



Merry Christmas!



Handle with prayer

ANiC news

ANiC and ACNA events calendar

January 6-10 – ACNA College of Bishops meet

January 20 – 22 – [AMMiC](#) meeting of clergy, evangelists and those in-charge of plants/projects

January 25 – [Bible-in-a-Day seminar](#), Richmond Faith Fellowship (Richmond, BC)

January 25 – Dr Adebusola (Buzz) Onayemi ordained a deacon, [Celebration Church](#) (Barrie, ON)

January 28-29 – [Clergy event](#) near Burlington, Ontario focused on the “*Craft of Preaching*”

February 7-8 – “[Rise up](#)” men's retreat at St Luke's (Pembroke, ON) with the Rev Garth Hunt

February 16 – The Rev Marty Fraser ordained to the priesthood at [The Way](#) (Stayner ON)

April 8-10 – Ontario clergy silent retreat (Information to come)

April 2014 – [Women of the Word](#) workshop at St John's Vancouver. Date to be determined.

May 5-8 – Clergy and spouse retreat, Malibu Camp, BC

May 6-8 – [March for Life](#), Ottawa, ON

May 31 – “*Recovering the Ministry of Blessing*” seminar will be held at [New Song \(Port Perry, ON\)](#)

June 25-28 – Anglican Church in North America [Assembly 2014](#) at St Vincent College, Latrobe, PA

November 5-7 – ANiC Synod 2014 in Ottawa, ON

Christmas messages from Bishop Charlie

Bishop Charlie's 8-minute video is [on YouTube](#). It is based on Matthew's account of the Son of God's coming as a helpless infant (Matthew 1). [Check it out!](#)

You can also read Bishop Charlie's [Christmas letter](#) to ANiC which reflects on the joy and peace Christ brings in the midst of life's difficulties. He closes the letter with this pray for each of us:

It is Jesus who is the gift that we long for, "the pearl of great price"; He is what we need and seek, he whose very name conveys his victory over sin and the joy his presence brings to our lives. This is our prayer for you, for those you love, and for this world that God loves so much that he gave his only Son: that you will seek to know Jesus more and more this Christmas and throughout the coming year.



Be sure to read the [full letter on the ANiC website](#).

Celebrating ordinations, baptisms and confirmations

Bishop Donald Harvey will ordain Dr Adebusola (Buzz) Onayemi to the diaconate on January 25 at [Celebration Church](#) (Barrie, ON). Time and location will be announced soon.

The Rev Marty Fraser, who pastors [The Way](#) (Stayner ON), will be ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Charlie Masters on February 16. The congregation is also celebrating its 3rd anniversary.

[Good Shepherd Cantonese](#) (Calgary, AB) celebrated five adult baptisms last Sunday, while [Christ the Redeemer Multicultural](#) (Toronto, ON) also held a baptismal service for a young woman who is studying at the University of Toronto. On Christmas Day, [Good Shepherd](#) (Vancouver, BC) will have extra cause to rejoice as the congregation witnesses the baptism of a teenager and an infant.

[Ascension \(Langley, BC\)](#) reports that Bishop Trevor Walters confirmed one adult on December 8.

Eastern clergy session focused on the “craft of preaching”, January 28-29

Clergy are invited to reserve January 28-29 for a clergy event near Burlington, ON with guest speaker Peter Moore, former principal of Trinity School of Ministry in Ambridge PA. The topic will be “The Craft of Preaching”. Full information is [on the ANiC website](#).

ALL ANiC clergy and spouses are invited to retreat May 5-8

Bishop Trevor Walters and Bishop Charlie Masters invite ANiC clergy from across our diocese to come apart and rest awhile at a May 5-8 retreat at Young Life’s spectacular [Malibu Camp](#) up BC’s coast in Princess Louisa Inlet. This was originally billed as a western clergy retreat, but is now open to all ANiC clergy. This retreat at Camp Malibu replaces the annual Cedar Springs clergy retreat (in Sumas, Washington).

