

# The Canadian Templar



June 2015  
Newsletter



## News and Report from our Grand Prior

This spring has seen many events and much activity in Canada and internationally. The OSMTH Grand Magistral Council meetings were held in March in Tomar Portugal, a medieval town steeped in Templar history. Any international event is worthwhile to attend, but especially in Tomar. For the first time there was a retreat preceding the conference. It was held in the old Tomar Templar Castle and was organized by Vicar General Ron Matthewman and Chancellor General Rev Pertti Ruotsalo. Four Canadians attended. Be sure to read the excellent articles by Grand Chancellor Rev Nola Crewe and Dame Sheila Wright on their experiences at the retreat. At the GMC, former GP USA Colonel Tom Curtis was elected Deputy Grand Commander. Many of you may remember Tom as he has attended our Investitures in both Windsor and Toronto. Presentations were given by each of the committee chairs and the Deputy Chief of Mission at the UN, Brigadier General John Digilio brought us up to date on OSMTH activities at the UN in NY, Geneva, and Vienna. He made



particular mention at the dedication and professionalism our representative in NY, George Platsis, from the Priory of St James in Toronto. George has served for the last few years as the OSMTH representative for NGO Committee on the Status of Women and is a very well respected and active

member of the committee. In this newsletter George has given a summary of what we do as Templars at the UN and if you are interested in participating at any level, please contact him directly. Thank you George for your hard work and dedication, including the monthly trips back and forth to NY. Between presentations a slideshow and video was played illustrating medieval and modern Templarism. It was produced by Stuart Ross, our representative on the OSMTH Communications Committee, and Deputy Secretary General. Congratulations to Stuart for a first class video. It received many compliments.

And finally on the international front, Dame Theresa, myself and Vicar General Ron Matthewman attended the GP USA Convent and Investiture in Boston last weekend. At that event, OSMTH webmaster Kathy Watson was installed as the new Prior of St David of Wales. Also, our Vicar General was honoured with a birthday cake and a spontaneous rendition of Happy Birthday.

Many fundraising activities and meetings have taken place throughout each of the Pories this spring, as noted below. The Priory of Simon Peter held their Investiture in Ottawa on April 25. Congratulations to Prior Bill Megill on his promotion to Grand Officer in recognition of all his hard work and dedication. More activities are planned across the country for the summer, so get involved. Before you know it Toronto and Windsor Investitures will be upon us so start planning now for those people you intend to sponsor.

On a personal note, Theresa and I would like to thank everyone who sent us notes of condolence for the recent passing of our daughter Morgan. There were many of you who attended personally, and some travelled many hours. Your kindness and heartfelt sympathy was greatly appreciated.

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

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## Editors Letter

Continued mayhem around the world this quarter with lots of deaths being reported of people trying to get to Europe from North Africa and across the Middle East. The fighting in Yemen is also growing and I might add that my father was in Aden helping to build an oil refinery back in 1946 and I have some old cine film of the people and local culture from those days.

As usual I've profiled some reports on International matters around the world and quite a bit to report in our Canadian Update section where this quarter I wanted to show how Canada engages with the world.

I have in this issue done a profile on MS which affects Canada more than any other country in the world. This is because we are a cold weather country.

Also covered the various WW I & II anniversaries where Canadians made a huge contribution.

Having been watching the news as I do on the situation in Iraq, Syria and Libya I can't help but consider that getting rid of dictators seems to have resulted in many more deaths than under their regimes. I am wondering if we have learnt anything from these situations? I am also wondering if it is time to look at how these countries could be spilt into separate countries on ethnic grounds. Israel seems to have been stuck with a two state solution but considering the problems they face with their security I feel it is time to look at a totally different solution. Where are the people that can look afresh at all these problems?

Many thanks to our Knights and Dames that both sent in and suggested articles for this issue.

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

The Priory Of The Ascension Of Our Lord has been pretty low key during this period, with the one major event being our April dinner meeting at the Church.



In the background, however, plans have been moving forward for future events.

Our charitable donations committee is meeting on 20 May 2015 to map out our charitable activities plans for 2015. The committee will then present their plan to the Priory Council the following week for approval. After that the approved recommendation will be presented to the membership for ratification at the June Dinner Meeting on Wednesday 17 June at the Church.

Other activities in the planning stage are the summer Social to be held on Sunday 16 August at Beach Grove Golf and Country Club. Of course, it goes without saying that the one major event of the year is our Convent and Investiture to be held at The Church Of The Ascension on Saturday 07 November 2015. We will follow that event with our annual Christmas Social on Sunday 13 December, also at Beach Grove.

So, it may seem that not much is happening, but behind the scenes, there is a flurry of activity planning our future events.



Priority Donations Committee at Work

I would like to leave you with one of my favourite quotations:

WE THE WILLING,  
LED BY THE UNKNOWING,  
ARE DOING THE IMPOSSIBLE,  
FOR THE UNGRATEFUL AND  
WE HAVE DONE SO MUCH,  
FOR SO LONG,  
WITH SO LITTLE,  
WE ARE NOW QUALIFIED  
TO DO ANYTHING,  
WITH NOTHING!

"BEAUSEANT"

Major (ret) Roy Embury CD, GOTJ,  
Prior of The Ascension Priory

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## News from St James Priory, Toronto

We have Miniature Medals available now and should you be interested contact George Jackowski at [GJackowski@pivotaltherapeutics.us](mailto:GJackowski@pivotaltherapeutics.us) and he'll follow up with you directly.



Knight Templar  
\$50.00 Cdn



Knight Commander  
\$60.00 Cdn

Wine and Cheese Party was held on 28th May where we also got a talk from Sir George about our work with the UN. Here are some of the highlights from his presentation which I took from his Power Point presentation slides...





OSMTH at the United Nations  
 A Brief Overview  
 Priory of St. James (Toronto) 28 May 2015

#### OSMTH Status at UN

- Non-Governmental Organization in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations
- Types of Status
  - General Consultative: large international NGOs and in all fields
  - Special Consultative: have special competencies and focus in a narrower field
  - Roster: have a narrow and technical focus of work

Special Consultative Status is difficult to attain and requires continual work to maintain this status

- Also a member of the Department of Public Information (DPI)
- Promote global awareness of UN work
- Three (3) delegates plus three (3) youth (<32 years old)
- Board Member of CoNGO (2014-2017)
- Ensure NGOs fully participate in UN decision-making

#### OSMTH Work at the UN

We are referred to as the: Sovereign Military Order of the Temple of Jerusalem (OSMTH) We do not use any other type of name, such as SMOTJ or “The Knights Templar”

As a Christian chivalric order, we promote:

- Protect Christians at Risk (especially in the Holy Land)
- Help build bridges between Western and Eastern churches
- Foster dialogue between the great religions of the sons of Abraham
- Foster communication and understanding among all peoples and faiths

As an advocacy and humanitarian group, we also promote:

- Human rights, especially the status of women
- Anti-slavery and anti-trafficking
- Clean and safe water at an affordable price
- Peace
- The UN Millennium Goals

What are the UN MGDs?

- To eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- To achieve universal primary education
- To promote gender equality

- To reduce child mortality
- To improve maternal health
- To combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases
- To ensure environmental sustainability
- To develop a global partnership for development

#### Delegations & Committees

In three cities:

- New York City
- Geneva
- Vienna
- Dozens of different committees at UN and OSMTH does not sit on all

Decision on where to sit comes from the Grand Commander and is on the approval of the Grand Master

Committees OSMTH sits on:

- Human Rights
- Sustainable Development
- Spirituality, Values, and Global Concerns
- The Family
- Status of Women

#### Delegates & Responsibilities

- Five (5) permanent delegates for each UN location
- Temporary representation possible for special events and on approval
- Each sits on a different committee
- Delegate is “on loan to OSMTH” from their own respective Grand Priory
- All report to the Chief of Mission in each location

Responsibilities:

- Prepare in advance for Monthly Meeting or Special Annual Sessions
- Delegates wishing to make a statement during meeting must seek prior approval
- If an immediate item must be discussed, delegate will contact Head of Delegation
- An After Action Report must be submitted to OSMTH leadership
- Not an honorary position, it is a working position
- Delegate is responsible for all associated costs
- Biggest responsibility? Positive representative of OSMTH at the UN!!!

#### NGO Code of Conduct

Be independent of government control

- Civil society plays an important role in policy planning

Individual representatives must answer to their organizations

- Being a delegate does not mean you have a platform to voice your personal views

Maintaining credibility of organizations and representatives

- Must remain truthful to the cause and the issues

Create cooperative relationships with other NGOs

The world is a big place with many challenges, there are synergies there to be taken advantage and OSMTH can work with others to achieve our mutual goals

OSMTH has a very good reputation at the United Nations!

#### Becoming a Delegate

Individual members must make their desire known and go through the formal chain of command:

- Prior

- Grand Prior
- Grand Commander
- Chief of Mission
- Decision will be made after a review process from the formal channels
- In some cases, a knight or dame may be specifically identified and asked to serve as a delegate

Desire to be a delegate is not enough, this is a position of responsibility, this is a position that requires work - you are responsible to the Order.

Any questions?

Contact Sir George Platsis

OSMTH Representative to the NGO Committee on the Status of Women (New York City)

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## News from the Priory of Simon Peter, Ottawa

During the last quarter, the Priory of Simon Peter caught up on a number of activities that we had been advertising in these pages for some time. The first was our annual Convent and Investiture, held at St Matthew's Church, Ottawa on April 25, where the Vicar-General gave the accolade to Sir Joshua Matthewman, his grandson, and promoted our Prior, Sir William Megill to the dignity of Grand Officier for his efforts at rebuilding the Priory over the past two years.

Due to illness and other absences, we were unable to fill all of the ceremonial roles as we had planned, and we thank very much the Prior of the Priory of the Ascension of our Lord, Sir Roy Embury, for agreeing to act as Knight Swordbearer, and a very impressive swordbearer he was!

