

Thanksgiving: Let us thank God that he has revealed himself to his disciples. We are so blessed!

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.

ACTIVITIES FOR THE MONTH OF OCTOBER 2019 (Please note some changes for Moncton and Saint John)

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

Time of services in Saint John – October 27 2:30 PM. Services cancelled on October 13.

Communion-on the second and fourth Sunday in both Moncton and Saint John this month.

Address: Moncton—70 King St. —Sage building, second floor;

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

The next Discipleship groups Thursday, October 24 – 7:30 p.m. We will study 2nd Peter.

Should you have forgotten the password to enter "For members only" on the www.worshipim.ca website, please do not hesitate to contact Mr. Vautour.

Prayers for our brethren living in Haiti: There quite a few GCI members living in Haiti. Please pray for them as the poverty-stricken country is presently experiencing violence and political upheaval.

(<https://www.miamiherald.com/news/nation-world/world/americas/haiti/article236242113.html>)

Prayer of Thanksgiving: Incorporating the Bertrams Congregation into GCI (From GCI Update)



I am excited to announce that last Sunday we formally incorporated Bertrams congregation as a GCI congregation! Bertrams was started by Pastor Gideon, who emigrated to Canada a few years ago. He then joined GCI in Canada, and recommended that the church he planted in Bertrams, Johannesburg, South Africa must join GCI as he realized they needed structural support. We thank God for the blessing of coming together with them in the ministry of Christ.



We installed Pastor Issa Kwigomba as the Lead Pastor of the Bertrams congregation. We had over 140 people in attendance during the service to celebrate the incorporation of the congregation into GCI. We were also celebrating two baptisms, and we shared a meal afterward. In Bertrams, I experienced a Healthy Church. They are missional, generous, loving, caring, with an excellent mix of children, youth and adults. Their Love, Hope and Faith venues are strong. I had a very blessed time of fellowship with them.



Report of Conference in Kenya from Josephine Nyaboke: Dated October 17, 2019

Dear in Christ Pastor Eric and Edna,

..... Thank you for your continued prayers for us, my husband and I we are grateful indeed for the timely conference invitation to Nairobi by Pastor Gachanja. Two of us travelled the church secretary by name Jairus and I. The conference was past Nairobi at town called Ngong at Watakatifu wote center this was a place the conference was held. It was a lovely place where men and women of God from around the world come to hear the word of God. We were also happy to meet a great man of God called Kalengule Kaoma from Zambia working in the ministry as a minister of Africa missions. The man of God spoke strongly on the church structure and leadership principles, and he encouraged us those who have not joined bible schools to prepare and join at least to have certificates in theology, whereby i am so much willing to study pray for me to have this opportunity. May God each day continue to make him and his family a blessing to the nations.

On Sunday our last day there was a plan to attend a building dedication at a place called Ruai, Ruai GCI of Pastor Wambu was opened officially. There also pastor Nzuki and Wambu were laid hands for the service of God, praise God. That was a great moment for us, and on the same day evening we prepared to travel during the night back to Kisii to meet our families again.

Therefore i am looking forward to share my insight to the church members on Sunday. i will share my new-found experience that i saw in the conference I believe this will strengthen our people's faith in God. We shall continue voicing our prayers too to Pastor Gachanja as our able leader to lead us together for the benefit of the entire nation of Kenya and beyond.

God is good to care for our health and to strengthen us in our responsibilities he has ordained us for in this earth.

Agape love,

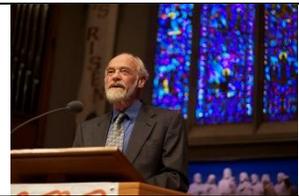
Yours in Christian love

Sister Josephine and James.

Prayer: During this time, let us not forget to pray as the apostle Paul has instructed Timothy. Such encouragement in those verses! **"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. 5 For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, 6 who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time."** (1Ti 2:1-6 ESV)

Tribute to Eugene Peterson

(From GCI Update for week of Oct. 14, 2019)



Almost one year ago, on October 22, 2018, the Christian community lost scholar, pastor, and Bible translator, Eugene Peterson. Peterson was a pillar for the Christian community and at age 85 he completed his "long obedience in the same direction." *Christianity Today* interviewed eight different leaders to offer their reflections about Eugene. See the comments from Trygve Johnson below.

Pastoral ministry is serious, consequential work.



