

Prayer of Thanksgiving: did we can rest in God. **“Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!” (Ps 46:10 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.

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 of the month in Saint John of the month; **in Moncton**, we will have communion on October 13 and 27. and on the 1st and 3rd and 5th Sunday in Moncton.

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

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

The next Discipleship groups will be on Wednesday October 9 and Thursday, October 24 – 7:30 p.m. We will study 2nd Peter. **Monthly GCI prayer guide** is now posted in Featured Articles on our www.worshiphim.ca website.

Bahamas: From Mr. Bill Hall, GCI Canadian Director, October 2, 2019

Hello everyone. Below is the latest update on the members who survived the Hurricane in the Bahamas. I've been working with Robert McKinney on how Canada can help the survivors. My idea is to take care of the needs of a family or two until they can get back on their feet. As Averil's video that Steve Posiak posted in Dropbox explained, many of our members were left with just the clothes on their backs. Now they are faced with the daunting task of rebuilding their lives which includes relocating, finding a new home and job, as well as children having to start in a new school far from where they used to live. (Video 1: Trixie Morris (8 minutes)

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/9axk9jprdmjyhbh/Trixie%20Morris.MOV?dl=0> Video 2 - Freddie Lightbor (4 minutes)
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/thiybe7vehls4vp/Freddie%20Lightbor.MOV?dl=0>

While in the Bahamas we were struck by the outpouring of help from the international community. Our hotel in Nassau was completely full of relief workers from around the world as well as survivors of Hurricane Dorian.

Robert McKinney has asked if we could help one family with their monthly rent payments of \$750.00 US for the next 6 months. They have moved to Nassau from their destroyed home on Abaco and are looking for employment and have registered their children in school. They are shown in the photo below. Our help of \$4,500 US (\$6,100.00 CDN) will go a long way in helping this family get back on their feet.

Could you please mention this to your congregations? And if any congregation would like to make a general contribution from their congregational account, please let me know. The deadline for contributions is November 4th. They can be marked Bahamas Hurricane Help.

Disaster Relief – Helping The Bahamas



President Greg Williams and North American Superintendent Mike Rasmussen meet the GCI members who survived Hurricane Dorian.

We have sent \$23,000 for emergency needs, made available by generous donors, to help with disaster relief for members in The Bahamas and we are standing by for additional requests. We wish to express our sincere appreciation to the GCI congregations and members who have donated to the GCI Disaster Relief Fund, so together, we can assist those in need.

The following is an update from Robert McKinney, National Director, on our members in The Bahamas, following the devastation of Hurricane Dorian.

We would like to thank you for your prayers and overwhelming show of support and love during this very difficult time. I visited Grand Bahama Island two days ago and met with our pastor, Calvin Parker and a number of our members. The devastation on the island is unbelievable. About 50% of our members suffered either a major roof or flooding damage.

Miraculously, a number of our members were not impacted by the hurricane. Pastor Parker has begun to distribute funds, food and supplies to members, and they are beginning to put the pieces together again. I plan to visit Abaco next week. Our members there were harder hit than those on Grand Bahama. Most remain displaced, some living with family members, while others have moved to Nassau and have had to find housing here. We have begun to assist these members with housing, funds, food, clothing and other needs as well.

I am in the process of organizing a work crew with Pastor Charles Taylor of our Miami church to go to Abaco to help with damage to our church building and members' homes there sometime next month. Thanks again for all the love, prayers, moral and financial support. It's still a long road ahead for some of our members, but we know that God is with us, and your loving support reassures us that we are all in this together.

Robert McKinney, Nassau, Bahamas

Prayer update from Josephine and James (Oct 3, 2019): We pray and request your prayers for a tank for harvesting water during this rain season, it started raining last week. So kindly pray for us. I am happy to inform you that on 11th-13th of October we have been invited by Pastor Anthony to attend a conference in Nairobi which we are told that would be conducted by Kalengule Kaoma. Yours in Christ' service, Sister Josephine and James, Please pray for the success of this conference

Please pray for L. Richard who was diagnosed yesterday with cancer in his mouth. He is to see a specialist shortly.

Articles from Mr. Deddo on Postmortem Evangelism and Does GCI Teach Universalism will be on our worshipim.ca under featured articles.

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.

