

# The Canadian Templar



March 2015  
Newsletter



## News and Report from our Grand Prior

The Holiday season is well past us and a distant memory. There were many people involved in helping others in several different projects across the country. I applaud all those who were so generous with their time and money and encourage those who were not able to help, or were not aware, to get involved next year. Congratulations to St James Priory in Toronto for last month's charity ball. Organizers Cesare Fazari and Prior Nick Migliore were instrumental in making it a very successful event. Well done.

I know that there are many activities planned for the new year and people are needed to help. The power of our networking in our Order is significant and the contacts you have may be an important factor to some of the works going on. For instance, Ottawa has had great success in recent years with its Hockey Knight in Canada program which collects and distributes used hockey equipment from across the country to



under privileged Aboriginal kids in Canada's north. Recently, there have been changes in the operations that was taking the equipment to the North, which has halted our ability to get the hockey equipment to the children. Can you help? Someone somewhere has some ideas or contacts that will solve this challenge and some of our other challenges. Your ideas can be very powerful, are needed, and are always welcomed. Contact Simon Peter's Prior, Bill Megill directly at [bdmegill@gmail.com](mailto:bdmegill@gmail.com)

There have been many atrocities in recent months against mankind and in particular Christians. Our Order has been involved at the highest levels in attempts to bring peace to the many areas affected. Information is included in the newsletter to keep you informed. Alas, it is a very complicated world we live in and solutions are neither easy nor quick. Please keep our leaders and all those that are trying to broker peace in your prayers. A reminder, a portion of your donations goes to help those in the field that are pursuing peace. Additional contributions are always welcomed.

Last year many people in our Order were involved in the ceremonies of the opening of the Church of Bethany on the River Jordan, near the site of Christ's baptism. One of the key organizers and someone that was very helpful to us (particularly us Canadians) while we were there was Adel Shatara, a Palestinian Christian from Amman Jordan. As stated previously, the plight of Christians in the Middle East is not good and they are in constant danger. This past month, I am pleased to tell you that over the past year we have worked diligently with the Canadian government to get Adel to Canada. He arrived last month, and he and his family are very thankful and are now living in the Toronto area as Canadian citizens.

Remember to think of people who may be interested in joining our Order, particularly in Halifax, Edmonton, our developing cities, as well as our Pories in Ottawa, Toronto, and Windsor.

Blessings,

H.E. Commander (Ret'd) Peter L. Kelly CD, GCTJ,  
Grand Prior of Canada

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## Editors Letter

In this past quarter there are a number of stories such as the killing of many children in Pakistan. Further horrendous stories of massacres in Nigeria. We've also had the story of terrorism in France, Belgium and Holland. Continued conflict in Ukraine and of course more stories of attacks on Christians in the Holy Land and in Egypt and Libya. As this is a quarterly publication the stories can be quite old when you read them and so probably not worth covering as you'll have read them already. That said I'm still adding stories which are perhaps not covered in the Canadian media and should be of interest.

I might add that older copies of this newsletter can be downloaded from:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/Religion/kt.htm> and if you scroll to the foot of the page you'll find a comments system. You can login to it with a Google, Facebook, Twitter, Yahoo or Disqus account and if you don't have one of these it's easy to sign up with Disqus so you can add your comments. I've taken to adding the odd comment about upcoming events so might be worth bookmarking so you can visit once a month. You can also use this to announce your own events. In February we had 139 unique visitors to the page which is encouraging.

I've included a link to two reports from the Priory in Utah which demonstrates the problem that some Pories have and what they are doing to correct them.

Also in this issue you'll find a couple of feature articles of charitable works being done and also ones we might get involved with.

I also included a copy of our Brussels Declaration which includes the paragraph...

"the contribution of the Knights Templar, medieval and modern, with regard to agriculture, construction, transportation, crafts, medicine, finance, inter-faith affairs, diplomacy and philanthropy is

both well researched, and also widely understood and valued by the public."

That paragraph shows why I try to include information on a whole variety of topics in this newsletter. It also demonstrates how our Knights and Dames can contribute information on pretty well any topic where you have special knowledge or expertise and so share this with our International order.

As to the Priory of Simon Peter, Ottawa, you will note their problem on getting hockey equipment sent up to the North due to the Canadian Air Force no longer being allowed to help. Surely someone reading this newsletter must know someone who travels up there and could help? Perhaps we could talk to the Ice Road Truckers to see if they have a pick up point nearer and could help?

Mind that many pictures in this newsletter also link to larger versions of the pictures. Also remember the clocks go forward an hour on Sunday 8th March.

Hope you enjoy this issue and I'd like to wish you all a very Happy and successful New Year. I'd also like to thank our Knights and Dames for sending in or suggesting articles for this newsletter.

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## From The Vicar General of OSMTH-I

Lent - Easter  
We are Easter People

We are, I hope, coming out of a very difficult winter, lots of snow and ice, bitterly cold, difficult driving and all that goes with the winter season. Lent means the lengthening of the days, so that is good news and the best part of Lent is that it is crowned by Easter.

Lent is an opportunity to do the Spring Cleaning – in the house, the car, the garden and yes in your mind and soul. Lent is a time to increase and develop your Spirituality – that is to increase God's place within you.

My suggested emphasis this year is not so much on what we are giving up for Lent, but rather on what you are doing to increase your faith for the celebration of Easter.

The three great principles of Christian faith are:

FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE  
And the greatest of these is love.

Continue to respond to the love God has for you and express that in prayer, worship and devotion. In sharing that love with family, friends your neighbours and community; not forgetting the people who are devastated by all the turmoil in the world. The stranger at your gate, refugees, people whose lives are at risk, children in need of care. You don't need to look very far to increase your outreach.

Your faith is a matter of knowing that you are – a child of God, a member of Christ and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven. Seeing God in all things and in all people. Then you will know that the Kingdom of God is very near and dear to you.

Hope is more than the sentimental things you wish for.  
Our hope is in God.  
Our hope is that we are being and doing what God created us to be.

If you need to know more about Living with Christ in the world then come to the Retreat in Tomar.

Lenten and Easter Blessings to all

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## News from the Priory of Ascension of Our Lord, Windsor

To all members of the Order in Canada and around the world, since this is our first newsletter edition

of 2015, I wish you a very happy and healthy new year!

Since our last edition, our Priory has engaged in a couple of events, including our Christmas Social on Sunday 14 December at the Windsor Yacht Club and our February dinner meeting at Church Of The Ascension.

At our Christmas Social we enjoyed a fine afternoon meal catered by the Yacht Club and participated in a Christmas Carol sing along organized by our very own Sir Graham Parker.

As a bonus, Carol DelCol, Wife of Sir Roy DelCol, donated a painting entitled "Knights Of Old" and gave us permission to auction it, with the proceeds to go to The Women's Welcome Centre.

A good time was had by all!

Photos following are courtesy of Sir Walt Pastorius for which many thanks.



Enjoying the ambience and the camaraderie at the Yacht Club.



Our Chancellor Sir Terry Pearce being presented with the scroll for his promotion to Grand Officer



The Vicar General receives his new Hoodie and title "The Sermonator"



Our members enjoying the fine cuisine at the Windsor Yacht Club.



Sir Graham Parker leads the Carol singing.



Everyone is in fine voice.

On Wednesday 10 February, we held our first dinner meeting of the new year at Church Of The Ascension, catered by Il Gabbiano Restaurant. We enjoyed a very delicious meal and afterward our resident Auctioneer Sir Terry Fink went to work to auction the previously mentioned painting entitled "Knights Of Old". Sir Jim McDonald was the ultimate winner of this artwork even though there was some suggestion he had been bidding against himself. At any rate, The Women's Welcome Centre was the recipient of the \$125 profit from the auction. We thank Sir Terry Fink for his auctioneering expertise and Sir Jim McDonald and all those who participated in the event!

It proves to me that we can have fun while doing good for others!



The artwork "Knights Of Old" Donated by Carol DelCol.



Fellowship before dinner.



A tasty feast.





The auctioneer Sir Terry Fink, the winner, Sir Jim McDonald and the painting "Knights Of Old".

Our next dinner meeting is Wednesday 29 April at the Church Of The Ascension and we again plan for a delicious meal catered by Il Gabbiano and an interesting guest speaker. Please plan to join us at 1800 hrs (6:00PM) for dinner at 1900 hrs (7:00PM)

I am looking forward to an excellent turnout!

H. E. Major Sir Roy Embury, CD, GOTJ  
Prior of the Priory of Ascension of Our Lord, Windsor



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## News from St James Priory, Toronto

Our Grand Chancellor sent in a wee report on the very successful February Ball... A Knight to Remember.

Cesare Fazari and Nick Migliore just pulled off the best Ball ever. Live music for listening early in the evening and for dancing later, great food and a stunning location. Add to that, Anna Migliore who, with her Mother, put together the most stunning floral and table arrangements. It was just magical. There was a silent auction that I am sure raised quite a bit for the cause (if my depleted bank account is any gauge). They had a mushroom appetizer that I would have been content with for the entire meal: smoked salmon, chicken wings, roast beef, an enormous loaf of the crusty bread on each table, dips and dessert and so much more (must admit, I can't remember if we had potatoes, by then I could barely move from all the wining and dining)! It was an open bar with wine flowing throughout dinner. All the things that you most appreciate. And the speeches were to the point and short: always a plus. Our new Prior is really doing St James proud!

Here are some pictures from the event...







It was a great fun evening. Nola was correct in how she explained the night. We don't have all the figures in yet but our goal is to support the holy land and we think we did very well indeed.

Sir Nick Migliore  
Prior of St James Priory, Toronto.



## News from the Priory of Simon Peter, Ottawa

We are predicting at time of writing that we will have two postulants this year to be invested during our Convent on April 25.

The Priory has been concentrating on finding new charitable activities to offer our members a more challenging experience. We have continued to develop our Hockey Knights in Canada operation in conjunction with Project North, another Ottawa charity, but have run into a major obstacle in that the Canadian Forces, for operational reasons, can no longer support our activities by flying materiel to the North. This operation will have to be reworked.

To balance this drop in activity, we have taken on support for the Perley Rideau Veterans' Health Centre, where we sponsor one of the units. We are not certain just what this will involve other than visiting and personally supporting the veterans of our unit, and the initial activities, which were to have started in February this year, had to be postponed due to a very severe outbreak of influenza. Additionally we have agreed to participate in the Meal-a-Month program at the Cornerstone Women's Shelter, an operation providing a Saturday lunch at the shelter when no other support is available, sponsored by a four Ottawa church groups. These groups cover four weeks of each month, and we have agreed to be the provider for the fifth Saturday when there is one.

The first occasion will be May 31 of this year, and we are now preparing to take this on with the help of the existing teams from St Matthew's church, which is our home base.

Our support for the Aphasia Centre of Ottawa continues. We are looking forward to the annual "Walk and Talk for Aphasia" activity in early June. So also does our support of the international Kiva micro-loans scheme where we are most pleased with the performance of those women to whom we lend. Some 97% of our loans have been repaid.

William K. Megill Colonel (Ret'd)  
Prior of the Priory of Simon Peter, Ottawa

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## News from the Commandry of Edmonton

This has been an eventful year for us as we look forward to the Investiture that should give us Priory status. We started 5 years ago and have taken our time wading through the Alberta legalities and the Templar rules and that has not always been easy. We have monthly business meetings that are fleshed out with our social programs.

Our programs now includes a shoe program, helping to feed the homeless and work at the Edmonton Valour center. The shoe program is run out of the Anglican cathedral, in Edmonton's downtown, where we have collected and handed out hundreds of shoes. On a more regular note we participate at the Hope mission making food and feeding the homeless both from the stationary mission and the converted ambulances that go out on the street to help. In the last year we have added an event at Edmonton's valour house (<http://valourplace.ca>). Valour Place is a temporary home away from home for all Canadian Forces members, Families of the Fallen, Veterans and RCMP along with their families who require medical treatment in Edmonton, and live outside the city/area. Through Valour Place, they have the means to face the challenges of rehabilitation in a warm, welcoming and supportive environment, at no cost and we are trying to enhance their lives during times of crisis.