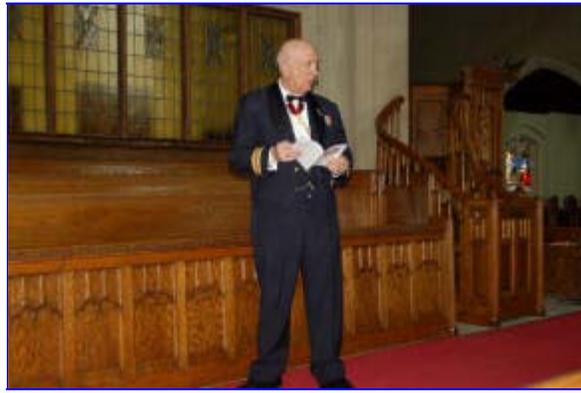
The celebrant for the event was the Reverend Canon Allen Box of St Matthew's, who in addition to celebrating the Eucharist gave us a short homily noting "It's dangerous to ask a retired clergyman if he wishes to say a few words". We are delighted to report that Canon Box has subsequently agreed to become our Chaplain.

A banquet was held in the wardroom of HMCS Bytown to round out the day. The priory is greatly in debt to Dame Commandeur Nicole Lassaline for conducting the training, preparing the script for the main event, setting up the dinner and acting as MC, while somehow managing to hold down a full-time job and take university courses at night. We don't know how she does it, but we're very thankful that she does!

On May 24 we held our first activity with the veterans at the Perley-Rideau Health Centre, an afternoon Meet and Greet, where we began to make the acquaintance of some very interesting people and to hear some very interesting stories of wartime and peacetime service. The Centre has had a very difficult winter with many cases of flu and other communicable illnesses that have meant that a number of activities have had to be postponed and we have not had the chance to meet. We are now hoping for a flu-free summer and a chance to get together more often with the members of the unit we are sponsoring, Ottawa 2 East.

Then on May 30 we started another activity, this time providing a home-cooked lunch to the residents of a women's shelter under the Cornerstone "Meal-a-Month" program in conjunction with four Ottawa churches, St Matthew's being one of them. We do the fifth Saturday in months with five Saturdays (there are four in a year), and the residents were very pleased at having this gap covered. We were prepared for all 60 residents to attend lunch, but it was a very nice day outside so we only drew about half. We left the remaining food behind to be reheated in their microwave during the week. St Matthew's lent us their kitchen and some pots and pans for the preparation, which was very kind of them, and we hope that we can continue this cooperation into the future. We made sure to clean everything up very carefully.....

We should have some photos of these last two activities for the next issue, as well as a report on the "Walk and Talk for Aphasia", which happens next weekend. After that we are looking at relaxing for a couple of summer months.



1. Sir Ron Matthewman Vicar-General of the Order reviews his notes before the Convent begins
2. Sir Roy Embury, Prior of the Priory of the Ascension of Our Lord reviews the program



3. Sir Roy and Sir Francis Garbutt discuss the opening of the Convent
4. Dame Nicole Lassaline leads postulant Joshua Matthewman and Sir Francis Garbutt in rehearsing the procession



5. Sir William Megill, Prior of the Priory of Simon Peter leads the procession followed by Dame Kristina Inrig, Dame Nola Crewe, Grand Chancellor, and Sir Ron Matthewman
6. The Investiture of Sir Joshua Matthewman



7. Sir William Megill promoted to Grand Officer



8. All Convent participants



9. Sir Ron Matthewman congratulates his grandson, newly invested Sir Joshua Matthewman

Bill Megill, GOTJ  
Prior, Priory of Simon Peter

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## News from the Commandry of Edmonton

No news received this quarter.

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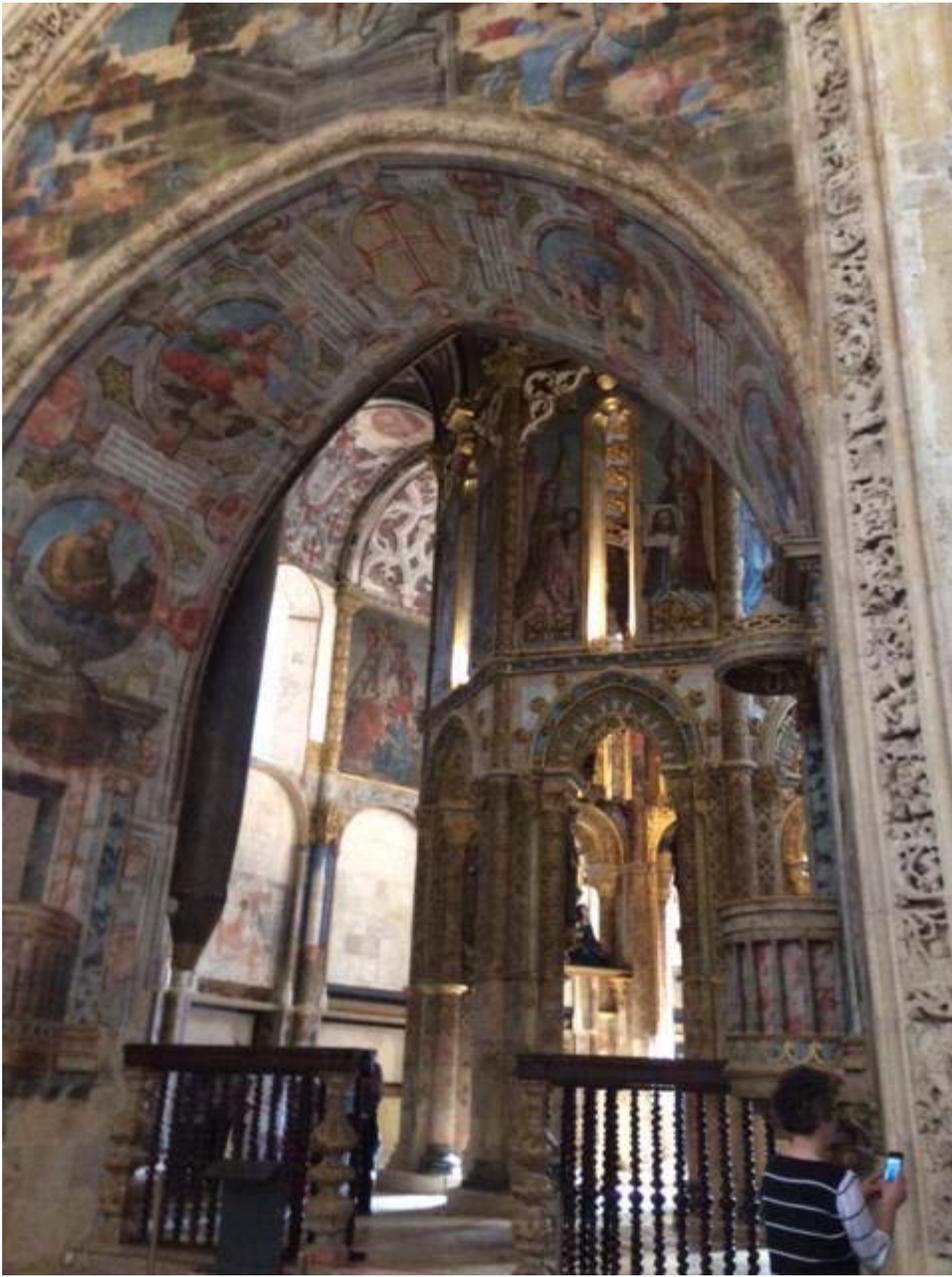
## Chancellors Corner

Being a Templar means new adventures at every turn: particularly when you didn't expect them.



When I signed up to do a retreat in Portugal in advance of the meeting in Tomar, I anticipated quite days of serious thought, silence and that I would be roughing it: after all, retreats aren't meant to be first class in a material sense: only spiritually! Since it was to take place in an ancient convent, built in the 12th century, I seriously considered taking a sleeping bag and pillow, but, for the good of my soul I decided that if we were to sleep on stone slabs with only a blanket to protect us from the elements, so be it . . . that would be part of the experience. In reality, the greatest challenge was adapting to sharing a room with someone who wanted the windows shut to keep out any flying bugs!

The experience was magical . . . the convent, adjoined to the King's Palace and the Templars reeked of history and when the tourists left in the late afternoon, the whole establishment became ours to explore. Lush gardens, hidden nooks and crannies and a chapel unlike any I have ever seen, with a charola: a Romanesque rotunda full of frescoes and gold..



Mind you, the delights of the surroundings did interfere with the traditional times of contemplation and introspection and communing with God . . . but I am confident that there was an indulgent smile on His face as we explored. After all, it was God-given talents, and God loving masons and builders and artists who created this delight.



Tomar is a town of restaurants, bars and shops around a square to explore where history reeks from its very pores. The Templars are committed to returning to Tomar every two years: make sure you plan your holidays around one of those visits. And the Chaplains are looking to plan retreats at future Convents and Investitures, so consider well whether a few days spent examining your faith with others who can offer a good debate or explore a hidden passage whether from the scriptures or within your soul or a companion to share your roamings both spiritual and physical, it is an opportunity you will never regret.

On a more somber note, things are starting to come to a head in Jerusalem over access to the Templar Mount. Although the Israeli Court ruled that all faiths could go to the Temple Mount and pray there, the police have continued to enforce a ban on non-Muslims praying there. As one who was prodded while merely stopped to think, it is bizarre. I can understand not wanting competing prayers being bellowed at each other, or missionary work taking place there. But, to forbid prayer!!! So while Muslim children kick soccer balls about this most sacred of sites, Christians are denied a silent prayer. It would seem to me that the logical outcome should be that either no one prays there: or everyone can. However, logic seldom seems to triumph in this situation.

And elsewhere slaughter in the name of God/Allah seems to rule the day.

A uniquely Canadian perspective on religion is found in the Reader's Digest summary of 10 things not said in Canada . . .