ONE IN THREE AND THREE IN ONE

The Bible never compromises the fact that God is one. Yet, Jesus' incarnation and work give us a greater depth of understanding of the way in which God is one. The New Testament testifies that Jesus Christ is God and that the Father is God. There is *more than one* Person in the *one* God.

The New Testament, as we shall see, also presents the Holy Spirit as divine and eternal. Whenever we say that the Holy Spirit does something, we mean that God does it. The Holy Spirit is God. That means the Bible reveals one God who exists eternally as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is for this reason that Christians are to be **baptized "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19).**

Throughout the centuries, many ideas have been developed that might seem, at first glance, to make these biblical facts easier to understand. But we must be careful not to accept any idea that contradicts what the Bible says. Some ideas might make things seem simple, in the sense of making God easier to comprehend and easier to picture in our minds. But what is important is whether an idea is consistent with the Bible, not whether it is simple or easy.

The Bible tells us there is one and only one God, and then presents us with more than one Person called God. The Father is called God, the Son is called God, and the Holy Spirit is called God. All three are eternal, and all three do things that only God can do. So there is one God, and three in the One.

"One in three" – or "three in one" – is a concept that, at first glance, appears illogical. But neither is it logical for us to assume that God could not be more than what we would expect if we simply sat down, with no revelation, to figure it out for ourselves.

God reveals many things about himself, and we believe them, even though we cannot explain them all. For example, we cannot completely explain how God can be without beginning. This is beyond our ability to understand. We cannot explain what eternal existence is like, yet we know that God is without beginning. Likewise, the Bible reveals that God is one and only one, yet is also Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We believe it even though it is not simple or easy to explain. We believe it because the Bible reveals it.

The Holy Spirit is God

Acts 5:3-4 calls the Holy Spirit God: Peter said, **“Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied to men but to God.”**

When Ananias lied to the Holy Spirit, Peter says he was lying to God. He was not trying to deceive an impersonal force or an intermediate agency — he was trying to deceive God.

The New Testament ascribes to the Holy Spirit attributes that belong only to God. For instance, the Holy Spirit is omniscient, or unlimited in knowledge. **“God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.... No one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God” (1 Corinthians 2:10-11).**

The Holy Spirit is omnipresent, or unlimited in place. **“Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?” (1 Corinthians 6:19).** The Holy Spirit is in believers everywhere, not limited to any one place (see also Psalm 139:7-8 **“7 Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? 8 If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!” (Ps 139:7-8 ESV).**

The Holy Spirit regenerates Christians, giving them new life. **“No one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit” (John 3:5-6).**

The Holy Spirit speaks and foretells the future. **“The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons” (1 Timothy 4:1).**

The Holy Spirit is equated with the Father and the Son in the baptismal ceremony. Christian converts are baptized **“in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19).** There is one name, but three are included in the One.

The Spirit creates out of nothing (**Psalm 104:30**). Only God can create like that.

Hebrews 9:14 says the Holy Spirit is eternal. Only God is eternal. Jesus told the apostles: **“I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever – the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you” (John 14:16-17).**

Jesus identified the Counselor as the Holy Spirit: **“The Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you” (verse 26).** The Counselor convicts the world of sin, an accomplishment that can rightly be ascribed only to God. He guides into all truth, something only God is capable of doing. As Paul affirmed, **“We speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words” (1 Corinthians 2:13).**

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: one God

When we understand that God is one, and that the Holy Spirit is God, just as the Father is God and the Son is God, we have no problem understanding a passage like **Acts 13:2: “While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’”** Here Luke presents the Holy Spirit as speaking. The Holy Spirit is God at work in the church, speaking and calling people to do God's will.

The biblical revelation of the nature of God is beautiful. When the Holy Spirit speaks, or sends, or inspires, or leads, or sanctifies, or empowers, or gives gifts, it is God speaking, sending, inspiring, leading, sanctifying, empowering or giving gifts. But since God is one, and not three separate beings, the Holy Spirit is not a separate God.

God has one will, the will of the Father, which is also the will of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. It is not a matter of two or three separate God Beings deciding to be in perfect agreement with each other. This would contradict scriptures such as **Isaiah 44:6-8**. It is a matter of one God, one will. The Son is the very expression of the will of the Father. Similarly, the Holy Spirit constitutes the will of the Father at work in the world.