Dates: May 5 (Monday) - 8 (Thursday)

Speaker: The Rev Jim Salladin

Activities: Malibu Camp offers a spectacular natural setting with a variety of outdoor activities, including rock climbing, sailing and kayaking.

Transport: Price includes the boat trip up the coast and along Princess Louisa Inlet.

Cost: \$350 per person for shared accommodation; \$450 per person for single occupancy.

Good news from the Anglican Relief and Development Fund Canada (ARDFC)!

[ARDFC](#) reports that nearly \$15,000 has been donated to date to help with typhoon relief efforts in the Philippines. And we are within a few thousand dollars of achieving our project goal of raising \$61,600 (US) to build an [education and training centre](#) for the Diocese of Recife in a poor community in northeastern Brazil. Praise the Lord!

ARDFC, ANiC’s relief and development partner, is dedicated to “*Restoring health, hope and dignity in JESUS’ name*”. It does so cost-effectively by partnering with Global South Anglican dioceses on carefully selected projects. All projects undertaken are researched and monitored to ensure donations are used effectively and project objectives are achieved. Check out our track record [here](#).

Archbishop Bob Duncan, president of the Anglican Relief and Development Fund (ARDF), brings Christmas greetings in [this 2-minute video](#) in which he focuses on God’s example of giving at Christmas. If you would like to support the work of ARDF-Canada (ie ARDFC) you can make your year-end donation [online](#) or through your church.

New ANiC church plants within our Asian and Multicultural Ministries (AMMiC)

An article [posted on the ANiC website](#) features the ministries of six recent ANiC church plants. These six are all under Bishop Stephen Leung’s care and focus on ministry to specific ethnic groups in Canada’s large new immigrant population. [Have a look](#). You’ll be encouraged.

Immanuel Vancouver: “a bunch of nut cases” loving Jesus, loving each other

An [excellent article](#), featured on both the Anglican1000 and Anglican Church in North America websites, gives the flavour of Immanuel’s ministry near the commercial core of Vancouver. Immanuel is said to be “*a church for the disconnected, the disaffected and the hurting*” and “*an incredibly eclectic gathering of folks... connecting unchurched young people (20-40 year olds, who have no interest in church or Jesus but who do have great social concern for the poor), the disillusioned (those people who love Jesus but have a hard time loving His Church), the substance addicted and the mentally struggling to Jesus Christ and to each other*”.

The Rev Simon Neill planted Immanuel, which meets in a theatre, with “*12 faithful people and has seen it grow to a regular group of 125 attending adults, with about 90 in church on any given Sunday. He says, “We are a bunch of nutcases, but we love each other.”*” Read [the article](#). You’ll be blessed!

Simon+ is also featured in an [entertaining 4-minute Alpha video](#) about the ministry of Immanuel.

Preaching for the first time...

An [Artizo video](#) explores what it is like for a young person to preach for the first time by following Ian Hall on his first assignment preaching to young people at St John's Vancouver. [Artizo](#) prepares "young men and women with gifts for ministry... for a future in teaching and preaching."

New book on The Lord's Prayer

ANiC parishioner Renee Noseworthy has written [Our Father: A Personal Journey of Discovery into the Lord's Prayer](#). For information, see the item on Renee's book on the [ANiC website](#). Renee is donating part proceeds to ANiC from all direct orders; [email Renee](#) to make arrangements.

How is your church reaching out to your community this Christmas?

The temptation is to be inward looking at Christmas – me, my family, my church. Tell us how your congregation reached out to those who don't know the Christ of Christmas. We'll share the most inspiring in the next newsletter.

Christ the Redeemer Multicultural (Toronto, ON), for example, invited international students and those far from home to enjoy a Christmas feast, held in three host homes. Pray that these events will be effective in sharing the love of Christ during this season of warmth, hope & joy!

