



### *Handle with prayer!*

#### **News shorts – ANiC and AEN**

### **Common Cause event launches new North American Church**

The Anglican Network in Canada is one of the founding partners of the new Anglican Church in North America, along with the other [Common Cause Partners](#). On December 3<sup>rd</sup>, this new Church was [launched](#) in Wheaton, Illinois and Bishop Bob Duncan, from the Diocese of Pittsburgh and Moderator of the Common Cause Partnership, was named archbishop designate.

This Church unites 700 Anglican congregations, representing an estimated 100,000 people. As the Primates of the Global Anglican Future Conference requested in Jerusalem last June, this Church has the characteristics necessary to be recognized as an Anglican province.

The [provisional constitution](#) and [canons](#) of the new Church make clear that mainstream Anglican Christian belief and mission are central to its identity.

Immediately following this launch, the GAFCon Primates Council met to consider the constitution and canons and [issued a statement](#) which welcomed the “Province in formation” and stated their support, prayers and blessing.

The coming months will be marked by a period of transition for all who will be part of this new Church. The goal is that ecclesial ties to various overseas provinces will shift over time to missional relationships as structures within the North American Church take shape. In the short term, during this transition, a period of dual citizenship will exist for entities like ANiC, including their clergy, parishes and dioceses.

While there is no definitive roadmap for this transition period, several initial milestones are anticipated:

- The Governance Task Force will begin immediately to work on additional canons required in the near future.
- By April, various groupings of parishes - dioceses, clusters or networks – will apply to be part of the Church. These do not need to be geographically-based groupings but over time, the expectation is that geography will be the most common theme of these groupings.
- In late April, the Leadership Council of the new Church will likely meet.
- The College of Bishops is expected to meet in June immediately prior to the first Church-wide assembly, called the “Provincial Assembly”, which is tentatively planned for the summer of 2009, where the constitution and canons will be presented for final ratification by all those who have become part of the Anglican Church in North America.

See [photos of the December 3<sup>rd</sup>](#) launch.

Watch archived videos on AnglicanTV of the [celebration service sermon](#) on December 3<sup>rd</sup> and the preceding [news conference](#). A [transcript](#) of the news conference is also available.

## **Responses to announcement of “province in formation”**

The launch of the Anglican Church in North America has been lauded and welcomed by many, including the [Diocese of Recife](#) (under the Southern Cone), the [Diocese of Sydney](#) and the [Anglican Coalition in Canada](#).

A director of the **Institute on Religion and Democracy**, **Faith J.H. McDonnell**, [says](#):

*Some liberals in the Episcopal Church are undermining their own talking points by the spitefulness with which they are being delivered. If the proposed new Anglican Church of North America were so insignificant, their response would be dismissive but gracious. Instead, a mean-spirited hostility has broken out.*

*Ultimately, this is not a schismatic movement. While disaffected groups have split from the Episcopal Church in the past, the fact that many of these groups are now unifying is unprecedented. The stated intent is to remain within the Anglican Communion.*

*Having more than one Anglican province occupy a single geographic area is not completely new. The Church of England's Diocese in Europe exists alongside both the Convocation of American Churches in Europe and the Old Catholic Church, which are both in communion with Canterbury.*

**Ms. McDonnell** also [says that](#) *"Having more than one Anglican province occupy a single geographic area is not completely new. The Church of England's Diocese in Europe exists alongside both the Convocation of American Churches in Europe and the Old Catholic Church, which are both in communion with Canterbury."*

The **“Hills of the North”** blog [proposes](#) the new province have a membership category to accommodate those who are not part of a member parish – an “at large membership”. In a subsequent blog, the writer, an Episcopalian, [comments](#) on the debate between those committed to staying within the ACoC or TEC and those leaving the establishment churches and creating this new province:

*As the ever-irenic Dean Munday earlier wrote, "I believe the ACI's efforts would win the support of a greater number of people if they spent more time telling us how they propose to save the ship and less time knocking holes in other people's lifeboats." Surely he was right..*

*It is this lifeboat vandalism that those of us who now criticize the ACI object to, not their valiant efforts to maintain a witness still within the Episcopal Church. Yes, there are some now on the outside who do not understand why the ACI fights on, and who view the ACI's work as quixotic and irrelevant. There are some who are now experiencing the elation of being free from the sickness that is the Episcopal Church who feel it necessary to condemn those who remain, forgetting that not so long ago they were in the same place. This is surely*

