



Prayer of Thanksgiving: with God all things are possible. **26 And they were exceedingly astonished, and said to him, "Then who can be saved?" 27 Jesus looked at them and said, "With man it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God."** (Mr 10:26-27 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

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

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.

Discipleship group at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Vautour – tentative date Wednesday, October 24 at 7:30 PM.

Hurricane Michael - Please continue to pray for our brothers and sisters and all other people affected by the horrible hurricane that affected the Florida Panhandle and other states where many people lost all that they had.

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.

10 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)**

[Taste, see and tell](#)

Posted by GCI Update on October 9, 2018 under [From the President](#) |

This week's "From the President" is by GCI Vice President, Greg Williams.

Dear Brothers and Sisters:



Greg and Susan
Williams

I'm sure we all pray that our non-Christian loved ones—family, friends, neighbors and coworkers—will give God a chance. Each of them has a viewpoint concerning God, but is the God they envision the triune God revealed in Jesus? How can we help them come to know *that* God in a deeply personal way? How can we help them respond to King David's invitation in [Psalm 34:8](#) to "Taste and see that the Lord is good"? This is no marketing gimmick—David is referencing the profound truth that God makes himself known to anyone who searches for him. He is inviting us to a robust, life-changing encounter with God—one that engages every dimension of our human existence!

Taste that the Lord is good

Taste? Yes! Experiencing the complete goodness of God is like having delicious food or drink roll over your tongue. Think of rich dark chocolate melting slowly, or perfectly aged red wine puddling on your tongue. Or think of tasting a center cut of tender meat, seasoned with the perfect blend of salt and spice. A similar thing happens when we come to know the God revealed in Jesus. We want the delightful taste of his goodness to linger and last!

Meditating on the richness of the triune God's nature and the complexities of his ways arouses hunger for the things of God. Jesus said, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled" ([Matt. 5:6](#)). When we come to know God personally, we long for righteousness—for good and right relationships—just like God does. Especially when things are bad, that desire is so intense that it hurts as if we were starving or dying of thirst. We see that intensity in Jesus' ministry to those around him and in his anguish over those who reject God. We see it in his desire to reconcile relationships—especially our relationship with his heavenly Father. Jesus, God's Son, came to give us that good and fulfilling right relationship with God—to share in God's work of making all relationships right. Jesus himself is the bread of life who fills our deep hunger and hope for good and right relationships. *Taste that the Lord is good!*

See that the Lord is good

See? Yes! It is through our sense of sight that we behold beauty and perceive shape, distance, movement and color. Think of how frustrating it is when something we long for is blocked from sight. Think of an avid bird-watcher hearing the sound of a long-sought-for rare species, who is unable to see it. Or the frustration of trying to navigate through an unfamiliar darkened room at night. Then consider this: How can we experience the goodness of a God who is invisible and transcendent? That question reminds me of what Moses, perhaps a bit frustrated, said to God: "Show me your glory," to which God replied: "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you" ([Ex. 33:18-19](#)).

The Hebrew word translated *glory* is *kabod*. Originally meaning *weight*, it came to be used to refer to the *shining forth* (for all to see and enjoy) of the totality of who God is—all his goodness, holiness and uncompromising faithfulness. As we behold the glory of God, all hiddenness is removed and we see that our triune God truly is good, and that his ways are always right. In the glory of his righteousness and justice, God is committed to making all things right. Our God of peace and life-giving love is opposed to all evil and has guaranteed that evil has no future. In his glory, the triune God shines forth, revealing his essence and presence—the fullness of his merciful and righteous grace. The light of God's glory shines in our darkness and reveals the radiance of his beauty. *See that the Lord is good.*

An unfolding journey

Coming to know the triune God is not like hurriedly consuming a fast-food meal or casually viewing a three-minute video clip. Coming to know the God revealed in Jesus Christ involves having the blinders stripped from our eyes, and the taste restored to our mouths. It involves being miraculously healed to see and taste God for who he truly is. Our unaided senses are far too weak and damaged to apprehend the fullness and glory of our transcendent, holy God. This healing is a life-long gift and task—a miraculous, unfolding journey of discovery. It's like a lengthy meal that involves the explosion of tastes over multiple courses, with each surpassing the previous one. It's like a compelling mini-series with myriad segments—you can binge-watch it without ever growing tired or bored. Though an unfolding journey, coming to know the triune God in all his glory has a focal point—what we see and behold in the person of Jesus. As Immanuel (God with us), he is the Lord God become visible and touchable flesh. Jesus became one of us and took up residence with us. By paying attention to him as he is presented in Scripture, we discover the one who is “full of grace and truth” and we behold the “glory” of “the only Son from the Father” ([John 1:14, ESV](#)). Although “no one has ever seen God... the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in the closest relationship with the Father, has made him known” ([John 1:18](#)). To see God as he truly is, we need look no further than the Son!