Parish and regional news

[New Song \(Port Perry, ON\)](#) is holding a day with the Rev Dr Russ Parker from the UK on "Recovering the Ministry of Blessing", Saturday, May 31, 9am-4pm. All are welcome, so mark their calendars and plan to attend! Details will be available soon.

[Saint Matthew's \(Abbotsford, BC\)](#) is inviting parishioners to join in on a pilgrimage through the entire Bible in a year.

[Saint Matthew's \(Abbotsford, BC\) School of Life and Ministry](#) has opened registration for its Epiphanytide 2014 session which begins in January. Courses offered are:

- *Christians and the law of Moses* taught by Dr Marty Abegg
- *Creation to Covenant* taught by Dr Peter Flint
- *The Word on Finances* taught by Amanda Flint
- *Christian Hope: Identity and Calling - Prayer* taught by the Rev Mike Stewart

Be sure to email your parish news to [Marilyn Jacobson](#).

Anglican Church in North America (ACNA) news

How God is leading ACNA churches which have lost their properties

A very interesting [World Magazine article](#) looks at a number of ACNA churches which have lost their long-time property and where God has led these congregations. It's definitely worth reading. Below is an extract from this article:

"Senior warden Marie Bartz reminded the group: "We didn't get the building because we're good people. ... We got it because we have something to do." Bartz says she's glad they moved on when they did. "We spent a lot of time being distracted from the things we really should have been doing," she says. "Once you leave, there's freedom, there's peace—there's life after." ...

"LePine's daughter, Sara, now 16, still remembers leaving the only church building she'd ever known: "Leaving that was scary, but it's how we learned to be the body of Christ outside church walls. ... It was painful, but it was painful with a purpose.""

Anglican Communion

Global Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans' Advent message

In his [Advent letter](#), Archbishop Eliud Wabukala, Primate of Kenya and chairman of the Global Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans (GfCA), discusses the recent GAFCon conference and the so-called Pilling Report which advocates the blessing of same-sex blessings in the Church of England. He concludes with words of encouragement:

During the coming year we shall be working to increase our organizational effectiveness [of GFCFA], set up global networks and improve our communications, but we also need the involvement of every member in prayer, giving and active engagement with our global vision. We are at heart a spiritual movement of renewal, looking to the Lord who graciously revives his Church and this is a reality that flows out of the daily discipleship of each one.

I write with deep gratitude to you all for your prayer and fellowship in this great project which the Lord has called us. This Advent Season is a reminder to live as those who are ready for the Lord's return in power and glory, as Saviour and as Judge. So let us be of good hope, confident in the ultimate triumph of God's purposes in Jesus Christ.

International news in brief

Canada – The Supreme Court of Canada, on December 20, struck down all three provisions of Canada's prostitution laws, creating a legal vacuum. However, the current laws remain in place for the next year, allowing the federal government to respond potentially with new laws. Saying prostitution is exploitation not an occupation, the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada – of which ANiC is a member – is pushing for new laws that would abolish the sale of vulnerable women, men and children. EFC President Bruce Clemenger, says, "*Canada should be a place that promotes and defends the dignity of all persons. The commodification of sex, which inevitably results in abuse and exploitation, should not be tolerated.*" EFC has prepared, and delivered to key government ministers, [a comprehensive proposal](#) which builds on the legal framework in place in Sweden.

United States – If you are an ANiC clergyperson living in the US, you might benefit from hearing lawyer Alan Haley's discussion of the IRS's tax code affecting the clergy housing allowance and the potential changes resulting from a legal challenge. This segment begins just after the 33 minute mark of the [December 6th edition](#) of the Anglican Unscripted video newsmagazine.