Our page program has been growing as well! We started a program, a few years back, investing 3 members in our Page program. These pages are between the ages of 16-25 and this we are trying to invest two more and hopefully the year after another member. These boys and girls are welcome at all events as they are mentored and guided by our knights and Dames. Those youth bring a vitality to the group with both energy and desire that some of our older members seem to have problems sustaining.

The basis of our program however continues to be our social program. This usually is a monthly get together that includes Christmas parties, super bowl parties, bar-b-ques and almost anything we can

find an excuse to party for. The secret seems to be that we have chosen our members well and we enjoy each other's company.

Will we make Priory status this year – unknown! We do know however that we are continuing to grow by four or five members each year, enjoy ourselves and help those who need it. We are reaching out to the Seattle priory for some exchanges, we are hoping that the Canadian leaders will join us and we pray that anyone who wants to come to Edmonton joins us for our investiture May 23, 2015.

P.S. If your ever in Edmonton, for any reason, get ahold of us and we will show you the town, buy a dinner or at least buy a beer

Rob Macmullen  
Commandry of Edmonton



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## Chancellors Corner

LENT is a time of penance and examination of one's life and efforts. But too often we become mired down in patterns we learned as children instead of approaching the season as mature Christians and Templars.

For instance, how often do we give up the same things each year . . . candy, coffee, alcohol, desserts, going to the movies: as ideas suggested to one as a youth and repeated (and broken), year after year. More an annual rite of dieting and body cleansing than a cleansing of the soul!. This year I would like to challenge you instead, to DO something instead of NOT DOing anything (although if you think your waistline or health would benefit from your planned abstentions, go right ahead).

I would like to challenge you to make the world a better place. Pick up a pen and write a letter to someone to whom you owe a debt of gratitude: your 7th grade teacher who taught you to love Latin, or the coach that taught you how to be a good winner: and a good loser too. Or how about your Mother for a dozen different reasons. OR, you could write a letter to the Editor or your MP, the PM or Ban Ki-Moon sharing your concern about the violence of ISIS or the homelessness in our community or the conflict between free speech and political correctness.

It is easy to write a cheque to a good cause: but giving of yourself is an appropriate way to honour Lent. A few hours set aside to visit a friend in hospital or jail, or sharing your talents at a Senior's residence. Or you could commit yourself to coach a local kids' soccer team or tutor a university student through calculus or put an apron on and serve or cook at a local food kitchen.

Templars are talented people. We are also very blessed individuals. We have more of this world's rewards than do most and we need to give back.

And not just during Lent . . . we need to be opening our wallets to support the various charities of our Order; we need to be approaching our optometrist to put out a box to collect used glasses or our gym for used shoes. There is so much, that can do so much good, and take so little time. So while you are examining your life, examine how you allocate your time: how much do you give to God's work? To helping others, to caring for those less fortunate, to visiting the sick and the elderly. It is in you to give: and your vows of obedience to Christian values dictate that you do.

God bless you and may we all rise and sing come Easter Morning, "Jesus Christ is risen this day, HALLELULIAH . . . and know that we have risen to the occasion and helped the fire that Christ lit to glow a little brighter.

God bless you,  
nnDnn  
Nola Crewe  
Grand Chancellor

## A COLLECT for LENT

Almighty God,  
you alone can bring into order the unruly wills and affections of sinners:  
Grant your people grace to love what you command and desire what you promise;  
that, among the swift and varied changes of the world,  
our hearts may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. AMEN.

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## International News

### Official Visit to Middle East - from GP ARGENTINA

The below communication is to show how another of our Grand Pories is getting involved in the troubles in the Middle East..

Your Excellencies, Dear Brothers and Sisters

Between 15th and 29th November 2014, I made an official academic and cultural journey with a delegation of Argentina to Turkey, Jordan and Israel. Among those with whom I have interviewed are: With the Islamic leader of Turkey, Istanbul Grand Mufti, Sheikh Rahmi Yaran, the same a week later met with His Holiness Pope Francis; with authorities of Koc University; with the Turkish Trade Agency; with the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople; with the Director of the Royal Institute for Inter-religious Studies of Jordan; with the Rector of the University of Jordan; with officials of the Israeli Foreign Ministry; with members of the Knesset, with professors from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Tel Aviv University, Nativity Church (Palestine) and Christian sacred places.



On this trip with others Argentines OSMTH knights we could appreciate the difficulties that arise at regional and international level, to the threat of fundamentalist terror groups like ISIS, which has caused a shift of 2,000,000 refugees into Jordanian territory, country that shows technical capacity and tolerance to the needs of their neighbors, especially Syria and Iraq. This reality also strategically affects Turkey, one of the major powers in the Middle East, and before the new wave of terrorist attacks has crippled the Palestinian dialogue - Israel, in this case particularly pronounced when the terrorist group Hamas authority that governs the Gaza Strip.

Attached you will find pictures of the meetings that we had in the three countries.











For the members of the Grand Priory of Argentina it has been a unique experience.

We are under the command of all the brothers. Fraternally in Christ

Prof. Dr. Navy Lieutenant (R) Ramiro Anzit-Guerrero GOTJ  
 Grand Prior II  
 Grand Priory of Argentina

Saudi Arabia Faces Challenges in the New Year

From Geopolitical Weekly By Michael Nayebi-Oskoui and sent in by Matthew Gaasenbeek, Prior II of Toronto for which many thanks.

The Middle East is one of the most volatile regions in the world — it is no stranger to upheaval. The 2009 uprisings in Iran and the brinksmanship of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's government were followed by the chaos of the Arab Spring, the spillover of the Syrian conflict into Iraq and a potential realignment of the U.S.-Iranian relationship. Unlike recent years, however, 2015 is likely to see regional Sunni Arab interests realign toward a broader acceptance of moderate political Islam. The region is emerging from the uncertainty of the past half-decade, and the foundations of its future are taking shape. This process will not be neat or orderly, but changes are clearly taking place surrounding the Syrian and Libyan conflicts, as well as the region's anticipation of a strengthened Iran.

The Middle East enters 2015 facing several crises. Libyan instability remains a threat to North African security, and the Levant and Persian Gulf must figure out how to adjust course in the wake of the U.S.-Iranian negotiations, the Sunni-Shiite proxy war in Syria and Iraq, and the power vacuum created by a Turkish state bogged down by internal concerns that prevent it from assuming a larger role throughout the region. Further undermining the region is the sharp decline in global oil prices. While Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates will be able to use considerable cash reserves to ride out the slump, the rest of the Middle East's oil-exporting economies face dire consequences.

For decades, long-ruling autocratic leaders in countries such as Algeria and Yemen helped keep militancy in check, loosely following the model of military-backed Arab nationalism championed by Gamal Abdel Nasser in Egypt. Arab monarchs were able to limit domestic dissent or calls for democracy through a combination of social spending and repression. The United States not only

partnered with many of these nations to fight terrorism — especially after September 2001 — but also saw the Gulf states as a reliable bulwark against Iranian expansion and a dangerous Iraq led by Saddam Hussein. Levantine instability was largely contained to Lebanon and the Palestinian territories, while Israel's other neighbors largely abided by a tacit agreement to limit threats emanating from their territories.

Today, Saddam's iron grip on Iraq has been broken, replaced by a fractious democracy that is as threatened by the Islamic State as it is by its own political processes. Gone are the long-time leaders of states like Tunisia, Libya and Egypt. Meanwhile, Algeria, Saudi Arabia and Oman are facing uncertain transitions that could well take place by year's end. The United States' serious dialogue with Iran over the latter's nuclear program, once a nearly unthinkable scenario for many in the Gulf, has precipitated some of the biggest shifts in regional dynamics, especially as Saudi Arabia and its allies work to lessen their reliance on Washington's protection.

### The Push for Sunni Hegemony

Riyadh begins this year under considerably more duress than it faced 12 months ago. Not only is King Abdullah gravely ill (a bout of pneumonia forced the 90-year-old ruler to ring in the new year in the hospital and on a ventilator and since this article was written has now died), but the world's largest oil-producing country has also entered into a price war with American shale producers. Because Saudi Arabia and its principal regional allies, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates, boast more than a trillion dollars in cash reserves between them, they will be able to keep production levels constant for the foreseeable future.

However, other OPEC producers have not been able to weather the storm as easily. The resulting 40 percent plunge in oil prices is placing greater financial pressure on Iran and the Shiite-dominated government in Iraq, Saudi Arabia's largest sectarian and energy rivals. Riyadh's careful planning and building of reserves means the Saudi kingdom's economic security is unlikely to come under threat in the next one to three years. The country will instead continue to focus on not only countering Iran but also rebuilding relationships with regional Sunni actors weakened in previous years.

Riyadh's regional strategy has traditionally been to support primarily Sunni Arab groups with a conservative, Salafist religious ideology. Salafist groups traditionally kept out of politics, and their conservative Sunni ideology was useful in Saudi Arabia's competition against Iran and its own Shiite proxies. Promoting Salafism also served as a tool to limit the reach of more ideologically moderate Sunni political Islamists like the Muslim Brotherhood and its affiliates, groups Riyadh sees as a threat because of their success in organizing grassroots support and fighting for democratic reforms.

With rise of external regional pressures, however, Gulf monarchies such as Saudi Arabia are re-evaluating their relationships with the Muslim Brotherhood. Internal threats posed by Salafist jihadists and a desire to limit future gains by regional opponents are pushing countries such as Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to try to forge a relationship with the Muslim Brotherhood to limit the risks posed by rival groups in the region.

Restoring relations with the Muslim Brotherhood will also have effects on diplomatic relations. Qatar has long been a supporter of the Muslim Brotherhood, a fact that has strained its relations with other countries — Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates even went so far as to close their embassies in Qatar. However, the continuation of the United States' rapprochement with Iran and Riyadh's own discomfort with the rise of Salafist jihadist groups has made it reconsider its stance on political Islamism. Riyadh, Bahrain and Abu Dhabi's agreement to resume diplomatic ties with Doha, and the latter's consideration of changing its relationships with Egypt and Libya, points to a shift in how the bloc's engagement with the Muslim Brotherhood has the potential to streamline the Gulf Cooperation Council's (GCC) efforts in the region.

The Gulf monarchies' attempt at reconciling with political Islamists can potentially benefit the GCC. For its part, Qatar has engaged with the staunchly anti-Islamist Libyan government in Tobruk, and it appears tensions with President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi's government in Egypt have calmed. Both scenarios point to the likelihood of the GCC moving closer to adopting a more unified regional stance beginning in 2015, one more in line with Riyadh's wishes to preserve the framework of the council.

This improvement in relations comes at a critical moment. With the United States and Iran undergoing a rapprochement of their own, the Gulf monarchies will try to secure their own interests by becoming directly involved in Libya, Syria and potentially Yemen. This military action will also aim to project strength to Iran while also filling the strategic void left by the absence of Turkish leadership in the region, especially in the Levant.

However, Qatar has been opposed to this course of action in the past. Despite its small size, the country has used its wealth and domestic stability to back a wide array of Islamist groups, including the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, Ennahda in Tunisia and rebel groups in Syria. Tensions between Qatar and regional allies came to a head in 2014 in the aftermath of Saudi and Emirati support for the July 2013 uprising that ousted the Doha-backed Muslim Brotherhood government in Egypt. The tension threatened the stability of the GCC and caused rebel infighting in Syria. This disconnect in Gulf policy has had wide regional repercussions, including the success of Islamic State militants against Gulf-backed rebel groups in Syria and the Islamic States' expansion into Iraq.