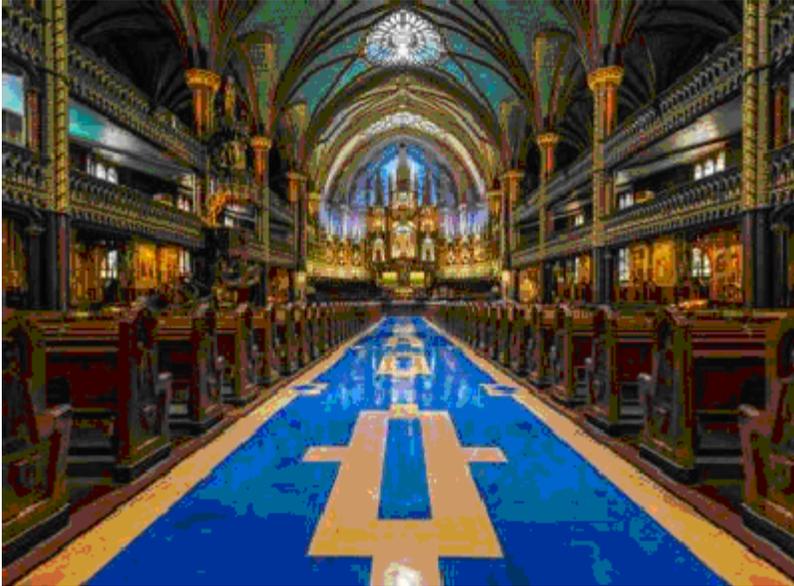


Photo: Thinkstock

### I Disagree With Your Religious Beliefs

Argue over politics, expound your views on gay marriage, even publicly take a stance on abortion, but never talk about religion. Unless, of course, you're saying something to the effect of "I support your right to believe what you believe." Though the country is more than two-thirds Christian, religion remains an issue Canadians prefer to keep within the walls of their private homes and holy places. A lot of the world's conflicts are rooted in religion and Canadians are a peace-loving people. It all comes down to the fact that we want to like each other. Maybe the best way to do that is to ignore each other's differences.

<http://www.readersdigest.ca/travel/canada/10-things-you-cant-say-canada/?id=2#t3gT0Xl3U5loz8Ub.97>

May God's blessings ever be upon you and may your oath as a Templar lead you to serve Your God, Your Fellow Templars and both this World and the next. AMEN

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### Tomar Retreat

Our thanks to Sheila Wright for sending in these pictures taken at the Tomar Retreat and the article to go with them.



Retreat Participants - going down the table from left over to right. Louis Mollerfors, Heather Boyle, Archdeacon Ron Matthewman, Rev. Pertti Ruotsalo, Father Michael, Tom Curtis, Simon Le Fevre, Dale Starkes, Peter Kelly. Missing - Rev. Nola Crewe and Sheila Wright.



Tomar Castle/Convent of Christ



Stairwell



Hallway to rooms



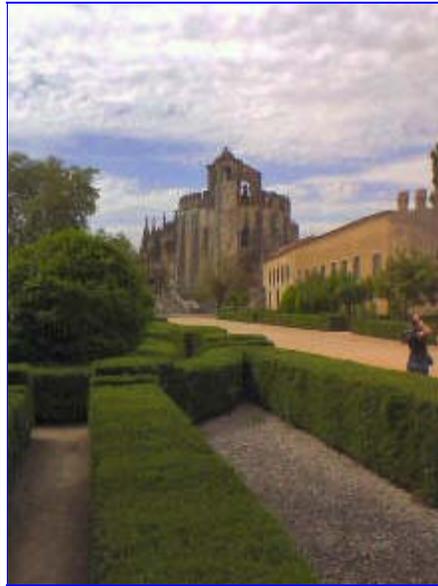
A typical room



Mealtime



Sharing thoughts



Another Castle view



View of the section where we were housed

### The Retreat in Tomar – An Overview

On a hill high above the town of Tomar, Portugal sits an ancient castle known as Castelo do Templarios/Convento de Cristo. Tomar Castle became the military headquarters of the Order of the Temple (1160-1314) and later was changed to a monastery for the Order of Christ (1357-1834). A number of additions and renovations were made over a period of four hundred years to create the present day UNESCO Heritage site.

Thus, on one bright and sunny April morning in 2015, a group of eleven individuals, representing five

countries, Canada, Denmark, England, Finland and the United States, gathered to take part in the first OSMTH Retreat to be held at Tomar Castle. We were housed in a section of one of the more recent additions, part of the monastery/hospital. Many stairs to climb! The accommodation was basic, three or four single beds in each room, wardrobes to keep your possessions in, night stands and lamps. Bedding included lots of blankets as the nights were cool!

On the first afternoon the participants introduced themselves and our leaders the Vicar General, Archdeacon Ron Matthewman and Chancellor-General Rev. Pertti Ruotsalo outlined the daily format we were to follow.

We adopted the name 'The Upper Room' for our meeting place, as it was on the top floor and the title was appropriate for our purpose.

The procedure for each day was as follows: The Liturgy of the Hours with Morning Prayer after breakfast and Daytime Prayer in the afternoon. Each service had as the focal point a lesson and also included a hymn, psalm and bible readings. The Liturgy of Eucharist was the evening service. After each session we had time for personal meditation, exploration of the grounds or rest.

Timelines proved to be impossible to follow due to mealtimes. Breakfast was served at a later time than expected and it was difficult to limit lunch and dinner to fifty-five minutes. The meals were delicious, well served and the conversation and camaraderie around the table proved to be a welcome addition to the retreat.

When we attended school, we listened and took notes while the instructor taught the lessons, hopefully we had gleaned enough information to pass the final exam. There in Tomar we listened, took notes, and each of us, in his or her own way, absorbed the facts and interpreted them for our own personal use. There was no final exam! I will attempt to give you a brief overview of these lessons from my point of view. I beg forgiveness for any over simplification.

The three lessons presented by the Vicar General were most profound, powerful and thought provoking. Quotes from the books of the Bible, the Prophets, the Disciples and Jesus and his own words gave us much food for thought.

The title of the first lesson was 'In the beginning' - We were asked to try and come to a better understanding of God and His place in our lives. How big a part does God play in life. As adults we now need to grow up, move forward and build a more mature relationship with God based on a platform of faith and spirituality. To do this we needed to go back to the beginning, to retrace our steps, to confirm not only to ourselves, but also to God, that we are on the right track toward the ultimate goal, The Kingdom of Heaven. Your relationship with God changes when you accept the fact that you are one of God's people and that He is always with you. We also have to express God in our way of life, in our home, community and nation. With such acceptance we can become of community in Faith, hope and love The Bible presents us with a plan. It is a guide book. The beginning is Creation, the Garden of Eden, the perfection of God. It ends in the last book, the Book of Revelation - In the City of our God - Heaven. "The process is a concept - the means by which you become a person of Faith. You have nothing to prove to anyone but you do have to live it out. You have to know and believe that you are Born of God, Redeemed by Jesus Christ to become an inheritor of the Kingdom of our God'.

The second lesson was given the title "The Way, the truth and the Life" - the journey we all make, alone, with companions and with God. In the first lesson we learned that everything has a beginning and how it moves forward is up to us. Now we are invited to follow Jesus who was born to set us free to the Glory of God. Growing in the Grace and love of God can be difficult and we need the help of family, friends and even the community. We also need to remember that we are a part of the Family of God and He is always with us.

As mentioned in the first lesson, the Bible is a guide book. It is also a history book and Jesus is our travelling companion and the tour guide, setting the pattern for each day. Everything has a beginning and how we move forward is up to us. Bethlehem, the birth place of Jesus. Christmas is when we celebrate this event. He is born within us, over and over again. Easter, the spring equinox, the flowering of new life renews the presence of Christ within us. The seasons and the holy days provide

us with a pattern.

Your daily life should have a place for God. One should create a prayer that will set the pace for you and give a meaningful purpose to your day. It was suggested that this is a task that should be the very first on our list of things to do and not to let anything take its place.

As a people we complain about many things, the government, the weather, the roads, how others treat us, the economy etc. How often have we thought of the difficult journey, that Mary and Joseph took from Nazareth to Bethlehem. The suffering of Jesus and His cruel treatment as He was dying on the Cross. "He bore the sins of many". We live a self centred style of life to-day. Do we know the meaning of goodness or badness? Every day we read and hear about world affairs, how much do we care? The Road to Bethlehem and the Road to Calvary challenges us to see things as they really are. How does one react to the difficulties of others and those of ourselves? Can you see them with the eyes of God who loves us all?

The prophet Isaiah prophesied Christ's birth using the word "Behold". The use in this context means 'Be Aware'. What is happening? What is God doing? What is God expecting you to do? After a number of years, John the Baptist told us to prepare the way of the Lord. Jesus proclaimed that "He is the Way" the Christian faith was established. How now do we behave? We must be aware of God's expectations.

The joyful message of Christmas brightens the world. We need to lift up the world from linking Christmas and Santa Claus. Christmas is when Christ came into our lives.

Before we get Easter we have to know what Good Friday is all about. You have to experience the circumstances of the life of Jesus. Listen to the Sermon on the Mount, walk with Him and the disciples. You have to grow from seeing the Babe of Bethlehem to experiencing the Crucifixion and Resurrection. You have to receive the Holy Spirit of Pentecost. You have to have a place for God in your life. You have to know what God has done for you and where He is leading you. God is there for you in both good and bad times. He is your salvation. Work on developing your relationship with God.

"Death and Resurrection" was the title for the third lesson. Before the lesson began the Vicar General spoke to us about the recent atrocities of ISIS; the plane crashes and other acts of inhumanity. Some of these victims could well be considered modern day martyrs dying for their faith. Their sacrifice they represent all of us and could have been any one of us.

However the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus is quite different. Martyrdom is being willing to die for Christ's sake and for the sake of others.

