



GRACE COMMUNION
INTERNATIONAL

Living and Sharing the Gospel

Weekly bulletin
October 17 , 2021

Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, we will continue to have worship services online through the Zoom platform, until further notice. You are welcome to worship with us on Sunday at 10:30 a.m. If you need information about how to join with us for worship services, please contact Mr. Vautour, minister. The contact information is at the bottom of the bulletin.

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.

Please note that audio and video sermons and other materials are also available on our local website at www.gcine Brunswick.org; Mr. Greg Williams' sermon given during the 2021 Denominational Celebration is posted on our website in the section sermons, 2021, October. It is both in video and audio format.

Offerings:

You can make your donation by cheque; Address: Grace Communion International- Canada, Suite 203A, 2121 Airport Dr., Saskatoon, SK 7S1 6W5.

You can call 1-306-653-2705 (GCI Canada main phone number) and make credit card donation.

E-transfers to khorwood@gcicanada.ca (her full name is Kathleen Horwood). There is no need for a password as the donations are deposited directly into the GCI banking account. In the subject or message line, write the name of your church and your member number. Most banks send an immediate confirmation of successful deposit. If you do not know your member number, please write to Mr. Vautour at the email address below.

You can also donate to our GCI Canada website at [Grace Communion International - Canada \(gcicanada.ca\)](http://Grace Communion International - Canada (gcicanada.ca)); click on Donate. In the donation box detail, and under **Fund**, make sure you click on General. In the message box, make sure that you identify your church and your church member number. If you don't know your church number, please contact Mr. Vautour.

The next Bible Study will be on Thursday October 21, 2021 @ 7:30 p.m.

There are new prayer requests on our local website – www.gcine Brunswick.org under “Members Only”

To see specific prayer requests from the church, please go to www.gcine Brunswick.org–under “Members Only” and type the password. If you do not know the password, please contact Mr. Vautour at evautour47@outlook.com

Let us pray according to God's will and as per his instructions: **“1 ¶ First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgiving 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.” (1 Ti 2:1-4 ESV)**

- Let us thank God for his grand purpose in creating mankind. While respecting our God-given freedom, God's desire is that everyone will say “Yes” to Jesus “Yes” for us.

- Let us thank God that He loves his creation. He loves humanity. He is love. Our brokenness does not change His love.
 - As believers, we live in what the apostle Paul describes as “this present evil world”. This is our present reality. Because we are light in the Lord, we are to walk as children of light in this world (Eph. 5:8). Let us ask for all believers to be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of our Lord, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God (Colossians 1:9-10)
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CHURCH: LAY MEMBERS’ ROLE IN THE EARLY CHURCH

(<https://www.gci.org/articles/lay-members-role-in-the-early-church/>)

Acts 2 describes the setting: God-fearing Jews from various nations had gathered in Jerusalem for the Day of Pentecost. The Holy Spirit filled the apostles and other disciples, and they spoke in tongues. Although the pilgrims came from 15 territories — north, south, east and west — each traveler heard his or her own native language. After Peter spoke, 3,000 baptisms took place that day ([Acts 2:41](#)). The church continued to grow rapidly (verse 47).

What happened to these people? Where did they go? What is their legacy? We know of Peter, John and Paul. Stephen’s strength in martyrdom inspires us; Philip’s faith encourages us. What of the other members?

Every great work finds support in a group of people with a shared vision. The church is no different. Thousands of members supported Peter, John, Paul and other leaders. The mission of all these dedicated people was to preach redemption through Jesus Christ beginning in Jerusalem and extending to the whole world.

Heroic literature seldom mentions the commoner standing side-by-side with the hero. However, God’s Word records the faith, courage, dedication and work of many members of the early church. Their lives are inspiring examples of personal evangelism. They helped spread the gospel. These faithful members of nearly 20 centuries ago inspire us in our work today. There were no fanfares, booklets or articles. But there was faith, the Holy Spirit, love for others and a vision of a new life. The ordinary members made a difference in their society for the kingdom of God. Let’s look at what some of them did.

Examples of the earliest Christians

On the Day of Pentecost, people from many different lands became disciples of Jesus Christ. As the church grew, some of the Jewish leaders caused a persecution. After Stephen’s martyrdom, members fled, but they did not remain silent. **“Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went”** ([Acts 8:4](#)). They were fruitful. In [Acts 11:19-21](#), we see the result of their faithfulness:

Those who had been scattered by the persecution in connection with Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, telling the message only to Jews. Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus. The Lord’s hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord.

Despite persecution, these believers — perhaps thousands of them — bravely and faithfully taught the word given them. In the deep conviction of their faith and inspired by the Holy Spirit, they preached the gospel (the Greek word in verse 20 is *euangelizomai*). Many people responded to their teaching and believed in Jesus Christ. Some of these believers may have been the 70 or 72 that Christ

had commissioned earlier ([Luke 10:1](#)), but most were probably lay members. That's why the Jerusalem church needed to send Barnabas to minister to the new believers ([Acts 11:22-23](#)).

