

Prayer of Thanksgiving: that we have received the grace of being called at this time to participate in the joy of participating in the work of God on this earth at this time. Paul wrote the following to the Philippians - **"3 ¶ Every time you cross my mind, I break out in exclamations of thanks to God. 4 Each exclamation is a trigger to prayer. I find myself praying for you with a glad heart. 5 I am so pleased that you have continued on in this with us, believing and proclaiming God's Message, from the day you heard it right up to the present."** (Php 1:3-5 Message)

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 December 2018

Times of worship services: **Moncton** – 10:30 AM every Sunday

In Saint John , worship services will be December 9 and 23

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.

The Moncton congregation of GCI is invited to the home of Mr. and Mrs. Vautour for supper and a social on Friday December 14. We will supper around 6:30 p.m.

As per our tradition, we will have a Yankee Swap (gift exchange). We suggest that you bring something from home that you do not need any more but which would be a blessing to others or that you buy a gift of a \$10 or less value. We look forward to this get together and fellowship evening as we get together in honour of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus.

GCI Teen Camp - Kenya



Picture dated Dec. 7. 3 teens preparing for the GCI Teen Camp at Mount Kenya to be held in the next few days. 3 of Josephine and James Nyaboke, whom we have been supporting through sermons, GCI literature, etc... will also be attending. James and Josephine look after orphans, victims of the HIV epidemic. GCI NB has contributed \$1000.00 Cdn towards his camp.

All attending, including GCI Director, Mr. Anthony Gachanja, regional GCI director, appreciate your prayers that God will continue to touch the hearts of those attending.

Moncton congregation: The city of Moncton and other organizations are going to open a new shelter to give a place to sleep for those who have no place to go at night (estimated 120 needing such an accommodation). The new shelter will be on Assumption Boulevard, across from the Moncton law courts. Two charitable organizations are involved directly. They are presently accepting the following items for these homeless people: **pillows, socks, winter jackets (adult sizes), hats (adult sizes) mittens/gloves (adult sizes), laundry soap, hygiene products, feminine hygiene products, nonperishable, individually wrapped snacks (i.e. granola bars, etc.) coffee, tea, \$5.00-\$10.00 gift**

cards to local restaurants/coffee shops. Items can be dropped at the Salvus clinic, 22 Church St. (entrance at back of peace Centre building) or you can bring these items to church this week and someone will deliver them.

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. ¹⁰Your 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)

GRACE LEADS TO GODLY LIVING

(Part of a transcript from *You're Included* video which is also talking about the Incarnation of Jesus – for video or full transcript please see <https://www.gci.org/media/videos/alan-torrance-grace-leads-to-godly-living/>)

Introduction: Welcome to a special edition of *You're Included*, recorded in the ancient Scottish city of St. Andrews. St. Andrews is the home of the University of St. Andrews, Scotland's oldest university, founded in 1413. St. Andrews enjoys a reputation as one of the finest institutions of higher education in the United Kingdom. It is the home of St. Mary's College, the university's renowned divinity school. In St. Mary's nearly-500-year-old college hall, *You're Included* host J. Michael Fezell, Vice President of Grace Communion International, interviews Professor Alan J. Torrance.

Dr. Torrance is a Professor of Systematic Theology at the University of St. Andrews and a widely respected teacher and author. As the son of James B. Torrance and nephew of Thomas F. Torrance, he carries on their theological tradition. Professor Torrance's work includes *Persons in Communion: Trinitarian Description and Human Participation*.

J. Michael Fezell: Professor Torrance, thank you for agreeing to meet with us.

Alan Torrance: It's a pleasure to be here, Mike. Thanks for coming.

JMF: We would like to begin just asking about a word that I'm sure my grandmother would not know what it means, but she knows what it's about. Could you talk about the Incarnation, and why it's important for Christians.

AT: The Incarnation concerns the very heart of Christian faith. If I didn't believe the Incarnation, I'd pack up my bags, resign my job, and go and do something useful. The Incarnation basically affirms that God is with us as the person of Jesus Christ. It's absolutely fundamental to the knowledge of God. In the person of Christ we have God disclosing God's own very being to us. But it's not just that in Christ God comes to us as God. God comes to us as *man*, and taking to himself a human-knowing of the Father.