Creation – the first Miracle is where it all began with God. The Big Bang came from God. Scientists need proof, we have our Faith as God is the source of all things. He has given to us the power to continue to do His work and move forward each day. Every plant and every child comes from an original seed that comes from God. It is up to us to pass on the knowledge of God. By making a family tree you learn where you came from, your lineage and the origin of your name. Thus through your children and grandchildren you can acknowledge the first miracle and teach them about God.

The greatest miracle is "The Resurrection of Jesus from the dead". He rose from the dead in the same body and mind and walked among us. To those who believe, He still does. The second miracle is the promise of Eternal Life confirmed many times over in the New Testament. We are Easter people and we believe that we are born to inherit eternal life. In 2015 many question our beliefs and many have lost their faith in these turbulent times. The question is often asked "If God's Promise is so great, then why is there so much grief and inhumanity in today's world? God has given us free will. Therefore are we for or against God? Many have proclaimed that the world belongs to them and not to God.

In the Old Testament death does not mean the end of life. It means the end of that day. You have the opportunity to begin again in the new day. The worst thing about death is the separation from loved ones.

In present day we go to bed to rest to face the trials of the new day not to recover from the

tribulations of the previous day.

Nicodemus cared about what others might think of him. He did not want to be put at odds with society. He is not alone! He did not understand the phrase 'You must be born again'. Jesus said to him, 'You have to be born of God' – that is, you must come to a new understanding of God. St. Paul on the Damascus road came to a new understanding of God and became a changed man.

The Resurrection of Jesus is our faith. "His Resurrection places us on the banks of a new eternal life."

The Lord has given us three principles to live by:

Faith to guide us. Hope to move us forward. Love to relate with God in the world

St. John in the Book of Revelation saw Heaven and earth being married together as one. As Jesus expressed it in the Lord's Prayer: "Thy kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven"

Can we hope that we can be found worthy to be in the new heaven, the perfect dwelling place of God. Will we get to Paradise to await the promise of Eternal Life?

We know that God the Father created us for Himself. We know that Jesus Christ came to Redeem us for a new salvation. We know the Holy Spirit of God dwells in our hearts by faith.

From the other lessons that were given we learned much about the Knights Templar and their rich history. Our new Deputy Commander, Tom Curtis gave the second lesson on day one. His topic was "Christians in the Holy Land". He outlined for us that while Jordan is very accepting of Christians and those living in Jordan receive fair treatment, other countries are not so welcoming. In Egypt the Coptic Christians are now allowed free worship but they still live with uncertainty for the future. The United States Grand Priory sends money to churches in Israel to build homes, so those who cannot own homes can rent one through the Church.

The situation in Iraq is most dire. For many years we have heard about the wonderful work of Canon Andrew White, the Anglican priest from England who spent many years in Bagdad working with the Christian faithful. Now Canon White is in poor health and the Archbishop of Canterbury ordered him to leave the country. Canon White went as far as Jerusalem and from this city continues to raise money to support his dwindling flock in Bagdad.

The second lesson given by Tom was titled "The Medieval Order of Knights Templar – and the current realization. This is a part of a lecture that he has given to postulants who are being prepared for investiture into the Order.

To be a success a group needs a Cause. In 1119, a group of pilgrims, 385 in number visiting Jerusalem were attacked by Saracens. 300 were killed and the rest taken as slaves. The King of Jerusalem, Baldwin II asked the Knights to stay and police the kingdom. A group possibly as large as twenty made use of the old mosque on Temple Mount as their headquarters and protected pilgrims from Jaffa to Jerusalem. Such is the case to-day, as the cause is the same, to protect Christians at risk in the Holy Land and the Middle East.

One needs an organizational structure to survive, a continued rule to guide your life and provide perpetuity. In the year 1128, Bernard of Clairvaux assisted the Pope at the Council of Troyes, at which he discussed the Charter of the Knights Templar, who were to work directly under the Pope. The garments to be worn were a white robe and mantle. Only the knights who had been on a Crusade allowed to wear the cross.

In his final comments, Tom issued a warning as he spoke about 'hubris' – extreme pride or self confidence. I'm so good no one can get to me! This was the attitude adopted by the Templars. As history has recorded with the rise of the Muslim leader Sal-a-din (Sala Al Din) the Crusaders were to suffer many defeats. Never think too highly of yourself. God rules, He is the Power.

Then on October 13th, 1307 when Jacques De Molay, the Grand Master, was arrested by Philip IV,

King of France who was deeply in debt and demanded the Order's money in Paris and the fleet in Toulon. The money was gone and the fleet had sailed away. The rest is history. Remember, once you lose your cause the effectiveness is destroyed.

Simon Le Fevre, past Grand Prior of England and Wales, also spoke to us. His topic was "The Knights Templar and their Saints. He provided brief histories on four military Saints and three female Saints.

St. Michael, the Archangel mentioned in both the Old and New Testaments. A defender of the people of Israel against their enemies. Christian sanctuaries to Michael first appear in the fourth century. He was also known as a healing angel. Venerated by all faiths.

St. George, a Roman soldier willing to pay the supreme sacrifice rather than give up his Christian faith. The tale of the dragon slaying is considered to be a fable.

St. Lawrence was a favourite of Pope Sixth II who made him a Deacon. Lawrence was a giver of alms to the poor and upon given notice of his imminent arrest, he gave away all the money he had, plus sold church vessels to raise more funds. His was a low and painful death and in his honour a church was built over the place where he was martyred.

St. Martin of Tour was born in Hungary to pagan parents and raised in Italy. He joined the Roman army but disliked the killing and left the army. He is known as the first conscientious objector. He converted to Christianity at the age of eighteen. While serving in army, it has been told that on a particularly cold day he cut his cloak into two pieces and gave one to provide some warmth for a beggar. Befriended by Bishop Hilary of Poitiers he chose the life of a monk and lived for a time in a monastery near Milan. Even when made the Bishop of Tours he lived a simple life. Both he and St. Ambrose did not like putting heretics to death.

St. Mary Magdalene who according to the Book of Luke had seven demons cast out from her by Jesus. Was she an immoral woman? She was the first person to see Jesus after his Resurrection.

St. Catherine of Alexandria a scholar from a young age, converted to Christianity at age eighteen. Personally rebuked the Emperor Maxentius for his cruel persecutions and was made to champion her faith in a debate with a group of pagan scholars. She won the debate and as a result was sentenced to death by placement on a wheel. The wheel shattered at her touch, however she was later beheaded. Catherine is the patron saint for teachers and lawyers.

The Virgin Mary has a special place in Templar worship. In the Bible much is written on the Annunciation, her purification and her ascendance into Heaven. St. Bernard built Lady Chapels in her honour. According to Chapter 306 in the Medieval Rule of the Templars; the hours of our Lady are always set first in the house except the compline of our Lady which should always be set last in the house because our Lady was the beginning of our Order and in Her and Her Honour, if it please God, will be the end of our lives and the end of our Order, whenever God wishes it to be.

After lunch on our final day a brief homily was given by Father Michael, a Dominican Brother from the U.S. We are all here for a reason, we have a special bond and unique qualities in the eyes of God. One should always strive to be the best that you can be.

This was a very unique experience to share with the other participants. A personal journey for each of us. Much to think about and ponder. We were sad to leave. Thanks to our wonderful leaders for arranging this retreat for us.

I believe other retreats will be held in Tomar, in the years to come. Plan to attend.

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## International News

### Nepal earthquake

Relief efforts in Nepal are intensifying after more than 8,000 people were killed in the worst earthquake there in more than 80 years.

At least 388 Canadians were registered to be in Nepal when the deadly quake hit, but the Foreign Affairs department said that was only an estimate, as registration is voluntary.

A full report on this event can be read at:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-32701385>

UNICEF Canada says it has "prepositioned" emergency supplies in Nepal to help children and families affected by the disaster. Those supplies include tarps, nutritional supplies, water purification tablets and hygiene kits to keep survivors healthy in the aftermath of the earthquake.

"We've quickly set up a fund for life-saving supplies and services," UNICEF Canada spokesperson Andrea Ramhity told CTV News by email. UNICEF is accepting donations for its Nepal relief efforts on its website.

The Canadian Red Cross says it has people on the ground in Nepal to treat those injured in the earthquake. The organization is accepting donations from individuals or businesses who wish to make one-time or monthly contributions to the effort.

CARE Canada has more than 150 staff in Nepal to help survivors find access to food, water and shelter, the relief agency said in a statement. CARE workers are building temporary shelters, providing ready-to-eat meals, setting up toilets and purifying water for those displaced by the quake.

"All of the particularly vulnerable – children, breastfeeding mothers, people with chronic diseases – they have been suffering a lot," CARE emergency response coordinator Santosh Sharma said. "It's essential to get help to these people as quickly as we can."

Sharma adds that medical supplies "are an urgent need" and more than 40,000 people are being treated in hospital.

Many people are afraid to enter their homes for fear of triggering a collapse, he said. "Almost everyone has slept outside and they are creating temporary shelters with what they have," he said.

Save the Children has an ongoing Emergency Relief for Children fund set aside to give the organization "flexibility" to respond to disasters that affect children.

The organization's Australian branch is calling for Nepal-specific donations to help pay for hygiene kits, buckets, jerry cans, kitchen kits and tarpaulins for shelter.

World Vision Canada is helping children and families gain access to food, shelter, clean water and other basic necessities. World Vision Canada is calling for donations to help provide "lifesaving essentials" to the disaster-stricken people of Nepal.

Plan Canada is calling for donations to support earthquake survivors through Plan International Nepal. Mattias Bryneson of Plan International Nepal says his staff are working to address "core needs" for the survivors.

"It's dark now in Kathmandu, and power is out in most areas," Bryneson said in a statement. "It seems as though the entire city is outside, sleeping on the streets."

Medicins Sans Frontieres (Doctors Without Borders) says it is sending four teams of medical and logistical staff to Nepal to help those affected by the quake. MSF is also shipping 3,000 emergency and medical kits to the country.