Paul says that **“the Lord is the Spirit,”** and he speaks of **“the Lord, who is the Spirit” (2 Corinthians 3:17-18).** He says **“the Spirit gives life” (verse 6)** which is something only God can do. We know the Father, only because the Spirit enables us to believe that Jesus is the Son of God. Jesus dwells in us and the Father dwells in us, but that is only because the Spirit dwells in us (**John 14:16-17, 23; Romans 8:9-11**). Since God is one, if the Spirit is in us, then the Father and the Son are in us. The three can be distinguished, but not separated.

Paul equates the Spirit, the Lord, and God in **1 Corinthians 12:4-11**. He says it is **“the same God who inspires”** in **verse 6**, and he says **“these are the work of one and the same Spirit,”** and goes on to declare that

the Spirit does all this as the Spirit wills (**verse 11**). How can the Spirit will? The Spirit wills because the Spirit is a person, and the Spirit is God, and God is one, and the will of the Father is the will of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

To worship God is to worship the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the one and only one God. That does not mean we are to single out the Holy Spirit and worship the Holy Spirit as though the Holy Spirit is a separate Being. We do not direct our worship to the Holy Spirit specifically, but to God, who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is God in us (the Holy Spirit) who causes us to worship God. The Comforter (like the Son) will not speak on his own (**John 16:13**), but what the Father gives him he will speak. He does not direct us to himself, but to the Father through the Son. Likewise, we don't normally pray specifically to the Spirit – it is the Spirit in us who helps us in our prayers, and intercedes for us (**Romans 8:26**).

Unless God himself is in us, we would not be turned toward God at all. Unless God himself is in us, we would not know God, and we would not know his Son. That is why all the credit for our salvation goes to God and not to us. The fruit we bear is the fruit of the Spirit – that is, God's fruit, not ours. But God gives us the privilege, if we will accept it, of participating with him in his work.

The Father is the Creator and Source of all things. The Son is the Redeemer and Savior, and the one by whom God created all things. The Holy Spirit is the Comforter and Advocate. The Holy Spirit is God in us, the one who leads us to the Father through the Son. Through the Son, we are cleansed and saved so that we can have fellowship with him and the Father. The Spirit stirs our hearts and minds and inclines us toward belief in Jesus Christ, who is the way and the gate. The Spirit gives us gifts, the gifts of God, including faith, hope and love.

All this is the work of the one God, who reveals himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He is not a different God from the God of the Old Testament, but in the New Testament something more is revealed about him: He sent his Son as a human being to die for our sins and to be raised to glory, and he sent us his Spirit – the Comforter – to dwell in us, to lead us into all truth, to give us gifts, and to conform us to the image of Christ.

When we pray, reaching God is the goal of the prayer, yet it is also God who leads us toward that goal, and it is also God who is the Way along which we are led toward the goal. In other words, it is to God (the Father) we pray; it is God in us (the Holy Spirit) motivating us to pray; and God is also the Way (the Son) along which we are being led toward that goal.

The Father initiates the plan of salvation. The Son embodies and executes the atoning, redemptive plan for the salvation of humanity. The Holy Spirit applies the benefits, or gifts, of redemption to empower the actual salvation of the faithful believers. All this is the work of the one God, the God of the Bible.

Paul ended 2 Corinthians with the blessing: **"May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all" (2 Corinthians 13:14)**. In this verse, Paul highlights the love of God, which is shown to us through the grace he gives us in Jesus Christ and the unified fellowship with himself and one another he gives us through the Holy Spirit.

How many "Persons" is God?

Many people have only a hazy idea of what the Bible teaches about the oneness of God. Most do not really think about it. Some imagine three separate Beings. Some picture one Being with three heads. Others think of one Being who changes from Father to Son to Holy Spirit whenever he wills. It is easy to make such mistakes.

Many people use the word Trinity as a definition of the biblical teaching about God. However, if asked, most would not be able to explain what the Bible actually teaches about how God is one. In other words, what many people envision when they speak of the Trinity is not biblical. Some of the confusion lies in the use of the word Persons.

