



Anglican Network in Canada

ANiC Newsletter 10 December 2014 (Advent & Christmas edition)

Handle with prayer...

Advent Collect

ALMIGHTY God, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious Majesty, to judge both the quick and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, now and ever. Amen.

Advent 2

BLESSED Lord, who hast caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience and comfort of thy holy Word, we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which thou hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

ANiC news

ANiC and ACNA events calendar

December 12-14 – Bishop Charlie holds meetings in New England for both New England and Maritime provinces (See [website for details](#))

December 13, 7pm – [Jacob Moon Christmas Concert](#) for refugees at [St Peter & St Paul's](#) (Ottawa)

December 21, 1pm – Ordination of the Rev Neil van der Heerden at [Church of Our Lord](#) (Victoria)

January 22-25 – Bishop Charlie holds meetings in Greater Toronto (See [website for details](#))

February 5-8 – Bishop Charlie holds meetings in Ottawa/Pembroke (See [website for details](#))

February 13-15 – Bishop Charlie holds meetings in St John's, NL (See [website for details](#))

February 15 – Alex Pryor+ to be ordained to the priesthood at [Good Samaritan](#) (St John's, NL)

February 24-25 – Southern Ontario clergy retreat near Orangeville

April 21-23 – Ontario clergy silent retreat near Orangeville

May 14 – March for Life 2015 in Ottawa

May 26-28 – AMMiC mini-conference in Richmond, BC

June 22-26 – ACNA Executive Cabinet, Council, College of Bishops meetings in Vancouver

ANiC's newly elected council begins work

November 20-21, the members of ANiC's council met in Richmond, BC for orientation, the forming of committees and to begin work. You can learn more about the members of the council [on the ANiC website](#). Also, photos of the council meeting were posted [on the ANiC Facebook page](#). If you are on Facebook, be sure to "like" ANiC so you can easily stay informed.

ANiC in the news

Our Province's magazine, *The Apostle*, included a [short photo-essay](#) on Bishop Charlie's "tour" around ANiC, visiting and speaking with clergy and members the length and breadth of our diocese.

You can see [Bishop Charlie's itinerary](#) here and also the [five ministry priorities](#) he so passionately is discussing at his meetings.

Report on Vicar of Baghdad visit to St George's Burlington, December 7

Canon Andrew White, who is known as the Vicar of Baghdad, was at [St George's Anglican Church](#) (Burlington, ON) on December 7 to baptizing his grandson. The Rev Ray David Glenn also interviewed him. You can see photos, courtesy of David Jenkins, [here](#).

David reports that “Canon Andrew spoke about the situation in Iraq which has gone, he said, from very bad to very, very bad. He takes courage from the Christian children. As recently as a couple of weeks ago, ISIS demanded that a group of children convert to Islam and follow Mohammed. They all held hands and said: “no, we love Jesus”. One by one, they were shot in the head.”



A recent [Huffington Post interview](#) offers much more detail. The blogger who goes by the name “Archbishop Cranmer” [wrote](#) that Canon White was ordered by the Archbishop of Canterbury to flee Iraq because there was reported to be a “£36-million bounty” on his head.

The photo is of the nativity scene set up this Christmas by refugees in Northern Iraq in a refugee tent. It reminds us that Jesus and his family were also refugees in Egypt for a time.

Upcoming clergy events in Southern Ontario

February 24-25 – A southern Ontario clergy event is slated for February 24-25 at a retreat centre near Orangeville, ON. The speaker is the Rev Keith Ganzer who will focus on the theme “Ministers of a New Covenant” taken from 2 Corinthians 2:12- 4:18. Keith+ will also discuss the process of sermon preparation. For cost, registration information, and other details, see flyer which will be posted soon [to the ANiC website](#).

April 21 -23 – At the same retreat centre, Bishop Charlie Masters will lead a silent retreat for clergy on the theme “Faithful is he who calls” (1 Thessalonians 5: 24). Full details and registration information will be provided in January. But reserve the dates now!