Without foreign military intervention on behalf of the rebels, no faction participating in the Syrian civil war will be able to declare a decisive military victory. As the prospects of a clear-cut outcome become less realistic, Bashar al Assad's Russian and Iranian backers are increasing diplomatic efforts to negotiate a settlement in Syria, especially as both are eager to refocus on domestic woes exacerbated by the current drop in global energy prices. Kuwait's recent decision to allow the Syrian regime to reopen its embassy to assist Syrian expats living within its borders points to a likelihood that the Gulf states are coming to terms with the reality that al Assad is unlikely to be ousted by force, and Sunni Arab stakeholders in the Syrian conflict are gradually giving in to the prospect of a negotiated settlement. A resolution to the Syrian crisis will not come in 2015, but regional actors will continue looking for a solution to the crisis outside of the battlefield.

Any negotiated settlement will see the Sunni principals in the region — led by the GCC and Turkey — work to implement a competent Sunni political organization that limits the authority of a remnant Alawite government in Damascus and future inroads by traditional backers in Tehran. Muslim Brotherhood-style political Islam represents one of the potential Sunni solutions within this framework, and with Saudi opposition to the group potentially fading, it remains a possible alternative to the variety of Salafist options that could exist — to include jihadists. Such a solution ultimately relies on a broader democratic framework to be implemented, a scenario that will likely remain elusive in Syria for years to come.

#### North Africa's Long Road to Stability

North African affairs have traditionally followed a trajectory distinct from that of the Levant and Persian Gulf, a reality shaped as much by geography as by political differences between the Nasser-inspired secular governments and the monarchies of the Gulf. Egypt, Saudi Arabia's traditional rival for leadership of the Sunni Arab world, has become cripplingly dependent on the financial backing of its former Gulf rivals. The GCC was able to use its relative stability and oil wealth to take advantage of opportunities to secure its members' interests in North Africa following the Arab Spring. As a result, Cairo has become a launching pad for Gulf intentions, particularly UAE airstrikes against Islamist militants in Libya and joint Egyptian-Gulf backing of renegade Gen. Khalifa Hifter's Operation Dignity campaign.

Like Syria, Libya represents a battleground for competing regional Sunni ambitions. Qatar, and to a lesser extent Turkey, backed Libya's powerful Islamist political and militia groups led by the re-instated General National Congress in Tripoli after the international community recognized the arguably anti-Islamist House of Representatives in Tobruk. Islamist-aligned political and militia forces control Libya's three largest cities, and Egyptian and Gulf-backed proxies are making little headway against opponents in battles to gain control of Tripoli and Benghazi, prompting more direct action by Cairo and Abu Dhabi.

Saudi Arabia, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates are primarily concerned with the possibility of Libya, an oil-rich state bordering Egypt, becoming a wealthy backer of political Islam. Coastal-based infighting has left much of Libya's vast desert territories available for regional jihadists as well as a host of smuggling and trafficking activities, posing a significant security risk not just for regional states but Western interests as well. Egyptian and Gulf attempts to shape outcomes on the ground in Libya

have proved largely ineffective, and Western plans for reconciliation talks favor regional powers such as Algeria — a traditional rival to Egyptian and Gulf interests in North Africa — that are more comfortable working with political actors across a wide spectrum of political ideologies to include Muslim Brotherhood-style Islamism.

Libya will likely find itself as the proving ground for the quid pro quo happening between the participants of the intra-Sunni rift over political Islam. In exchange for Saudi Arabia and its partners reducing their pressure on Muslim Brotherhood-style groups in Egypt and Syria, Qatar and Turkey are likely to work more visibly with Tobruk in 2015 in addition to pushing Islamist proxies into a Western-backed national dialogue. Libya's overall security situation will not be settled through mediation, but Libyan Islamists are more likely to re-enter a coalition with the political rivals now that both sides' Gulf backers are working toward settling differences themselves.

### Regional Impact

Dysfunction and infighting have marred attempts by the region's Sunni actors to formulate a cohesive strategy in Syria. This has enabled Iran to remain entrenched in the Levant — albeit while facing pressure — and to continue expending resources competing in arenas such as Libya and Egypt. The next year will likely see an evolving framework where Saudi Arabia and Qatar, and to a lesser extent Turkey, will reach a delicate understanding on the role of political Islam in the region. 2014 saw a serious reversal in the fortunes of Muslim Brotherhood-style groups, which inadvertently favored even more far-right and extremist groups such as the Islamic State as the Gulf's various Sunni proxies were focused on competing with one another.

Iran's slow but steady push toward a successful negotiation with the United States, as well as the threats posed by militant Islam throughout the Levant, Iraq and North Africa, is necessitating a realignment of relationships within the Middle East's diverse Sunni interests. Less divisive Sunni leadership will be instrumental in coordinating efforts to resolve the conflicts in both Libya and Syria, although resolution in both conflicts will remain out of reach in 2015 and some time beyond.

A more robust Sunni Arab position, especially in Syria and the Levant, will likely put more pressure on Iran to reach a negotiated settlement with the United States by the end of the year. While a settlement may seem harmful to Gulf interests, the GCC is shifting toward a pragmatic acceptance of an agreement, similar to Riyadh's begrudging accommodation of a future role for the Muslim Brotherhood in the Middle East. The GCC's new goal is to limit Tehran's opportunities for success rather than outright denying it. Part of this will be achieved through an ongoing, aggressive energy strategy. The rest will come from internal negotiations between Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Qatar and Turkey.

The next year will see the Sunni presence in Syria attempt to coalesce behind rebels acceptable to Western governments that are eager to see negotiations begin and greater local pushback against the Islamic State. More cohesive Gulf leadership will also present a more effective bulwark against Iranian and Alawite interests in the Levant. Most important, however, is the opportunity for regional Sunnis, led by Saudi Arabia, to present a more mature and capable response to mounting pressures. Whether through more assertive military moves in the region or by working with states such as Qatar to steer the Muslim Brotherhood rather than embolden the Islamist opposition, 2015 will likely see a shift in Sunni Arab strategies that have long shaped the region.

Islamic civilisation is in Europe's DNA

Khaled Diab is an award-winning Egyptian-Belgian journalist, writer and blogger. He is the author of *Intimate Enemies: Living with Israelis and Palestinians in the Holy Land*. He blogs at [www.chronikler.com](http://www.chronikler.com)

His article provides an interesting slant on the Paris killings and you can read his article at: <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2015/01/islamic-civilisation-europe-cart-20151845933392616.html>

In need of a religious revolution  
By Ezra Levant, QMI Agency

On Jan. 1, the president of Egypt made a stunning speech.

Abdel Fattah al-Sisi spoke at Al Azhar, the greatest university in the Arab world, a place of Islamic scholarship dating back more than a millennium.

Al-Sisi didn't just speak to scholars though. He also addressed the Awqaf Ministry, the government's religious department that funds mosques and Muslim imams across Egypt.

Al-Sisi is Egypt's president and he's also its top general. And his speech was an order. A plea, but a command as well: Islam needed to reform itself.

The problem was Islam's violence. Islam, said al-Sisi, has become the world's enemy. "It's inconceivable that the thinking that we hold most sacred should cause the entire Islamic world to be a source of anxiety, danger, killing and destruction for the rest of the world. Impossible!"

How was it that the religion they all loved is so hated by the rest of the world? Why is the world so Islamophobic – not in the politically correct meaning of that phrase, but in the literal meaning of that phrase. Why is the world so scared of Islam?

It wasn't Islam, the religion, he said. It was Islam, the radical political force. "That thinking—I am not saying 'religion' but 'thinking'—that corpus of texts and ideas that we have sacralized over the years, to the point that departing from them has become almost impossible, is antagonizing the entire world. It's antagonizing the entire world! Is it possible that 1.6 billion Muslims should want to kill the rest of the world's inhabitants, that is 7 billion—so that they themselves may live? Impossible!"

It was the closest thing Islam has seen to Martin Luther nailing his 95 theses to the church door in Wittenberg. Al-Sisi was calling for nothing less than a Reformation of Islam. And he was doing so in the heart of Al Azhar. He continued:

"I say and repeat again that we are in need of a religious revolution. You, imams, are responsible before Allah. The entire world, I say it again, the entire world is waiting for your next move... because this ummah is being torn, it is being destroyed, it is being lost—and it is being lost by our own hands."

"This ummah is being torn" – ummah is the Arabic word for nation, but it's also the Arabic word meaning all Muslims anywhere in the world. Al-Sisi was saying that Islam was destroying Muslims; radical Islam, political Islam, "Islamism" as it's sometimes called, is dangerous.

Al-Sisi is no marginal man. He is the president of Egypt, the president, its military leader, the general who kicked the Muslim Brotherhood terrorist junta out of power and who is trying to keep a lid on the biggest Arab country in the world.

Will al-Sisi get his way? Let's hope so. For with Obama in retreat, and the Islamic State and Iran on the rise, al-Sisi and his reformation might be the only thing standing between Egypt's 90 million people, the great city of Cairo and the Suez Canal on the one hand, and the death cult Islamist violence that is burning through the Middle East.

The fact that al-Sisi's speech has received so little attention in the western media, and even less support from western politicians and diplomats, only emphasizes how important al-Sisi's campaign may be.

Read more at:

<http://legalinsurrection.com/2015/01/egypts-president-sisi-calls-for-islamic-religious-revolution/>

Jordanian 'Karama' initiative seeks to spur interfaith dialogue

Work is under way in Jordan to kick off an initiative to promote mutual respect among religions and disseminate a culture of dialogue and tolerance across the region, organisers said.

Read more about this at:

<http://www.osmth.org/news/341-jordanian-karama-initiative-seeks-to-spur-interfaith-dialogue>

ICRD Templar Update

This article is very much worth the read. The ICRD (International Center for Religion & Diplomacy) is truly one of our most valued and internationally recognized cooperative NGO's with OSMTH on the world scene. Both Chev. Dr. Johnston, President of ICRD, and The Rev. Chev. Canon Brian Cox, Senior Vice President of ICRD, are exceptional world leaders in faith based diplomacy. In fact, Canon Cox delivered a number of key presentations at the recent GPUSA annual C&I. It was also he that asked OSMTH to host the Copenhagen-Syrian Conference hosted by GP Denmark about 70 days ago which was attended by many to include Princess Elizabeth, Ennio Senese, Duke Alexander zu Mecklenburg, Tom Curtis (GPUSA), Lars Karstensen (GP Denmark) plus a number of Knights and Dames from Denmark.

You can read this update at:

[http://www.osmth.org/documents/ICRD\\_TemplarUpdate.pdf](http://www.osmth.org/documents/ICRD_TemplarUpdate.pdf)

How Iran's feminist genie escaped

Iran's 1979 revolution may have put an ayatollah in charge - but for women it had plenty of positive side-effects...

Read this article at <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-31728658>

Allan Massie: Struggle for soul of Islam

Moderate Muslims, not the West, must ultimately beat groups such as IS, by driving radical versions of the faith into the shadows, writes Allan Massie

'Islam is a religion of peace'. "Islamic State – is not true Islam but a perversion of the faith." Both these statements, or something like then, are commonly made. Both are true. Equally both are untrue. It's difficult to keep these opposed judgments clear in one's head, but one should try to do so.

It helps one to do so if one thinks of Christianity and the history of the Christian religion. Christianity is a religion of peace. When the angels appeared to announce the birth of Christ to the shepherds, they proclaimed the Christmas message: "Peace on earth and good-will to all men." That promise is at the heart of the Christian faith. But we all know that over the centuries wars have been fought in the name of Christ, and believers in one variety of Christianity have fought, persecuted and murdered followers of another version of the faith. "The Lord's wark gangs merrily on," said a minister of the Kirk as the army of the Covenant slaughtered prisoners and camp-followers of the Royalist army after the Battle of Philiphaugh.

You can read the rest of this article on the Scotsman newspaper site at:

<http://www.scotsman.com/news/allan-massie-struggle-for-soul-of-islam-1-3693425>

ISIS

ISIS torturing, raping children from minority groups in Iraq

A UN report urges governments to respond to ISIS atrocities against children in Iraq

GENEVA-The United Nations released a report Feb. 4 that says Islamic State group ISIS, which controls areas in Syria and Iraq, is systematically killing, torturing and raping children and families in Iraq, and the report calls on governments to respond.