So when we affirm the Incarnation, we also immediately affirm the Trinity. Because the knowledge that's given to us in Christ is a human knowledge of the Father, and Jesus knows the Father in the Spirit. We are taken by that same Spirit to share in Jesus' knowledge of the Father. But that's not just a human knowledge of the Father, we've been taken into the knowledge of a Father that belongs to the eternal Son, in and through the incarnate Jesus.

So without the Incarnation, we don't have anything that begins to resemble a full and final and adequate knowledge of God. But it's not just the knowledge of God that the Incarnation's vitally important. The doctrine of salvation is contingent, is dependent, upon the doctrine of the Incarnation.

Very quickly, what is the Christian doctrine of salvation? The key to understanding what salvation's about is the Greek words that Paul uses. Paul uses the word *apolutrosis*, meaning redemption, and the key to that is three Hebrew concepts which that Greek word translates in the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible.

The first is *pada*, meaning God delivers us from bondage. It's a word that is used of God's deliverance in Israel from Egypt. So in salvation, God is delivering us from bondage, the bondage of sin, the tyranny of sin, the disease that we cannot overcome in and of ourselves. God does that in the Incarnation. God comes in Christ to deliver us from bondage. That's the first key metaphor.

The second: God comes to us and deals with the *costliness* of sin. There's another Hebrew word, *kipper* or *kofer*, that is also translated by a form of the word Paul uses for redemption, and that concerns the sacrificial offerings. On the Day of Atonement, the priest would take a lamb, declare...and he would have [the names of] all the tribes of Israel along his coat...he'd lay his hands on the lamb, declare the sin of Israel—in other words, all of Israel's sin is being laid on that lamb, in effect. Then the life of the lamb would be taken and Israel would see the life of that lamb, the costliness of its sin being taken from them. Or, a scapegoat. He'd lay his hands on a goat and declare the sins of Israel, hit it on the backside, and all of Israel in the celebration of worship would watch the goat run off into the wilderness carrying away its sin. So, the second metaphor, in the Incarnation, God comes as human to deal with the costliness of sin and carry our sin away from us.

The third metaphor is *go'el*, the kinsman redeemer. This is perhaps the most important in some ways. There's a provision under the covenant where if a family lost its father, say, or a woman lost her husband, then a kinsman, a relative, would come and marry that woman and restore that woman to an inheritance that she would otherwise lose. Or, if a farmer falls into debt and loses his farm, the kinsman member...perhaps that man's brother... of that family would come and restore that person to the inheritance that was lost. Again, the Incarnation concerns God coming as a human to restore us the inheritance that was lost in Adam.

All three metaphors are kind of intertwined. So in the Incarnation, we have God coming to deliver us from sin and from guilt, most importantly. People think of guilt as a good thing. Well, guilt oppresses. It can make us ashamed of being in the presence of God. Guilt eclipses God. It can become a barrier between us and God. In the Incarnation, God comes to deliver us from guilt, and he comes as our kinsman redeemer, blood of our blood, flesh of our flesh, to restore us to an inheritance that was lost. What was Adam's inheritance? Communion with God.

All of this takes place in the Spirit. What we have is not just the doctrine of the Incarnation. The doctrine of the Incarnation unfolds properly when we understand the doctrine of the Trinity. Because everything Christ does is in the Spirit. Bringing humanity by the Spirit, through the Spirit, into communion with the Father. To share in that eternal communion which is constitutive of the being of God, which defines the being of God. God is eternally Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. That communion of love is shared with the world in the person of Jesus Christ. Sinful, alienated, diseased humanity is taken and re-created and given to participate in that eternal communion of love.

A lot of people think of God as kind of individual voyeur God, who kind of sits in a rocking chair at some distance watching the world and condemning all that goes on. A lot of liberal theology is exactly like that. That's why very often liberal theology is full of exhortations and condemnations, you know, bullying us into social action of some kind or another. That is a pauper's understanding of God.

The God of the heart of the Christian faith is a God whose being is eternally one of love and communion. A self-contained individual isn't capable of love. Without doctrine of the Trinity, it wouldn't make sense to talk about the love of God. 1 John suggests God is love. That actually is required to be understood in Trinitarian terms because there's an eternal triune communion of loving.