*I first heard the name Eugene Peterson in college. My chaplain, after listening to me wrestle with a sense of calling, squinted like a doctor making a diagnosis, pulled a book from his shelf, and handed me *The Contemplative Pastor*. "Read this!" he said. I did. In Eugene's words, I found a vision for pastoral life I had always hoped existed but did not know how to articulate.*

Years later Eugene befriended me. He had recently retired to Montana. I was a young aspiring pastor, and he took me on, inviting me into a mentoring relationship through letters, conversations,

books, and pilgrimages to Flathead Lake. This invitation changed my life and my ministry.

Eugene gave me a vision and a language for who I could be as a pastor. He restored honor and dignity to the calling of the pastor. Eugene revived a vision of a pastor as someone serious, intelligent, savvy, creative, playful, and prophetic. Eugene encouraged those in ministry to resist the seductive sirens of the pragmatic pastor, in favor of a ministry animated by the patient and cruciform witness of a long obedience in the same direction.

Through this encouragement, Eugene pulled me into a larger world of consequence. His words and vision helped me see and experience the wide-open country of salvation. Here, Eugene invited me to explore the geography of the Trinity, which expanded my imagination and bent my reason back into shape. The use of cliché or paint-by-numbers theology was unworthy of the work. The pastor, Eugene counseled, required a charged imagination, an earthy piety, with a double shot of humor! He showed me that a ministry at play in the expansive fields of the Triune God was a more interesting place to spend the day.

The key to this larger world was the Bible. Eugene showed me how to read with a scriptural imagination. He taught me that the goal of reading Scripture was not to know more, but to become more. His great lesson was that Scripture had everything to do with the neighborhood, because the neighborhood is where Christ shows up.

Maybe Eugene's greatest legacy on my ministry was that he taught me to love by simply loving me. Eugene gave me time. He always wrote back. He never refused a call. He always welcomed me into his home. Never was I treated as an abstraction or a project to solve. He treated me as a friend. He showed me that healthy ministry requires, even demands, relationships where we can be known and understood.

Receiving the news of Eugene's death feels like what the Fellowship of the Ring in the Tolkien novel of the same name must have experienced when they lost Gandalf. What do you do when your guide is gone? But Eugene taught us well, for

he reminded us to practice resurrection. And so we carry the Message on! — Trygve Johnson, Hinga-Boersma Dean of the Chapel at Hope College

Comments

What a testimony. Eugene Peterson impacted scores of people with his life-on-life style of mentoring and friendship. He instructed and mentored even more through his prolific writing.

Certain lines stuck out in Johnson's tribute. "**Ministry at play in the expansive fields of the Triune God**" is such a brilliant way of characterizing the context of pastoral ministry. It is finding the rhythm and dance steps that allow us to commune with Father, Son, and Spirit, while experiencing the peace, purpose and passion that flows from the divine relationship. It is joining in with what God is doing within our sphere of life and entering this divine participation that penetrates the human realm.

"**Reading the Bible with a Scriptural imagination**" is another choice line. As pastors and ministry leaders we don't approach the scriptures with a clinical mindset attempting to exegete properly with the sole purpose of constructing a sermon. The Bible is God's inspired word to us and ultimately points us to an engagement with the Living Word – Jesus. The words of the Bible should wash over us afresh each time we read the ancient words, and our imaginations should be re-ignited.

The final line that I want to highlight is "**Scripture has everything to do with the neighborhood.**" Pastoral ministry must navigate out from the private study, out from the sanctuary, and into the streets of the neighborhood. The Bible clearly communicates human nature and all its pitfalls; it communicates a broken world in need of deliverance, and ultimately it communicates about the Savior who is uniquely drawing all humanity unto himself and is in the process of redeeming all that is broken. This is the story that rings true for all peoples, in all places, at all times, and it needs to be proclaimed in all neighborhoods.

Thank you, Eugene Peterson, for a life well-lived, with long obedience in the same direction. And thank you GCI pastors for your long obedience in the direction toward Jesus and his eternal kingdom.

Greg Williams

P.S. In addition to The Message Bible, Eugene Peterson has contributed an entire series of books that help to guide and influence pastors in a true course. Here are a few titles of his books that are "must-reads" for any pastor who takes his/her calling seriously.

- The Contemplative Pastor
- Five Smooth Stones for Pastoral Work
- Working the Angles: The Shape of Pastoral Integrity
- The Unnecessary Pastor

WHY BOTHER WITH THEOLOGY?