*unhelpful. The ACI and all those faithful Christians still in the Episcopal Church deserve the support and prayers of those who have chosen to leave.*

The president of **Trinity School for Ministry** [has called](#) on both those who support the new province and those who disagree to:

*Be Aware of different feelings about all this. People with a high view of the Bible and a deep concern for world mission differ on how to respond to this crisis.*

*Be Blameless in your talk. But in this tense time, we need to be extra vigilant. Let us beware of letting our anger or our euphoria get the better of us.*

*Be Constant in prayer. Pray everyday for those with whom you disagree.*

**Dr Albert Mohler**, President of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, media commentator and a leading evangelical intellectual, [articulately summarizes](#) the events of this past week then concludes, “*In the end, the greatest achievement of this new group may be to make one point exceedingly clear -- the true church is rightly defined by theology, not territory.*”

**Robin Jordan** is [not impressed](#) with the constitution and canons of the new province, finding them flawed, weak and inadequate. Instead he proposes the Australian model.

**Bishop Jack Iker** (Fort Worth) [anticipates](#) his diocese will ratify the constitution of the new province next November at their annual convention, formalizing their membership.

**Dr Stephen Noll** [says](#) that the Anglican Church in North America would like recognition by the “instruments of communion” but do not consider such recognition essentials. However, it is committed to full and final recognition in a reformed communion.

## **Media reports on this Province in formation**

National Post – Dec 3 08 – [Conservative Anglicans take step in forming new church](#)

VirtueOnline – Dec 3 08 – [Anglican leaders... forming new Church in North America](#)

Christianity Today – Dec 4 08 – [Conservative Anglicans create rival Church](#)

Church of England Newspaper – Dec 4 08 – [New American Province looms](#)

Religious Intelligence – Dec 4 08 – [Legal framework set for new Third Province...](#)

Living Church – Dec 4 08 – [Provisional structure unveiled for new province](#)

Toronto Star – Dec 4 08 – [Anglicans formalize split](#)

Stephen Sizer – Dec 4 08 – [High Noon at... OK Corral: Primates meet... Canterbury](#)

Christianity Today – Dec 5 08 – [What's ahead for the fractured Episcopal Church](#)

Anglican Journal – Dec 5 08 – [...new church or new province?](#)

TimesOnline – Dec 5 08 – [Archbishops hold... summit over threat of schism](#)

VirtueOnline – Dec 5 08 – [Alternative Anglican province formed in North America](#)

[A list of additional media coverage is available from [Marilyn](#), if you are interested!]

## **New ANiC clergy and church plants**

Newly licenced ANiC priest the Rev Bob Reed and his wife Barb have been leading a small but growing fellowship in Swan River, Manitoba. They meet in a home for mid-week Bible study and Sunday Eucharist services. Previously, Bob served for 50

years in the Anglican Church of Canada and has been active in Anglican Renewal Ministries since its early days.

St Luke's in Pembroke, ON which joined ANiC in mid-November got a [nice story](#) in their local paper about the new congregation.

### **Obispo Donald in Recife**

Bishop Don Harvey ("Obispo" in Spanish) cut short his time in the meetings at which the constitution and canons for the new "Province in formation" was launched in Chicago in order to fly to Brazil to attend the synod of the Diocese of Recife – which is also under the Southern Cone. Archbishop Greg Venables had asked Bishop Don to represent him in Recife, as Archbishop Greg flew to London to meet with the GAFCon Primates and then the Archbishop of Canterbury. Bishop Don's trip to Recife was anything but smooth – with delayed flights, missed connections and the challenges of making alternative arrangements in a foreign environment and in a language with which he was not conversant. He did make it to Recife in time for the synod – and 40°C heat.

### **ANiC clergy honoured**

The Rev Dr J I Packer and the Rev David Short have been appointed honorary clerical canons of the Diocese of Sydney's St Andrew's Cathedral. The Diocese's [website states](#): *"Both Dr Packer and Mr Short had their licenses removed by the Canadian Anglican leadership when their church, St John's Shaughnessy in Vancouver voted to realign with the Province of the Southern Cone... In view of the action, Archbishop Jensen said the move to appoint the pair as honorary clerical canons was a symbolic tribute to their ministry and to the fact that Sydney still recognises their holy orders."*

In his letters to Canon Packer and Canon Short, Bishop Don said, *"I wish, on behalf of the clergy, congregations and individual members of the Anglican Network in Canada, to extend our warmest congratulations to you on receiving this great honour. Not only does it speak highly of the esteem in which you are held in different parts of the Communion, but also the wide acceptance of our Church as part of that Anglican family."*

### **Ordination next Sunday**

Bishop Don will preside at an ordination service 3pm next Sunday, December 14, at St George's Lowville (meeting at Crossroads Centre in Burlington). The Rev Keith Stodart and the Rev Peter Parent are to be ordained to the priesthood, while Scott Walker will be ordained a deacon. Please be in prayer for these three embarking on a new stage of their ministry.