From The National Post, "In a report issued Wednesday in Geneva, the U.N. Committee on the Rights of the Child said it has received reports of "several cases of mass executions of boys, as well as reports of beheadings, crucifixions of children and burying children alive.""

ISIS targets children of minority groups, abducting and forcing them to act as suicide bombers or sex slaves.

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein spoke at the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C Feb. 5, warning world leaders against "sinking into a state of paralysis" and urged for moral courage to treat each other humanely.

Forceful reprisals, Zeid says, against atrocities are not working.

“Just bombing them or choking off their financing has clearly not worked...for these groups have only proliferated and grown in strength,” he says. “The space for dissent in many countries is collapsing under the weight of either poorly-thought out, or indeed, exploitative, counter-terrorism strategies.”

Instead, he says the world needs leaders who choose to fully observe humanitarian law, “without excuses.”

“Surely we now know, from bitter experience, that human rights are the only meaningful rampart against barbarity.”

#### What ISIS Really Wants

I got in an email from our Chancellor who provided me with a link to what she considers a must read article and one she believes all Templars should read. It is a long article and of course depressing reading but we do need to understand what is at stake here. Here is what she said...

Christians, and Knights Templar in particular, cannot hide from the harsh reality that is threatening civilization to-day in the form of ISIS: Islamic terrorists dedicated to turning the world into a Caliphate.

And those who do not convert? They will be destroyed. For they believe this is the way to bring about the end of the World in keeping with the promises of Allah.

In the path of wrath they will destroy our freedoms, the democratic form of government, the achievements of the enlightenment, science and all that the life of Christ has meant to the modern world.

This is a long article, and not a cheerful one, but I would suggest it be required reading for every Templar. We must be informed if we are to be prepared to participate in the dialogue and contribute to the response that lies ahead.

Read the article at:

<http://www.theatlantic.com/features/archive/2015/02/what-isis-really-wants/384980/>

ISIS Punishment for Woman wearing a red jacket instead of black

This is a graphic video which shows the brutality and intolerance of ISIS so only watch if you have a strong stomach! The end is a real shocker!

See [http://www.electriconadian.com/esimages/ISIS\\_Punishment-She\\_Wore\\_Red\\_Jacket1.mp4](http://www.electriconadian.com/esimages/ISIS_Punishment-She_Wore_Red_Jacket1.mp4)

OSMTH Solidarity, deepest sympathy and sorrow with the Royal Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

See the press release at:

[http://www.osmth.org/images/stories/20150204\\_jordan.pdf](http://www.osmth.org/images/stories/20150204_jordan.pdf)

Widespread outrage after IS bulldozes ancient Iraq city

(Reuters) - Islamic State fighters have looted and bulldozed the ancient Assyrian city of Nimrud, the Iraqi government said, in their latest assault on some of the world's greatest archaeological and cultural treasures.

For more information visit:

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/03/06/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-nimrud-idUSKBN0M20GZ20150306>

India's Daughter: nearly 300,000 watch BBC's Delhi rape documentary in UK

Nearly 300,000 people watched India's Daughter, the controversial documentary on the gang-rape of a young woman in Delhi, after its broadcast was brought forward by the BBC.

The film, which had been due to air on International Women's Day on Sunday, had an audience of 286,000 viewers, a 1.9% share of the audience, between 10pm and 11pm on Wednesday.

Delhi authorities banned the broadcast of the film in India, prompting its British director Leslee Udwin call on Indian prime minister Narendra Modi to “deal with the unceremonious silencing of the film”.



India's Daughter review – this film does what the politicians should be doing. This documentary, which focuses on the assault of Jyoti Singh on a bus in Delhi in 2012, may not contain much that will surprise Indians, but its determination to shed light on the country's rape crisis should inspire change.

The BBC said it brought forward the broadcast “given the intense level of interest in the Storyville film”, enabling viewers to “see this incredibly powerful documentary at the earliest opportunity”.

It said on Thursday that it had received 32 complaints about the film, while four viewers it contacted in support of the film.

Based on the brutal rape in December 2012 of 23-year-old physiotherapy student Jyoti Singh, Udwin's documentary includes interviews with one of the men convicted for the crime, who is now in prison and waiting for the supreme court to hear his appeal against the death sentence.

It was the highest rating documentary in BBC4's Storyville series so far this year, with a five-minute peak of 352,000 viewers. It was broadly in line with the ratings average for the slot.

The BBC said the film, which seeks to explore the crime and the cultural context in which it was committed, provided a “revealing insight into a horrific crime that sent shock waves around the world and led to protests across India demanding changes in attitudes towards women”.

The Singhs were poor, but they cared for their children fiercely. Jyoti, their only daughter, grew up well-adjusted and focused, but also deeply empathetic. One of her friends recalls that after the police picked up a street urchin for snatching her purse, Singh, rather than berating the boy, took him aside and asked him what made him do it. Because I want what you have, he said – shoes, jeans, a hamburger. Singh, recalled her friend, promptly took the boy shopping and bought him everything on his wish list. Her only stipulation was that he not steal again.

The word “happy” repeatedly comes up in reference to Jyoti. She was happy, said Asha Singh. She had only six months of her internship left, recalled Badri Singh. “Happiness was a few steps ahead.”

In contrast, the six men who would take Singh's life appear never to have encountered happiness. The juvenile left his home in a village in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh when he was just 11 years old and didn't return. His mother thought him dead. The others were familiar with poverty and violence. In turn, they were violent towards others. “There is nothing good about him,” Singh says of one his co-conspirators. Of another he admits: “He was capable of anything.”

A psychiatrist in Delhi's Tihar Jail, where Singh is lodged, tells Udwin that he knows of rapists who have committed as many as 200 rapes before they are ever caught. Two hundred rapes that they remember, that is.

Given Singh's own statements it isn't a stretch to say that had the men got away with raping and killing Jyoti, they would have raped and killed again. Or, that neither Singh's mindset nor even the manner of the rape, during which an iron rod was inserted into Jyoti, was, as the court declared in its judgment, truly “the rarest of the rare”. As recently as February this year, a woman was gang-raped by nine men in Rohtak, Haryana for over three hours. The men violated her with bricks and asbestos sheets. Sticks, stones and condoms were found stuffed in her private parts.

India's Daughter doesn't malign India, but Naidu's statement about a “conspiracy” does demonstrate, with an acute lack of self-awareness, what lies at the heart of the nation's rape crisis.

Naidu isn't implying that rape is shameful; but that talking about rape is shameful because it draws attention to the fact that it happens at all. This fear is exactly what prevents rape victims from filing police complaints, and, as a result, emboldens rapists to strike again and again. In fact, Udwin has done what India's politicians should rightfully be doing: investigating rape cases thoroughly and discussing them openly.

While eloquently expressing his love for his daughter, Badri Singh tells Udwin: “I wish that whatever darkness there is in the world should be dispelled by this light.”

The Indian government has thwarted his wishes. By banning this documentary it has deprived the Singhs of the opportunity to share the story of their daughter widely within India. In attempting to push a conversation about rape back into the closet, it has stigmatised the subject further. It has done more damage to India's reputation, and, far worse, the fight against rape, than any film ever could.

Freedom in the World 2015

The latest edition of its annual report on political rights and civil liberties in 195 countries around the globe.

Of the 195 countries assessed, 89 (46 percent) were rated Free, 55 (28 percent) Partly Free, and 51 (26 percent) Not Free.

All but one region had more countries with declines than with gains. Asia-Pacific had an even split.

More aggressive tactics by authoritarian regimes and an upsurge in terrorist attacks contributed to a disturbing decline in global freedom in 2014. Freedom in the World 2015 found an overall drop in freedom for the ninth consecutive year.

Nearly twice as many countries suffered declines as registered gains—61 to 33—and the number of countries with improvements hit its lowest point since the nine-year erosion began. Russia's invasion of Ukraine, a rollback of democratic gains by Egyptian president Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdogan's intensified campaign against press freedom and civil society, and further centralization of authority in China were evidence of a growing disdain for democratic standards that was found in nearly all regions of the world.

You can read this report at:

[https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2015#.VODmI\\_nF-So](https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2015#.VODmI_nF-So)

Salvation Army harnesses viral power of #TheDress for anti-domestic violence ad  
When brands attempt to harness viral phenomena for their own purposes, the results are often cringe-worthy. But, in this case, using last week's hoopla over #TheDress for a powerful message about domestic violence seems to have hit the mark.

The Salvation Army's South Africa branch tweeted a PSA Friday morning showing a model with a black eye and bruises wearing a gold and white dress. It's the same dress that blew up on social media last week as people debated whether it was blue and black or white and gold (it's blue and black, it turns out).

Read more at <http://news.nationalpost.com/2015/03/06/salvation-army-harnesses-viral-power-of-the-dress-for-anti-domestic-violence-ad/>

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## Brussels Declaration

I wasn't sure how many of you were aware of this Declaration and hence my including it here for you to read.

OSMTH – KNIGHTS TEMPLAR INTERNATIONAL  
BRUSSELS DECLARATION  
13th October 2007

OSMTH – Knights Templar International:  
“Aiding humanity on the pilgrimage through life.”

### OUR VISION

Today, OSMTH – Knights Templar International looks for a world in which:

a constructive dialogue between the great religious faiths, and the individuals and nations that adhere to them, is conducted in an atmosphere of mutual respect, understanding and peace;

the holy sites of Christianity and the other great faiths are respected, protected and maintained, and pilgrims can travel to them in safety;

the dedication, generosity and integrity of all those engaged in providing humanitarian aid are recognised and valued, and aid workers carry out their vital work in an ethical manner without fear of discrimination;

the principles of active charity, courtesy, dedication and honesty, inherent in the highest ideals of a code of chivalry and a personal rule of life, are spread wider and wider in society;

and

the contribution of the Knights Templar, medieval and modern, with regard to agriculture, construction, transportation, crafts, medicine, finance, inter-faith affairs, diplomacy and philanthropy is both well researched, and also widely understood and valued by the public.

## OUR COMMITMENT

OSMTH - Knights Templar International aspires to be the modern organisation the original Knights Templar might have become, if their historical development had not been broken.

Like other orders of military and monastic origins, whose traditions stem from Jerusalem in the Middle Ages, our membership has long ago put aside swords for purely ceremonial use and turned its attention, as a civil society organisation, to charitable, cultural, humanitarian and reconciliation endeavours. In our members today, we look for Christians sufficiently confident in their own beliefs to respect and value the beliefs of those of other faiths and of none.

Today's Templars in OSMTH – Knights Templar International seek, by their collective action and individual personal example, to put into practice in the modern world the highest ideals of the code of chivalry and the personal rule of Christian life inspired by the spiritual father of the medieval Order, St Bernard of Clairvaux.

Our modern Order also adheres to the Principles adopted by the General Assembly of the Order of the Temple in Paris in 1841 in that:

our membership is open to Christians of all denominations and from all social backgrounds;

we operate as an openly accountable, democratic and non-political organisation;

our members have a duty to promote the causes of peace and human dignity; and

our work in humanitarian aid is undertaken for the benefit of the diverse strands of all humanity.

## OUR ACTIONS

In addition to the local and national activities of each of its constituent Member Grand Pories, OSMTH – Knights Templar International undertakes a range of collective programmes around the world. In choosing and implementing these collective international programmes, our modern Order particularly seeks:

to promote dialogue amongst, and between, the Abrahamic faiths and the other great religions of the world with a view to establishing better understanding and greater tolerance;

to assist Christian communities around the world, and especially in the Holy Land, whenever their human rights are at risk;

to build bridges of understanding and support between the Eastern and Western Churches of the Christian faith; and

as a UN recognised Non Governmental Organisation, to support the United Nations and other

international civil society organisations by our active participation in programmes of disaster relief, humanitarian aid, peace building and sustainable development, that respect the full range of human diversity.

