



Handle with prayer

Archbishops Venables and Orombi talk about the Primates meeting

In a 45 minute “debriefing” [“debriefing” video on Anglican TV](#), Archbishops Greg Venables (Southern Cone) and Henry Orombi (Uganda) talk candidly about the just concluded Primates meeting in Alexandria, Egypt. The meeting, they say, was marked by a refreshing honesty not found in previous meetings of the Primates. The meeting started from the understanding that the Communion was broken and that many Primates were not in true communion with others, and concluded that Anglicanism now encompasses two religions – only one of which is true to the historic Christian faith.

They confirm that the Primates all recognized as fully Anglican orthodox groups in the Anglican Church in North America – like ANiC. They are now watching to see if the Archbishop of Canterbury will engage and listen to these orthodox groups as part of the proposed mediation recommended by the Primates.

They say they want to see the ACNA leaders talk to Rowan Williams quickly about the need for an orthodox Province in North America. They don’t want to continue providing pastoral care to North American orthodox Anglicans any longer than necessary but will remain as long as protection and Primatial oversight is required. The Primates meeting laid the groundwork by demonstrating to all the Primates that the Communion was irreconcilably broken and the Gospel was being impaired. They feel that before a “political” solution can be found for the widening split in the Communion, theological work is needed.

They urge Biblically-faithful Anglicans in North America to stay united and be assured that the Global South Primates stand with them. The way forward, they advise, is prayer and mission – seeking God and doing what God has called us to do.

They both expressed appreciation for Archbishop Fred Hiltz of the Anglican Church of Canada, describing him as articulate and passionate about what he believes – even though his beliefs are very different from the beliefs of the Global South Primates.

The Primates next meeting, they tell us, is tentatively scheduled for the end of 2010 somewhere in South America.

Understanding the Primates meeting and Communiqué

The Primates meeting ended only a week ago and already much has been written about it – some has been positive, some has been negative, and much has been puzzled. ANiC’s statement [focused](#) on the positives. Bishop Jack Iker of the Diocese of Fort Worth [admits](#) his initial disappointment, saying “...*there was not much new in what was being proposed*”. He then goes on to succinctly respond to several perplexing points in the Windsor Continuation Group report which found their way into the Communiqué, saying that defections from the Episcopal Church will likely continue and the partners of the Anglican Church in North America “*will not turn away those who come to us seeking refuge*”.

Bishop Bob Duncan (Pittsburgh and leader of the Anglican Church in North America) [expresses](#) gratitude that the Primates meeting recognized those in the Anglican Church in North America as fully Anglican.

Those of us in the Common Cause Partnership who live face to face with the stark realities of unjust depositions, lawsuits, and forced evictions from church buildings and homes are acutely aware of the need for resolution. We are committed to help the process however we can. We are aware, however, that the innovations, punitive lawsuits, and abuses of the Episcopal Church

continue to take a toll. They proceed unrepentant and undeterred. We of the Common Cause Partnership and the emerging Anglican Church in North America will do our part for the good of the Anglican family we value so much.

The coming together of the Common Cause Partnership into the Anglican Church in North America will proceed. Our commitment to our missionary partners all around the world will continue. Already larger than twelve Provinces of the Anglican Communion, we will work together in koinonia with all who are willing to work with us. We are trusting in our Lord Jesus Christ, trusting that our commitment to the mainstream of the gospel witness will soon enough result in confirmation of our rightful place within the mainstream of the Anglican family.

The Rev Phil Ashey of the American Anglican Council [points out](#) some difficulties and incoherency in the Communique – particularly in the footnotes. He concludes: “*The Primates’ Communiqué offers a compelling diagnosis of the divisions within the Anglican Communion, without any promise of meaningful Communion structures to address those divisions.*” He also makes these points:

On the Covenant – *The Primates repeatedly acknowledge the need for mutual accountability. But the instrument they propose for this is a “Covenant” which has no mechanism for enforcement whatsoever... In short, without any mechanism for enforcement, the proposed Covenant is already irrelevant and an empty promise.*

On the futility of mediation - *Those who left TEC after years of “dialogue” over the fundamentals of the faith and issues of human sexuality understand the futility of this process. They crossed the Red Sea... [and] will not be repatriated to Egypt—and certainly not under any arrangement that views them as the problem, and not TEC... “Provisional holding arrangements,” “dialogue,” and professional mediators appointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury are not new solutions... Unfortunately, they are the same processes that have failed to hold the Communion together, and the same processes of delay that TEC will take advantage of while imposing a false gospel at home and throughout the rest of the Communion.*

For a good summary of the Communique and responses from GAFCon Primates, see George Conger’s [report](#) in the Church of England Newspaper.