2015 Liturgical calendars

Canon Tom Carman has prepared a 2015 liturgical calendar following Common Worship (Church of England) which you can find as a pdf [on the ANiC website](#). (Thanks Tom+!)

ANiC featured in global and “provincial” publications

In his [Advent pastoral letter](#) to the Global Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans, GAFCon chairman Archbishop Eliud Wabukala (Primate of Kenya) devoted considerable space to ANiC and specifically Bishop Charlie Masters. He notes Bishop Charlie’s response to the terrorist attack in Ottawa at the end of October – in an [Anglican TV interview](#) as well as an earlier [written statement](#).

Bishop Charlie’s current schedule of visits around ANiC is featured in the [Advent edition of *The Apostle*](#), ACNA magazine.

Thank you from ARDFC

Close to \$40,000 has been raised for Iraqi refugees. ARDFC is sending your gifts to Archbishop Mouner Anis for distribution via churches working in Iraqi to refugees in need.

In addition ARDFC anticipates that all the funds will soon be raised for its 2014 project: building a pediatric ward in partnership with the Diocese of Yei in South Sudan. A new project will be select soon for 2015.

Thank you to all who gave so generously. You’ll enjoy a [five-minute video](#) created by ARDF, showing a few of the “*stories of redemption*” made possible by donors in 2014. Be sure to also watch a [series of short ARDF Advent videos](#) with messages of appreciation from global Anglican leaders.

Clergy announcements

The **Rev Trevor Potter** has been appointed rector of Emmaus Anglican Church (Montreal, QC) effective December 1.

The **Rev Kevin McKee** was welcomed as a priest in ANiC and as Honorary Assistant of The Table (Victoria, BC) effective December 9.

The **Rev Dwight MacPherson** resigned as rector of All Saints' (Rutland, Vermont) and his license was suspended effective, 9 November 2014.

Upcoming ordinations

The **Rev Neil van der Heerden**, who pastors [Living Edge](#) (Victoria, BC), will be ordained to the priesthood on Sunday, December 21 at 1pm [at Church of Our Lord](#) (Victoria). Please keep Neil+ in your prayers.

Keeping up with our bishops

Bishop Charlie Masters was recently in Victoria and Quebec meeting with clergy and their spouses, engaging in children's meetings and sharing his ministry priorities for ANiC with members from local congregations. Photos from both the Victoria and Montreal-area events will be posted soon [to the ANiC website](#).

Bishop Charlie is ministering in New England this weekend – first at a clergy retreat in Bangor, Maine and then in Marlborough, MA at Holy Trinity on Sunday. You can see his full schedule [on the ANiC website](#). This is followed by a trip to Washington, DC, December 15-16, where he will meet with the rest of the ACNA Liturgical Commission under the leadership of Archbishop Emeritus Bob Duncan.

Bishop Trevor Walters is in Jerusalem for [CMJ](#) meetings.

Bishop Stephen Leung is in Hong Kong for his mother's funeral. Please keep him – and all our bishops – in your prayers.

AEC blog

Be sure you use the correct URL to access the AEC blog as the redirect from the old web address no longer works. The correct URL is www.aecblog.net. The AEC blog has been active since 2007.

AMMiC prayer calendar

To help you in praying for ANiC's Asian and Multicultural Ministries you can access a prayer calendar [on the AMMiC website](#). You'll also find a monthly prayer calendar for ANiC – as well as monthly prayer meditations, known as the *First Friday Call to Prayer* – [on the ANiC site](#).

Our Primate asks priests to hold off signing marriage pledge

Addressing a call – put forward by Drs Ephraim Radner and Christopher Seitz – for clergy to protest the radical cultural redefinition of marriage by pledging stop serving as agents of the state in performing civil marriages, Archbishop Foley Beach asks we hit the pause button. He writes, "*It would be best for us to take counsel together before taking further action. Therefore I ask that you do not sign this pledge until as bishops, clergy, and lay leaders we have had more opportunities to pray about and discuss the legal, theological, and sociological ramifications of signing such a statement.*" You can read his full statement [on the ACNA website](#).

