullness of the kingdom of God. At the present time, the kingdom is mostly hidden, and so its coming fullness is the Christian's hope. The church does enjoy fellowship with the King of the coming kingdom. It does *participate* (has "*koinonia*") by the Spirit in the kingdom that is yet coming in fullness. That participation now is a *sign*—a real, actual pointer to what is yet to come. As a sign, it is not itself what it points to, namely the promised fullness of the kingdom.

The New Testament uses the idea of signs frequently. It speaks of believers having an inheritance, a down payment, the first fruits, and a sealing. As those living in the "time-between-the-times," Christians do not yet possess in full what these signs portend—we don't yet have what we will inherit, the full payment, the full harvest, or what is yet to be unsealed. Thus we understand that the church, being a sign of the coming kingdom, participates in the kingdom now in part, but not yet in its fullness. [2]

For Christians, the kingdom is regarded as an inheritance that will be received when Jesus returns and sets up the fullness of the kingdom. At that point in time (which Scripture calls "the end of the age") all will necessarily recognize Jesus as Lord and Savior—even those who refuse to enter his kingdom (Phil. 2:9-11). At that time, all powers and authorities will be subservient to him and his goodness and grace (1 Cor. 15:25-28). Evil will be no more. Every tear will be wiped away (Rev. 7:17; 21:4) and all things will be made new (Rev. 21:5). Those who presently believe in Christ, acknowledging him as King and Lord of all, hope and pray for the coming fullness of his kingdom, and they look forward to entering it. As noted in Jesus' teaching and throughout the New Testament, that coming is regarded as a *future* event, which will occur only at the end of the age. Meanwhile, believers participate in Christ's assembly, the church.

### **The church: commissioned to *proclaim*, not *be* the kingdom**

Jesus has commissioned the church to preach the kingdom of God as the world's ultimate hope. Note that the church does not preach the church—instead it proclaims the ultimate hope of the church. Note also that the church is not commissioned to declare the church to be an ideal social or political entity. The church is not the kingdom and it ought not try to be or set up the kingdom.

The church has not been commissioned to try to establish an earthly ideal prior to Christ's return. This is true whether we're addressing the role of the church in society, or the church taking over the role of human governments. The gospel is not a message of humanistic idealism achieved with a little outside help from God.

Jesus and his apostles taught that the church must pray to God, asking him (not the church) to bring about the arrival of the kingdom on earth so that his will would be done fully on earth as it is in heaven. Jesus taught that his kingdom was "not from this world" (John 18:36, NET) and its coming is not something that can be observed (Luke 17:20). Thus the kingdom of God cannot be identified simplistically with any earthbound thing, event or pattern of events.

The kingdom of God does not arise from within this present evil age. It does not develop out of the systems within our fallen world. Rather it is given from above (by God from heaven) and comes to earth with Christ's coming down from above, from where he now is seated in the presence of the Father. Until that coming occurs, the church acts here and now with hope and expectation as it waits with patience.

Following Jesus' ascension and awaiting the sending of the Spirit, the disciples were counting on Jesus' promise that the kingdom was coming (though Jesus had not told them when). Just before the ascension, they had pressed Jesus for the details, wondering if the

kingdom would arrive immediately, perhaps with the coming of the Spirit. In reply, Jesus revealed three things about the kingdom of God:

- That it was *coming*, thus indicating that it was not already fully present.
- That the Spirit would definitely come to them soon, while the kingdom, in contrast, would arrive at an indefinite future time—a time unknown, even to Jesus.
- That though the coming of the Spirit and the coming of the kingdom are related, they are not the same thing, and so will be manifested at separate times.

As we know, the Spirit descended on Pentecost and indwelt those who received him. That great event inaugurated the church, not the fullness of the kingdom. The church, rather than being the kingdom, is a “sign” of the kingdom, for in the church the King is recognized even if the extent of his kingship (his rule and reign, which constitutes the kingdom) is not fully evident to all here and now.

So, while the Spirit became present and active in a new way at Pentecost, the kingdom did not come—it was not set up in its fullness on that day. However, the church was brought into being that day and its presence on earth continues. The Spirit came but Jesus, the King, ascended.

In reciting the Lord’s prayer and otherwise, the church has always prayed for the kingdom to come. Doing so was in accordance with what Jesus taught his disciples, for the kingdom is a disciple’s ultimate hope. In hope, we long for Jesus’ kingship to be fully manifested, operative and experienced in all the world (Luke 11:2). Beginning with Pentecost, the church was clearly established on earth and could be observed. Believers clearly are participants in the church as members of the body of Christ, here and now (between the times). The same cannot be said about their participation in the kingdom of God.

Before the arrival of the kingdom in all its fullness, the church exists on earth in particular times and locations. In his letters, Paul addresses them as such: “To the church gathered at [name of city or region].” The church is the visible assembly of those incorporated by the Spirit into the body of Christ—those called and gathered for worship. They are also those who are then sent out to share, with Christ, in the Father’s mission to the world by the Holy Spirit. They fulfill this calling by proclaiming the King and his coming kingdom. Notice that the church does not go out and proclaim itself. There is a distinction to be made here. The kingdom is the hope of the world. That cannot be said about the church. Instead, the church is a humble witness to (sign of) the kingdom. Yes, those who are incorporated into the church by the Spirit will experience something of the benefits of the kingdom now, though the kingdom is yet to come in its fullness.

The calling (vocation) of the church is not to be the kingdom, but to bear witness in word and deed to Jesus and to the hope of his coming kingdom. That hope will be fulfilled only when Jesus returns. The kingdom, which is hoped for, is not and cannot be seen here and now:

For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. (Rom. 8:24-25, NRSV)

In the present age, the church with its members has a personal relationship with the Triune God that is centered on worship and witness. All that Christ has done for us is still being worked out in us as we continually hear the Word of God and by the continuous ministry of the Holy Spirit, who leads the church on mission, witnessing to Christ and his kingdom. As the body of Christ, the church, we have not reached the goal, but we are on the way. We know the Lord and receive from him his grace, peace, joy and comfort, even before the complete rule and reign of Christ becomes evident. As believers, we are in real, daily and dynamic personal relationship with the head of the body (Christ) by the Holy Spirit.

By God’s grace, the church as a community and as individuals is given the privilege of bearing witness to who Jesus is and to the hope of his coming rule and reign, which will range over the whole earth and the entire cosmos, establishing a new heaven and earth—something that has not yet occurred. It should also be noted that the existence of the church is part of that witness to what is yet to come, namely the kingdom of God. *Lord, speed that day!*

**GCI principle** website and Moncton Websites—[www.gci.org](http://www.gci.org), [www.worshipim.ca](http://www.worshipim.ca), [www.facebook.com/GCIMoncton](https://www.facebook.com/GCIMoncton); For a wealth of helpful articles about God, grace and his plan for salvation, who we are, etc., please see the GCI.org website. *Contact Information: Pastor’s contact information: email—[evautour47@outlook.com](mailto:evautour47@outlook.com)*