Selected additional media reports on the Primates meeting:

Living Church – Feb 5 09 – [Conservative bishops laud outcome of meeting...](#)

Anglican Journal – Feb 5 09 – [No consensus on separate North American Anglican province](#)

EpiscopalLife Online – Feb 5 09 – [Primates support ‘pastoral visitors’... healing Anglican divisions](#)

Religious Intelligence – Feb 6 09 – [Anglican Primates agree mediation programme](#)

VirtueOnline – Feb 7 09 – [Alexandria 2009: Anglican primates miss the proverbial bus](#)

Living Church – Feb 5 09 – [Conservative bishops laud outcome of meeting... leadership](#)

Province of Nigeria website – Feb 10 09 – [A wake up call to the people of God](#) (Archbishop Akinola)

Episcopallife Online – Feb 6 09 - [Primates’ communiqué, Windsor report draw praise, criticism](#)

Times Online – Feb 6 09 – [Anglicans brace themselves for an outbreak of unity](#)

Windsor Continuation Group Report

The Primates were presented with [a report](#) from the Windsor Continuation Group which [the Archbishop of Canterbury](#) summarized into three points:

- **Accountability** – The need for provinces to move from focus on autonomy to focus on communion and accountability understood within that framework.
- **Instruments of Communion ineffectiveness** – “All four; the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Primates Meeting, The Anglican Consultative Council and the Lambeth Conference need some looking at as to whether their present structures of working are adequate to the situation.”
- **North America and the Anglican Church of North America** – “The continuation group report notes the enormous difficulties of parallel jurisdiction but also recognizes the desire of these groups to be Anglicans and be in relationship with the Anglican Communion. The recommendation was that the Archbishop of Canterbury convenes a professionally resourced **mediation** process. In addition there was support for the appointment of a **pastoral forum** and **pastoral visitors** who can act as consultants in situations of stress and conflict.”

Primates' meeting addresses urgent international situations

Sudan – Archbishop Daniel Deng Bul (Sudan) [recounted](#) the atrocities in Darfur and Southern Sudan and yet told of church growth in the midst of hardship. He appealed for “urgent support for the work of relief, rehabilitation and resettlement” and asks us to pray for the church in Sudan, which now comprises four million people. The Primates issued [this statement](#) about the situation in Sudan.

Zimbabwe – The Primates [called on](#) President Robert Mugabe to respect the results of the democratic election and step down. They also called on Anglicans worldwide to assist in the humanitarian crisis in Zimbabwe and to observe Ash Wednesday February 25 as a day of prayer for the people of that country.

Gaza – They also [addressed](#) the recent military action in Gaza, calling for a cessation of hostilities.

Archbishop Hiltz embraces mediation

Speaking to the Anglican Journal the Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada [said](#) he was “encouraged” by the Primates’ proposal for a “professionally mediated conversation” and was prepared to participate.

In [his letter](#) to members of the Anglican Church of Canada, Archbishop Hiltz reiterates his contention that “those who are the proponents of cross-border interventions have and continue to show no restraint.” He also says he is pleased to see the efforts made to make the Covenant more relational and less juridical. And he makes the unsubstantiated claim that “...the majority of the Primates do not believe that the blessing of same- sex unions ought to be a Communion-breaking issue. They uphold the principle of autonomy within Communion and respect the pastoral context, polity and due synodical processes of the Churches of the Communion.”

News – ANiC and AEN

ANiC welcomes St Mary’s Nanoose Bay (Vancouver Island) and two priests

On Sunday, February 8th the people of [St Mary’s](#) in Nanoose Bay (north of Nanaimo on Vancouver Island) voted by a decisive 85 per cent majority to align with the Anglican Network in Canada. Both the rector, the Rev Guy Bellerby, and honorary assistant, the Rev Geoffrey Dixon, have turned in their Anglican Church of Canada licences and received ANiC licences from Bishop Don. St Mary’s Nanoose Bay is the 27th congregation to choose to align with ANiC. The difficult decision to align with ANiC requires long and prayerful thought and considerable courage for both congregations and clergy. They move only because they of the abiding conviction that the move is fully in keeping with the Word of God and the leading of the Holy Spirit.