Parish and regional news

Good Shepherd (Vancouver, BC) – Good Shepherd's Taste of Life Ministry to chefs and restaurant workers in Richmond, BC has seen 13 adults baptized in the last few years. Three of these were baptized just last week and three others were confirmed. Photos are [on the ANiC website](#). Taste of Life meets late at night on Tuesdays – after the restaurant workers' shifts end.

St Matthias and St Luke (Vancouver, BC) – In what has become an annual tradition, the church choir will be bringing the Christmas message of peace, hope, love and salvation through music and songs to the shoppers at Oakridge Shopping Centre. If you are in the Vancouver area and want to hear the choir, it is performing as part of the shopping centre's '*Sounds of the Season*' program on Friday, December 19 at 7pm.

New Song (Port Perry, ON) is celebrating Christmas by [hosting a free community dinner](#) – turkey and all – on December 25.

Ascension (Langley, BC) – On Sunday, December 14, Bishop Trevor Walters will be at Ascension for baptism and confirmation.

That same day, Jenny Roberts will be installed as the second Canadian member of the ACNA's Order of the [Daughters of the Holy Cross](#), a lay community for women desiring a committed framework of prayer, service, study and evangelism. The first Canadian member of the Order is also an Ascension member. Once Ascension has three members, they hope to form the first Canadian chapter of the Order.

Got parish news? Let the rest of us know about it! [Email Marilyn.](#)

Anglican Church in North America (ACNA) news

Diocese of Quincy wins important legal case

The US Episcopal Church (TEC) was denied leave to appeal a lower court decision which favoured the ACNA Diocese of Quincy. As a result, [writes Alan Haley](#), one of the lawyers representing the ACNA diocese, the Illinois Supreme Court upholds the lower court decision that *“there is no provision in the governing documents of the Episcopal Church (USA) that keeps a Diocese from withdrawing its membership in that organization. The Church in fact is an unincorporated association of dioceses fashioned under American common law, and not under the laws of any one given State. Under the First Amendment, members of such associations are free to leave the group at any time, with only reasonable restrictions placed on their ability to do so (they could be required to pay any back dues still owed, for example). The opinion delivered last April by the Illinois Fourth District Court of Appeal stands as written.”*

Archbishop Beach & ACNA contingent at Diocese of Singapore mission conference

A large contingent from ACNA was involved in a missions strategy session in Singapore recently. The Missions Consultation Roundtable focused on reaching SE Asia with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Diocese of Singapore has missionary deaneries in Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Indonesia, Nepal and Vietnam. The [ACNA website reports](#) that *“37 mission leaders from the Anglican Church in North America were invited to participate in the roundtable which was held November 11-14, 2014 at St. Andrew's Cathedral in Singapore. In all, there were 171 participants representing 19 countries in attendance at the conference.”*

In all, Archbishop Foley Beach spent 18 days in Singapore, Malaysia, Myanmar and eventually Australia visiting with local church leaders, preaching and ministering.

More ACNA news

- The ACNA's *The Apostle* magazine, Advent edition, [is now online.](#)
- Bishop Royal Grote [has succeeded](#) the Most Rev Leonard Riches as Presiding Bishop of the [Reformed Episcopal Church](#) (REC). The REC was a founding member of the ACNA and is comprised of several ACNA dioceses.
- St Peter's Anglican Church (Tallahassee, FL) [is partnering](#) with Trinity School of Ministry in Ambridge, PA to offer theological education locally.
- Archbishop Foley Beach is leading a Shoreside Study Tour to Israel, May 30-June 11, 2015. You can learn more [on the ACNA website](#). If you prefer to tour Israel when the temperatures are milder, the Rev Sharon Hayton, who leads CMJ-Canada, is leading another Shoreside tour next fall, Nov 5-20. You'll find [information](#) and [registration](#) on the CMJ-Canada website.
- In [an interview](#), the newly appointed ACNA canon for church planting, Canon Dan Alger, says *“Now that we have a zeal for planting, we need to add support systems such as assessment, training, coaching, and other resources, that will allow us to more effectively plant more healthy churches with healthy church planters.”*
- A highly favourable review of the ACNA's new catechism by a Church of England clergyman [posted on Anglican Mainstream](#) concludes with *“Here we have not only Alpha, but Beta, Gamma and Delta with huge potential for the renewal of the church. I commend it warmly.”*