One man in the Decapolis

In at least one instance, Jesus instructed someone other than the apostles to tell people what Jesus had done. After casting a legion of demons out of a man who lived on the southeast side of the Sea of Galilee ([Luke 8:26-37](#)), the man asked for permission to travel with Jesus (**verse 38**). Jesus replied, **"Return home and tell how much God has done for you."**

The man did more than Jesus had asked: **"The man went away and told all over town how much Jesus had done for him" (verse 39). "All the people were amazed" (Mark 5:20).** Later, Christ toured the area of the Decapolis. People brought a man to him for healing ([Mark 7:31-32](#)). Perhaps the witness of the healed demoniac helped the people respond to Jesus.

Similarly, the Samaritan woman told her people about Jesus ([John 4:28-29](#)). **"Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony" (verse 39).**

Paul refers to the staying power of some early converts in [Romans 16:7](#). He says Andronicus and Junia **"were in Christ before I was."** They were probably some of the Roman Jews converted on the Day of Pentecost. Paul also mentions Epenetus, **"who was the first convert to Christ in the province of Asia" (verse 5).** [Acts 2:9](#) mentions people from Asia in Jerusalem for Pentecost.

Philip

As we follow the church's growth after Pentecost, many members of the earliest era of the church leave a remarkable legacy. Philip, a leader of the Greek-speaking Christians in Jerusalem ([Acts 6:5-6](#)), went to Samaria ([Acts 8:5-8](#)), perhaps fleeing Saul's persecutions (**verses 3-4**). There he preached the gospel, as other members did elsewhere. The intensity of his speaking and the power of the Holy Spirit were followed by miracles. **"When they believed Philip as he preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women" (verse 12).**

Later, Philip was led by the Holy Spirit to witness to an Ethiopian (**verses 26-40**). He explained **"the good news about Jesus"** (verse 35), and he baptized the Ethiopian. Was Philip ordained? The book of Acts doesn't say. Luke didn't think it important to indicate whether he was or not. Many years later, Philip was an evangelist in Caesarea, and his four daughters had the gift of prophecy ([Acts 21:8](#)).

Called to baptize an apostle

Acts 9 records the important role of another member, Ananias. All Judea and the surrounding regions knew of Saul's severe persecutions of the church. While on the way to Damascus, Saul lost his eyesight during a miraculous intervention. In response to a vision ([Acts 9:10](#)), Ananias sought for and baptized the chief persecutor, Saul of Tarsus.

We know little of Ananias except that he **"was a devout observer of the law and highly respected by all the Jews" (Acts 22:12).** Consider the faith and courage required of Ananias. Paul's reputation was so bad that even the Jerusalem disciples, veterans of many persecutions, feared to meet Paul when he later wanted to join them ([Acts 9:26](#)). Knowing Paul's reputation and authority to inflict terror, Ananias asked the Lord if this was the right person (**verses 13-14**). Assured by Jesus in vision that Paul was indeed the chosen individual, Ananias went into the house.

Placing his hands on Saul, he said, **"Brother Saul, the Lord — Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here — has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit."** Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized. (**verses 17-18**)

In Damascus, in a little-known Christian community, Ananias, a member of whom we know little, baptized the New Testament figure of whom we know much, the apostle Paul. In spite of Saul's persecutions, Ananias acted, and God recorded his faith as an example for us. Faith and courage aren't confined to ministers; they are found in lay members, too.

Women

God also records the courage and faithful witness of many women. They bravely withstood not only religious persecution, but also risked social ostracism.

Cenchrea was a city east of Corinth. From there, Phoebe helped Paul minister to the Roman church. While Paul prepared for his journey to Jerusalem, Phoebe had business in Rome. Paul commends her to the Roman church ([Romans 16:1-2](#)) as one who showed generosity and hospitality to many. F.C. Conybeare postulates her as a widow (*The Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, page 497). Greek manners and customs would not normally allow a married or single woman to be so prominent. An ancient subscription to the book of Romans states that Phoebe carried the epistle by hand.

Philippi was a city of Macedonia north of Greece. Since no synagogue existed in this city (Conybeare, page 226), devout Jews would seek a **"place of prayer"** ([Acts 16:13](#)). Usually this was outside the city near running water, perhaps because it was peaceful. The group at Philippi was composed primarily of women. Among these women was Lydia, a businesswoman from Thyatira. God moved in her life, opening her heart (**verse 14**). Paul baptized not only her, but also her whole household (**verse 15**); she seems to have been the dominant individual in her home.