ANiC reports on recent events in the Anglican Church of Canada

The Archbishop Peter Akinola (Nigeria) has written the Archbishop of Canterbury, providing him with reports about the situation within the Episcopal Church (prepared by the American Anglican Council) and the Anglican Church of Canada (prepared by ANiC). These reports are now publicly available:

[The Anglican Church of Canada: Tearing the Fabric of Communion to Shreds](#)

[The Episcopal Church: Tearing the Fabric of Communion to Shreds](#)

In his cover letter, Archbishop Akinola says:

“[I] did not release [the reports] more widely in the hope that we would receive assurances from the Presiding Bishop of The Episcopal Church and the Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada that they were willing to exercise genuine restraint... Sadly that did not prove to be the case. Instead we were treated to presentations that sought to trivialize the situation and the consequences for those whose only offence is their determination to hold on doggedly and truthfully to the faith once delivered to the saints.

“In addition I have learned that even as we met together in Alexandria actions were taken that were in direct contradiction to the season of deeper communion and gracious restraint to which we all expressed agreement. For example... The Diocese of Toronto... announced that it will

start same sex blessings within a year... These and many further actions are documented within the report.

"In our meeting we recommended that you initiate a "professionally mediated conversation which engages all parties at the earliest opportunity." It now seems increasingly clear that without a radical change of behaviour on the part of The Episcopal Church and the Anglican Church of Canada the only possible outcome of such a process is acknowledgement of a bitter truth that the differences... are "irreconcilable". I know that you are grieved by the continuing brokenness of our Communion but I believe that healing will only come when we face into the true reality of our situation."

Report from ANiC board meeting

Our board met this past week and made the following decisions:

- **Church Plants** – The Rev Ray David Glenn (rector of St George's Lowville) was appointed as chair of a Church Plant Committee which is to draft a policy regarding the approval of new ANiC church plants and projects. In the meantime, the Rev Glenn, Bishop Don Harvey and the Ven Charlie Masters will accept new church plants and projects based on the existing interim policy.
- **Church Plant finances** – ANiC treasurer Claus Lenk is authorized to approve financial relationships with new church plants and projects, pending the approval of formal policy guidelines.
- **New ANiC parishes** – Pending approval of a formal policy and guidelines, bishop Harvey, the Ven Masters, and Chancellor Cheryl Chang were appointed to approve parishes applying for admission into ANiC.
- **Governance Committee** – Board member Rob Alloway was appointed chair.
- **Audit Committee** – Board member Rob Alloway was appointed chair.
- **Finance Committee** – Treasurer Claus Lenk was appointed chair.
- **Synod motions** – The Board ratified motions where appropriate and is ensuring any necessary actions are carried out in keeping with the decisions made by Synod in November.

Clergy conference approaching fast

ANiC's annual clergy conference is only a few weeks away. If your parish clergy haven't yet registered, time is running out! See [the flyer](#) for more information.

Time: **March 3-5**, beginning Tuesday at 4pm and concluding Thursday after supper
 Place: **Cedar Springs Retreat Centre** in Sumas Washington (near Abbotsford, BC)
 Speaker: **Canon Dr Chris Sugden** is Executive Secretary of [Anglican Mainstream](#) and director of academic affairs of the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies, and was one of the driving forces behind GAFCon

Bishop Don speaks in England

Bishop Don addressed a meeting organized by Anglican Mainstream at the General Synod of the Church of England in London today (12 February). Ruth Gledhill (Religion reporter for *The Times*) interviewed him and posted the video to YouTube. You can see it on the [AEC blog](#).

St Chad's special service

On Sunday March 1, ANiC members – and newly appointed missionaries – Norm and Audrey Henderson will be at St Chad's (Toronto), speaking at both the 11am service and at a 4:30pm gathering for the wider Anglican Network community in Toronto. Norm and Audrey are members of St George's Ottawa and have been accepted as career missionaries with Missionary Aviation Fellowship. They expect to leave Canada for Africa in mid-2009. St Chad's invites you to hear Norm and Audrey at either the morning or afternoon gathering. St Chad's is located in Toronto at the corner of Innes and Caledonia, north of St Clair. For more information, phone 416-653-2338 or visit www.stchads.ca.