The Canadian government has pledged \$5 million to help with Nepal's disaster relief efforts and matching Canadian's donations.

Nepal: Survivors' Stories with Yalda Hakim

This is a 30 minute documentary which is only available to view up to around June 22nd 2015.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b05wdnpw>

Grand Priory of Greece  
13th of March 2015

TO : ALL OFFICIALS AND MENTORIES OF GRAND PRIORY OF GREECE  
ALL OFFICIALS AND GRAND PRIORS OF INTERNATIONAL ORDER

PROCLAMATION OF GRAND PRIOR OF GRAND PRIORY OF GREECE  
ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF TEMPLARS KNIGHTS

"FRIDAY AND 13 "  
THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF TEMPLAR KNIGHTS

Jacques de Molay, 23rd and last Grand Master of Knights of the Temple , has been at the head of the Order of the Temple from the 20th April of 1292 up to its dissolution by the Pope Cleme . Even if relatively a few are known about his real life and achievements before his last years, he is considered as the most famous Knight of the Temple, together with the founder of the Order and first Grand Master Hugues de Payens. Target of De Molay was to reform the Order, and to adopt it to the situation that dominated in Holy Land during the decadence of the Crusades. As the excitement of Europe about the Crusades was decreasing, Philip IV of France, deeply in debt towards Templars, ordered in 1307 the arrestment and torture of Jacques de Molay and other French knights in order to extract fake confessions. When later de Molay withdrew his testimony, Philip ordered his death in fire on an island of Seine, in March 1314.

On the 14th of September, Philip took advantage of the fames and the beginning of the research and begun his action against the Order, ordering his agents in the whole France to get into massive arrestments of Templars, at the dawn of the 13st October. He wished the confiscation of their belongings, which would end to the royal treasury, while at the same time the huge debt towards them, would get written off. De Molay was arrested in Paris (where he was invited at the funeral of Catherine of Courteney) together with 60 more knights. Among other extravagant and constructed accusations, Philip accused the Order for heresy. After being tortured by royal agents in the University of Paris in 24th of October, de Molay "confessed" that the ritual of admission in the Order, was calling all the new members to "deny Christ and step on the Cross".

Under the pressure of Philip, Pope Cleme ordered the arrestment of all the Knights of the Temple in all Christian world. Then followed 4 years of trials, testimonies and appeal of previous confessions, until during the papal council which was called in Vienna in March 1312, the Order was dissolved by papal order. In March of 1314, two years later, three cardinals sent by the Pope, convicted de Molay and other eminent Templars in life imprisonment. However the insistence of de Molay and his companions to proclaim their innocence and recall their "confessions" drove Philip to order their burn in fire, at the "Island of Jews" (Isle des Juifs) of Seine, at the center of Paris.

#### CURSE

According to a narration, de Molay cursed Philip and Pope Cleme during the time he was burning. Indeed Pope Cleme passed away due to illness a few months after the execution, while a little later Philip was killed in an accident during hunting. They both passed away in 1314.

Finally, for us modern knights of the Temple, Friday and 13, of month March, is day of mourning, but at the same time is also day during which we renew our Vow, Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and as Knights of the Temple of Holy Sepulchre to assist, offer and try to contribute in the peaceful co-existence of all the peoples of the world, applying the Christian ideals that taught to us our Lord Jesus Christ.

HAPPY CEREMONY TO ALL TEMPLAR KNIGHTS OF THE WORLD  
"BROTHER TO BROTHER, IS GIVEN IN LIFE AND DEATH"

With Fraternal Respect

Grand Cross Knight  
Dr Paul Tsolakian  
Grand Il of Grand Priory of Greece Of OSMTH

"OSMTH - GREECE"  
OSMTH-INTERNATIONAL

Did Scotland and the Knights Templar Influence the Founding of America and the Design of America's Great Seal?

Dear Gary,

Thank you again for being our guest on 21st Century Radio! Our host, Dr. Bob, greatly enjoyed talking with you about your work with the Knights Templar and the Great Seal. Enclosed is a weblink of your show, which was broadcasted on Feb. 22nd, 2015, to be used for your records and promotional use.

<http://21stcenturyradio.com/audioarchives/2015/index.html#GaryGianotti>

Please keep us informed about other projects you are working on and put us on your mailing list for future updates. We would also appreciate your suggestions for future guests and other "Leading Edge" work that Hieronimus & Co. could explore.

Your work is an inspiration! Thank You once again for being a part of 21st Century Radio!

Shalom,

Dr. Bob & Dr. Zoh Hieronimus  
Hosts, 21st Century Radio

Bostonian Barnabas Webb drew the earliest known "star & stripes" flag on his powder horn in 1776, the parent flag of the stars and stripes. The history researched by Gary Gianotti, provides indisputable and irrefutable evidence that the United States national flag and the national coat of arms originated from Scottish Jacobean loyalists, who used the symbolism of the Royal House of Stuart. Symbolism used in an attempt to make a rebirth of the House of Stuart in America by having Charles Edward Stuart III as the constitutional monarch of America.

See <http://www.electricscotland.com/History/charles/104.htm> to read the research.

See also <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/stclair/> where you can learn about the oldest army flag in America which was created by Scot, the US Great Seal engraver, for General Arthur St Clair.

This flag represents the earliest known surviving flag of the United States Army to date. This flag was identified at auction as an 1830's NY State Militia Flag. Leading flag scholars assert this flag was made for an unidentified unit from 1812-1830's! In this document, it can be proven that the flag was made by Robert Scot, the US Great Seal maker for Gen. Arthur St. Clair.

World's protected natural areas receive eight billion visits a year  
Researchers say that the first study to attempt to gauge global visitation figures for protected areas reveals nature-based tourism has an economic value of hundreds of billions of dollars annually, and call for much greater investment in the conservation of protected areas in line with the values they sustain – both economically and ecologically.

The world's national parks and nature reserves receive around eight billion visits every year, according to the first study into the global scale of nature-based tourism in protected areas. The paper, by researchers in Cambridge, UK, Princeton, New Jersey, and Washington, DC, published in the open access journal PLOS Biology, is the first global-scale attempt to answer the question of how many visits protected areas receive, and what they might be worth in terms of tourist dollars.

The authors of the study say that this number of visits could generate as much as US\$600 billion of tourism expenditure annually - a huge economic benefit which vastly exceeds the less than US\$10 billion spent safeguarding these sites each year.

Scientists and conservation experts describe current global expenditure on protected areas as "grossly

insufficient”, and have called for greatly increased investment in the maintenance and expansion of protected areas – a move which this study shows would yield substantial economic return – as well as saving incalculably precious natural landscapes and species from destruction.

“It’s fantastic that people visit protected areas so often, and are getting so much from experiencing wild nature – it’s clearly important to people and we should celebrate that,” said lead author Professor Andrew Balmford, from Cambridge University’s Department of Zoology.

“These pieces of the world provide us with untold benefits: from stabilising the global climate and regulating water flows to protecting untold numbers of species. Now we’ve shown that through tourism nature reserves contribute in a big way to the global economy – yet many are being degraded through encroachment and illegal harvesting, and some are being lost altogether. It’s time that governments invested properly in protected areas.”

Dr Andrea Manica, a corresponding author also at Cambridge, said these are ballpark estimates based on limited data, so the researchers have been careful not to overstate the case: “These are conservative calculations. Visit rates are likely to be higher than eight billion a year, and there’s no doubt we are talking about hundreds of billions of tourism dollars a year,” he said.

The attempt to calculate these figures was in part borne from frustration, said Balmford. “We study what people get out of nature, so-called ‘ecosystem services’. While some ecosystem services are difficult to measure – such as cultural or religious benefits – we thought that nature-based recreation would be quite tractable: there’s a market and tangible visits you can count.

“However, when we started to investigate we found no-one had yet pieced the data together. So we got to work trawling for figures ourselves. After a few months we had constructed a database from which we could build our models. It’s limited, but it’s the best there is at the moment,” Balmford said.

The database consists of visiting figures for 550 sites worldwide, which were then used to build equations that could predict visit rates for a further 140,000 protected areas based on their size, remoteness, national income, and so on.

The results surprised even seasoned conservation researchers. Nature tourism expert and team member Dr Matt Walpole of the UN’s World Conservation Monitoring Centre calls their cautious estimate of eight billion annual visits an “astonishing figure that illustrates the value people place on experiencing nature”.

Visit rates were highest in North America, where protected areas receive a combined total of over three billion visits a year, and lowest in Africa, where many countries have less than 100,000 protected area visits annually.

The Golden Gate National Recreation Area near San Francisco had the highest recorded visit rate in the database with an annual average of 13.7m visits, closely followed by the UK’s Lake District and Peak District National Parks, with 10.5m and 10.1m. By contrast, Tanzania’s Serengeti National Park got an annual average during the study period of 148,000 visits.

Team member Dr Jonathan Green, based in Cambridge, points out that it is far from just exotic places and large national parks that contribute to the visitation value of protected areas. “For many people, it’s the nature reserve on their doorstep where they walk the dog every Sunday”. Fowlmere nature reserve, a few miles south of Cambridge University, receives an average of almost 23,000 visits a year.

By combining regional visit rates with region-specific averages for visitor spending – on everything from entry fees to transport and accommodation – the researchers were able to derive the most complete picture yet of the global economic significance of protected area visitation.

“Our US\$600 billion figure for the annual value of protected area tourism is likely to be an underestimate – yet it dwarfs the less than US\$10 billion spent annually on safeguarding and managing these areas,” said Dr Robin Naidoo of World Wildlife Fund, another author of the study. “Through previous research, we know that the existing reserve network probably needs three to four times what is currently being spent on it”.

“While that may seem a lot of money, it’s a fraction of the economic benefit we get from protected areas – nature-based tourism is just one part,” said Balmford.