### **News shorts – Canada**

#### **Open letter to Members of Parliament**

The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC) – of which ANiC is a member – [wrote](#) members of parliament in the midst of the political crisis in Canada appealing for civility, integrity, statesmanship and grace, saying these are needed to restore functionality to Parliament in this time of crisis.

## ACoC Diocese of Saskatchewan elects bishop

The Diocese of Saskatchewan [website reports](#) that:

*The **Very Reverend Michael Hawkins** has been elected the next Lord Bishop of the Diocese of Saskatchewan. He is currently Rector of St. Alban's Cathedral in Prince Albert, and the Dean of Saskatchewan... The role of a Bishop, to Mr. Hawkins, is to "lead the Church in fulfilling the 'Great Commission' of John 20:21 ['As the Father has sent me, even so I send you'] in the power of the Holy Spirit"... Mr. Hawkins will be consecrated as Bishop at a service on Friday evening, March 6th, 2009."*

Let's uphold Bishop-elect Hawkins in prayer as he serves our Lord in his diocese and in the ACoC.

## In the Canadian media

- Anglican Journal – Dec 8 08 – [Hawkins elected bishop in Saskatchewan](#)
- Anglican Journal – Dec 3 08 – [Huron bishop not yet acting on same-sex blessings](#)
- Anglican Journal – Dec 1 08 – [Majority of bishops endorse moratoria](#)
- Anglican Journal – Dec 1 08 – [New indigenous province proposed](#)
- Anglican Journal – Dec 1 08 – [Dioceses consider next steps towards... blessings](#)
- Anglican Journal – Dec 1 08 – [Lutheran bishops share similar same-sex issues](#)
- Anglican Journal – Dec 1 08 – [Final draft of... covenant could take five years...](#)
- Anglican Journal – Dec 1 08 – [Moratorium allows for time to create a way forward](#)
- Anglican Journal – Dec 1 08 – [Brutality continues in Goma, Congo](#)

## News shorts – USA and North America

### Presiding Bishop ignores TEC canons – again

Presiding Bishop Jefferts Schori, preparing to appoint a new Fort Worth bishop and initiate litigation against the Diocese of Fort Worth, now claims that Bishop Jack Iker has renounced his ordained ministry – a claim [Bishop Iker denies](#) in no uncertain terms. He says *"I have not written to the Presiding Bishop making any such declaration or request. I hope the House of Bishops will hold her accountable for her continued abuse of the canons."*

### Diocese of Los Angeles officially condones same sex blessings

The LA Times [reports](#) that Bishop Jon Bruno announced at last week's diocesan convention that:

*...church leaders can bless the unions of same-sex couples as a matter of policy...[However] Bruno's declaration is not expected to have a major effect on Episcopal churches in Southern California. Many have been blessing gay unions for years. But he has now made it official. "The practice has not changed. The policy has... It's sort of like 'coming out,'" said the Rev. Susan Russell...president of Integrity USA."*

### Fighting for property

Father Matt Kennedy [explains](#) why his parish is fighting the diocese for their church property: *"...if we do not resist this sort of thing when we have the resources to do so, then who will? There may well be parishes after us that the diocese will go after. We cannot in good conscience acquiesce to the diocese and walk away without*



*putting up the best defense we know how. We may indeed lose, but those behind us may be spared a bit longer and it may be more difficult for the diocese to steal the property of other parishes if we make it costly for them to steal our.”*

### **In the US media and on the blogs**

Tennessean – Dec 1 08 – [Myanmar refugees save dying congregation](#)

Press-Enterprise – Nov 30 08 – [Episcopal Church diocese to meet in Riverside...](#)

Anglican Communion Institute – Nov 30 08 – [The subversion of the constitution and canons of the Episcopal Church: A response to my critics](#)