Living Waters Anglican Fellowship (Athabasca, Alberta) update

Recently, Bishop Malcolm and the Ven Charlie Masters visited this ANiC church plant and commissioned Lyle Lewis as lay pastor and authorized him to administer reserved sacrament.

Board members Reg and Wendy Netterville, Carole McCarthur and Lyle Lewis were commissioned to begin afresh the work of Living Waters Anglican Fellowship. Visit the recently unveiled [website](#) for this new ANiC church plant.

St Hilda's fights to keep fruitful ministries

David (aka Anglican Samizdat) [tells about the ministry](#) of ANiC's St Hilda's in Oakville to students of a nearby high school and the spiritual fruit this ministry is bearing. For 10 years, the parishioners and pastor have offered the students a free lunch, activities and a short Gospel message on Fridays – known as Freebie Friday. Their message: “*just as salvation is free, so is lunch*”. About 100 teens come each Friday. The students pool their money to sponsor two World Vision children and recently paid for three wheelchairs to go to physically disabled people in developing countries. Through this ministry some have chosen to follow Christ and are now raising their children in the church. After telling the story of Freebie Friday, David concludes:

“[This] brings me to the reason why we are fighting in the courts to keep our building. The diocese of Niagara has a congregation of about five people using St. Hilda's building; it is managed by two priests. If they win ownership of the building, Freebie Friday, along with other ministries will stop. St. Hilda's ANiC would not be able to continue it because it has to take place at a location close to the school; the diocese will not continue it because, even if they had the inclination, they do not have the people needed to keep the building open, let alone engage in time consuming ministries.”

ANiC legal defence fund needs your support

The legal team needs your ongoing prayer and financial support. With a three-week trial beginning May 25 in New Westminster, and with ongoing pressure in the diocese of Niagara, financial support designated for the legal fund is critically important to our efforts to preserve church buildings and assets for ongoing Biblically faithful Anglican ministry.

It is important to note that the court decision in New Westminster will set a precedent and have implications for every congregation in Canada that may be concerned about the theological drift of the ACoC. In fact, these court decisions will have implications for other denominations that are struggling with the same issues in their churches. It will certainly impact a number of congregations if the ACoC General Synod approves same sex marriage in 2010, and even more when the issue of the uniqueness of Christ is debated.

In a 21 Feb 2004 Vancouver Sun article by Douglas Todd, Bishop Michael Ingham admits that same sex blessings are not the real issue for the church.

“. . . [Bishop Ingham] believes there's another giant controversy, beyond homosexuality, coming soon within Anglicanism. It will be over the place of other faiths and the "absoluteness" of Christianity, he says. Ingham has already got a taste of the conflict after writing Mansions of the Spirit, which applauds people who are good Buddhists, Muslims and Jews. "A Christian is one who believes Jesus Christ to be the way, the truth and the life. This is not to say there are no others," he says. "This issue will be the next major battleground."

Please pray about how you can contribute to the fundraising efforts in your area. Donations to the legal fund can be made [online](#). Please specify “Legal Fund” next to “Fund/Designation” on the CanadaHelps donation page, or on your cheque.

News – Canada

In the media - Canada

Religious Intelligence – Feb 8 09 – [Toronto... gives go-ahead for blessings of same-sex couples](#)

News shorts – Anglican Church in North America & Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans

ACiC holds a renewal mission on the West Coast

The Rev Canon Doc Loomis and the Rev William Beasley will speak March 20 – 22 in North Vancouver, BC, at St Simon's, 420 Seymour River Place, Lions Gate Christian Academy. On Sunday, March 22nd at 6:30pm, an interdenominational celebration service with the two visiting

ministers will be held at Harvest City Church, 7416 Victoria Drive, Vancouver. For further information contact Elsbeth Turner at elsbethturner@telus.net or 604 929-1613.

Diocese of Fort Worth shows genuine Christian charity

Taking a “page” from the Bible, rather than the Episcopal Church’s litigation “play book”, Bishop Jack Iker graciously [released](#) from canonical residency 23 retired and active priests and deacons who wished to remain in the Episcopal Church and not come under the jurisdiction of the Southern Cone along with the rest of the diocese. He also [released](#) the property and assets of four parishes, which have indicated their intention to remain in TEC, from the corporation of the diocese – pending removal of any outstanding loans from the diocese. In doing so, Bishop Iker assured the parishes of his continued prayers and best wishes. No defrocking, no law suits, no acrimony.