By way of context, he points to the recent announcement by computing giant Apple of record profits of US\$18 billion in a single quarter. “Stopping the unfolding extinction crisis is not unaffordable. Three months of Apple profits could go a long way to securing the future of nature. Humanity doesn’t need electronic communication to survive. But we do need the rest of the planet.”

Woulda, Coulda, Shoulda

Thanks to Prior II of St James Priory for sending in this article from Jack.

One thing I thought to raise as a point of discussion at our seder, but did not, perhaps for lack of courage on my part, was the situation of the Jews in the world today. Should the Jews of France, of Belgium, of Scandinavia leave Europe now? Are conditions there just too dangerous? Does the hostility of the media and academia of Britain to Israel and Zionism mean that the Jews of Britain are no longer welcome there and should get out while there is still time? Is it 1938 for the Jews of Europe?

On the other hand, do the Jews of Israel face the threats of even greater violence and physical destruction? Is there a difference between the threats to the Jews of Europe and the threats Israel faces from its neighbors in the Middle East? Will the threat of rockets from every direction and intenal terrorism make conditions in Israel intolerable? If the Muslims of Iraq, Syria, Yemen, etc. deal with each other with such violence, with such murderous abandon, can there be any question about what would be done to Israel given the chance, or perhaps even, what will be done to Israel sooner or later? Will the growth in population of the Palestinians and other Arabs simply overwhelm the Jews of Israel? Does Israel face a greater threat of annihilation from Iran than do the Jews of France or of Belgium from the growing European Muslim population? Is it 1938 for the Jews of Israel? Is being Jewish just not worth all the physical threats to our survival?

For that matter, are the ancient Christian populations of the Near East--the Chaldean Christians, the Aramaean Christians, the Assyrian Christians, the Maronites, the Syriac Christians, the Copts --even more threatened than are the Jews of Israel and elsewhere? Is their condition better or worse than the conditions of the Jews both in Western Europe and in Israel? Why don't the Christian populations of Europe and the US seem to care? And if those ancient Christian populations are under threat to their very survival, what chance is there for the West to care about the survival of the Jewish populations of the world? And can even the Christian populations of Europe survive if the turbulence and even the populations of the Middle East move more definitely to Europe? Or is it racist even to raise this question?

And will the situation here in the United States remain unchanged for us as Jews, but even more for all of us inhabitants and citizens of the US? Will our principles of freedom and tolerance change disastrously as the world becomes threatened and overwhelmed by upheaval?

Well, let's see if things change for the world's Jews this coming year, and if they do not, maybe we'll talk about all this next year--if, of course, we are not in Jerusalem next year. Or maybe, even if we are. And, if of course, there is a next year.

Jack

Pakistani Christians: Hate is spread against us

Pakistan's Christians make up less than 2% percent of the country's predominantly Muslim population. Some have been the target of blasphemy accusations and attacks on churches that have claimed hundreds of lives. One of the most recent attacks, in Lahore's Youhanabad area last month, left 15 people dead. Shaimaa Khalil has been back to the city to see how the Christian community is coping. Read her report at <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-32212962>

Turkey anger at Pope Francis Armenian genocide claim

Armenia and many historians say up to 1.5 million people were systematically killed by Ottoman forces in 1915.

Read more at <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-32272604>

Friday marks the 100th anniversary of the day the Ottoman Turkey authorities arrested several hundred Armenian intellectuals in Constantinople, today's Istanbul, most of whom were later killed.

Armenians regard this as the beginning of the Ottoman policy of mass extermination of Christian Armenians suspected of supporting Russia, the Ottoman Empire's World War One enemy.

Hundreds of thousands of Armenians died in 1915 at the hands of the Ottoman Turks, whose empire was disintegrating.

Many of the victims were civilians deported to barren desert regions where they died of starvation and thirst. Thousands also died in massacres.

Armenia says up to 1.5 million people were killed. Turkey says the number of deaths was much smaller.

Most non-Turkish scholars of the events regard them as genocide - as do more than 20 states, including France, Germany, Canada and Russia, and various international bodies including the European Parliament.

Turkey rejects the term genocide, maintaining that many of the dead were killed in clashes during World War One, and that many ethnic Turks also suffered in the conflict.

Read more at <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-32443266>

As Canadians mark the 100th anniversary of the Armenian genocide Friday, one former Liberal MP is reflecting on his years-long fight to have Ottawa officially recognize the slaughter as such.

Sarkis Assadourian remembers when MPs passed a resolution in 2004 officially recognizing the 1915 massacre as genocide and condemning it as a crime against humanity.

Read more at:

<http://www.ctvnews.ca/politics/the-political-game-how-one-mp-fought-to-have-canada-recognize-the-armenian-genocide-1.2343214>

Yemen crisis: Who is fighting whom?

Yemen is in the grip of its most severe crisis in years, as competing forces fight for control of the country.

Impoverished but strategically important, the tussle for power in Yemen has serious implications for the region and the security of the West.

Read this BBC report to get the background at:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-29319423>

Turning Ethiopia's desert green  
From the BBC Magazine

A generation ago Ethiopia's Tigray province was stricken by a famine that shocked the world. Today, as Chris Haslam reports, local people are using ancient techniques to turn part of the desert green.

In the pink-streaked twilight, a river of humanity is flowing across Tigray's dusty Hawzien plain. This cracked and desiccated landscape, in Ethiopia's far north, occupies a dark corner of the global collective memory. Thirty years ago, not far from here, the BBC's Michael Buerk first alerted us to a biblical famine he described as "the closest thing to hell on earth".

Then Bob Geldof wrote Do They Know It's Christmas? - a curious question to ask of perhaps the world's most devoutly Christian people - and thereafter the name Tigray became synonymous with refugees, Western aid and misery. The Tigrayan people were depicted as exemplars of passive

suffering, dependent on the goodwill of the rest of the planet just to get through the day without dying.

But here, outside the village of Abr'ha Weatsbaha, I'm seeing a different version. From all directions, streams of people are trickling into that human river. You hear them before you see them - some chatting excitedly, others singing hymns - as they converge on a viciously steep valley at the edge of the plain. They were summoned before dawn by horns, an Old Testament echo calling every able-bodied man and woman over 18 years of age to report for the first of 20 days of compulsory community labour. Their job, quite simply, is to tame the desert.

Around 3,000 people answered the call to take part in the terracing work.

"This is how the Axumite kings got stuff done 2,000 years ago," says my guide Zablou Beyene. "With the same tools, too."

By 10 in the morning, some 3,000 people have turned up. Using picks, shovels, iron bars and their bare hands, they will turn these treacherous slopes into neat staircases of rock-walled terraces that will trap the annual rains, forcing the water to percolate into the soil rather than running off in devastating, ground-ripping flash floods.

"Sisters are doing it for themselves," says Kidane, a pick-wielding Amazon whose arched eyebrow suggests I might want to put down my camera and do some actual work. Brothers, too: from strapping, sweat-shiny youths to Ephraim, a legless old man who clearly ignored the bit about being able-bodied and sits on his stumps, rolling rocks downhill to the terrace builders.

Overseeing this extraordinary effort is 58-year-old Aba Hawi, Abr'ha Weatsbaha's community leader. Short, pot-bellied and bearded, he darts from one side of the valley to the other, barking orders into his mobile phone, slapping backs and showing the youngsters the proper way to split half-ton boulders. Rumour has it that Aba Hawi once took up arms to fight for Tigrayan independence, but these days he prefers to describe himself as "just a farmer".



Village chief and head motivator Aba Hawi shows off one of the 18 dams built by communal labour on what was once a flash-flood gully.

Either way, his tireless leadership has brought a miraculous transformation to this sun-blasted land. In just a decade, entire mountains have been terraced. Once you had to dig 50ft (15m) down to find water. Now it's just 10ft, and 94 acres (38 hectares) of former desert have been transformed into fertile fields. Families are now reaping three harvests a year from fields of corn, chillis, onions and potatoes. Free-range grazing for sheep, goats and cattle has been banned, allowing new forests of eucalyptus and acacias to take root, and Aba Hawi is particularly keen to show me what he's done with the deep flash-flood canyons that rive the plain.

We take a long, hot hike to a vast pool of cool, green water held back by a huge hand-built dam. "We've built 85 of these check-dams so far," says Aba Hawi, "and you can see how they work. These mini-reservoirs fill up during the rains and are fed by groundwater in times of drought. Now, every farmer has a well." He tosses a handful of dust into the wind. "Ten years ago, that was our land." Then he points at a shimmering blue flash in the reeds. "Now look: we've got malachite kingfishers living in the desert."

But success brings its own problems. Abr'ha Weatsbaha is now facing an immigration problem as people from neighbouring valleys clamour for their share of Aba Hawi's oasis.

"They shouldn't need to come here," he says. "Every district in Tigray is supposed to be using compulsory community labour for terracing but, well..." he shrugs with just a tad of false modesty... "not all community leaders are so, er, committed."

And as fear of starvation fades, Aba Hawi faces new demands.

"People want electricity now," he sighs.

I'm interested in his views of where God comes into all this. After all, this valley was once the physical definition of the term "Godforsaken."

Aba Hawi disagrees. "God was here when the land was bad," he says. "And he's still here. But God will only help those who help themselves."

Editors Note: OSMTH has sent out a letter...

We witness once again a brutal act of ISIS against Christian people. Such barbaric acts call for our public denunciation, which is the policy of our Templar members (OSMTH). ISIS released a video in the last few days, which portrayed some thirty Ethiopian Orthodox Christians either shot or beheaded on a Libyan beach.

You can read the full letter at:

[http://www.osmth.org/images/stories/20150420\\_ethiopia.pdf](http://www.osmth.org/images/stories/20150420_ethiopia.pdf)

The Cries of the Messiah

Rabbi Jonathan Cahn, The New York Times best-selling author of *The Harbinger* and *The Mystery of the Shemitah*, addressed the United Nations on Friday about the worsening persecution of Christians in the Middle East and other parts of the world.