Fort Worth Star Telegram – Dec 7 08 – [Episcopal... presiding bishop says Iker renounced orders](#)

Albert Mohler.com – Dec 8 08 – [Turning the Bible on its head – Newsweek goes for gay marriage](#)

### **News shorts – International**

#### **Violence in Nigeria against Christians results in 400 dead**

While the world is focused on terrorism in India, twice as many casualties are reported in Jos, Nigeria where extremist Muslims attacked Christians, unprovoked. The Diocese of Jos' website provides a [complete chronology](#), a [partial tabulation](#) and [photos](#) of the carnage suffered by Anglicans. Christians from other denominations were attacked as well. Fatalities are estimated at around 500-600. Archbishop Peter Akinola [has condemned](#) government in action in bringing the perpetrators to justice.

A message from the Diocese of Jos on December 2 provided [further information](#) and prayer items:

- *The Governor of Plateau State has stated very clearly that no Muslim was killed in a mosque in Jos. Please pray against the adverse effects of untrue propaganda in the international press.*
- *Amongst the several hundred people arrested are many foreign Muslim mercenaries who were well armed. NB These have killed both Christians and Muslims because, being aliens, they do not know who is who.*
- *Government figures last night gave nearly 26,000 displaced persons in 20 camps across the city. This number does not of course include the many homeless who are being cared for by family and friends.*
- *The State authorities have begun to get some relief to these persons but the task is big and the need for water, food and medicine is becoming urgent.*
- *The State authorities have also begun to clear corpses and debris from the streets.*
- *Many people have started to go out and look for food etc. but with no banks and little movement into the city both cash and supplies are tight.*
- *The situation is therefore easing in one sense but there is still the very real possibility of further violence. Please pray that God will wash away anger, rage, retaliation and lust for bloodshed.*

See the reports in the [TimesOnline](#) and the [Church Times](#).

## **Crisis in Zimbabwe worsens to unimaginable level**

The Wall Street Journal [reports](#) that the political and economic crisis in Zimbabwe has now become a health crisis. The government of despot Robert Mugabe has so mismanaged the country that inflation is running at an unimaginable 231 million per cent. Infrastructure is in shambles and law and order are subverted. Now a cholera epidemic is killing hundreds and spurring many others to flee the country. Finally, other African leaders are calling for Mugabe's removal – as is the [Archbishop of Southern Africa](#), Thabo Makgoba. With the water supply to the capital city of Harare shut down, the bishop of Harare, Sebastian Bakare is attempting to raise funds and international support for a well drilling campaign and a school meals program. Christian Today [reports](#) that “most schools have closed because teachers receive less pay than the cost of commuting to school, and because they and their families are also facing starvation.” Pray for God's mercy on these people who are precious in His sight.

## **Refuse “Seasons Greetings” Archbishop urges in interview**

In a [recent interview](#) with the Nigeria Tribune, Archbishop Peter Akinola discussed everything from church growth to secularization:

**On discipleship in Nigeria** – *The task before us now is, how do we deepen the faith, how do we get these new converts and even the old ones to take their faith more seriously, how do we relate faith to daily life? ... We call that Discipleship. We are going to focus more, now, on teaching and preaching in such a way that people are led to deeper things of God so that their faith can sustain them in time of difficulties. That they can see that God is sufficient in all things at all times, and they will not be tempted to go back to their old ways.*

**On eradicating Christ from culture** – *...I see the agents of anti-Christ at work and their determination is to remove God and Christ and the church from national consciousness, from the public domain. Begin to think of the tremendous developments and benefits nations have derived from the church, think of the tremendous blessings the church has been to Europe or to America. In fact, the founding fathers of these nations built their policies, government, and constitution on the strength of their Judeo-Christian heritage.*

*Today, modern man says ‘to hell with the church.’*

*In England, only 1 million go to church, (Anglican church) but on paper, there are 25 million Anglicans. You now have a so-called modern concern. Oh! don't bother your neighbour, don't offend your neighbour, be politically correct, don't do things that will be offensive to your neighbour. All of a sudden, if you speak about Christ that is seen to be offensive, if you have Christmas carol being song, all of a sudden it is offensive. When we talk of Christmas, it is offensive because Christ is there, in the name of civil liberty and political correctness, they removed Christ; they are campaigning for the removal of the Cross from public domain...*