END

There is a multi lingual version of this document available at:

<http://www.osmth.org/BrusselsMulti.pdf>

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## Coptic Orthodox Church News Release

By HG Bishop Angaelos, General Bishop of the Coptic Orthodox Church in the UK

On January 6th, the Grand Master requested I circulate this new release from His Grace Bishop Angaelos from the Coptic Orthodox Church in the United Kingdom for your review and consideration. In the three days that have passed from that request, events in France seem to have overtaken us, but the plight of Christians in North Africa continues to be of grave concern.

Senior leadership for the Order continues to reach out to the Coptic Church in the Orders ongoing efforts towards promoting peace and bridge building which seems to be more needed now than ever.

Very Truly Yours,

Chevalier Dale J. Starkes, GOTJ  
Secretary General, OSMTH

Coptic Orthodox Church UK  
Media and Communications Office

Statement by His Grace Bishop Angaelos, General Bishop of the Coptic Orthodox Church in the United Kingdom regarding escalating attacks on Coptic Christians in Libya

It is deeply concerning to witness the unprovoked, targeted and escalating attacks on Egyptian Coptic Christians in Libya, particularly but not exclusively in Sirte.

In recent years Coptic Christians in Libya have endured horrific acts of brutality that include the bombing of churches, abductions, torture, and execution style murders. In recent weeks alone we have seen the murder of a Coptic Christian couple and their thirteen year old daughter in Sirte, and the kidnapping of thirteen Coptic men in the same area. Since December 2014 to date there have been reports of at least twenty abductions of Coptic Christians in Libya and these numbers continue to escalate.

In personal conversation with His Holiness Pope Tawadros II, Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of the See of St Mark, as well as representatives from the Diocese of Boheira and Pentapolis, we are aware that the Egyptian government is liaising with Libyan authorities and working to provide safe passage for Coptic Christians returning from Libya, an initiative welcomed at this time.

Out of serious concern and in light of these circumstances a meeting is currently being sought with the Libyan Ambassador to Britain for further discussion of these constantly evolving events.

At a time when Coptic and other Christian families are preparing to celebrate the Feast of the Nativity, we pray for those who are literally concerned for their lives in Libya as well as for countless other Christians and minority groups across the Middle East who are victims of war, violence, and unrest.

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## Mountain Grail

The Newsletter of The Priory of The Mountain of the House of the LORD, Utah, USA.

Thanks to Prior II of St James Priory, Matthew Gaasenbeek, for sending me in a copy of these newsletters which can be read on the page at:

[http://www.electricscotland.com/history/knights\\_templar.htm](http://www.electricscotland.com/history/knights_templar.htm)

The Prior is Dr Thomas E Sawyer and a resume of him can be read at:

<http://www.tesawyer.net/>

The December 2014 and the January 2015 newsletters show how the Priory fell by the way side but is now making a come back and we wish them every success in their endeavors.

I believe the key to this is getting Knights & Dames involved in the Priory. How often do we ask them why they didn't attend an event we put on? Indeed how often do we ask them what events they would like to see put on that they would attend? In fact do we even ask them what events they would attend when they are being considered for membership?

In the last newsletter I mentioned that the USA was reporting a decline in membership and that was due to them being much more accurate on the state of their membership. The above newsletters show how this Priory had 50 to 60 members but due to various reasons declined to around a half dozen. The following newsletter then starts to see work bring done to build it back.

I'm told that our Commandary in Edmonton had problems in their first 2 years of operation but thanks to the work of the Prior they are now close to becoming a full Priory.

Perhaps if we all share with each other we can learn more about what works and what doesn't so we can all benefit?

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## Canadian Update

### 50th Anniversary of the Canadian Flag



The maple leaf flag has succeeded in large part perhaps because its unique iconography arrived just as Canada was coming into its own as a country.

(Adrian Wyld/Canadian Press)

Read more about this anniversary at:

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/canada-s-flag-debate-flaps-on-50-years-later-1.29571> and  
<http://www.ctvnews.ca/w5/w5-seeking-the-origins-of-the-maple-leaf-flag-finding-the-soul-of-our-nation-1.1738784>

Prime Minister Stephen Harper today issued the following statement to mark National Flag of Canada Day:

"Today I join Canadians across the country in celebrating the 50th anniversary of the National Flag of Canada.

"While our flag dates back half a century, the use of the maple leaf as a proud Canadian symbol goes back much further to the early 1700s. A few of the highlights of the maple leaf's storied history in Canada are: its use as a logo by many organizations, including the Saint-Jean-Baptiste Society who had it as their emblem in 1834; the use of it as a central and unifying theme in song, such as the

'Maple Leaf Forever' penned by Alexander Muir in 1867 as a tribute to Confederation; its use by Canadian military units, both pre-Confederation as well as during the first and second World Wars; and its use since 1921 in the Royal Arms of Canada as a distinctive national emblem.

"The Canadian flag is a symbol of the values of peace, democracy, freedom and justice that define and unite us as Canadians. It is a common rallying point for great moments in our country's history and a testament to our ingenuity and achievements, both at home and on the international stage. Whether on the backpacks of Canadian travellers, the uniforms of members of the Canadian Armed Forces, or above the podium at the Olympic and Paralympic Games, our flag means home to all Canadians and inspires a fierce sense of national pride.

"Since it was first raised on February 15, 1965, our national flag has proudly flown on Parliament Hill, in communities across our nation, and at Canada's missions around the world. It can even be found on the International Space Station.

"Our Government has made it a tradition on National Flag of Canada Day to present a PeaceTower flag to Canadians who exemplify the values that we hold most dear.

"I am therefore honoured today to present this great symbol of our country to the Canadian Museum of History for posterity and the enjoyment of all our citizens. I am also proud to mark this very special semicentennial by presenting 50 Canadian flags to 50 Canadians and organizations across the nation in recognition of their tremendous contributions to our great country.

"On this special day, I invite all Canadians to take part in activities to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Canadian flag and to learn more about the history of this unique, enduring and remarkable symbol of our national identity."

Toronto named world's best city to live  
Economist magazine

If you ask any Torontonians, they'll probably already tell you they live in the best city in the world, but thanks to a series of ego-inflating studies by The Economist, now there's some validation.

The city was named the best overall place to live, after scoring highly on the U.K.-based magazine's business environment, democracy, food security, safety and livability indices.

Montreal, the only other Canadian city in the rankings, clinched second in the shortlist of 25 cities.

To read the whole article see:

<https://ca.finance.yahoo.com/blogs/insight/toronto-montreal-take-top-spots-for-best-places-140812272.html>

Ice climber scales frozen Niagara Falls

Recently released footage shows professional climber Will Gadd becoming the first person ever to ascend frozen sections of the world's largest flowing waterfall, Niagara Falls. (Jan. 30)AP

See <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation-now/2015/01/29/climber-frozen-niagara-falls-will-gadd/22532363/>

Canada in Iraq

I was watching the BBC news the other day and in an interview with Kurdish forces the man interviewed was asked how they were working with US forces. He didn't actually say much about them but then stated that their relationship with Canadian forces was particularly good in that they responded very quickly and did a very accurate job. He was quite fulsome in his praise of the Canadian air force and that's always good to hear.

Operation IMPACT is the Canadian Armed Forces' (CAF) support to the Middle East Stabilization Force (MESF) – the multinational coalition against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in the Republic of Iraq.

More information is available at:

<http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/operations-abroad-current/op-impact.page>

#### STOP PRESS

As this newsletter was going to press I just learned that a Canadian Soldier has been killed in Iraq and three others injured in a friendly fire incident by Kurdish fighters. Our thoughts are with the families.

Kevin Vickers named ambassador to Ireland

Kevin Vickers, the House of Commons sergeant-at-arms who became a household name in October after his confrontation with a gunman in the hallway on Parliament Hill, will be Canada's next ambassador to Ireland

The ambassadorship is the latest honour bestowed on Vickers since the October shooting in Ottawa that took the life of Cpl. Nathan Cirillo, who was standing sentry at the National War Memorial.

Canada House in London reopened today by Queen Elizabeth

Queen gets new keys similar to set presented to grandfather King George V in 1925.

Queen Elizabeth has officially reopened Canada's newly refurbished high commission in London, after years of renovation and a consolidation of offices from other buildings.



The Queen arrived at Canada House on Trafalgar Square with Prince Philip on Thursday morning.

She toured the new facilities and was presented with a set of keys to the building — a similar set to the one presented to her grandfather, King George V, when he opened the building in 1925.

You can read more about this and see a video at:

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/canada-house-in-london-reopened-today-by-queen-elizabeth-1.2962948>

Some other pictures can be found at:

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-2959999/What-privileges-Queen-gets-stuck-traffic-jam-en-route-Canada-House-manages-time.html>

PM marks successful visit by German Chancellor Angela Merkel to Canada



Prime Minister Stephen Harper today held a productive meeting with Angela Merkel, Chancellor of Germany, who was visiting Ottawa.

Discussions during Chancellor Merkel's second bilateral visit to Canada focused on the ongoing situation in Ukraine and the next steps to help bring an end to the conflict. Preparations for the G-7 Summit being hosted by Germany this year in Schloss Elmau, Bavaria, also featured in discussions. Items on the agenda for this year's Summit will include traditional G-7 issues such as international security, development, health and the global economy, in addition to several new initiatives being championed by Germany. Prime Minister Harper congratulated Chancellor Merkel on hosting a successful replenishment conference for GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance, a key component of Canada's efforts to improve maternal, newborn and child health.

The leaders also discussed a number of other pressing security issues such as the Middle East and the ongoing fight against terrorism, including the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

They also reaffirmed the robust relationship between the two countries, emphasizing the opportunities offered by the Canada-European Union Trade Agreement.

#### Quick Facts

Canada and Germany enjoy close relations, underpinned by active international cooperation, healthy trade and investment relations, and long-standing people-to-people ties. Roughly 3.2 million residents, or 9.8 per cent of Canada's population, indicate "German" as their ethnicity.

With bilateral merchandise trade totalling \$19.1 billion in 2014, Germany was Canada's thirteenth-largest merchandise export market, and ranked fourth among Canada's suppliers of merchandise imports.

Germany is an important ally and multilateral player within the G-7, the G-20, the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, and the World Trade Organization.

Chancellor Merkel attended the June 2010 G-8 and G-20 summits in Muskoka and Toronto. She also took part in a bilateral visit to Ottawa in August 2012.

Prime Minister Harper attended the Canada-EU Summit in Berlin and the G-8 Summit in Heiligendamm in June 2007. He participated in a bio-diversity conference in Bonn in 2008 and the NATO Strasbourg-Kehl Summit held in France and Germany in 2009. He also visited Berlin in May 2010 and Munich and Berlin in March 2014.

#### Quote



“Canada and Germany enjoy a very strong and stable friendship, underpinned by common interests, shared values and robust commercial ties. Chancellor Merkel and I had highly productive discussions today, focused on the international community’s response to the crisis in Ukraine, the global fight against terrorism, and preparations underway for the upcoming G-7 Summit. We also discussed bilateral relations, including tapping into the enormous potential of the Canada-EU Trade Agreement. I look forward to continuing to work alongside Chancellor Merkel to tackle these and other pressing issues.” – Prime Minister Stephen Harper

#### Government Launches Comprehensive International Education Strategy

The Honourable Ed Fast, Minister of International Trade, today launched a new International Education Strategy designed to maintain and enhance Canada’s global position in higher education. The comprehensive plan sets targets to attract more international researchers and students to Canada, deepen the research links between Canadian and foreign educational institutions and establish a pan-Canadian partnership with provinces and territories and all key education stakeholders, including the private sector.

The strategy will help Canada build on its already strong education advantages and performance. Capitalizing on these vast opportunities will create jobs and economic growth and help Canada retain and enhance its global leadership position and become more prosperous, innovative and competitive.

For more information visit:

<http://www.international.gc.ca/media/comm/news-communiqués/2014/01/15a.aspx?lang=eng>

Editors Note: I researched the Pisa Tests: Top 40 for Maths and Reading. The OECD's Pisa rankings compare the test results of 15 year olds in countries and regional education systems.

I found out that Asia is seeing the top results. Canada came 13th for Maths (USA 36th) and 9th for Reading (USA 24th).