England – As the specter of same-sex blessings looms for the Church of England as a result of recommendations contained in the "Pilling Report", many more are weighing in. (For background on this report, see [this Anglican Planet article](#).) Reaction has included the following:

In a [brief response](#), the Rev Lee Gatiss, director of the **Church Society**, says: "*... we would prefer to discuss the good news of Jesus Christ and the salvation he offers to all, but feel constrained to respond to the teaching of those who are changing the gospel into an affirmation of immoral behaviour. We call on the church to read the report prayerfully, and to weigh its teaching and recommendations carefully in the light of scripture's very clear teaching on sexuality, to which the Church of England is committed in its canons, doctrinal formularies, Synodical statements, and the resolutions of the Lambeth Conference. We particularly commend to people the "dissenting statement" in the report from the Bishop of Birkenhead, and thank him for its clarity and care.*"

Canon Phil Ashey of the American Anglican Council [notes](#) that GAFCon 2 Communique anticipated the crisis threatened by the recommendations of the Pilling Report. Those in attendance committed to support and defend those who are marginalized within their diocese for standing for apostolic truth. GAFCon 2 explicitly recognized the Anglican Mission in England (AMiE), essentially christening it as a lifeboat for the Biblically faithful in England, should the need arise.

The Rev Professor Stephen Noll concludes his [thorough discussion](#) by saying, "*The Pilling Report has one goal: to legitimize an ongoing dialogue about normalizing homosexual relationships in the church's life... Nearly eighteen years ago, the Episcopal Church USA initiated a process called "Continuing the Dialogue" on sexuality that sounds very much like the PR's idea of "facilitated conversation." The end result of that "dialogue" was never in doubt - approval of the gay rights agenda...*"

Presiding Bishop Mouneer Anis (Jerusalem and the Middle East) and **Archbishop Ian Ernest** (Indian Ocean) [ask](#), "*...will the Church of England allow the society to shape its faith*

and practice... or will the Church of England recognize that its distinctive mission is to transform the society?... It would be very sad, indeed, for the Church of England to follow in the steps of those in North America whose similar unilateral decisions... tore the fabric of the Communion at its deepest level... We are clear on what the Bible teaches about sexual relationships outside of the marriage of one man and one woman... The dissenting view written by the Bishop of Birkenhead captures well our position. For us in the Global South, his view is the majority view... The Church of England needs to be cautious in taking decisions that will compromise faith and the position of the Church of England within the Anglican Communion as well as the position of the Archbishop of Canterbury..."

ACNA's **Archbishop Bob Duncan** [writes](#) that there are elements of the report which are to be commended but there are elements which "are potentially destructive the Church's life and witness" – particularly the recommendation to affirm same-sex blessings and the underlying assumption that traditional Church teaching on marriage and sexuality is "inconclusive".

In [an excellent article](#), **Bishop Bill Atwood** explains how the "liberal" worldview – which denies the authority of Scripture – is shaped by a low view of God. This contrasts the experience of God that many in the Global South have – a God who works miracles and transforms lives.

A UK-based church commentator who goes by the online name **Pageantmaster** provides [fascinating insight](#) into the inner workings of the Church of England and how it got to this point. He writes. "This is about cold, manipulative engineering... It is about the cold hard determination to do whatever it takes, whatever the cost, whatever the promises broken and lies which need to be told... Nothing will be allowed to get in the way, and those persuaded that we are just having a 'conversation' just need to note the way TEC was undermined using the same game plan. Justin under the guise of a sheep has got away with things Rowan never could have... It is a high risk policy... and it will break apart the Church of England."

Syria – Rebels, which including many radical Islamists, [have captured](#) an ancient Christian village, Maaloula, kidnapping Greek Orthodox nuns and killing Christians and destroying buildings used for Christian purposes. The [Christian Post reports](#) that, in another village, Sadad, 45 Christians – men, women and children – were tortured and massacred by the same rebels. The mainstream media is strangely silent.

Iraq – The Vicar of Baghdad, Canon Andrew White [writes](#) about Christmas in Iraq:
Iraq may no longer be in the news but the violence and tragedy are getting greater by the day. The violence has also recommenced towards the Christians. Just this week a large number were shot through the head... It is almost as if the worse the situation has become, the more important the celebration of one's faith has become. As the people always say here 'When you have lost everything Jesus is all you have left'. We may have lost everything, but the one thing we have left is so important to us all through the year, especially at this time when we when we celebrate His coming...

