

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. The Zoom link for this service will be sent to you by email. The phone numbers for Zoom always remains the same but the Meeting ID and password number changes 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 and a PDF copy 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, 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 July 23 at 7:30 p.m. We will be continuing in 1 John 3.

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."

Apology



Greg and Susan
Williams
President GCI

Due to the heightened racial tension in the US a question has come up "Is GCI considering additional plans/actions for multi-racial outreach and inclusion?" It is without a doubt a matter that deserves proper attention, and in fact, it is not an issue that has been ignored. Please allow me to explain. Historically, the roots of Grace Communion International come from the Worldwide Church of God. Racial bias in the WCG was primarily based on Herbert Armstrong's misguided doctrine of British-Israelism that kept non-Israelite peoples (Gentiles—which included all people of color) as second class and therefore inferior.

This heretical and false teaching created division and mistreatment of people of color. Noticeable limitations were placed on Black members and leaders and many suffered from racial slurs and prejudice that were simply wrong.

Under the leadership of Joseph Tkach Sr. and his son Joseph Tkach Jr. there was major doctrinal reform leading to a greater understanding of the New Testament teaching that there is neither Jew nor Gentile, but we are all one in Jesus Christ ([Galatians 3:28](#)).

The Tkaches commissioned and sanctioned Pastor Curtis May and Greg Albrecht to oversee the Office of Reconciliation Ministries. These men, along with other key pastors, worked tirelessly traveling the country and holding weekend conferences that did much good in acknowledging past wrongs and providing healing for a more positive future.

More recently Regional Director Jeff Broadnax, along with several pastors, interns and members, helped organize gatherings called **"Together in Christ."** The idea was birthed out of conversations with our community of GCI interns. Though space for participants was somewhat limited, these weekends allowed for honest discussion and were conducted from the platform that Jesus is the unifying factor for all broken relationships and lives. True human togetherness and unity can be found only in surrendered relationship to Jesus.

"Together in Christ" was intentionally hosted by local GCI churches because this is the space where we should be able to come together with our hurts and differences and find forgiveness and restoration in the presence and power of Jesus. It is my hope that our GCI churches are maturing in Christ and are healthy enough to weather any social challenges or obstacles that come our way, and we can continue to hold "Together in Christ" events to address difficult social matters.

If you are a person of color and never had the opportunity to participate in any of these GCI sponsored events, my prayer is you will have an opportunity in the future. For those of you who have never heard a public apology for any racial slurs or mistreatments you have suffered within our church, let me say on behalf of our denomination: Please accept our heartfelt apology for the individual and systemic discriminatory and racist actions, teachings and culture we openly or ignorantly embraced and allowed. Please forgive us. May we never repeat the sins of the past, and through the power of the Spirit may we value all people as beloved children of God treating everybody with genuine love and respect."

Together in Christ we can and will go forward!

Greg Williams

P.S. If you have not yet read the cover letter for the July Equipper, I encourage you to do so. My long-time friend and fellow pastor, Charles Taylor does a marvelous job in his article "[Know Justice, Know Peace – Know Jesus, Know Peace.](#)" (<https://equipper.gci.org/2020/07/know-justice-know-peace-know-jesus-know-peace>)

GOD'S GRACE: TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE?

(From: <https://update.gci.org/2016/02/gods-grace-too-good-to-be-true/>)

This is the second letter in a 3 part series.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,



Mr. and Mrs.
Tkach (former
president of GCI)

If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. So goes the old adage. But when the topic is God's grace, it does not apply. Nevertheless, some people insist that grace truly is too good to be true, and seek to counterbalance it with law to avoid what they see as license to sin. Their sincere, though wrong-headed efforts are a form of legalism that robs people of the transforming power of grace, which flows from the love of God poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit ([Romans 5:5](#)).

The good news of the grace of God in Christ

Jesus (who is the grace of God) came declaring the gospel ([Luke 20:1 ESV](#)), the message of God's grace toward sinners (which, last time I checked, includes *everyone*). But the religious leaders of his day didn't like that message because it seemed to place all people (including those they saw as less

righteous than themselves) on the same, level playing field. For them, Jesus' message of grace (the *good news*), was decidedly *bad news*. On one occasion, Jesus gave this reply to their protests:

The Great Physician at Work

Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means, "I desire mercy, and not sacrifice." For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners. ([Matthew 9:12-13 ESV](#))

Though we embrace the gospel—the message of God's grace in Christ—it was repugnant to the self-righteous, religious types of Jesus' day. That same message still rankles those who believe they must try harder and behave better in order to earn God's favor. "How," they wonder, "can we possibly motivate people to work hard, live right, and look to a spiritual leader for direction, if we tell them they are already under grace?" They can't imagine any other way to motivate people than by emphasizing a legal (contractually-based) relationship with God.