Cahn, the senior rabbi at the Beth Israel Worship Center in Wayne, New Jersey, was invited along with other Jewish and Christian leaders, businessmen and high-ranking military officials, to speak at the conference entitled, "The Persecution of Christians Globally: A Threat to International Peace and Security."

Here is the text of Cahn's speech: See

<http://www.osmth.org/news/347-the-cries-of-the-messiah>

Roman Catholic Bishop and Nobel Laureate Receives Templar Recognition

The Grand Prior of Portugal in a report to the Grand Master, Brigadier General Patrick Rea, outlined a significant event that was a part of the Tomar OSMTH meeting in mid-April of 2015. Dr. António Andrade stated that His Excellency Bishop Carlos Filipe Ximenez Belo, Nobel Laureate, accepted the Portuguese Templar Order of Merit award for his life time of humanitarian work in support of the people of East Timor. Grand Master Rea extended his praise to the Grand Prior of Portugal for his ability to arrange a Templar recognition for such an outstanding Catholic Christian leader, Bishop Ximenez Belo. A brief summary of the Bishops' actions and accomplishments validate the wisdom of Dr. Andrade's decision to arrange this Templar recognition.

Read more about this at:

<http://www.osmth.org/news/346-roman-catholic-bishop-and-nobel-laureate-receives-templar->

## recognition

The battle of the e-Muftis

In one corner, there's the religious establishment of a global faith - complete with 1,400 years of collected learning. In the other, there is the self-styled Islamic State (IS) and its daily dose of propaganda videos flooding the internet. Have traditional clerics got what it takes to be heard in this digital culture war?

Even if every Muslim scholar in the world constantly tweeted against IS, young Muslims on social media could simply turn their backs and carry on reading IS's output. But Jordan's e-Muftis are among those beginning, slowly, to put up a fight online.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/onvmcvv>

US Christians numbers decline sharply, poll finds

The number of Americans who identify as Christian has fallen nearly eight percentage points in only seven years, according to a new survey.

Read more at <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-32710444>

The Scottish Episcopal Church on the Black Isle

Came across an interesting article where this church has connections with the Knights Templars.

In this article there is also comments made...

Ministers and priests also tell us that God loves us no matter who or what we are, but in the gospel of Matthew, Jesus also said that I do not come to bring peace but a sword. This should not be taken as a clarion call to Christians to take up arms and resort to violence in pursuit of their faith.

It is, I believe, a foretelling by Christ of how things were to pan out after He left us. Given his wisdom, he could not have failed to see the frailty of human nature at work, even when he was alive there was certain jostling for power.

Christ did not have long to wait to see his prediction come to pass.

No sooner had he ascended into heaven when even his closest followers fell into disagreement over who was, or was not, entitled to call himself a follower.

You can read about this at:

<http://www.blackislechurches.co.uk/index.asp?pageid=283835>

Why is God not female?

An article from the BBC Magazine

A group in the Church of England is calling for services to address God as "She" as well as "He". The question of God's gender goes back to the early Christian Church, writes Stephen Tomkins.

You can read this article at:

<http://tinyurl.com/ohlxxp7>

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## Canadian Update

A lot going on in Canada these days and this is in part due to the desire to do more business with countries other than the USA. The pipeline issues with the USA have soured relationships between Obama and Harper. As you read the articles below you'll see a very active foreign policy working hard at doing more business right across the globe.

I also noted a TV show during May that was discussing relations with the USA and that the keystone pipeline issue was considered a dead deal. However the panel thought there was tremendous scope

for clean energy but it needed a special table to be created in the USA to discuss the opportunities. For example there is tremendous scope to export Hydro power to the USA but some people in the USA are now claiming that Hydro isn't "clean energy". It's topics like this that require more effort.

Some on the panel were commenting on how Canada and the USA should be working even closer together to make North America a real power house in global affairs. As you'll see in the articles below our Governor General was visiting the USA this quarter and I've quoted some of the figures he quoted in his talks about the value of trade between our two countries.

It's not my intention to provide such detail in future newsletters unless you want it of course. However, I thought that by highlighting all the International meetings we have had in just this last quarter it will provide an insight into how active Canada is on the world stage.

Birth of Her Royal Highness The Princess of Cambridge  
May 2, 2015

The Government of Canada has announced a \$100,000 donation to Immunize Canada, in honour of the birth of Princess Charlotte, the second child of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge.

This child-focused charity is dedicated to promoting the understanding of and the need for life-saving vaccines for children across Canada.

Immunize Canada points out that immunization is one of the most crucial and cost-effective public health programs. In Canada, immunization has saved more lives than any other health intervention, and has contributed to the reduction in illness and deaths in adults and children.

Princess Charlotte will also receive a Canadian-made snowsuit, symbolic of Canada's northern culture.

When the Duke and Duchess's first child, Prince George, was born – the Government of Canada marked the occasion with a \$100,000 donation to Canadian Centre for Child Protection, a registered charity dedicated to the personal safety of all children.

Prime Minister Harper congratulated the Duke and Duchess on the newest addition to their family.

“On behalf of all Canadians, Laureen and I would like to offer our heartfelt congratulations and very best wishes to the happy family on the arrival of their second child.”

On May 12th, Health Minister Rona Ambrose joined Laureen Harper at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario to announce the donation.

Canada-United Kingdom Joint Declaration  
I noted our Prime Minister congratulated David Cameron on the UK election results...

“On behalf of the Government of Canada, I would like to congratulate David Cameron on his strong re-election as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom with a majority government.

“Canada and the United Kingdom share a deep and close relationship rooted in our common history and values, our tradition of parliamentary democracy, our partnership on global issues, and our shared sovereign, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

“The potential for collaboration between our two countries is unlimited. I look forward to continuing to work with Prime Minister Cameron to ensure our collective security, including in our efforts to support Ukraine against Russian aggression and in our fight against the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, to promote the economic ties between our two countries, particularly through the Canada-EU Trade Agreement, and to advance our shared partnership and cooperation as reflected in the Canada-United Kingdom Joint Declaration.”

You can read about the Joint Declaration at:  
<http://pm.gc.ca/eng/news/2011/09/22/canada-united-kingdom-joint-declaration>

Harper congratulates Prime Minister Netanyahu of Israel on New Government  
Prime Minister Harper spoke today to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and congratulated him on the formation of his new government, reaffirming Canada's steadfast support for Israel.

The two leaders agreed to continue working on deepening the close ties between Canada and Israel. The leaders also discussed security challenges in the Middle East, including the threat posed by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria.

Economic Club of Minnesota Luncheon Address by The Governor General of Canada.

But seriously, folks, let me talk about Canada-Minnesota trade for a moment.

It exceeds a remarkable \$19 billion annually, which means that Canada exports more to Minnesota than we do to the UK, Japan or Mexico. This is most impressive, given Canada's status as a trading nation.

And Canada is by far Minnesota's largest export customer. We buy more Minnesota products than your next three largest foreign markets combined.

It's estimated that more than \$2 billion (USD) worth of goods and services crosses the Canada-U.S. border every day.

That's \$1.4 million every minute! The biggest two-way trading relationship on Earth!

You can read his entire talk at:

<http://www.gg.ca/document.aspx?id=16022&lan=eng>

Speech by the Governor General at the Great Lakes Economic Forum

The Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Region has an approximate GDP of \$5.5 trillion, which, if it was its own country, would place it as the third largest economy in the world.

Roughly 40 percent of all cross-border trade between Canada and the United States takes place in this region, which supplies about 30 percent of our combined workforce. And a large portion of our trade consists of intermediate products traded into integrated supply chains. Often, hundreds of companies on both sides of the border contribute components to a single product.

This region is also a continental centre of learning. It's home to 19 of the world's top 100 universities and accounts for about a quarter of the R&D spending in the U.S. and almost three quarters of R&D in Canada.

You can read this talk at <http://www.gg.ca/document.aspx?id=16030&lan=eng>

US - Canada Trade

2015 National Trade Estimate Report on Foreign Trade Barriers. USTR.

Canada is currently the largest export market for U.S. goods. U.S. goods exports in 2014 were \$312.1 billion, up 3.5 percent from the previous year. Corresponding U.S. imports from Canada were \$346.1 billion, up 4.1 percent. The U.S. goods trade deficit with Canada was \$33.9 billion in 2014, an increase of \$3.0 billion from 2013.

See a much larger report on all aspects of USA Canadian business which reveals some very interesting information at:

<http://canada.usembassy.gov/key-reports/trade-estimate-report/2015-national-trade-estimate-report-on-foreign-trade-barriers-canada-chapter.html>

Canada-EU Trade Agreement already yielding results

Prime Minister Stephen Harper today welcomed the announcement made by Honda Canada Inc.'s President and Chief Executive Officer Jerry Chenkin that its manufacturing facility in Alliston, Ontario, will produce the next-generation CR-V model destined for the European Union (EU) market. The Prime Minister was joined by Ed Fast, Minister of International Trade, and Dr. K. Kellie Leitch, Minister

of Labour and Minister of Status of Women.

Thanks in part to the Canada-EU Trade Agreement, Honda Canada is upgrading its Alliston facility to produce the next-generation CR-V. This project, along with Honda's current operations, will continue to protect high-quality and well-paying jobs.

This will be the first time that Honda Canada will export vehicles to Europe. Honda Canada's decision was made possible by the historic market access provided by the Canada-EU Trade Agreement, which is paving the way for increased Canadian exports to the world's largest integrated market of more than 500 million consumers.

Our Government is helping the advanced manufacturing sector expand and succeed around the world by keeping taxes low, reducing red tape and opening new markets for Canadian businesses to boost exports. Our efforts are creating and protecting jobs, as well as promoting growth and long-term prosperity for Canadians in every region of the country.

#### Quick Facts

Under the Canada-EU Trade Agreement, Canadian auto manufacturers will have the ability to export vehicles annually to the EU on a preferential basis under a flexible rule of origin.