News shorts – United States

TEC hires special legal council to advise on multiple lawsuits

Mary Kostel [has been hired](#) as special legal counsel to the Presiding Bishop of TEC “for property litigation and discipline”. The Anglican Curmudgeon [tells us](#) her task will be to devise a “common strategy” to deal with dioceses that have voted to realign out of TEC.

Anglican Communion Institute addresses proposed Covenant

Dr Philip Turner of the [Anglican Communion Institute](#) has posted three lectures on the Covenant with the hope of stimulating discussion. These lectures deal with the background to the Covenant, the current draft of the Covenant, and arguments for and against the Covenant.

American Anglican Council challenges TEC to disclose funding for litigation

David Virtue tells us that the American Anglican Council has filed a Legal Transparency Petition, which reads:

The Episcopal Church's (TEC) continued litigation against parishes and vestries is a great concern to many in the Anglican Communion. These lawsuits come at a high price emotionally, spiritually, and financially. Of special concern is the source of TEC's funding. Where are they getting the money to sue these churches? Should TEC be open about the amount spent and the source of their litigation funding? If you are concerned about this issue and want to do something about it, then click on the provided link and sign the American Anglican Council's on-line petition. Help us bring this issue into the light!

You can sign the TEC Legal Transparency Petition [here](#).

In the US media

Church of England Newspaper – Feb 11 09 – [US Church – No Covenant before 2015](#)

Colorado Springs Gazette – Feb 10 09 – [Independence is the crux of church trial](#)

VirtueOnline – Feb 10 09 – [Why mediation will not work. Why the orthodox Episcopal church “inside strategy” has failed.](#)

News shorts – International

Bishop Nazir-Ali endorses recognition of the Anglican Church in North America

In an interview with David Virtue, Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali (Rochester) supported the recognition of ACNA as a Province in the Anglican Communion. Speaking of the Covenant, he said, “*An Anglican Covenant can certainly be a means to 'principled comprehensiveness' but it cannot be a panacea. What is needed is deep agreement in faith, on the authority of the Scriptures and Apostolic Tradition, on authoritative teachers and on common decision-making on vital issues.*”

Archbishop of the Sudan calls again for Bishop Robinson to resign

Speaking to the media gathered in Alexandria for the Primates meeting, Archbishop Daniel Deng Bul (Sudan) [repeated](#) his call for the resignation of Bishop Gene Robinson so healing could begin in the Communion. He surprised Anglican Communion Office officials by boldly issuing the same challenge at the Lambeth Conference last July.

Alexandria School of Theology prepares next future Christian leaders in Egypt

David Virtue [reports](#) that the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, which was opened in 2006, now trains 140 students, mostly Egyptian and Sudanese. "Our primary vision," says the Rev Emad Mikhail Azmi, principal of the school, "is to train people to reach into Egypt and our entire region for Christ through ordained and lay ministry." Pray for this ministry and the safety of Christians in Muslim lands.

In international news

Reuters – Feb 4 09 – [Anglican primates call for Mugabe resignation](#)

EpiscopalLife Online – Feb 4 09 – [Anglicans key to interfaith bridge-building efforts in Egypt...](#)

Beliefnet – Feb 5 09 – [Anglican leaders take dim view of viral US Church](#)

TimesOnline – Feb 6 09 – [Anglican brace themselves for an outbreak of unity](#)

Guardian – Feb 12 09 – [Church throws open female bishops dispute](#)

Soul food

Worth reading

Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali's [article](#) in the Telegraph reflects on the Christian origin of hospitals and the nursing profession and wonders at the increasing marginalization of Christianity in the very hospitals Christianity birthed. He concludes:

The long withdrawing roar of the sea of faith seems to be getting louder: nurses cannot pray, the Creed cannot be recited at Christian services for fear of offending non-believers, Christian marriage counsellors are removed because they believe in Christian marriage and Christian adoption agencies cannot be publicly funded because they believe that children are best brought up in a family with a mother and father to look after them.

It seems certain that no other faith would be subjected to such strictures and, indeed, to the benign neglect to which the churches have become accustomed. A place for Christians in the public square must be reclaimed. We should be able to contribute to public discussion about the beginnings of life and its end, the structure of the family, the building of community, justice for the poor, company for the lonely and, especially, the care of the sick, the dying and the bereaved and a host of other issues.