Likewise the OECD's Problem Solving test found Canada at 8th (USA at 18th).

Shanghai (China), Singapore and Hong Kong came out in the top 3 places.

#### Government of Canada Programs for Apprentices

I've been watching developments on these programs and I've noted that in many instances these apprentices can go on to earn more money than many that instead go to University. Often the cost is much lower than the fees charged for University places and so it's certainly well worth considering. I'm told there are at least 1 million jobs available through these schemes so the opportunities are amazing.

I've also been told that it's private business that is holding things back as they are not investing in providing apprenticeship places for Canada's young people. You can learn more about the schemes available at:

<http://www.esdc.gc.ca/en/esdc/initiatives/apprenticeship/index.page>

#### Canada and Vietnam: Peeling back the layers

On paper, we couldn't be more different. The reality is much more complex. Part one of a six-part series.

Step into the dynamic world of Vietnam and you will immediately discover a country of incredible progress, a people with a vibrant and exhilarating culture, and youth with tremendous hope for the future. Peel back the layers and it will dawn on you that most things are not quite what they seem.

Canada and Vietnam have a lot in common. Both are unabashedly proud beer-drinking cultures: Canadians might object to the tendency of Vietnamese to put ice in their beer, but if they experienced the heat and humidity they'd understand. Both were forged out of a struggle between two peoples: the French battled the English in Canada, the south battled the north in Vietnam.

Finally, both are small but industrious countries living next to giant military superpowers with 10 to 15 times their population: Canada's 35 million people to the United States' 315 million, and Vietnam's 90

million to China's 1.3 billion. And as both of those superpowers slowly tilt towards one another, Canada and Vietnam are both seeing each other as more of a strategic partner.

On paper, on the ground

Yet on paper and in the minds of many of us, we couldn't be more different. Canada is a constitutional monarchy and parliamentary democracy, while Vietnam is a communist one-party state. Canadians boast of their freedoms, while reports out of Vietnam sound the alarm over jailed bloggers. Canada has a longstanding close friendship with the US, while the Americans fought the Vietnamese in a bloody war that left an indelible mark on our neighbours' psyche.

Even so, what's on paper does not necessarily represent what's in reality, in both countries. Canada has had more than its fair share of democratic scandals recently, for example, while the Communist Party of Vietnam is not as monolithic as it appears. That difference between what's on paper and what's on the ground is what I attempted to investigate in this series, *From the Tundra to the Jungle: Canada and Vietnam in the 21st century*.

I started with what's on paper, looking at government reports and press releases, and filing many access-to-information requests. I then travelled to Vietnam for about a month this fall on a media fellowship from the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada, sponsored in part by Cathay Pacific Airways. After returning to Canada, I interviewed more people.

The result is this series. You're reading Part One, the introduction. Part Two, to be published Dec. 17, will focus on Canadian connections to Vietnam's development. Part Three, to be published Jan. 14, will explore Canadian and Vietnamese business and trade interests. Part Four, to be published Jan. 21, will expand on energy and environment ties. Part Five, to be published Jan. 28, will look at education ties. And finally Part Six, to be published Feb. 4, will examine the political and human rights situation.

You can read more at:

<http://www.embassynews.ca/news/2014/12/10/canada-and-vietnam-peeling-back-the-layers/46504>

PM celebrates Tết

Prime Minister Stephen Harper participated in a special event celebrating the Vietnamese Lunar New Year, also known as Tết. The celebration, hosted by the Vietnamese Association of Toronto, took place at the International Centre in Mississauga, Ontario. The Prime Minister was joined by Jason Kenney, Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism, and Senator Thanh Hai Ngo, who is the first Canadian Senator of Vietnamese descent.

During the celebration, the Prime Minister delivered a speech in which he highlighted the many contributions of the Vietnamese-Canadian community to our great country.

The Vietnamese Lunar New Year is a time to gather with family and friends to reflect on the year that has just passed, and to look forward in anticipation of all that the year ahead may bring. In 2015, Tết officially begins on February 19, and marks the start of the year of the goat.

Today, Canada is home to more than 220,000 people of Vietnamese descent who contribute greatly to the prosperity, culture and social fabric of our country.

See <http://youtu.be/tk3fvpxRXDk>

Prime Minister celebrates Chinese New Year  
The Year of the Sheep.

See a short video at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f7tIMwIBWkg>

The Canadian absence

All too frequently, foreign policy authors neglect Canada. Two recent books are good examples of this tendency.

China has undergone an astonishing economic development over the past few decades. As well as

lifting a record number of people out of poverty and modernizing its infrastructure and cities, the country's rise has been characterized by a considerable and growing thirst for resources.

China's tactics to meet its voracious appetite for resources has raised concerns worldwide. What is the impact of Chinese investment on both local communities and the world at large? The stakes here are political, economic and environmental.

All too frequently, however, authors neglect Canada. Two recent books, *By All Means Necessary* by Elizabeth Economy and Michael Levi (OUP, 2014), and *Winner Take All* by Dambisa Moyo (Harper Collins, 2012), are good examples of this tendency, and offer a useful starting point for discussing this Canadian absence.

What is especially disappointing about its omission from the debate is that Canada would serve as an excellent comparative case study. On almost every issue, Canada presents China with its own obstacles and opportunities.

*By All Means Necessary* provides a good overview of China's global search for resources, working methodically through key issues. *Winner Take All's* strengths lie more in Moyo's clear and accessible presentation of context and theory and when placing China's strategy in historical context. By trying to cover all aspects of China's global strategy, neither book offers as much detail as it should, and both titles suffer from a paucity of in-depth case studies.

Studies on China's resource strategy tend to focus on its global competition with the United States and its activities in underdeveloped countries. Little attention is given to China's relationship with Canada. High worldwide resource demand has been a major driver of Canadian economic growth, much of the demand comes from China, recently surpassing the US as the primary consumer of Canadian ores. Although dwarfed by the trade with the USA, Canada's exports to China are not insignificant, at \$20 billion.

Despite the importance of this relationship, especially in western Canada, it is given short shrift in the literature. Moyo lumps Canada in with other Western countries as a statistical comparison. That China took over from Canada as the number one destination for US exports is the only noteworthy fact Moyo offers regarding Canada. In contrast, Economy and Levi provide a decent, brief history of Chinese investment in Canada, highlighting its increasing participation in Canada's resource industries (\$30 billion invested between 2005-2012). While writing about Canada at greater length than many authors, Economy and Levi spend little time on analysis.

Commodities trading and our civilian understanding of it remains, in Moyo's words, "blurry at best." Moyo provides a concise primer on modern markets, explaining how there is no escaping the impact of commodities price fluctuations. With some of the world's largest supplies of natural resources, Canada should demand greater attention. At the same time, much American analysis appropriates Canada as part of a monolithic North America, which could explain Canada's absence from the discussion. The fact that the US consumes the vast majority of Canada's resources does not justify dismissing Canada as a separate entity.

Perhaps some have difficulty locating Canada in the predominant paradigm: that presents China as either a benefactor to poorer nations, providing investment and development; or as exploitative neocolonialists, siphoning off resources at the expense of others. The truth is that Canada presents China with different challenges. With a highly-developed civil society and well-established, modern infrastructure, one of China's greatest tools – its infrastructure-for-oil barter system – becomes redundant. Instead, it relies on cash investment in order to gain access to technology and purchase substantial stakes in, amongst others, Alberta's oil sands.

For those incapable of articulating an alternative paradigm, the relationship shares many issues. Chinese corporations have a reputation for disrespecting local labour and environmental laws. According to Economy and Levi, given China's domestic reality, specifically high pollution, frequently unsafe working conditions and low wages, it is not unreasonable to presume similar conditions could be exported.

There are also concerns that increased Chinese investment and immigration will lead to downward

pressure on wages, a worry that was somewhat confirmed by the news that Chinese officials have lobbied Ottawa to lower immigration barriers for Chinese workers, specifically because Canadian workers are "so expensive" that Chinese corporations cannot turn a profit employing them. Given the decline in gas prices, the industry's influence, and China's aforementioned massive investment, how long can the Harper government resist these lobbying efforts?

Accessible entry points for understanding the complexities of China's global resource strategy, these books nevertheless exhibit common weaknesses. They typify Canada's omission from discussion about China's resource strategy. No comprehensive debate on nor understanding of global resources trends can ignore Canada, with its considerable and strategically important reserves, its first class infrastructure and sophisticated markets.

Canada Celebrates 25 Years of Membership in Organization of American States  
Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird today issued the following statement on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of Canada's joining the Organization of American States (OAS):

"I am proud to mark 25 years of Canadian partnership with the countries of the Americas through the OAS. Canada's membership in the hemisphere's premier multilateral forum has provided us with a key channel for cooperation with Latin American and Caribbean partners on mutual priorities, such as safeguarding and promoting freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

"Canada's membership in the OAS is an integral part of its engagement in the Americas, and Canada's leadership in the OAS has helped strengthen security and democracy in the hemisphere.

"Since becoming a full member of the OAS, Canada has made important contributions to some of the organization's greatest collective achievements, such as the establishment of the Inter-American Democratic Charter and the elaboration of the Declaration on Security in the Americas.

Learn more at:

<http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?mthd=tp&ctr.page=1&nid=918579&ctr.tp1D=1>

Canadian Dollar

Due to the oil price going down dramatically we have seen the Canadian dollar heading downwards. We were at parity for a while with the US dollar but at time of writing we're at 79 cents so a 20% fall and some predications that it could continue to slide to 75 or even 71 cents. The oil price is a major factor on this but it has to be said there are some upsides as our tourism industry should benefit as should our manufacturers. With Canadians paying less at the pumps it should provide some extra cash with which to purchase goods and services.

The problem is that while the oil price has an immediate effect it can take some months for our manufacturers to ramp up production to take advantage of the lower price of both the exchange rate and the lower price of fuel. So in the short term we're hitting some problems but in the longer term we could actually benefit.

The USA, our largest market by far, is seeing good growth and much better employment numbers so this should offer Canada lots of opportunities.

Alberta will be hard hit but Ontario should benefit and so the coming months will be interesting to see how we cope.

There is an interesting article called: "Don't bet the factory on Canada: Why the falling loonie won't spur a manufacturing revival" in which they profile Windsor, Ontario as an example of the problems in Canada.

See <http://business.financialpost.com/2015/03/02/dont-bet-the-factory-on-canada-why-the-falling-loonie-wont-spur-a-manufacturing-revival/>

Extreme Weather

February 2015 is now recognised as the coldest month in Canadian history.

Did you know?

Canada has the 4th most powerful passport in the world offering free travel visas to 170 countries in the world?

Discover Canada Study Guide

Quite by chance I came across this almost 3 hour study guide video (audio). I guess if you have friends that are applying for Canadian citizenship this would be a good place to send them. It is also a place where you can also learn what potential new immigrants have to learn to become citizens.

You can view this video at <http://youtu.be/FLGkgTyezH8>

Also you might watch The Provinces (and Territories) of Canada at:  
<http://youtu.be/gj-UTq0i5so>

Royal Canadian Navy Submarines: Fleet Status

The Victoria-class submarine fleet is now operational with three out of four submarines available for operations. HMCS Windsor, Victoria, and Chicoutimi were all at sea in December 2014 and spent a cumulative total of approximately 260 days at sea in 2014. HMCS Corner Brook is currently docked at Victoria Shipyards to undergo its Extended Docking Work Period (EDWP) under the Victoria In-service Support Contract with Babcock Canada Inc. It is scheduled to remain in EDWP until 2017. Canadian submarines generally operate in an operational cycle in which each vessel is available to the fleet for six years, referred to as the “operational period”, followed by two years in deep maintenance during an EDWP.

