

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. If you need more information, please contact Mr. Vautour. See the bottom of the bulletin 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, please see the international website at www.gci.org. On the left-hand upper side of the screen, you will see 3 short lines. You simply need to click on it. A drop-down menu will appear. Click on "PARTICIPATE".

Please note that audio sermons are available of sermons are available at www.worshipim.ca and video sermons are now available on YouTube – GRACE COMMUNION INTERNATIONAL-MONCTON (see link below)

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.

For local prayer requests and financial updates, please see <http://www.worshipim.ca/> and click on **Members Only**. It is password protected for confidentiality reason. If you do not have the password, please contact Mr. Vautour.

Voice of the Martyrs (<https://www.vomcanada.com/ng-2020-06-04b.htm>). Christians continue to be persecuted in many parts of the world. They need our prayers. You can receive a free publication through your email. If you are interested, please visit their website to subscribe.

Next Bible Study (through ZOOM) is scheduled for Thursday August 27 at 7:30 p.m. We will continue to series in 1st John 3

For prayer requests please see local website www.worshipim.ca under "For Members Only". If you do not know the password, please contact Mr. Vautour

Nex week, on August 23, Mr. Williams will be addressing the Canadian churches through Zoom. Worship services will be at 9:00 a.m. Pacific time, 1:00 p.m. Atlantic time.

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 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."

Answering Questions About Our Theology, by Gary Deddo (from <https://www.gcs.edu/>)



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

The label, “Incarnational Trinitarian theology” is descriptive rather than prescriptive for our doctrinal statements. Our critics sometimes want to label our theological perspective as Barthian or Torrancian or whatever. But at best, such labels are only partially

descriptive. Any similarities are definitely not prescriptive. Prescriptive for us is the reality of who God has revealed himself to be in Jesus Christ according to Scripture. Our theological formulations are derived from and meant to point faithfully to that reality, which exceeds what can be contained in our theological understandings.

When we quote any theologians positively, or even when the historic Christian creeds are referenced, they are being used as illustrative of our theological position, not as a source or final norm of it. They show that other members of the Body of Christ at other times and places grasped the biblical revelation in a way similar to how we have come to understand it. It demonstrates that we are concerned not to be esoteric (*obscure - synonym added by Mr. Vautour*) or eccentric (*strange - synonym added by Mr. Vautour*) in our teaching and that we believe that other members of the Body of Christ can be helpful to us, saying at least as well, if not better than ourselves, how we understand God’s Word.

Given what is noted above, the label “Incarnational Trinitarian theology” is not meant to indicate that we hold to a special (or superior) form of Christianity. It indicates that the center and heart of our faith and worship corresponds to the center and heart of the revelation of the gospel itself – just as the historic, orthodox church has done down to this day. This label reminds us of the core reality of who God is and has revealed himself to be in and through Jesus Christ, according to Scripture. It also represents the nature of our renewal and restoration to true Christian faith, which we have come to share with the Christian church. If others have been pushed or pulled off-center, we hold out to them these foundational truths, from which flow all other Christian doctrines, that they might also be renewed and restored in their faith and worship.

Some critics say we don’t make distinctions between believers and non-believers because of the way we speak of God having a oneness of mind, heart and purpose towards all. Though it is not true, they say we teach universalism. Why do they come to this wrong conclusion? Because they make inferences from our statements about God to our views about his creatures. “If God regards all the same way, then all must regard God the same way.” But we do not come to our understanding through logical inferences made from a single affirmation about God. That would be bad theology and bad logic. No simple logical inference is ever *necessarily* true, most especially when moving from God to talking about creatures.

It seems that their critique of our theology is a mirror-image of how their own theology works. Seeing a difference between believers and non-believers, they then imagine a corresponding difference in God. They make a simple logical inference, but this time in the reverse direction: from a description of the differences among humans to what God then must prescribe for that difference among humans. We do not reason in that way. Doing so would, in our view, constitute mythological projection, which is idolatry. Doing so would mean concluding something about what God prescribes from a description of individual creatures or a class of them. John Calvin made this mistake in reasoning in his polemical writings about predestination. Thankfully, he did not succumb to that faulty reasoning in most of his writings on theology (in his *Institutes* and elsewhere).