Go and tell

Psalm 34 paints a picture of the God who is good, just, loving and personal—the God who wants his children to experience his presence and goodness, and who delivers them from evil. It tells of a God who is so real that our lives are forever transformed and our hearts, like Moses, yearn for him and his ways. This is the triune God to whom we introduce our loved ones. As followers of Jesus, we are called to share in our Lord's ministry of evangelism—sharing the gospel (good news) that the Lord truly is a good God. For GCI resources to assist you in your ministries of evangelism, see

<https://resources.gci.org/pathway> and <http://thesurprisinggodblog.gci.org/2018/07/what-about-evangelism.html>

Tasting, seeing and telling that the Lord is good,
Greg Williams

PS: In the United States and some other countries, October is *Pastor Appreciation Month*. I want to extend my personal thanks to the fine men and women who give so generously of their time, talent and treasure in pastoring our congregations around the world. I also want to encourage all our congregations to show their appreciation to their pastor and to their pastor's spouse.

PPS: The next issue of *GCI Update* will be published on October 24

Church, Kingdom & Government part 2

Posted by GCI Update on September 19, 2018 under [Church Development](#)

The church is called to witness

As noted in part 1, there is an “already-but-not-yet” aspect of the kingdom of God. Though it has already broken into the world, its fullness is not yet seen. Though Jesus is now Lord of all, it does not yet appear that all things are subject to his rule and reign ([Heb. 2:8, ESV](#)). Though Christ's victory is complete, it is not yet fully apparent—it has yet to be fully uncovered (revealed).[1]

As Christians, our calling (vocation) is to witness to the reality of Christ and his already-but-not-yet rule and reign (i.e., his kingdom). We provide that witness first by living in a worship relationship with God through the gracious mediation of Jesus and the ministry of the Holy Spirit, all under the authority of Scripture ([Eph. 2:20](#)). We then gather to proclaim the fact that Jesus is King of kings and that his rule and reign is assuredly coming in all its fullness ([Acts 1:4-9](#)). In this way, the church becomes a beacon of the hope that will be realized when Jesus returns to earth at the end of this present age ([2 Tim. 4:1](#)).[2] Concerning this witness provided by the church, note these three things: The witness of the church is partial, temporary and provisional (more on that below).

It serves as a sign (parable or pointer) of the rule and reign of Jesus ([Acts 5:12](#)).

It points forward to the consummation that is yet to come when Jesus returns ([Act 2:22](#)). In that way, the witness of the church is like the earthly ministry of Jesus, which did not set up the fullness of the kingdom. Instead, Jesus pointed forward to a future coming of his kingdom. Through the earthly ministry of Jesus (including his death, resurrection and ascension), the kingdom was *inaugurated*, though it has yet to be fully *consummated* (realized). Because that consummation is yet to come, we wait with expectancy, hope and patience ([Rom. 8:25](#)). However, our waiting is not passive, for we are called to the mission of witness—the ministry of declaring Jesus Christ and his coming kingdom, so that others may come in and participate now in his church.

Our mission as the church is to declare the kingdom, not set it up or substitute for it. Nowhere does the New Testament teach that the church's witness will gradually and inevitably turn into the kingdom. Were that the case, the church would cease being a *witness* (a sign) and turn into the *reality* to which the sign points. That the church's witness will expand in the world is implied in Scripture, even assumed. However, that expansion should not be confused with the full manifestation of the kingdom and the coming of the new heavens and earth.

Don't confuse the church and the kingdom

It is a mistake to confuse the church and the kingdom. Such confusion sets up unfounded expectations of the church and leads to disillusionment and bitterness concerning either the failure of the church or, even worse, the failure of God to accomplish through the church what we wrongly expect of the church in this current “evil age” (Gal. 1:4; 1 John 2:8).

Scripture teaches that, when he returns, Jesus will bring the kingdom in all its fullness to earth. In the present age, prior to the return of Jesus, God grants to the church the privilege of being a sign that points to the coming kingdom. The fact is that the church fulfills this mission of witness imperfectly. As Jesus indicated in the parable of the wheat and tares (Matt. 13:25-30, KJV), his church will not be perfectly pure in this age. The book of Acts and the Epistles, along with the record of church history, bear witness to this fact. The imperfection of the church contrasts with the perfection of the kingdom, in which there will be no mixture of good (wheat) and evil (tares). Evil will have no place in the kingdom of God. Indeed, evil has no future. This reality is secured by the resurrection and ascension of Jesus, along with Jesus’ promise that he will return with power to put an end to all evil and to vanquish death and all suffering (Rev. 12:10).