For more information visit:

<http://www.navy-marine.forces.gc.ca/en/news-operations/news-media-submarine-fleet-status.page>

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## Canadian History

SIR JOHN A. DAY

<http://sirjohnaday.ca/>

Through the Sir John A. Day project, Historica Canada strives to raise awareness about the life and legacy of Sir John A. Macdonald, a Father of Confederation and Canada’s first prime minister. In 2001, the Canadian Government officially declared January 11 to be Sir John A. Macdonald Day, and in 2015 the nation will celebrate his 200th birthday! The Sir John A. Day website is a great resource for teachers, and a fun and interactive website for students – featuring videos, a timeline of Sir John A.’s life and accomplishments, a blog and learning tools for teachers - including a collection of tips for throwing a birthday party in the classroom that is worthy of a prime minister!

Sir John A MacDonalld

By George R. Parkin (1908)

BY common consent Sir John Alexander Macdonald has been assigned the foremost place among the statesmen whom the public life of Canada has hitherto produced. Popular opinion on this point has been ratified by the stricter and measured judgment of the ablest men among his Canadian contemporaries with whom he was brought into close personal and official contact. It was equally ratified, even during his lifetime, by opinion in Britain, where those who best knew his work recognized in him one of the foremost statesmen of the empire. At his death the creation of a peerage for his widow put a special stamp of national recognition upon the singular services which he had rendered to Canada and the nation. A memorial tablet in the crypt of St. Paul's Cathedral—his statue adorning the squares of most of the larger Canadian cities—indicate the general desire to perpetuate his memory.

If special honour is due to those who by wise constructive statesmanship lay broad and deep the foundations of a great state, then to such honour Sir John Macdonald is fairly entitled.

No public man has ever in Canada won in an equal degree the sustained admiration of his fellow-citizens, and at the same time their affection, as had Macdonald at the time of his death. That he should have done this in spite of grave political errors and acknowledged personal defects, and as the

general outcome of a life spent in the very furnace of party conflict, makes the achievement all the more striking.

For many years before Confederation his history is an essential part of the political history of the province of Canada as then constituted; for nearly twenty-five years afterwards it is practically that of the whole Dominion. While many men and many forces contributed to that great end, it is scarcely an exaggeration to say that it was his personality which in 1867 made the confederation of British North America possible. Rightly understood this period was as critical for the empire as it was for the colony itself. No one can doubt that the whole future development of the imperial system is destined to be profoundly affected by the course of action then taken.

It was fortunate that at such a time Canada possessed a public man who was versed in all the intricacies of local politics, and endowed with the peculiar skill which creates and holds together parliamentary majorities, and who at the same time had a mind capable of grasping the problems of a broad national statesmanship. The colonial politician, guided by a few dominant principles, gradually developed, under the pressure of circumstances and the needs of a great occasion, into an imperial statesman who has left a lasting stamp upon the policy of the nation.

The confederation of Canada under the Crown inaugurated the new idea and the new organization of the empire. That organization is still far from complete. Other great groups of colonies are feeling their way towards a consolidation similar to that which has conferred such immense advantage on the Dominion. The empire as a whole begins to realize that it has not yet reached its final goal in the process of political evolution.

The period in which we live is, therefore, one of national transition where every lesson of experience has extreme value. The work of the men who laid well and truly the constitutional foundations of the Dominion has now stood the test of nearly forty years of stress and strain. A political system which commands public confidence, a healthy national spirit, great material prosperity, and well grounded hope for an ever-widening and successful future are results apparent to the ordinary observer.

The labours of Macdonald and his fellow-workers in adapting British constitutional principles to a federal system have become a part, and no unimportant part, of our national heritage. A recognition of the value of the work they accomplished will facilitate further national development.

The historical facts of a period tend to group themselves around its strongest and most representative personality. The man's history becomes the history of his time. Thus Canadians will always associate with the figure of their great leader the group of events which transformed their country from a number of isolated colonies, provincial in thought and policy, into a consolidated and self-reliant Dominion, filled with those hopes of a vast future which are naturally inspired by the possession of one-half of a great continent.

Even before the end of his life Macdonald had come to be looked upon as embodying, more than any one else, the spirit and purpose of the Canadian people. The tradition is one which seems likely to grow with the growth of the Dominion and with the fuller and more general recognition of the significance of the work he did and of the critical character of the period in which that work was accomplished.

My aim in this volume will be to bring this tradition within the limits of true historical perspective, so far as this is possible in a limited space and in dealing with events still close at hand. I wish to outline concisely, but at the same time clearly, the career of the man who guided the destinies of my country through the anxious years which preceded Confederation and the difficult and not untroubled ones which followed the union of the provinces.

For such a condensed biography there seems a distinct need. Sketches of Macdonald's career were written during his life, but mainly for party purposes and with a strong party bias. The two large volumes in which, since his death, Mr. Pope has ably redeemed the trust committed to him of being the literary executor of his old chief, and those in which Colonel Macpherson has embodied many of his uncle's most important speeches, may be recommended to all who have the wish and the opportunity to study the details of Canadian politics. To both I have been constantly indebted. But either of these works is too voluminous, in these days of many books, for readers who can only spare

the time to master essential facts. It is for such readers that this short biography is intended. I hope that in trying to condense I have not become obscure; that in the effort to be brief, no fact of major significance has been omitted.

It is not an easy task to separate in all cases the false from the true, or to form an impartial judgment in writing of a man whose every public word and deed was regarded from a party point of view at a period when party passion was extreme; whose actions and purposes are perhaps as unfairly judged by the adulation of supporters as by the hostile interpretation of opponents.

It may be a century before the final biography of Macdonald can be written, and his true place among contemporary statesmen assigned to him on clear historical grounds. Meanwhile, an attempt to separate the kernel of his achievement as a statesman from the husk of political controversy, in which the work of public men is so often hidden, may serve a patriotic purpose. It is in this belief that the present volume has been prepared.

I have to acknowledge valuable assistance given to me in the preparation of Chapters V, VI and VII, by Mr. W. L. Grant, Beit Lecturer in Colonial History in the University of Oxford; assistance which he was specially qualified to give through his own studies of contemporaneous Canadian history made in connection with the biography of his distinguished father, the late Principal Grant. I must also gratefully acknowledge my indebtedness to Dr. W. D. Le Sueur, whose sound judgment and full knowledge have been of inestimable advantage in the revision of the MS. and proof.

You can read this book and other information about him at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/makers/macdonald.htm>

See also <http://canada150.gc.ca/eng/1408380177760>

National Historic Sites of Canada

National historic sites are places of profound importance to Canada. They bear witness to this nation's defining moments and illustrate its human creativity and cultural traditions. Each national historic site tells its own unique story, part of the greater story of Canada, contributing a sense of time, identity, and place to our understanding of Canada as a whole. There are more than 950 national historic sites in Canada; of these, 167 are administered by Parks Canada.

Learn more at <http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/progs/lhn-nhs/index.aspx>

Ray Mears' Northern Wilderness

Here you will find a 6 part video series looking at the Northern Wilderness of Canada. Each of the videos is an hour long and have some stunning scenery. The reason I am profiling this series is that he makes significant references to three very important people that did great things for Canada in history, David Thompson, Dr John Rae and Samuel Hearne. Should you want to learn more about them I have links to more information about them under the Makers of Canada section on the Electric Canadian site.

You can view these at:

[http://www.electriccanadian.com/lifestyle/northern\\_wilderness.htm](http://www.electriccanadian.com/lifestyle/northern_wilderness.htm)

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Canon Andrew White

JANUARY 13, 2015

Dear Friends,

Greetings and blessings from Jerusalem. After several days of cold and snowy weather the sun has now returned to Jerusalem. When the Middle East is cold it is very difficult to keep warm. This is the dessert and it can't cope with the cold and neither can I in the midst of it. It is very difficult to keep warm and the country almost shuts down it was not possible to even have any serious meetings for several days.

Meanwhile life at St George's Baghdad continues to go well. The Church and Clinic are in good shape. The Bishop recently visited and appointed Faiz as the head chaplain and me as the vicar emeritus, this is indeed a great act for celebration. The situation in the Iraq however remains terrible. The refugees displaced from the homes and towns have been suffering so much in the cold of the winter. Our team up there have been doing a great job continuing to provide food and warm clothing to the hundreds in distress. Dr Sarah continues to head up the work. We will be going to see her tomorrow in Jordan where we also have a lot of work to do amongst our refugees there.

Our work may be rather overwhelming and depressing at times but it is truly awesome to do the work of G-d in this place, and see his glory is truly awesome.

Yesterday I had three very different events. The first was with Rabbi Melchior, he got me along to a meeting that he did not really want, it was with the leader of the Universal Peace Initiative. It is basically an initiative of the Unification Church (the Meanies) and he and I don't like them. Maybe people are going to not like me for saying that but that is the truth.

Then I met with Pastor Seven Koury our major Christian partner in Jerusalem and Bethlehem. We have decided to call our work Ishmael and Isaac moving forward. So there is a good foundation planned for much of our relief work here being done through the church.

The final meeting was more than amazing I took my rabbi for dinner. Many of you will know that I studied at an Ultra Orthodox Yeshiva. My Hassidic Rabbi (pictured) was Shimon Naftalis. How I love this man, my teacher my hero, my tzadick. I have not been with him since the night of our wedding reception at our honeymoon in Jerusalem. Our meeting was just like we had never been apart I thank the Almighty for this meeting and I am sure we are going to do a lot together, starting with our Ishmael and Isaac project. The tragic events of the past few days in Paris just remind us of how much work there still is to do.

I am now off to Jordan and there is much to do.

Love and Blessings,

MARCH 5, 2015

Dear Friends,

Chag Sameach, wishing you all a blessed Purim. If you don't know what that is read the book of Esther. It is indeed a time of feasting and celebration. So today is a good day.

Sorry I have not been in contact for a while but life here has been even more hectic than usual both here in Jerusalem and Jordan. Connie has been based in Jordan and doing a lot of the work there regarding school and accommodation. I go to Jordan on Friday to continue working on many of these projects.

I have also been speaking on Anti Semitism and Christian Persecution at the Springs of Hope conference here in Jerusalem. I always find such conferences very painful and difficult. But the Story has to be told. A friend from Sweden, Bo, has produced an outstanding documentary on the subject, the best I have ever seen. As soon as the documentary becomes available we will release information on how it can be purchased.

Meanwhile the friend who made one of the Vicar of Baghdad films is coming to Jordan with us next week to cover the story there. So much more on our work should be made available soon. I long to be back with my people in Jordan and I can't wait to see them.

Meanwhile we are being visited today by Jess from Nablus who is in the same class as Hannah-Rivka at SOAS, they are both doing Arabic. She is one of the youth leaders at Hillsong London and her grandfather was one of my Professors of Anaesthetics in my former life. So it should be good meeting her.

Meanwhile the needs amongst the Iraqi refugees in Jordan continue to be great. With so many of the



children now in school there are huge needs coming to the surface for the provision of food relief and housing for the families. With G-d's help and yours we continue to meet the needs and we know for certain that He will never leave us. I promise you will hear again soon.

Blessings and love from Jerusalem,

<http://frrme.org/canon-andrews-blog/>

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## A Florida Trip Report

By Sir Matthew Gaasenbeek, Prior II of Toronto.

Few people realize how much wonderful work is being quietly done in many parts of the world and often in places where one would least expect it.

This is a report about one of these operations, namely "ECHO", a globally oriented 50 acre research farm located about 20 minutes driving north of the Fort Myers Airport in Florida.

It studies the latest low tech farming solutions to increase farm and fish production.

There is a heavy accent to promote the distribution of the seeds of easily growable plants providing highly nutritious and good tasting fruits and nuts which are not yet universally distributed to regions where they could be grown with great success.



Ali Diaz and Dr. Chris Cobourn (My Son in Law) Efficient Stoves for Cooking

Secondly, to come up with low tech solutions for such things as better stoves; simple manually driven machinery to grind or husk corn that will benefit women in particular, or pumps that distribute water; simple mobile wheeled chairs for people unable to walk; how to raise pigs, ducks, chickens, goats and Tilapia fish more efficiently and in ways to better capture their manure for fertilizing their fields.