Global Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans and Anglican Communion news

Archbishop Welby warns of irreconcilable Anglican Communion divisions

In a media interview the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, acknowledged that divisions in the Anglican Communion might be irreconcilable – at least in the short term. He did hold out hope that, eventually, things might be smoothed over. [Anglican Ink summarizes](#):

“However, the archbishop was optimistic that in time the divisions in doctrine and discipline could be overcome by letting go of the stridency and rage that characterized many of the disputes of the last ten years.

“What you can ask is for people to engage with those with whom they disagree, not expecting to be convinced, or even to convince, but to understand the other person’s humanity and why they come to such a different view,” the archbishop said.

“The next step, he believed was embodying “good disagreement”, however, this was not unity for the sake of unity.

“I’m absolutely not saying ‘Unity at all costs’ — quite the reverse. Truth and integrity matter hugely,” he said. “It’s all very well making declarations. The difficult bit is living together and working it out in practice. And we’re absolutely determined to do that. It’s very tough. But it’s a prize that is so absolutely worth going for.”

International news in brief

Canada

- The [Anglican Journal reports](#) that the Anglican Church of Canada (ACoC) House of Bishops has formed a committee comprised of Bishops Stephen Andrews (Algoma), William Anderson (Caledonia), Michael Hawkins (Saskatchewan), Michael Oulton (Ontario) and Melissa Skelton (New Westminster) to “guide their peers through new discussions of the marriage canon issue, which will culminate at General Synod 2016” because “within this meeting and this house and this church, there’s a huge amount of anxiety” about the canon.
- The [Anglican Journal reports](#) that “The Anglican Church of Canada and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) have approved in principle a plan to hold a second joint assembly in 2019.”
- [Anglican Ink reports](#) that the Anglican Church of Canada’s Diocese of Quebec might be faced with closing or amalgamating 64 per cent of its congregations over the next five years. “Statistics published in a report released earlier this year by the Task Force on Mission Ministry and Management reports the diocese has 3000 members in 52 parishes with 87 congregations. The report stated “42% of congregations have fewer than 10 regular services a year and 76% have fewer than 25 participants at services. In 31% of the congregations the age range begins at 50 and in 13% at 70.” The report further reported that a “staggering 83% reported minimal or no activity outside of worship.”
- Archbishop Eliud Wabukala’s [Advent pastoral letter](#) denounced the Anglican Church of Canada-led Consultation of Anglican Bishops in Dialogue which, since it began in 2010, has brought African and western bishops together to discuss human sexuality.
- Calling the ACNA an ecumenical partner – as the Archbishop of Canterbury did a month ago – was a step too far according to Anglican Church of Canada Archdeacon Bruce Myers. [Writing in the Anglican Journal](#), Myers says the ACNA must repent and seek reconciliation before qualifying for ecumenical partner status. For comment, see [Anglican Samizdat](#) or [Virtue Online](#).
- The Anglican Church of Canada’s Council of the North is engaged in powerful prison ministries. You can read more [on the ACoC website](#). The article says, in part, “By challenging the unchecked demand for paid sex, the new laws send the message that women and children are not, and should not be for sale. This approach effectively turns the historic treatment of prostitution on its head.”

- The new prostitution laws, which are supported by the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC), came into effect in Canada this past week. It is hoped that these new laws, which, for the first time criminalize the *buying* of sex, will help end sexual exploitation of vulnerable people. [Read more from the EFC.](#)
- Opposition to Trinity Western University's Christian code of conduct continues with indications that the government of BC might be wavering on its earlier approval of the [university's proposed law school](#). The case will almost certainly find its way to the Supreme Court as opponents have succeeded in getting a number of provincial law societies to vote to not recognize TWU law graduates. The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada [is intervening](#) on TWU's behalf in a judicial review in Nova Scotia, December 16-19.