The nature of the church’s witness to the kingdom

As a sign (embodiment or parable) of the kingdom of God in the present fallen world, the church’s witness will always be partial, temporary and provisional:

The church’s witness is *partial*. It is unable to display the full range and depth of what God’s kingdom will be like. What the church does and says will only indicate a limited part of what the kingdom is about. The church will not be able to point to every dimension of the kingdom equally well. The witness of the church, as important as it is, will not bring about the completeness of the kingdom. Instead, it points beyond itself to the fullness yet to come, bringing forth anticipation and hope in the hearts of those who, in faith, look forward to the coming kingdom. The church’s witness is *temporary*. As the church embodies signs of the kingdom, those signs will often only last a little while then wear out, become degraded, and sometimes even corrupted. As beneficial as this witness is, it cannot be sustained indefinitely.[3] New forms of witness will always be needed as the old ones are forgotten, fall away or become no longer viable or relevant.

The church’s witness is *provisional*. It is not the reality, though it is a sign pointing to the reality—the coming kingdom of God. In that way the church’s witness engenders hope that exceeds what the church can accomplish here and now before Christ returns and evil is vanquished as all things are made new.

Though partial, temporary and provisional, the church’s witness is *vital*. In obedience to God’s commands, the church bears witness to its King and his coming kingdom, knowing that it is Jesus Christ who has promised that the kingdom of God will come. Sadly, the church has often turned aside from this calling, failing to offer the world partial signs of the kingdom’s coming reality, thus failing to be a provisional beacon of hope to the world. It has settled for becoming much like the surrounding culture. Instead of witnessing to the kingdom, the church has, at times, tried to make itself the kingdom—it has tried in vain to establish the fullness of the kingdom on earth now. In making that mistake, the church has assumed for itself a task that is reserved for Christ, becoming in its own eyes an end in itself, thus falling into the sin of idolatry and often compromising itself in the use of worldly power to achieve an impossible ideal.

The kingdom is not human government

We have seen that the church is not the kingdom. Now we need to see that human government is not the kingdom. Just as the church does not evolve into the kingdom (despite misguided attempts by a few church leaders to bring about that evolution), human government cannot evolve into the kingdom (again, despite attempts in that direction). *Scripture makes it clear that God’s kingdom is not a human kingdom.*

Human government does have an important, though limited, purpose in God providence. This is seen in Jesus’ teaching regarding distinguishing between what belongs to Caesar and what belongs to God (Mark 12:17). It also is seen in the way the apostles interacted with the Roman government of their day (e.g., Acts 4:19 and Rom. 13:1-7). In this age, human government has a limited purpose defined by God and has been assigned limited authority derived from God. Many don’t recognize that purpose (with its limitations) but the church must.

By God’s decree, the purpose of human government is to maintain fundamental social order and human justice, seeking the common good within the limits defined by God. No human government can rightly regard itself as absolute. Rather, all exist under an absolute that transcends human rule and reign. No human government has absolute rights over any human being, since all human beings belong to God. Humans are creatures of God, not of any human ruler.

It’s also important to understand that human government is limited in the good it can accomplish. Why? Because humans are unable to banish all evil and to prevent evil’s perpetual temptations. Human government cannot heal and transform the human soul, it cannot reconcile alienated human beings, and it cannot undo or redirect the past. No human government can make all things right—they are unable to renew and restore all things, including the past. Therefore, the church must not expect human government to solve all of humanity’s problems. No human government can turn itself into or otherwise bring about the kingdom of God by being the perfect, ideal government on earth before Jesus returns.

Nevertheless, the church should expect some good to come from human government. Keeping in mind the limited responsibility that God gives it, the church should remind civil leaders of the range of authority they should exercise for the common good. The church should also warn leaders to not neglect the responsibilities that go with their authority, and it should speak out if government exceeds the boundaries of those God-given responsibilities, especially when acting as if they have absolute authority and are answerable to no higher authority than themselves—whether that authority be God or, if not God, a moral standard which all governments ought to abide by.

Though human governments often are unaware of their God-given purpose and limited range of responsibilities, that lack of awareness does not eliminate the truth. One of the church’s tasks is to bear witness to human government concerning this truth. That is what we find the

church doing in the New Testament (e.g., Acts and Romans). In bearing witness, the church must be realistic in its expectations of human government. In this present evil age, no government will be perfect, and none will establish the ideal human community. All human governments, like the citizens they are called to serve, are endangered by evil. They rise and fall, they come and go.