We hear the Angels saying to us loudly and clearly, do not be afraid. For us it is not a theoretical proclamation. We are surrounded by fear. I stood up in church this evening and looked at my dear people. It suddenly struck me that there was not one family there who had not had members of their family killed in the terror and violence that surrounds us... They have all been injured so badly by the terror and turmoil, yet Christmas means to them they are not ruled by fear... All the time, people here talk about the joy of Christmas, the liberation of Christmas and the joy of this time. The worship is extra joyful and extra triumphant. It is in worship that real hope is found.

South Sudan – [Anglican Ink reports](#) that, "Clashes between rival regiments of the South Sudan army have left over 500 people dead and prompted fears of a coup in Africa's newest nation." A [report from the Anglican Communion News Service](#) states that a letter jointly signed by various Christian denominational leaders condemns the violence, but says it is not a tribal conflict but a

political power struggle. Other reports portray the conflict as tribally based. At least 500 have been killed in the past few days – including civilians and UN peacekeepers – and hundreds more wounded. A [CNN report](#) and [a BBC report](#) give more detail.

In an urgent email to Bishop Stephen Leung, Bishop Abraham Nhial, a guest speaker at ANiC's regional assembly in Vancouver last April, asks us to pray. Please pray for the Church in South Sudan, for wisdom for church leaders as they seek to be peacemakers, and for the Prince of Peace to reign in that fledgling nation.

Nigeria - The [BBC reports](#) that the UN claims that, in 48 separate Boko Haram attacks, “more than 1200 people have been killed in Islamist-related violence in north-east Nigeria since a state of emergency was declared in May”. Thousands more have been killed since 2009. A [Nigerian Tribune article](#) reports that an Anglican bishop is accusing Nigeria's military and police members of covertly working with the Boko Haram by leaking intelligence to these Islamist terrorists.

An interesting [Anglican Communion News Service article](#) explores the role of the bishop's wife in Nigeria – where she is known as Mama Diocese. Although the bishop's wife has many responsibilities, her primary focus is on equipping and leading the women of the diocese.

North Korea – The [Christian Post reports](#) that satellite photos obtained by Amnesty International verify massive prison camps in North Korea where political prisoners, including children, are subjected to “horrific conditions”. Hundreds of thousands of people – including many Christians – are believed to be imprisoned in six brutal labour prison camps, where “*where torture, starvation, rape and death are a fact of life*”. The report states:

North Korea is listed as the most oppressive country in the world for Christians by persecution watchdog group Open Doors, with the political regime strictly opposed to religious groups. “Christians are classified as hostile and face arrest, detention, torture or even public execution. There is a vigorous elimination program in existence to convert, imprison, banish or execute individuals who have converted to Christianity...”

Persecution – [LifeSiteNews reports](#) that the number of Christians is actually growing in Muslim countries – however many of these are foreign workers. For example, there are an estimated three million in Saudi Arabia, one of the worst places in the world for Christians. The report concludes with a quote from John L Allen, author of [The Global War on Christians](#):

“Christianity is experiencing phenomenal growth around the world, especially its evangelical and Pentecostal forms, and much of that growth is coming in dangerous neighborhoods such as parts of the Asian subcontinent, sub-Saharan Africa, and even regions of the Middle East.”

Thus, the persecution is a sign—a tragic sign, but a sign nonetheless—that the Great Commission is being fulfilled. Our fellow believers are in harm's way in part because they're being faithful to the call Jesus gave to all of us. The least we can do is emulate their faithfulness here at home and support them.