England

- The Church of England [has announced](#) plans to appoint a "headship" bishop as the next bishop of Maidstone, a suffragan appointment which has been vacant for five years. Such a bishop would fulfil the House of Bishops' commitment to make episcopal provision for clergy and churches which do not accept woman bishops. This bishop would serve "*as an advocate for those who hold a conservative position on headship*". Reform, which represents conservative evangelicals, welcomed the announcement, saying "*Once acted upon, it will provide reassurance both for conservative evangelicals and for those who have been keen to see women bishops.*"
- Andrew Symes of Anglican Mainstream sees the Church of England's declining numbers as a potential blessing and opportunity. Read his article [here](#).
- Andrew Symes, in [another article](#), proposes a three-part strategy for responding to the creeping imposition of "liberal" views and theology within the Church. His action plan includes: 1) disestablishment – untying the Church from the State; 2) disengagement – negotiating a peaceful breakup of the C of E; and 3) discipleship.
- The BBC has [a short debate](#) on the former Bishop of Oxford's proposal that the Koran should be read at the coronation of the next monarch.

Middle East – The Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East [announced](#) title changes for its senior bishops. The primate's title has changed from president bishop to archbishop (ie Archbishop Mouneer Anis). The title of the bishop of Jerusalem changed to "Archbishop in Jerusalem" – but this does not confer metropolitan authority.

Egypt – The Diocese of Egypt [is participating](#) with Muslims and other faith communities in seeking to counter the culture of extremism by building working relationships between priests and imams.

Kenya – Al Shabaab Islamist terrorists [recently killed](#) 64 in two different attacks in north east Kenya near the Somali border, including, according to [a Sydney Anglicans report](#), 11 members of one Anglican church. The attacks specifically targeted Christians and non-Muslims; Christians are fleeing the area. Al Shabaab is based in Somalia. A [BBC article](#) provides good background.

[Anglican Ink reports](#) that "*In his presidential address to the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Kenya last month, the Most Rev Eliud Wabukala stated Kenya's Christians were under assault from militant Islam. "Although 80% of the Kenyans identify as Christians, we face serious challenges," he said. "In a few weeks, the self-styled Islamic State or ISIS seized control of much of northern Iraq and eastern Syria and is set to consolidate those gains by shocking yet calculated violence and terror. We see how the churches in northern Nigeria are facing systematic eradication by Boko Haram and here in Kenya we also have felt the painful impact of radical Islam through Al Shabaab. While we look to the armed forces and the security services to protect all citizens, we must also be spiritually equipped to meet this challenge by a strong and courageous faith and a willingness to witness to all Muslims by acts of kindness and words of truth."*

Somalia – In its persecution update, [Frontline Missions reports](#) that "*Somalia is not only one of the most corrupt countries on the planet, but it is also ranked as one of the worst persecutors of*

Christians—second only to North Korea. Officially, Somalia is 100% Sunni Muslim and is governed with harsh sharia law. The accurate number of Christians is difficult to determine due to their very low profile, but estimates put the number of underground believers anywhere from a few hundred to a few thousand.”

Nigeria – The Islamist terrorist group responsible for thousands of deaths, kidnappings and carnage in northern Nigeria, Boko Haram, continued its attacks on unarmed villagers slaughtering close to 100 recently [according to a Reuters report](#).

South Sudan – The Episcopal Church of South Sudan and Sudan [recently consecrated](#) nine new bishops. The leaders of the church also resolved to preach repentance, oppose tribalism and encourage reconciliation rather than revenge.