Typically, the difference between our viewpoint and that of those who criticize it, is that we start with God’s self-revelation as the criterion for our statements about God (“only God reveals God”). We do not start with our own, or even the Bible’s descriptions of how humans respond differently to God and then logically infer something about who God is and what God wants for his human creatures. Descriptions of human creatures and of their potential eternal situations, either by means of our own observations or by reference to isolated biblical passages interpreted out of context, do not prescribe for us a definitive revelation of who God is and what he wants. Jesus Christ alone, according to divine revelation (Scripture) alone, prescribes for us our trust in and understanding of God’s heart, mind, purposes and character. On that basis, we conclude that God is a redeemer who has a redemptive nature and heart, does not want any to perish, but wants all to repent and receive eternal life. That is, God is identical in character to Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

Some condemn or dismiss our theological stance by labeling it universalism, Arminianism or Calvinism. However, we have no need to be aligned with a particular school of theology. Though each school has understandings deserving our consideration, each also has significant weaknesses that obscure important, even crucial elements of the biblical revelation. Those weaknesses have not only been identified by us but have been brought to light in the ongoing discussions and debates down through the history of the church. While we share faith in the same realities as do all Christians, our theological understanding and articulation does not fall neatly along the lines drawn in the typical universalist-Arminian-Calvinist debates.

Those who are satisfied with one of these primary theological traditions and insist that these are the only options, will probably not be able to properly hear our theological testimony or grasp its source and norm the way we do. Their critiques likely will assume that we have bought into the one or two theological options they have rejected – ones that might include being “incarnational” or “Trinitarian.”

While we can offer our reasons for why and how we understand the Christian faith the way we do, we don’t have to accept any labels nor defend the one we use. We are simply trying to be as faithful as we can in understanding and explaining the biblical revelation. We hold out our convictions to our members for their benefit and to others in hope that they might be renewed and blessed as we have been as the Lord has corrected and restored us.

It was not a particular theology or theologian who transformed us. Rather, it was Jesus Christ, speaking through his Holy Word, who revealed to us the true nature and character of God. Grace Communion International was grasped by the gospel of Jesus Christ, as our Lord placed himself at the center of our worship and faith. If the label “Incarnational Trinitarian theology” properly *describes* that transformation, then we accept it. However, we have no need to defend a label, for it *prescribes* nothing.

Shalom Shalom!

(from www.daybyday.org.uk August 13, 2020)



Doug Bass is a member of Grace Communion International. The closest congregation for Doug and his wife, Maureen, is in Exeter

“You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in You.”

Isaiah 26:3 (NIV)

Its 7am in the small coastal resort where I now live. On this Atlantic facing coast we’re used to bruising winds and heaving breakers battering the cliffs and beaches. My old garden shed is being slowly demolished as the wind drives raindrops like miniature sledgehammers into it. Not today though. Today all is quiet. The sea is showing its softer side, and quietly, almost timidly, splashing the sandy beach smooth. Looking down from the sloping cliff I can see a few people walking their dogs on the beach. Further along the coast, past Watergate Bay, a faint mist over the cliffs is slowly giving way to a strengthening sun. A man walking a small black and white dog passes me and says ‘Good Morning.’ Apart from a few seagulls wheeling and complaining in the sky above me, it’s an unusually peaceful morning here. I could almost say

along with the poet Browning: ‘The lark’s on the wing, The snail’s on the thorn, God’s in His heaven. All’s right with the world!’

Almost. But not quite. The lark is on the wing (although many fewer than there used to be). The snail is no doubt on the thorn. God is in his heaven for sure. But all’s right with the world? Hardly. When I return from this early morning walk and switch on the TV news I know that peace is not likely to be a major theme. Yet if God is in his heaven, why can’t every morning be as peaceful as it is here today?

Thankfully God is in his heaven and he is a God of peace (Philippians 4:9). Most people reading this will be familiar with the Hebrew word ‘Shalom,’ meaning among other things, ‘peace.’ In Isaiah 26:3 the expression ‘shalom shalom’ is used. This is not just peace. This is ‘perfect peace.’ Read the header scripture again. If our minds are set steadfastly on God, he will keep us in ‘shalom shalom’—perfect peace. This is the peace that transcends all understanding which Paul speaks of in Philippians 4:7. Atlantic storms or any of the storms of life will not blow away this peace. It’s an inner peace that every Christian can enjoy. We shouldn’t be surprised by this. After all, Jesus dwells within us through the Holy Spirit and Jesus is the Prince of Peace!

Peace doesn’t depend on an absence of storms, it depends on the presence of Jesus. Life is filled with uncertainties, especially at present, but one thing is certain: there is a God of peace in heaven and in every Christian, who loves us with a passionate love. Jesus, who is that God, said just before his arrest, “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you...do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid” (John 14:27). What a wonderful gift!

Prayer

Thank You, Jesus, for this wonderful gift. As we seek You and draw closer to You, may this gift of peace become more evident in our lives and our anxieties will diminish. Please help us to know your peace in the midst of our troubles.

Amen Study by Doug Bass

GCI principle website and Moncton Websites—a) www.gci.org , b) www.worshipim.ca , 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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