Prince Charles has weighed in on the persecution of Christians in the Middle East, warning of “*organized persecution*” by Islamist fundamentalists and saying Christianity is beginning to disappear from its birthplace because of organized persecution. [The Telegraph reports](#) that the heir to the British throne said “*I have for some time now been deeply troubled by the growing difficulties faced by Christian communities in various parts of the Middle East... we cannot ignore the fact that Christians in the Middle East are increasingly being deliberately targeted by fundamentalist Islamist militants... we must not forget our Middle Eastern brothers and sisters in Christ.*” [The Guardian expands on and backs up](#) Prince Charles' concerns.

Resources

Ministry resources

Christian history course – Canon Dr J I Packer endorses the (non-denominational) *Christian History Made Easy* [video series](#) by Dr Timothy Paul Jones.

What to look for in a church – [A post](#) on “*What to look for in a church*” provides a useful checklist for examining how our churches measure up.

Seven Ecumenical Councils – Tim Challies begins a series briefly exploring the seven church councils, starting with the [first Council of Nicaea](#) in 325AD which affirmed that Jesus is God and equal with the Father. The second article focuses on the [first Council of Constantinople](#) in 381AD.

Resources for Christian living and activism

Developing a Christian mind – Professor J P Moreland of Biola University [offers practical advice](#) to help us develop a “Christian mind” – a mind that is focused on God throughout the day, and which sees all of life through the prism of “a Biblically grounded set of believes”.

39 Articles – Canon Phil Ashey continues his video series on the 39 Articles by briefly examining Article 4 on the reality of [Christ’s bodily resurrection](#) and [his coming again](#).

Contagious Gospel zeal – In the article “*The contagious chain of missionary zeal*”, Nathan Busenitz provides inspiring evidence that “*Sacrificial faithfulness to Christ in one generation reverberates for many generations to follow.*” His example begins with John Elliott a Puritan settler in New England in the 1600s who evangelized Native Americans. Elliot inspired David Brainerd, who in turn inspired Jonathan Edwards, who influenced William Carey. The chain continued through Hudson Taylor to C T Studd and “The Cambridge Seven” to Amy Carmichael, Eric Liddell and Jim Elliott.

Family worship – The Rev Jason Helopoulos [discusses](#) the blessings and the “how to” of family worship. He says family worship is the best forum for passing on the faith. “*The benefits are significant and eternal... Christian families practicing family worship will also find that it centers their home upon Christ... It isn’t always easy. Sometimes it isn’t even enjoyable, but it is always worth it.*”

Marriage

Marci Preheim [offers a profound perspective](#) on how the Gospel applies to sex within marriage. Although long, the article is well worth reading. Some highlights include:

The gospel doesn’t just apply to marriage. Marriage is the ultimate illustration of what the gospel is. Christ is the second husband! [The Law was the first husband.] Ephesians 5:31-32 says this: For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh (and by “one flesh” he means the sexual union and all that entails). This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church.” Let that profound mystery sink in for a minute. Two people becoming one flesh is an illustration of Christ and His church! We miss the real pleasure of the marriage bed because we miss the profound mystery of Christ and His bride... Our measly little marriages are only a shadow of the true marriage that is to come...

Tim Challies [discusses](#) the road to adultery and how to “*stop an affair before it begins*”.

Modesty – Tim Challies offers a series of posts – [part 1](#), [part 2](#) and [part 3](#) – on the tricky subject of modesty, which he defines as “...*a virtue that shows love to others and brings glory to God through appropriate dress*” He says it is not a matter of rules, but “*It is a matter of the heart before it is a matter of dress, and that heart is both tricky and deceptive.*” In addition to the heart, he says that modesty takes into account the situation and cultural context.