In a potentially costly move, the bishops also stated that the Church would re-evaluate its relationship with western diocese which support and promote a non-Christian understanding of marriage. [According to Virtue Online](#), *“The Sudanese bishops reaffirmed their “commitment to Biblical teaching of one wife and one husband and [we] will determine and evaluate our partnerships in the Anglican Communion on that basis.”*”

West Africa (Ebola crisis) – [The CBC reports](#) that Ebola, while seemingly under control in some West Africa countries, continues to spread in parts of Sierra Leone and Guinea. The report states, *“The Ebola outbreak has infected more than 17,800 people, the vast majority in Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone. Of those, around 6,300 have died.”*

Africa – This [missionary blog post](#) provides an excellent understanding of the culture confronting Christianity on that continent. The author writes, *“In Africa, animism is the predominant worldview. Even among many who claim to be Christian or Muslim.”* An animistic worldview encourages corruption among leaders, apathy among the general populace, and a reluctance to hold those in authority accountable. The missionary writes, *“Until the underlying worldview is addressed, there will not be change in Africa. This is why Africa needs the gospel to penetrate its worldview. What does biblical Christianity have to offer Africa? The idea that progress is possible... The idea that every man is equal and under the authority of his Creator...”*

Pakistan – The [Barnabas Fund reports](#) that Aasia Bibi, *“The Christian mother of five children, sentenced to death for “blasphemy” in Pakistan, has filed an appeal to the country’s top court on 24 November... Aasia Bibi was arrested in June 2009 and has been on death row since 2010 after she was accused of insulting the prophet Mohammed when she was working with some Muslim women in a field. ... There are currently 17 people on death row [in Pakistan] who have been accused of “blasphemy”, five of whom are Christians.”* The [Church Times reports](#) that the lawyer defending Aasia Bibi, at great personal risk, is calling for international pressure on Pakistan to remove the blasphemy law which has been so consistently misused by extremists.

The [Anglican Communion News Service reports](#) that Christians in Pakistan fear that persecution will escalate with the growing presence in the country of extremists including ISIS. Christians in Pakistan are generally poor and powerless and often abused.

Malaysia – [Anglican Ink reports](#) that government-confiscated Bibles have been returned to the Archbishop of South East Asia, the Most Rev. Bolly Lapok, Bishop of Kuching on the condition that they be distributed in Borneo, not in Malaya. The Muslim-dominated government had confiscated those Scriptures over the use of the word “Allah”.

Roman Catholic and Ecumenical news

- The Archbishop of Canterbury joined the Pope and other faith leaders [in signing a declaration](#) pledging to fight modern slavery. Archbishop Justin Welby’s comments are [posted on Anglican Ink](#). The joint statement was orchestrated by the [Global Freedom Network](#).
- [Vatican radio reports](#) that Pope Francis and Patriarch Bartholomew, spiritual leader of the Orthodox world, signed a joint declaration *“reaffirming their desire to overcome the obstacles dividing their two Churches”*. You can read the full declaration [on the Vatican Radio site](#).

Resources

Resources for ministry

Pastors' office hours – Do we have [unrealistic expectations](#) of office hours for our pastors?

Qualities of church leaders, both lay and clergy – Tim Challies [looks at church leaders](#) in terms of what they are should NOT be: dictators, short-fused, addicts, bullies, and greedy.

Resources for Christian living

Happy New Year! – An [excellent, short video](#) explains the Christian year which begins with Advent.

Advent - Drawing on Bede's account of how Christianity first penetrated pagan Britain, the blogger Pageantmaster [suggests](#) that we emulate Augustine and the his fellow missionaries to England. He writes, "*Might this be a model to prepare ourselves in Advent, following the example of the early missionaries: to pray, examine ourselves, perhaps fast, remember again the story we were told and prepare to help others with it; to be an example so that not only will the message be received, but those listening will see as they did with the early missionaries, that we live that message out in our lives; that we practice what we preach. This was what according to Bede, finally persuaded the listeners to the early missionaries to the English of the truth of the message they lived out.*"

My favorite heresies – A recent survey of American evangelicals showed significant "*theological confusion*" on doctrines of Jesus, the Holy Spirit, God and mankind. For example, more than 51 per cent said that the Holy Spirit is a force, not a personal being and an additional seven per cent weren't sure. The full [Christianity Today article](#) provides interesting reading and shows again the pressing need for catechism.

Money can't buy happiness? - True, but it can *give* happiness – to the giver. Now we have [bonafide research](#) that proves it.