**On taking Christ out of Christmas** – *... I saw a card with the inscription, season greetings, and I said what season? Winter season or rainy season? If we are celebrating Christmas, then we are celebrating Christmas season, not any other season but the birth of the Christ.*

*Christ is the centre, and purpose and essence of Christmas celebration, so if you remove Christ from the card and the greeting, then, what are you people talking about? To the ordinary person, it is a harmless thing but if you look at the background, and you see what is happening around, then you will know it is not ordinary. It is part of the game of the anti-Christ to remove Christ and not only that, to remove all Christian emblems from public domain. As they do that year after year, with time, Christianity will be confined to the oblivion. That is the game, that is the agenda and we must therefore stand firmly against it. That is why I raised the alarm, and I call on the media, I call on all our church leaders in this country to rise against that trend.*

*If you see any card around Christmas in which they say 'Season Greetings', don't buy it, don't give it, don't receive it. If it is sent to you, send it back to sender...*

*Christ is at the very centre of Christmas celebration. We are commemorating the birth of the Christ, we are commemorating the incarnation, we are commemorating the most unique, the most historic, the most fundamental thing God ever did in human history, the gift of his Son for the salvation of this world and then, you now say season greetings. Ah! You don't trivialize that kind of thing.*

### **ACC not capable of handling covenant and disciple**

Recounting the history of the Communion, Christina Baxter, Principal of St John's Theological College (England), [explains](#) the diversity in polity in the Communion and how the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC) came into being. Of the ACC, she says, "it is not fit for purpose", "those who pay the piper call the tune" and it is handicapped by differences in language and understanding among members. She also comments on the disarray of conservative Anglicans in Britain.

### **In the international media**

Religious Intelligence – Dec 4 08 – [Indian...leaders call for action on... extremists](#)

Anglican Mainstream – Dec 1 08 – [Crosslinks Mission Director... reflects on... year](#)

### **Soul food**

#### **Just for fun**

An atheist angered by the upcoming Easter and Passover holy days, hired an attorney to bring a discrimination case against Christians, Jews and observances of their holy days. The argument was that it was unfair that atheists had no such recognized days.

After listening to the passionate presentation by the lawyer, the judge banged his gavel and declaring, "Case dismissed!" However, the lawyer sprang to his feet loudly objecting. "Your honor," he said, "How can you possibly dismiss this case? The Christians have Christmas, Easter and others; the Jews have Passover, Yom Kippur and Chanukah; yet my client and all other atheists have no such holidays."

The judge replied, "But you do. Your client, counsel, is woefully ignorant." The lawyer replied, "Your Honor, we are unaware of any special observance or holiday for atheists." The judge said, "The calendar says April 1<sup>st</sup> is April Fools Day. Psalm 14:1 states, 'The fool says in his heart, there is no God.' Thus, it is the opinion of



this court, that if your client says there is no God, then he is a fool. Therefore, April 1<sup>st</sup> is his day. Court is adjourned."

## Worth reading

**Zacchaeus Fellowship** remains an active witness to the transforming power of Jesus Christ despite attempts within the Anglican Church of Canada to marginalize and silence them. Recently Zacchaeus [paid tribute](#) to Alan MacGowan who when to be with the Lord on December 3 while on a conference call with colleagues in Zacchaeus.

*They write, "Alan was active in the gay community for most of his adult life but found no peace in a homosexual identity, as he describes in a [testimony](#) he shared on many occasions. In 2002, at last repenting of his rebellion and disobedience, he offered his full submission to Jesus... Never one to mince words, Alan continually wrote impassioned letters in which he denounced the drift of the Anglican Church of Canada away from scripturally based faith and morals and called it to repent for tolerating and even blessing sexual activity outside marriage. He remained always personally compassionate, though, towards his old friends in the gay community and others trapped, as he had once been, in sexual addiction and immorality. It was a grace that he died in the presence, via the Internet, of friends who were praying for him while he waited for the ambulance. As his life slipped away, he kept on saying, "I love you, Jesus."*

If you wish to support Zacchaeus Fellowship and honour Alan's transformed life, donations can be made via cheque, payable to St Thomas the Apostle Anglican Church, 250 Dundas St South, Suite 242, Cambridge, ON, N1R 8A8.