Please understand, it's good to work hard in God's service. Jesus certainly did—his work is the ultimate achievement. But remember that Jesus, who was perfect, came to reveal the Father to us. And in that revelation there is pure good news that tells us that God's economy is better than ours—he is the inexhaustible source of grace—love,

goodness and forgiveness. We don't pay taxes (things to earn God's grace) for God's government to work—he's in the business of graciously helping humanity out of the pit it has fallen into.

Perhaps you remember the story about the traveler who fell into a pit and was struggling to get out. Several people came along and saw his struggle. The sensitive person said, "I feel for you down there." The reflective person said, "It's logical that someone would fall into the pit." The interior designer said, "I can give you some ideas on how to decorate your pit." The judgmental person said, "Only bad people fall into pits." The curious person said, "Tell me how you fell into the pit." The legalist said, "I believe you deserve your pit." The tax agent said, "Are you paying taxes on that pit?" The self-pitying person said, "You should have seen my pit." The Zen Buddhist said, "Just relax and don't think about the pit." The optimist said, "Cheer up! Things could be worse." The pessimist said, "Be prepared! Things will get worse." Jesus, seeing the man (humanity) in the pit, jumped in and lifted him out. Now that's grace!

Some people don't like the logic of God's grace. Believing that their hard work helped get them out of the pit, they see it as unfair that others get out without working equally hard. But the nature of God's grace is that God is equally generous to everyone. Though some may need forgiveness from bigger debts than others, the same arrangement extends to everyone no matter their circumstances. God doesn't just talk love and compassion; he demonstrated it by sending Jesus into the pit with us in order to lift us all out.

Those who embrace legalism tend to misread God's grace as promoting a libertine, spontaneous, and unstructured lifestyle (the antinomianism I wrote about [in](#) first of this series). But that is not the case, as Paul noted in his letter to Titus:

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age. (Titus 2:11-12 ESV)

Let me be clear about this: in saving people, God does not leave them in the pit. He does not abandon them to a life of immaturity, sin and shame. God's grace does not tell us that having forgiven us for falling in, it's OK for us to remain in the pit. Jesus saves us so that we, by the Spirit, will rise from the pit to the new life of sharing in Jesus' righteousness, peace and joy ([Romans 14:17](#)).

The parable of the workers in the vineyard

Jesus taught about God's unconditional grace in the parable of the workers in the vineyard ([Matthew 20:1-16](#)). Regardless of how long they labored, all the workers were given a full day's wage. Naturally (humanly) those who worked the longest were upset, believing those who worked less hours received more than they deserved. I suppose those who worked less also believed they didn't deserve what they received (I relate to that viewpoint!). Indeed, grace by its very nature does not seem fair—but since the judgment of God (represented by the landowner in the parable) is in our favor, I simply praise God for his grace! I have not fooled myself into believing that if I worked hard all day in the vineyard I would somehow earn God's grace. Grace can only be gratefully, humbly received as the free gift that it is.

I love how Jesus contrasts the groups of workers in his parable. Perhaps some of us would identify with those who, having worked long and hard, think they deserve more than they received. But most of us, I'm sure, would identify with those who were given far more than they earned. It's only with a perspective of gratitude that we are able to appreciate God's grace, understanding just how desperately we need it. Jesus' parable teaches us that God gives salvation to those who have not earned it (indeed, it cannot be earned). It also points out that religious legalists complain that grace is unfair (too good to be true)—how can God, they reason, reward those who have not worked as hard as they have?

Motivated by shame or gratitude?

Jesus' teaching undermines *shame*, which is the primary tool legalists use to pressure people into conforming to God's will (or, more often, to their will!). Shame is the opposite of the motive that flows from grace, which is *gratitude* for God's love. While shame focuses on the self with its sin, gratitude (which is the essence of worship) focuses on God and his goodness. Speaking from my own experience, being motivated by shame (and the fear that goes with it) is a poor substitute for being motivated by gratitude for God's love, goodness and grace.

Unlike the legalistic obedience motivated by shame, obedience motivated by gratitude is fundamentally relational (heart-to-heart)—what Paul refers to as "**the obedience that comes from faith**" ([Romans 16:26](#)). That's the only kind of obedience Paul endorsed, for it's the only kind that truly glorifies God. Relational, gospel-shaped obedience is our grateful response to the grace of God. It was gratitude that motivated Paul in his ministry, and that motivates us today to participate in what Jesus is doing in the Spirit, through the church. By God's grace, that sort of ministry leads to life transformation.

In Christ, by the Spirit, we are and always will be the beloved children of our Father in heaven. All God asks is that we grow in his grace and in doing so get to know him better (**2 Peter 3:18**). That growth in grace and knowledge will continue now, then throughout eternity in a new heaven and new earth.

To God be the glory!

Rejoicing in the truth of God's grace, Joseph Tkach

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.
Contact Information: Pastor's contact information: email— evautour47@outlook.com*