Book of Common Prayer explained – A [short animated video](#) explains the need for and history of the Book of Common Prayer – courtesy of the All Souls Anglican Foundation.

Prayer – A new book on prayer by Pastor Tim Keller is [highly recommended](#).

Persecution, prayer and evangelism – Bishop Bill Atwood has written a [compelling meditation](#) on the linkage between persecution, prayer and people coming to faith.

Christians in court – With an increasingly antagonistic culture, Christians are faced with the prospect of being taken to court over their Christian convictions. A [Gospel Coalition article](#) explores the need to be prepared to defend ourselves and our faith in court as the 1st century apostles and converts did. The author states that the book of Acts was more than a missionary narrative, it was also carefully written to show that Christianity was not in opposition to Roman rule. Based on the Apostle Paul's example, the author draws lessons for us in giving a defense.

Fostering – [The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada \(EFC\) urges us](#) to consider how Christians could minister to the 80,000 Canadian children and youth in or needing foster care. Foster homes are urgently needed. A [six-minute video EFC](#) is suitable for showing in church.

Marriage, sexuality and family

- A highly recommended, [two-hour documentary](#) is available for purchase called "Such were some of you". It offers numerous testimonials of those who have "...found such a measure of healing from the brokenness and strongholds associated with what we now call homosexuality that they no longer consider themselves homosexual"... 'Such Were Some of You' lays out the facts about healing homosexual confusion and rejoices in the reality that Jesus Christ can heal anyone from anything while providing grace for the journey."
- The [Voices of Change website](#) offers testimonies of similarly healed people, "men and women who have experienced authentic change in sexual orientation..."

- Dr Albert Mohler offers a compelling [theology of the body](#), from creation to new creation, which he believes has been neglected and has resulted, in part, in the current sexual crisis in the church.

Abortion – Tim Challies neatly summarizes an effective pro-life defence which rests on the status of the pre-born. It is [worth reading](#) and even memorizing parts!

- Intentionally killing an innocent human being is a moral wrong
 - Elective abortion is the intentional killing of an innocent human being
- ➔ Therefore elective abortion is a moral wrong.

He notes that *“If the unborn are not human, no justification for elective abortion is necessary. But if the unborn are human, no justification for elective abortion is adequate.”* So what is the pre-born? *“Science tells us unequivocally that the pre-born child is a complete and a unique living human being.”*

Euthanasia – Veteran journalist Charles Lewis [urges](#) Christians to stop being so apathetic on the issue of euthanasia and offers suggestions for making our views known. The November/December issue of *Faith Today* also has [a short story](#) about Lewis’ passion for this issue and his concern arising from his own experience of chronic, debilitating pain.

Parenting – The *Gospel Coalition* [offers five points](#) for parents serious about passing on the faith to their children.

Soul food

Just for laughs

Christmas is weird. What other time of the year do you sit in front of a dead tree and eat candy out of your socks?

www.mikeysFunnies.com

Thoughts

“I am going to judge my circumstances by Jesus’ love, not Jesus’ love by my circumstances.”

~ Pastor Tim Keller

“God has so closely twisted his own glory and our happiness together, that as we advance the one we promote the other.” ~ C H Spurgeon

And now a Word from our Sponsor

O LORD, you are my God; I will exalt you; I will praise your name, for you have done wonderful things, plans formed of old, faithful and sure.

For you have made the city a heap, the fortified city a ruin; the foreigners' palace is a city no more; it will never be rebuilt.

Therefore strong peoples will glorify you; cities of ruthless nations will fear you.

For you have been a stronghold to the poor, a stronghold to the needy in his distress, a shelter from the storm and a shade from the heat; for the breath of the ruthless is like a storm against a wall, like heat in a dry place.

You subdue the noise of the foreigners; as heat by the shade of a cloud, so the song of the ruthless is put down.

On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined.

And he will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations.

He will swallow up death forever; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken.

It will be said on that day, “Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us.

This is the LORD; we have waited for him; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.”

Isaiah 25:1-9 ESV