They grow, select, clean, package and store seeds of all kinds for distribution to the various regions. This and the above work are done by volunteers and interns who may spend up to a year at ECHO for training.

ECHO is a Christian, charitable organizations run by highly educated and very dedicated staff of young men and women; most of the leaders all seem to have PhDs.



Low Tech Water Pump & Storage

I truly believe many of these smaller organizations do far more good than some large organizations in the same field that get much more publicity. It is all low costs, salaries are modest compared to that paid in the business sector, and most importantly, they are working quietly underneath all the interfering governmental radar screens at ground zero!

Their help goes directly to the people who need it and the same ECHO staff will be there for at least a year on location. So, if something does not work out, they will be responsible to fix the problem!

ECHO sees these Global Challenges as follows:

The average small scale farmer only produces half of the food of the land needed for his/her family.

There are one billion people living in hunger (or under-nourished) in the world today.

A child dies from hunger related causes every 12 seconds. (Another child dies every 3-1/2 seconds from bad water).

African farms are losing soil at twice the rate that is sustainable for crop production.



Maize Shellers and a Bicycle for grinding corn



Different Vegetables and Raising Pigs

Worldwide over 25 million acres of farmable land becomes desert every year.

75% of the world's food is generated from only 12 plants and 5 animal species.

ECHO works to take care of these ills by the promotion of innovation in the areas of agro forestry, best practices, seed saving and distribution, new methods of composting and relevant technologies. This is coupled with education and training by means of hands-on classes and workshops, internships and an on-line resource library searchable and accessible worldwide in over 56 languages.

ECHO has a large number of U.S. schools, churches and other organizations supporting them, and has over 200 interns. Among other things, 300 varieties of hard-to-find seeds are being grown, promoted and distributed throughout Asia by ECHO's Asia Seedbank.

ECHO has a steadily growing income budget which was almost three million dollars last year and has net assets of over four million dollars.

When one goes there, plan to spend the better part of a day there. There is much to see and do, especially take the tour. Then, go back and study those exhibits you found particularly interesting. There is also a fine book store dealing with these subjects and a nursery for tropical plants.

Two ladies were exceptionally helpful and knowledgeable. They were Ali Diaz and Danielle Flood. Do ask for them. Their charm, knowledge and dedication are so refreshing in these days of, at times, too much apathy, cynicism and ennui. Their coordinates are shown at the end of this article. Echo's two websites are excellent.

So, do visit ECHO during your next Florida trip. You will find it fascinating, you will meet some wonderful people in beautiful surroundings and last, but not least, it will give your spirits a big lift that will last for at least a week.

So have a great visit!

Matthew Gaasenbeek

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FL 333917, USA  
Phone: 239-543-3246

ECHO exists to equip people with agricultural and skills to reduce hunger and improve the lives of the poor. Learn more: [www.echonet.org](http://www.echonet.org) / [www.echocommunity.org](http://www.echocommunity.org)

Charity Navigator rates ECHO the #1 international charity in Florida and among the **Top 100** in the U.S.

Echo Global Farm Visit - Introduction and Tour - Helping the poor with tropical farm agriculture. Watch the video at:

<http://youtu.be/XNJebr5zQSY>

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## Oikocredit International

Oikocredit is a worldwide cooperative and social investor, providing funding to the microfinance sector, fair trade organizations, cooperatives and small to medium enterprises.

All the Grand Pories support Oikocredit as a means to assist with small business start-up financing in impoverished nations. You can learn more about them at <http://www.oikocredit.coop/about-us/about-us>

They also have a Canadian web site at:

<http://www.oikocredit.ca/en/>

February 02 2015

A first of its kind in Ontario; global impact GIC investment product launches today

KITCHENER, ON – Mennonite Savings and Credit Union (MSCU) and Oikocredit Canada have teamed up to launch the Oikocredit Global Impact GIC. For the first time ever, people in Ontario will be able to invest in a guaranteed, RSP-eligible investment aimed at lifting people out of poverty in low-income countries.

“We are thrilled to be offering this innovative new investment opportunity,” said Brent Zorgdrager, chief executive officer of MSCU. “Our commitment to our members is to offer values-based products that make our world more just, peaceful, and prosperous.”

“We know that Canadians and Ontarians want investments that directly benefit people and communities,” said Eugene Ellmen, National Director of Oikocredit Canada. “However, offerings in this area are very limited. Being able to contribute to global impact through personal investments is very exciting and begins to fill a big gap in the marketplace.”

Investments in MSCU's Oikocredit Global Impact GIC are guaranteed by the Deposit Insurance Corporation of Ontario (DICO) and are eligible for non-registered investments and registered accounts in RRSPs, RRIFs and TFSAs. The GIC is being offered as a 12 month term at an initial interest rate of 1.30%. It is available to any individual or institutional investor in Ontario who is a member of the credit union. When members invest in the GIC, MSCU purchases shares in Oikocredit that match the principal amount, thereby providing funds to support impoverished communities across low-income

countries.

### About Mennonite Savings and Credit Union

Mennonite Savings and Credit Union (MSCU) is a financial cooperative providing everyday banking services to over 19,750 members in communities across southern Ontario. It has more than \$950 million in assets under administration and ranks eighth among credit unions in Ontario. MSCU has eight full-service branches and five sub-locations offering a complete range of daily banking, investment and loan products.

### About Oikocredit

Oikocredit Canada is the Canadian arm of Oikocredit, a global co-operative and social investor providing loans and investments to partner organizations in low-income countries. Oikocredit mainly invests in microfinance, agriculture, co-operatives, fair trade organizations and renewable energy. In September 2014, it had total capital outstanding of € 653 million (CAD \$919 million) in 811 partners across 63 countries. Oikocredit is one of the world's largest private investors in microfinance.

Our thanks to Sr. Kathy Watson, OSMTH Communications, for letting us know of this organisation.

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### Videos this issue are based on Syrian refugees...

#### Salam Neighbor

Streamed live on Feb 12, 2014

Join Chris and Zach from the Living on One team as they broadcast LIVE from the Za'atari refugee camp in Jordan!

For the past several weeks, Chris and Zach have been filming their immersive journey living alongside Syrian refugee families in an effort to connect a global audience to the Syrian refugee crisis in the Middle East. Now, in partnership with 1001 MEDIA, Chris and Zach want to answer YOUR questions about the Syrian refugee crisis and share their experiences uncovering the daily struggles, heartbreaks and dreams that make up life on the edge of a conflict.

For more information about the Salam Neighbor Project, please see the website at: [www.salamneighbor.org](http://www.salamneighbor.org)

See the video at <http://youtu.be/HGowKIYiMQY>. This video is a bit shaky stopping and starting but some good information none the less.

Looks like this might be a project we could get involved with.

See also the video about "A young Syrian girl's life as a refugee" at <http://youtu.be/5lw957iXCm8>

Syria's Lost Generation: The Plight of the Youngest Refugees

See the video at <http://youtu.be/4iaJPafQrY>

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#### HIGH SCHOOL -- 1957 vs 2014

Got this in from one of our Knights for which many thanks.

By today's standards none of us were supposed to never make it.

#### HIGH SCHOOL -- 1957 vs 2014

##### Scenario 1:

Jack goes duck hunting before school and then pulls into the school parking lot with his shotgun in his

truck's gun rack.

1957 - Vice Principal comes over, looks at Jack's shotgun, goes to his car and gets his shotgun to show Jack.

2014 - School goes into lock down, FBI called, Jack hauled off to jail and never sees his truck or gun again. Counselors called in for traumatized students and teachers.

Scenario 2:

Johnny and Mark get into a fist fight after school.

1957 - Crowd gathers. Mark wins. Johnny and Mark shake hands and end up buddies.

2014 - Police called and SWAT team arrives -- they arrest both Johnny and Mark. They are both charged with assault and both expelled - even though Johnny started it .

Scenario 3:

Jeffrey will not be still in class, he disrupts other students.

1957 - Jeffrey sent to the Principal's office and given a good paddling by the Principal. He then returns to class, sits still and does not disrupt class again.

2014 - Jeffrey is given huge doses of Ritalin. He becomes a zombie. He is then tested for ADD. The family gets extra money (SSI) from the government because Jeffrey has a disability.

Scenario 4:

Billy breaks a window in his neighbor's car and his Dad gives him a whipping with his belt.

1957 - Billy is more careful next time, grows up normal, goes to college and becomes a successful businessman.

2014 - Billy's dad is arrested for child abuse. Billy is removed to foster care and joins a gang. The state psychologist is told by Billy's sister that she remembers being spanked herself, and their dad goes to prison. Billy's mom has an affair with the psychologist.

Scenario 5:

Mark gets a headache and takes some aspirin to school.

1957 - Mark shares his aspirin with the Principal out on the smoking dock .

2014 - The police are called and Mark is expelled from school for drug violations. His car is then searched for drugs and weapons.

Scenario 6:

Pedro fails high school English.

1957 - Pedro goes to summer school, passes English and goes to college.

2014 - Pedro's cause is taken up by a radical group. Newspaper articles appear nationally explaining that teaching English as a requirement for graduation is racist. ACLU files a class action lawsuit against the state school system and Pedro's English teacher. English is then banned from the basic curriculum. Pedro is given his diploma anyway but ends up mowing lawns for a living because he cannot speak English.

Scenario 7:

Johnny takes apart leftover firecrackers from the Fourth of July, puts them in a model airplane paint bottle and blows up a red ant bed.

1957 - Ants die.

2014 - ATF, Homeland Security, and the FBI are all called. Johnny is charged with domestic terrorism. The FBI investigates his parents - and all siblings are removed from their home and all computers are confiscated. Johnny's dad is placed on a terror watch list and is never allowed to fly again.

Scenario 8:

Johnny falls while running during recess and scrapes his knee . He is found crying by his teacher, Mary. Mary hugs him to comfort him.

1957 – In a short time, Johnny feels better and goes on playing.

2014 – Mary is accused of being a sexual predator and loses her job. She faces 3 years in State Prison. Johnny undergoes 5 years of therapy.

Does any of this make sense?

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## Niagara Falls From Above

Many people have visited Niagara Falls and enjoyed the view but when you see Niagara Falls from above you truly realize how spectacular it is. Filmed using DJI Phantom Quadcopter. Soundtrack is "The In-Between" by A New Normal. See this at:

<http://youtu.be/cfoLYTKObiU>

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## A Wee Bit of Humour

Pearly Gates

A taxi driver dies and goes to heaven and upon reaching the pearly gates he announces his presence to St. Peter, who looks him up in his Big Book. Upon reading the entry for the cabby, St. Peter invites him to grab a silk robe and a golden staff and to proceed into Heaven.

A preacher is next in line behind the cabby and has been watching these proceedings with interest. He announces himself to St. Peter. Upon scanning the preacher's entry in the Big Book, St. Peter furrows his brow and says, "Okay, we'll let you in but take that plain cloth robe and the wooden staff."

The preacher is astonished and replies, "But I am a man of the cloth! You gave that cab driver a golden staff and a silken robe. Surely I rate higher than a cabby!"

St. Peter responded matter-of-factly: "Here we are interested in results. When you preached, people slept; when the cabby drove his taxi, people prayed."

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## Notable Upcoming Events

Canadian                      International

April 12-19 - Tomar, Portugal, International Meeting

See [http://www.osmth.org/documents/meetings/2015\\_04\\_GMC\\_Tomar.pdf](http://www.osmth.org/documents/meetings/2015_04_GMC_Tomar.pdf) for registration details.

April 25 - Ottawa Investiture

April 29 - Windsor meeting at the Church Of The Ascension

May 23rd - Edmonton Investiture (date might change)

September 26 - Toronto Investiture, dinner at RCMI to follow.

September 30 - October 4 Cologne, Germany, International Meeting

November 7 - Windsor Investiture

April 13 - 17, 2016 Copenhagen, Denmark, International Meeting

Fall 2016, Sophia, Bulgaria, International Meeting

Note: Some of the dates can be approximate so to get more specific information do email your Prior for up to date information. Their email addresses are at the foot of this newsletter.

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