Many people find theology to be complicated, confusing and even irrelevant. They wonder why they should bother with it at all. "Surely," they exclaim, "the Bible isn't that difficult! Why read the works of head-in-the- clouds theologians with their long sentences and fancy terms?"

Sadly, it is common to ridicule what we don't understand. But doing so is a formula for continuing in ignorance and possibly falling prey to heresy.

I acknowledge that some academic theologians are hard to understand. In fact, it is unusual to find a genuine scholar who is also a gifted communicator. People in academic circles often deal in lofty ideas, and speak and write mainly with their peer group in mind. They leave it to others to bring those ideas down to earth. The situation is not unlike the difference between the practices of science and technology. The experimental scientist in his laboratory discovers a new process or material, and leaves it mostly to others to harness the idea into something practical for the ordinary person.

Theology has been called "**faith seeking understanding,**" and we should not despise it. As Christians we trust God, but God has made us to want to understand the one we trust and why we trust him. Our God apparently wants us to grow in our knowledge and trust in him, having our minds more and more transformed. But knowledge about God is not something that we humans can just come up with on our own by thinking it out. The only way we can know anything true about God is to listen to what he tells us about himself.

God has chosen to preserve the revelation of himself to us in the Bible, a collection of inspired writings compiled over many centuries under the supervision of the Holy Spirit. However, even the most diligent study of the Bible does not automatically convey to us a right or full understanding of who God is. Most heresies come from wrong understandings of who God is, often promoted by one or a few individuals who fail to grasp how God has revealed himself in the Bible and ultimately in Jesus Christ, and who have given little or no attention to the biblically based teaching of the church down through the ages.

What then do we need? **First**, we need the Holy Spirit to enable our minds to understand what God reveals in the Bible about himself and give us the humility to receive it. The Bible and the work of the Spirit together are sufficient to bring the humble reader (or hearer) with a mustard seed's worth of faith to an initial trust that repents of unbelief and acknowledges that Jesus is Lord and that he alone brings us God's gracious salvation. **Second**, growth in our knowledge of who God is calls for a

comprehensive grasp of the whole of Scripture with Jesus Christ standing at the center of it all. No one can do that for themselves in even a lifetime. We need the wisdom of others. **Third**, we may misunderstand some or much of what we read in the Bible due to assumptions we bring with us into our study of the Bible. We need help to remove these obstacles to spiritual growth. **Fourth**, we will not instantly know how best to communicate our understanding to those around us. Some are specifically called to help sort all these things out. And this is where theology comes in.

The word *theology* comes from a combination of two Greek words, *theos*, meaning God, and *logia*, meaning knowledge or study—*study of God*. Theologians are those members of the body of Christ who are called to synthesize and sum up the biblical witness to the nature, character, mind, purposes and will of God. In doing this they survey the results of others in the history of the church who attempted to do the same. They also analyze our contemporary context to discern the best words, concepts, stories, analogies or illustrations that most faithfully convey the truth and reality of who God is. The result is theology. While not all theologies are equally faithful, the church is wise to make use of those results that do help it keep its proclamation of the Gospel resting on the firm foundation of God's own revelation of himself in Jesus Christ according to Scripture.

The church as a whole has an ongoing responsibility to examine its beliefs and practices critically, in the light of God's revelation. Theology, therefore, represents the Christian community's continuous quest for faithful doctrine as it humbly seeks God's wisdom and follows the Holy Spirit's lead into all truth. The church ought to make use of those members of the Body who are specially called to help it do just that. Until Christ returns in glory, the church cannot assume that it has reached its goal. That is why theology should be a never-ending process of critical self-examination. Theology can thus serve the church by combating heresies, or false teachings, and helping us find the most faithful ways we can speak the truth in love today in our current context.

My point is that theology—good theology based in a profound respect for the biblical revelation and a sound understanding of its intent, background, context and comprehensive meaning for today—is a vital ingredient to a growing Christian faith. The 21st century is posing unprecedented challenges that are not addressed directly in the inspired Scriptures. Times change, but **“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever” (Hebrews 13:8)**. At the Last Supper, Jesus told his disciples, **“I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you” (John 16:12-15)**.

So let's not despise the understanding that comes from good theology, even though it sometimes comes wrapped in difficult language. As the “resident theologian” to the people you serve, strive to understand it and then serve it up to your people in a way they can also understand.

Joseph Tkach

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*