The word Persons, which is normally included in English-language definitions of the Trinity, causes people to think of three Beings. "One God who is three Persons – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit," is a common way the Trinity is explained. But the ordinary meaning of the word "person" is misleading when it is applied to God. It gives the impression that God has limits, and that his threeness lies in being three separate individuals – which is not the case.

The English word "person" is derived from the Latin word *persona*. The word *persona* was used by theologians to describe the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in the Latin language, but it did not convey the same meaning as the English word "person" conveys today. It was a word originally used for a role that an actor portrayed in a play. It was also the word for "mask," because actors wore different masks for each character they portrayed.

Even this concept, though it does not allow the error of three Beings, is still weak and misleading when referring to God. It is misleading because the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are not mere roles being played by God. An actor can play only one role at a time, quite unlike God, who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit all the time.

Even though a Latin theologian may have understood what was meant by the word *persona*, the average person today would not. The English word "person" is easily misunderstood by the average individual when referring to God, unless it is accompanied by an explanation that "Persons" in the Godhead should not be thought of in the same way as "persons" like humans.

When most English-speaking people think of one God who is three Persons, they cannot help but think in some way of three separate Beings. In other words, the terms *persons* and *beings* are usually thought of, in English, as meaning the same thing. But that is not how God is revealed in the Bible. There is only one God, not three. The Bible reveals that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are the way the one true God of the Bible is, the way God exists always.

One God: three Hypostases

When we express the biblical truth that God is one and at the same time three, it is helpful to use words that do not imply three Gods. God's oneness cannot be compromised. The problem is, all words that refer to created things tend to mislead by their very context in ordinary language. Most words, including the word *Persons*, tend to confuse God's nature with the created order. On the other hand, all our words in one way or another refer to the created order. So it is important to know what we mean, and what we do not mean, when we use any word in reference to God.

A helpful word, and one that was used by Greek-speaking Christians in expressing the oneness and threeness of God, is found in **Hebrews 1:3**. This passage is helpful in several ways. It states: **"The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word."**

From the description of the Son as "the radiance of God's glory," we learn a number of things. The Son is not a separate Being. The Son is not less divine than the Father. The Son is eternal, just as the Father is. In other words, the Son is to the Father as radiance or brightness is to glory. One cannot have radiance without the source of radiance, or a source of radiance without the radiance itself. Yet we distinguish between God's glory and the radiance of that glory. They are distinct, without being separate.

Likewise, there is much to learn from the words **"the exact representation of his being."** The Son is the full and complete expression of the Father. What God is in his being, the Son also is.

Now, let's look at the Greek word translated "being" in this passage. Some versions translate it "person." The word from which "being" and "person" in this passage are translated is *hypostasis*. It comes from Greek words meaning "standing under." It refers to that which "stands under," or

that which makes something what it is. Hypostasis could be defined like this: "That without which something cannot be." It could be called "the ground of being."

God is personal

Hypostasis (in plural form, hypostases) is a good word to use of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is a biblical term, and it does not so easily confuse God's nature with the created order.

The word *Person* may also be used, as long as one understands that *Person* must not be confused with the way humans are persons. One reason the word *Person* is helpful, if it is understood correctly, is that God interacts with us in a personal way. It is wrong to say that God is impersonal. We do not worship a rock or plant, or an impersonal "power that is behind the universe." Rather, we worship a "living Person."

God is personal, but he is not a person in the way humans are persons. He says, **"I am God, and not man – the Holy One among you" (Hosea 11:9)**. God is Creator; he is not just another part of his creation. Humans have a beginning, grow up, have a body, are separate from one another, grow old, increase or decrease in size, strength, etc., and die. God has none of those characteristics, but is nonetheless personal in his relationship to humans.

God is infinitely more than any human word can convey, yet he is personal and loves us dearly. God has revealed much about himself, but he has not revealed everything about himself – some things we are simply incapable of knowing. As finite beings, we cannot totally grasp the infinite. We can know God as he reveals himself to us, but we cannot know him exhaustively, because we are finite, and he is infinite. What God has revealed to us about himself is true. It is relevant. It is intimate. It is marvelous, and it is thorough. But we must never think we know everything about God. God has revealed all we *need* to know, and what he has revealed is wonderful!

God calls on us to continue to **"grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18)**. Jesus proclaimed, **"This is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent" (John 17:3)**. The more we know God, the more we realize how small we are and how great he is.

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*