Moral mayhem – Dr Albert Mohler discusses the [growing acceptance of polygamy](#). He notes that the moral revolution began with “*liberating sex from the confines of marriage*” and then from “*the expectation of procreation*”. “*Once marriage was redefined in function, it was easy to redefine it in terms of permanence. Once that was done, it was easy enough to redefine it in terms of gender. Now, with the logic of [the] moral revolution transforming marriage in all respects, polygamy follows same-sex marriage. If marriage can be redefined in terms of gender, it can easily be redefined in terms of number.*”

Same-sex attractions – [Living Out](#) is a new website created by [three Anglican ministers](#) who are committed to live chastely despite same-sex attractions. The goal of the website are to help others with same-sex attractions live faithful to Biblical teaching on sexuality; to help the Church better encourage and support such brothers and sisters in Christ; and help all understand that same-sex attractions need not doom one to a life of same-sex behaviour. LifeSiteNews [warmly commends](#) the website. On the website you'll find [video testimonials](#) of Anglicans who choose to live in obedience to Scriptural teaching despite experiencing same-sex attractions.

An [excellent video](#) from Family Watch International provides balanced treatment and helpful insight into same-sex attractions. Christianity Today offers two testimonials by women who left their lesbian lifestyle and the churches which walked with them in their way to the cross of Christ. You can read Professor Rosario Champagne Butterfield's story is [here](#) and corporate executive Charlene Hios' story is [here](#).

Sharing Christ with youth through clues – Paul Johnson shares the [series of nine "clues"](#) he offers young people who are open to learning about God.

Youth magazine – The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada has launched *Love in Action*, a free, interactive 16-page online magazine for youth, "*empowering them to live out their faith through a deeper understanding of love, Bible-style*". It is published by the [Love Movement](#), which also recently launched the TV series *Love is Moving* – a weekly half-hour show that celebrates spiritual transformation, innovation and excellence in Christian media – on Global and CTS-TV. LIA magazine will distribute six new issues per year, each as a digital supplement to *Faith Today*.

Books for non-believers – Eric Metaxas [offers](#) his top five recommended books for non-believers.

Santa Claus – John Piper is down on Santa. He summarizes [his argument](#) saying:

It is mindboggling to me that any Christian... would divert attention away from the incarnation of the God of the universe into this world to save us and our children. ...

I cannot see why a parent, if they know and love Jesus, if they have found Jesus to be the greatest treasure in the world, why they would bring Jesus out of the celebration and Santa into the celebration at all...

So my counsel is to give all your efforts to making your children as happy as they can possibly be with every kind of surprise that is rooted in the true meaning of Christmas. Let your decorations point to Jesus. Let your food point to Jesus. Let your games point to Jesus. Let your singing point to Jesus. Out-rejoice the world, out-give the world, out-decorate the world, and let it all point to Jesus.

If being Jesus-focused is a killjoy for your Christmas, you don't know him well.

Preserving religious freedom – In the November/December edition of *Faith Today*, Don Hutchinson [discusses](#) the threat to religious freedom in Canada and how we can help preserve it. *Faith Today* is free to [view online](#). Subscriptions to the (hard copy) magazine are [also available](#).

Soul food

Just for laughs – a double feature!

The Sunday School teacher, looking at Johnny's drawing of the manger scene, asked about the large dog which featured prominently in the drawing.

"Oh," said the child, "That's the German Shepherd."

Two young boys were spending the night at their grandparents the week before Christmas. At bedtime, the two boys knelt beside their beds to say their prayers when the youngest one began praying at the top of his lungs.

"I PRAY FOR A NEW BICYCLE, AN XBOX, AND THE NEW IRON MAN COMIC BOOK!"

His older brother leaned over and nudged the younger brother and said, "Why are you shouting? God isn't deaf."

To which the little brother replied, "No, but Grandma is!"

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Thought

He who has not Christmas in his heart will never find it under a tree. ~ Roy L Smith

And now a Word from our Sponsor

*How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news,
who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness,
who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns."
The voice of your watchmen—they lift up their voice; together they sing for joy;
for eye to eye they see the return of the Lord to Zion.
Break forth together into singing, you waste places of Jerusalem,
for the Lord has comforted his people; he has redeemed Jerusalem.
The Lord has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations,
and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.*

Isaiah 52:7-10, ESV