No human governments (together or individually) will ever be able to bring about the kingdom of God. Christians should not believe that human governments can do that, thereby confusing human government with the kingdom of God. Only God can (or should) be worshipped. Worship of any human leader or government is idolatry. Forgetting this was the huge mistake made by much of the church in Germany during the rise of the Nazis in the 1930s and 40s. In that dark time, most of the church in Germany surrendered itself to Hitler, believing that the greater good of God's kingdom on earth would thereby be created. This happened in large part because these Christians mistakenly believed that Hitler could establish God's ideal on earth—the kingdom of God. Because they believed that, they also believed that the great end the envisioned justified any means used to bring it about. They were terribly mistaken.

The reverse is also true. The coming of the kingdom of God will not amount to the installation by God of a perfect, ideal human government. God will not raise up a human-led government to serve as his kingdom on earth. Rather, God will reign through the Spirit fully manifested in every human life, and so lived out in gladness and freedom in and through all their relationships and activities. God himself will be their light. God himself will banish evil. God will end all suffering and resolve all regrets of the sinful past. God will reconcile all things and right all wrongs. In God's kingdom, righteousness (right relationships) will not be legally imposed or socially enforced. Rather, righteousness will flow unimpeded from God through human hearts and minds and (figuratively) out through their hands and feet.

In the kingdom of God, there will be no pride, arrogance or temptation to self-justification. All barriers in the way of fully receiving all from God and passing it on to others will be torn down. The kingdom will be fully manifested, not externally, but from within and among all those who come under God's rule and reign—all who enter God's kingdom when invited, leaving behind all other kingdoms, all other loyalties, all other priorities. Citizens of God's kingdom will be the true children of God who will, for the first time, experience true freedom to the full.

The church should not seek to substitute for human government

The church must not try to turn itself into an earthly government in this time-between-the-times. It also must not try to build the kingdom on earth by human means, through the agency of human government. The church must never seek to displace and take over the vocation of human government. The church is not going to bring in the kingdom, and it is not going to become God's ideal form of earthly, humanly mediated government.

Neither the church nor the kingdom amounts to the installation of human government. In the kingdom of God, Jesus himself, by the Spirit, will rule and reign in human minds and hearts in a new heaven and earth. It is this renewal of all things that will constitute the coming of the kingdom. Though Jesus will not turn his kingdom rule over to its human citizens, those citizens will share (participate) in his rule and reign, and do so perfectly, by his word and Spirit. At that time (and not before) it will be clearly manifested that Jesus has indeed "overcome the world" ([John 16:33](#)). We will reign under and with him, sharing in his kingly victory.

In the meantime, awaiting the coming of the kingdom, the church is called to bear witness to the world, including its various human governments, concerning the Lordship of Jesus Christ and the coming kingdom of God ([Col. 2:10](#); [Eph 3:9-11](#)). It is called to do so by being an embodied sign of the hope of the coming kingdom. That hope will not be presented as involving the development of a human government ruling and reigning perfectly. Though the church will bear witness to the limited but good purpose for human government (and speak out when governments fail in that purpose[4]), it will not confuse human government with the kingdom or with the church.

The church, in its witness, will support and respect human government and contribute to its best practices. However, the church, when needed, will also critically engage government when it exceeds its God-given, limited boundaries. In that witness, the church must never abandon its God-given, Christ-founded, Spirit-empowered vocation of worship and witness by which it serves as a beacon of hope in this present evil age. *Lord, give us courage to be your witnesses in this world!*

Endnotes

[1] In Greek, the first word and title of the book of Revelation is *apokalypsis* (from which we get the word *apocalypse*). It means to uncover or reveal.

[2] For the clear understanding that the kingdom of God is the future hope of God's people, see also: [Matt. 13:41-43](#); [24: 14](#); [26:29](#); [Luke 19:11](#); [22:16-18](#); [John 18:36](#); [1 Cor. 15:24](#); [2 Tim. 4:18](#); [Rev. 11:15](#).

[3] Even Jesus' raising of the dead was not permanent. The persons (e.g., Lazarus) that Jesus raised eventually died again. These resurrections (really resuscitations) were signs, and Jesus did not raise everyone from the dead during his earthly incarnate ministry. Jesus' resurrection, however, is permanent. His death is once (and for all). It is the *reality* to which the signs point.

[4] See the [Barmen Declaration](#) issued by the underground Confessing Church in Germany at the time of the Third Reich of Hitler and the Nazis. That document stands as a modern witness against the abuses of governmental authority and the acquiescence of any church to that abuse, as in the case of the so-called "German Christians" of the Reich Church of the time.

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*