It is time for a movement of Christians that will put the Christian case vigorously in public debate, that will remind the nation of its Christian heritage, that will make a difference where there is human need and, yes, that will commit itself to prayer in schools, hospitals, prisons, workplaces, Parliament and the streets so that people may experience again the blessing of God on this country.

Journey from homosexuality to chastity - Commenting on the [StandFirm blog](#), a celibate Christian man, who was deeply involved in the homosexual lifestyle and radical "gay politics", explains that those coming out of a homosexual lifestyle may never be completely free from same-sex attractions but they are always free to choose chastity. He says "*there are two opposite but related errors we can make in this area. One is to believe that a change in orientation is simply never possible, the other is to insist that it is always necessary... When God called me to faith and repentance, I discovered that our Lord Jesus Christ died on the cross to save me from sin and death, not to turn me into a heterosexual... [C]elibacy has helped to deepen my prayer life, and that's a good thing. But the old lust doesn't burn like a consuming fire the way it once did. I have passed through the refiner's fire instead while God forges me into a new creature in Christ. How incredibly liberating!*"

Just for laughs

Billy Graham was returning to Charlotte after a speaking engagement and was met at the airport by a limousine ready to transport him to his home.

As he prepared to get into the limo, he stopped and spoke to the driver. 'You know' he said, 'I am 87 years old and I have never driven a limousine. Would you mind if I drove it for a while?'

The driver said, 'No problem. Have at it.'

Billy gets into the driver's seat and they head off down the highway. A short distance away sat a rookie State Trooper operating his first speed trap. The long black limo went by him doing 70 in a 55 mph zone.

The trooper pulled out and easily caught the limo and he got out of his patrol car to begin the procedure.

The young trooper walked up to the driver's door and when the glass was rolled down, he was surprised to see who was driving.

He immediately excused himself and went back to his car and called his supervisor.

He told the supervisor, 'I know we are supposed to enforce the law... But I also know that important people are given certain courtesies. I need to know what I should do because I have stopped a very important person.'

The supervisor asked, 'Is it the governor?' The trooper replies, 'No, he's more important than that.'

"Oh, so it's the president.' 'No sir. He's even more important than that.'

'Well then, who is it?'

The young trooper hesitates, 'I think it might be Jesus, 'cause he's got Billy Graham for a chauffeur!'

Poem of encouragement

The Remnant (ANiC) - by Sandra Wayerizek

*God preserves a remnant
A people for Himself
Who will love and obey Him
Serve Him above all else
Those called to be faithful
No matter what the cost
Who keep their eyes on Jesus
And count the rest as loss*

*God calls out sons and daughters
To be holy to His Name
The Name above all names
The cross their glorious gain
They heed not other voices
Of prophets gone astray
But will only follow Jesus
And trust his sacred ways*

*The fire ever before them
The cross lifted high
The remnant follow Jesus
With scripture as their guide
Deliverance is promised
To the faithful and the true
To those who honor Jesus
Honor is given where honor is due*

Please pray...

For **Bishop Don, Bishop Malcolm and Bishop Ron**. Pray for clear guidance and boldness to follow the Holy Spirit's leading.

For **Barbara Pell** and other ANiC members and leaders who are experiencing health problems.

For **new ANiC congregations and fledgling church plants**. May they seek and know the Lord's wisdom and experience His blessing on their congregations.

For those **congregations still involved in court proceedings** and disputes. Pray for wisdom, courage, peace and the necessary funds. Pray also for the **judges and lawyers** involved.

For the **needed money to support the legal defence** of ANiC congregations. Pray for upcoming court hearings that could dramatically affect legal costs.

For our **national, provincial and civic leaders** as well as for **our nation**. May God be pleased to grant repentance and cause a revival to sweep our land.

For peace and order to come to **Zimbabwe, the Congo** and other troubled parts of our world.

For those affected by the **fires in Australia**. Also pray for Christians responding to the devastation and offering support and comfort for people who have experienced loss.

For the **Church of England synod** now underway wrestling with divisive issues.

And now a word from our sponsor

Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Rise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is a desert place. And he rose and went. And there was an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure. He had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning, seated in his chariot, and he was reading the prophet Isaiah. And the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over and join this chariot." So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. Now the passage of the Scripture that he was reading was this:

"Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter and like a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he opens not his mouth. In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth."

And the eunuch said to Philip, "About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?" Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus. And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?" And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he passed through he preached the gospel to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

Acts 8: 26-40