So I mentioned knowledge of God. The Incarnation opens out knowledge of God by getting us to share in Christ's human knowing of the Father, which at the same time is the eternal Son's knowledge of the Father. No one knows the Father save the Son and those to whom...?...and salvation.

It's also incredibly important for worship. When you turn up on a Sunday morning...I'm sure you're a lot more holy man than I am. But sometimes on Sunday morning I turn up in church and I don't feel in the mood to worship. I feel that's a terrible confession. I ought to, but for whatever reason, maybe I'm worried about my work or worried about my family, I've got concerns and so on. And you go into church and you're going to try and find the energy to pray and to sing hymns and to worship and so on. And very often, in charismatic churches, they poof up the energy with lots of choruses and so on.

One of the great answers to this problem is to remember what worship is. Worship is the gift of participating in the incarnate Son's eternal communion with the Father. So before we ever go into the church, the worship's already going on. The Son is adoring the Father. The Priest, the sole Priest of our confession, is providing that everlasting worship in our place and on our behalf in the Spirit. And when we enter into the church... (well of course it doesn't just happen at church, it happens at home)...when we worship, we're not starting something that wasn't previously going on. We've been taken by the Spirit to share in what is going on and to participate in the prayer that the High Priest is offering for me and for my family, concerning my work-related problems, et cetera. The praise and the rejoicing that goes on in the mind of Christ I've been given to participate in by the Spirit.

JMF: The fact that it is in the Spirit would seem to indicate that we don't see it. There's not evidence to us that it's going on, except that the word of God says so. Is that where faith comes in to believe the word of God that it's true for us, regardless of the fact that we may not see it or feel it?

AT: Precisely. Faith is a form of sight. It's a form of healing as well. Remember when Simon made that confession about the Christ? Jesus said, "Flesh and blood hasn't revealed that to you, but your Father who is in heaven." Faith is about being given the eyes to see and the ears to hear, to recognize what we otherwise simply wouldn't see. Sometimes I face struggles because sometimes we begin to doubt when we trust our own physical hearing and seeing. The Spirit gives us the conviction, the recognition of what's going on.

Two years ago my wife died of cancer, and she was ill for three and a half years until she died. It was a very difficult time. I've got four boys; it was a difficult time for the family. During that period, sometimes it was difficult to understand and see purpose in all of this. We prayed for her to be healed, and she wasn't healed, so on and so forth. There were times when it was quite a challenge not to give up and find oneself disoriented.

But one of the...again, just a return to the Incarnation, because this is so pertinent to faith. The heart of the Incarnation is the doctrine that Christ knows our weaknesses, takes our questions, our doubts to himself, ("My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?") and identifies with us in our suffering. By the Spirit we are united with that. We don't float free of the cares of this world. We are given to recognize the One who stands with us in the concerns of this world, who knows our weaknesses, our doubting, our blindness, who in every respect is as tempted as we are and knows our struggles. He knows even our sense of god-forsakenness at times, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" One of the most moving things that I've experienced when Jane was dying in the final weeks of that awful period was the Spirit's giving one the sense that God's solidarity with one, was present with us in and through this grief, that God is Immanuel, God with us.

A lot of people ask the *why* questions. If you're Christians, why is God not healing Jane? Even if they didn't ask it verbally, you tended to feel that people were thinking that. But far more important than the *why* question is the *where* question. I don't know *why* God allowed Jane to die of cancer, but I do know the answer to the *where* question. Where was God in

and through that process? He was right with us in that grief, in sustaining myself and my family and giving us the eyes to see and recognize his presence in and through that misery.

So when we're talking about faith, we are simultaneously talking about the Spirit. It's so easy for us to make faith become a work. Suddenly Alan Torrance does, like in a heroic way, he has faith. No, faith is about the work of the Spirit, taking Alan Torrance in all his frailty, confusion, doubting, and loneliness and suffering, and giving him the eyes to see and hear the grace of God in the context of doubt and suffering and so on. So I think that's the answer one ought to give. Faith is a form of discernment. It's through the *hypostasis*, the substance, in [Hebrews 11:1](#), of things hoped for. It's where we see and discern that which is the object of our hope.

GCI principle website and Moncton Websites—www.gci.org, www.worshipim.ca, 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*