Her first work after baptism was an act of hospitality. She opened her home to Paul and his companions. Later, after his release from prison, Paul returned to her home to encourage the members before leaving the area (**verse 40**). The letter to the Philippians expresses thanks and joy for continued support by the believers in Philippi. Lydia, a founding member, set an excellent example for that church. She was a spiritual leader.

Paul mentions Lois and Eunice ([2 Timothy 1:5](#)), Timothy's grandmother and mother. Timothy, who had a non-Jewish father, lived in Lystra when he first met Paul ([Acts 16:1](#)). Paul referred to the sincere faith of the women ([2 Timothy 1:5](#)). They were spiritual leaders in their family.

Paul had first-hand knowledge of their faith. He came to Lystra, in Galatia, on his first journey. There, after a miraculous healing ([Acts 14:8-10](#)), the residents declared Paul and Barnabas to be gods. But Paul was eventually stoned and left for dead. **"After the disciples had gathered around him, he got up and went back into the city"** (**verses 19-20**). The disciples probably included Timothy and his family ([2 Timothy 3:10-11](#)). Living in an area of persecution demands sincere faith. Lois and Eunice had that faith and instilled it in Timothy.

In [Philippians 4:2-3](#), Paul acknowledges Euodia and Syntyche. Paul recalls **"these women have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers."** Though Paul was greater in authority, he treated his spiritual brothers and sisters respectfully, as equals. They worked together to spread the gospel.

Priscilla and Aquila

One of the most significant couples mentioned is **"a Jew named Aquila...with his wife Priscilla"** ([Acts 18:2](#)). They lived in Corinth after being expelled from Rome by the Emperor Claudius. Paul went to see them and stayed and worked with them in Corinth. There is no mention of conversion; they were probably Christians when Paul met them.

Their contribution to the New Testament church is important. Not only were they in Corinth, but they were also in Ephesus ([Acts 18:24-26](#); [2 Timothy 4:19](#)) and in Rome ([Romans 16:3](#)). They were probably wealthy. The church in Corinth met in their house ([1 Corinthians 16:19](#)). So did a church in Rome ([Romans 16:5](#)).

Paul remarks that Priscilla and Aquila were his fellow-workers. **"They risked their lives for me"** ([Romans 16:3-4](#)). They went with Paul on his journey from Corinth to Ephesus ([Acts 18:18-19](#)). They helped Paul with physical and spiritual support. In Corinth, Priscilla and Aquila worked with Apollos, an eloquent and zealous man, and **"they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately"** ([Acts 18:26](#)). Were they ordained, or were they lay

members? Luke doesn't tell us. Service like this can be done by members whether or not they are ordained.

The work continues

Many other faithful members are mentioned in the New Testament. Throughout the centuries, many have dedicated their lives and wealth to proclaiming the name of Jesus Christ. The same Jesus Christ and the same Holy Spirit are guiding the church today. It is the same message: salvation through Jesus Christ. It is the same zeal. It is the same God who will not forget the sacrifices we may make. **"God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them"** ([Hebrews 6:10](#)).

The book of Acts shows us that various members were instrumental in spreading the gospel of salvation through Jesus Christ. Some of the people mentioned in this article may have been ordained, but others were probably not. All members can help spread the gospel. Lay members, as led by the Holy Spirit, continue to be a vital part of Christ's commission to the disciples.

Author: Donald L. Jackson



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Don't be imprisoned by the past

...But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining towards what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 3:13-14 (NIV)

Have you ever cringed at the recollection of an event in your past? Particularly if it revolved around a sin of commission or omission on your part? I certainly have. Sometimes I audibly groan at the lack of judgement displayed at various points in my past life. And these have occurred in many different areas: employment; family life, especially child rearing; and attempts at fostering better relations with others, and failing.

L.P. Hartley, in his book *The Go-Between*, opens with this much quoted statement: 'The past is a foreign country. They do things differently there.' This certainly resonates with me and many others. Sometimes I can scarcely believe some of the things I have done and said in the past. Did I really do or say those things? All too often the answer is a resounding – yes! However, we should not allow these shortcomings to shackle us to the past. The Apostle Paul certainly had a controversial past, yet, he was able to write the following in Philippians 3:13-14: '...one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining towards what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.'

That message is echoed in **Romans 5:8,10: 'But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us...For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!'**

Let Jesus, therefore, **'cleanse our consciences'** ([Hebrews 9:14](#)) and free us from the chains of our former sins and shortcomings, and let us press forward in serving our gracious Lord with all joy and gladness.

Prayer *Thank you Father for your wonderful gift of grace, through Jesus Christ, in forgiving our sins and cleansing us from all unrighteousness to serve you in sincerity and truth. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

GCI principal website and Moncton Websites—a) www.gci.org, b) www.gcine Brunswick.org,
c) www.gcicanada.ca;

*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*