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The arguments of religious liberals have changed little in nearly a decade. Read how **J Gesham Machen** [responded to these arguments](#) in the 1920s:

- Living like Jesus is more important than believing in him
- People are basically good and free from original sin
- Penal substitution is unnecessary because a loving God would forgive without demanding a sacrifice
- Salvation includes many who do not believe in Jesus
- This life matters at the exclusion of the afterlife

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**Dr J I Packer** [interviewed](#) by Founders Ministries, assesses the current state of evangelicalism. He says, "...Modern evangelicalism is simply too worldly... We are inclined to believe that God exists for us, God is waiting for us, God is there to make us happy. But in the gospel, God does not play the role of a butler. In the Gospel we are told that God, the Creator who made all things for his own praise and glory, has gone into action as mankind's redeemer. We human individuals are impotent of spiritual response, that is, response to God in any shape or form; but God first of all sends us a Savior to make atonement for our sins, and then he sends the Holy Spirit to change our hearts and make us willing to see and respond to Christ... [T]heology means the study of God, and if we are to love God, as we are commanded, with all our 'minds' then we need to be in the business of theology. So when I speak of

*theology, I am referring to the truth that God has given us all in Scripture which we all need to learn and digest. It is truth for life! ...theology is supremely practical. If this could be seen, then I think people's fear of theology could melt away and they would appreciate, and benefit from, serious theological instruction... If you actually get around to reading the Reformers, such as Luther or Calvin, you will find that they did all their work from a pastoral standpoint, but at every point they are applying truth to the lives of people."*

## Resources

Dr J Budziszewski and David Orgon Coolidge [provide excellent insight](#) into framing arguments in the public arena regarding sexuality, morality and marriage. For example, they suggest simply quoting Scripture is not particularly effective when speaking to those who do not accept Scripture. Rather, follow Paul's example by appeal to "general revelation" – what people know intuitively about right and wrong. Based on natural law, Budziszewski recommends "blowing away smokescreens and deceptions by appealing to peoples' consciences and God-ward longing as well as to consequences and design. Coolidge believes that to frame the debate correctly, we must focus on the key issue, marriage. He recommends "First, we must advance the passage of marriage-centered laws and policies. Second, we must oppose the passage of sexual orientation- or "sexuality"-centered laws and policies."

## Good tidings of great joy

### *I heard the bells on Christmas Day*

*Words by: Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, 1864.*

*I heard the bells on Christmas day, their old familiar carols play,  
And wild and sweet the words repeat of peace on earth, good will to men.*

*And thought how, as the day had come, the belfries of all Christendom  
Had rolled along the unbroken song of peace on earth, good will to men.*

*Till ringing, singing on its way the world revolved from night to day,  
A voice, a chime, a chant sublime of peace on earth, good will to men.*

*And in despair I bowed my head "There is no peace on earth," I said,  
"For hate is strong and mocks the song Of peace on earth, good will to men."*

*Then pealed the bells more loud and deep: "God is not dead, nor doth He sleep;  
The wrong shall fail, the right prevail With peace on earth, good will to men."*

## Prayer and praise

Praise God for this new **North American province in formation**

Please pray for **Archbishop designate, Bishop Bob Duncan**, for the Lead Bishops, including Bishop Donald Harvey, and for all those involved in bringing this province to fruition.

Pray also for the **GAFCon primates** and other orthodox primates as they consider full recognition of this province.

Pray for the **leadership of ANiC** – especially Bishop Don, Bishop Malcolm and Charlie Masters.

Pray for **new ANiC congregations** as they get organized and take care of all the many practical details. Pray for healing where needed, hunger for the pure Word of God and joy in the Lord.

Pray for the **ordination** in Burlington, ON next Sunday. Keith Stodart and Peter Parent are being priested, while Scott Walker will be ordained a deacon.

Pray for recently elected **Anglican Church of Canada bishops**, Stephen Andrews (Algoma) and Michael Hawkins (Saskatchewan) – both reputed to be theologically orthodox.

Pray for those in authority over us in **government**. Pray for a return to civility, statesmanship and functionality in parliament.

Pray for the **troops in Afghanistan** during this Christmas season, for safety and for hearts that seek after God. Pray for the friends and families of those killed while serving our nation.

### **And now a word from our sponsor**

*For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.*

Isaiah 9:5-7

*And his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied, saying, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David, as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old, that we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us; to show the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant, the oath that he swore to our father Abraham, to grant us that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all our days. And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, to give knowledge of salvation to his people in the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God, whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."*

Luke 1:67-79

*And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"*

Luke 2:13-14

*Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.*

John 14:27