Under the Canada-EU Trade Agreement, the EU will eliminate the 10 per cent tariff on passenger vehicles providing Canada's auto makers with a competitive advantage in the EU market. The EU will also eliminate, immediately upon entry into force of the Agreement, its tariffs on auto parts, which run as high as four and a half per cent.

Based on production volumes, Honda Canada was the fourth-largest automaker in Canada in 2014, with 393,007 vehicles manufactured.

Since 1986, Honda Canada has invested more than \$3.9 billion in Canada, and each year it sources nearly \$2.1 billion in goods and services from Canadian suppliers.

Honda Canada directly and indirectly employs more than 19,000 Canadians, including more than 4,000 in Alliston.

The Canadian auto industry is highly export-oriented, with approximately 90 per cent of auto production exported every year.

Canada's world-class automotive industry is a key driver of the economy, contributing 10 per cent of the country's manufacturing gross domestic product and 13 per cent of total merchandise exports. The industry employs approximately 117,000 Canadians directly and another 377,000 through its large supply chain of more than 730 companies, including many small and medium-sized enterprises across the country.

Learn more about Canada's Free Trade Agreements at:

<http://www.international.gc.ca/trade-agreements-accords-commerciaux/agr-acc/fta-ale.aspx?lang=eng>

#### PM Announces New Economic Initiatives in the Americas

Prime Minister Stephen Harper today announced several projects aimed at strengthening economic growth across Latin America and the Caribbean. He made the announcement in advance of the Summit of the Americas taking place from April 10 to 11, 2015, in Panama City, Panama.

Increasing economic opportunity is one of the pillars of Canada's Strategy for Engagement in the Americas. The projects announced today focus on critical areas such as rural and agricultural development, extractive sector governance and small-scale mining, and sustainable food production.

The Prime Minister made the announcement prior to participating in a roundtable meeting with several CEOs attending the CEO Summit of the Americas, which is taking place on the margins of the Summit of the Americas. As part of the discussion, the Prime Minister will highlight the vast opportunities that exist in Latin America and the Caribbean, and discuss the importance of the Canadian private sector's impact and influence in creating greater growth in the region. He will also

speaking about Canada's robust economic fundamentals, its proactive job creation strategy, and actions being taken to ensure that Canada continues to occupy a strong global economic position, including the most ambitious free trade agenda in Canadian history, which now boasts agreements with eight countries in the Americas.

#### Quick Facts

Latin America and the Caribbean are an important growth market for Canada, with a combined GDP of \$6 trillion in 2013.

Canada has free trade agreements with the following eight countries in the Americas: Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Peru and the United States.

Since Canada first made the Americas a Canadian foreign policy priority in 2007, bilateral trade has increased by 41.4 per cent, reaching \$60.1 billion in 2014, while Canadian investment in the region has increased by 70.7 per cent, reaching \$160.8 billion in 2013.

#### A Letter to Justin Trudeau

I just sent this to Justin Trudeau leader of the Liberal Party in Canada after reading an article in CBC where he compares prejudice to Islam like prejudice to Jews.....it is all so tiresome.

I am so tired of all the banter back and forth lately about loss of freedoms, and Harper vs Trudeau, I wrote to Justin Trudeau who compares treatment of Muslims here like refusing to let the Jews who were fleeing Hitler in, now I reread it not that well written but kind of a note from the heart ...my letter is probably just farting in the wind as they say in Newfoundland.

Dear Mr. Trudeau

None is Too Many was a terrible policy as was smallpox blankets and the only good Indian is a dead Indian attitude which led to mass near extermination of the original inhabitants of North America. But we must not mix metaphors here by comparing what is going on now to those days.

Sharia Law should never be allowed to co-exist in Canada with its dreadful attitudes toward women not least of which is the wearing of the chador. Surely in this country we have gone beyond a father's right to slit his daughter's throat if she goes out with a man other than her brother or her husband. This is but the least of what is anathema in Sharia Law.

I think you are being naive in your attempt to be something to everyone. To be politically correct. Religious freedom is one of our rights and we must try to be friendly with the followers of all religions. Radical Islam however is beyond the bounds of what it means to be religious. We should not kid ourselves that the object of Islam is to convert people to Islam and to make Sharia Law the foundation of society.

The failure of Islam to have become a universal and more widespread religion, is its treatment of women and although in centuries past in its prime it brought much to the world in advancement of science and the arts, it is its attitude to women among other things which is its weakness. You could say the same of Christianity I agree as it has taken years for women to attain even a semblance of equality. And these rights and freedoms have been won by strong determined women. Like the women who went before the Supreme Court in Canada to ensure women's rights were enshrined in the Canadian Charter which your father successfully brought to fruition.

I do not mean to criticize you as I respect you as your father's son, however the danger in politics and especially in these days of political correctness is to try not to offend. Be someone to everyone. But Sharia Law is outdated and barbaric. Even earlier laws passed in ancient Scotland of my birth are more forbearing and lending more towards a true sense of liberty and freedom. Our freedoms and liberties based on Judeo Christian law and heritage are more forward thinking than laws which say women must be veiled, must obey their fathers, etc.

What about the subject of the emancipation of women? As Scotland's greatest poet said, "it is coming yet for all that, that men shall brothers be for all that.....yet there is one thing that merits some attention....the rights of women." Rabbie Burns.

Yes of course we can say these Militant Islamic types are but a handful and Islam is a peaceful religion. It does however claim that Muhammad is the Seal of the Prophets and it's followers who believe that will not rest until everyone is converted. It was however spread by the sword and I for one am glad that as awful as they were, it was the Spanish Conquistadors who colonized South America in the Name of the Prince of Peace and not the Muslims who fortunately were kicked out of Spain just before Columbus set sail. I tell that to people who say "Europeans" came and conquered and I say well you are lucky in Canada it was the French and then the British with a strong element of Scots.

There is of course no easy answer to this. But I would wish for you not to be afraid you will lose votes and to take a stand in the right direction. Your father was a great man and the arts flourished under him. You are of course your own person and just as your father was not bamboozled in his day in matters of the time (although I did not agree with him downsizing the military) my prayerful thought for you is that you will flourish and rise to the great occasion and be unafraid.

Beware of the Men of the Mosque.

Yours sincerely, Gillian Charters

New border deal: Canada customs agents could work in U.S., vice versa  
Canada and the U.S. announced a deal Monday that further integrates their screening systems for cross-border travel.

Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Minister Steven Blaney held a joint press conference with U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security Jeh Johnson in Washington to announce details of the next phase of the Beyond the Border Action Plan, which was created in December 2011.

The ministers signed a "preclearance agreement," which allows U.S. border agents to inspect travellers and goods on this side of the 49th parallel, before allowing them to enter the U.S.

This type of screening has been going on for years at eight Canadian airports, but the new agreement extends it to all modes of transportation.

"Through the comprehensive approach to preclearance outlined in the agreement, Canada and the U.S. are seeking to strengthen our relationship and enhance our mutual security, prosperity and economic competitiveness," Blaney said.

The aim is to create an "integrated entry-exit system" so "documented entry into one country serves to verify exit from the other," according to the Beyond the Border plan, which covers a wide range of co-operation.

Critics of the plan have said it has great potential to violate Canadians' privacy, depending on what information is shared with U.S. authorities.

"This agreement respects the sovereignty and the laws of both countries," Blaney said and invoked the threat of terrorism as one reason for implementing the measures.

"Our enemies will not achieve their objective to deny our people of their freedom, their security and their prosperity," he said.

Nearly 400,000 people and \$2 billion in goods cross the border on land every day, according to the government.

Universal drug plan would save billions, UBC researchers say  
Government plan could save billions of dollars while keeping drug costs affordable, study suggests.

A universal prescription drug plan could reduce total spending on medications in Canada by billions and cover everyone at an affordable price for taxpayers, health policy researchers say.

Canada is the only developed country with universal health insurance coverage that does not also

offer universal prescription drug benefits.

About one in 10 Canadians say they can't afford to take their medications as prescribed, previous studies suggest.

In Monday's issue of the Canadian Medical Association Journal, researchers say the extra total cost to government of providing universal pharmacare could range as high as \$5.4 billion a year, but would likely be about \$1 billion, depending on exactly how much can be saved through bulk purchases of medications and other measures.

At the same time, it would save the private sector the \$8.2 billion annually it spends on prescription drugs, mainly through employee health plans.

"When we did the analysis, we were, at first, a little bit surprised," said study author Steven Morgan, a professor of health policy at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. "Wow. Canada can really save billions of dollars by covering everybody for virtually every drug? And then we started to look deeper at the math, and it made perfect sense.

"You save about 10 per cent by getting better generic prices, you save about 10 per cent [on] brand name prices and you save an additional 10 per cent by encouraging more cost-effective prescribing," Morgan said, using conservative estimates. "Mine those three things together, you save 30 per cent of a very large budget. Therefore you're saving billions of dollars."

If Canada achieved "middle of the pack" spending as in comparable countries like Switzerland, Italy and Spain, and achieved the rates of generic drug use seen in some provincial drug plans, a universal public drug plan would reduce total spending on prescription drugs in Canada by \$7.3 billion per year, the study's authors say.

PM announces significant support for the Thirty Meter Telescope

Prime Minister Stephen Harper today announced the Government of Canada's intention to provide significant support for the Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT), an international project that will build one of the world's largest and most advanced astronomical observatories in Hawaii. The Prime Minister made the announcement following a tour of Vancouver's Gordon MacMillan Southam Observatory. He was joined by James Moore, Minister of Industry.

The Government's support would provide resources over 10 years to enable Canada's participation in the construction and commissioning of the TMT, alongside participants from the Japan, China, India and the United States.

The majority of the Government's support for the TMT will be spent in Canada, creating high-quality jobs related to the construction and assembly of key telescope components, including a precision-steel enclosure by Dynamic Structures Limited, based in Port Coquitlam, British Columbia, and cutting-edge adaptive optics technologies, to be developed by the National Research Council in partnership with Canadian companies. As part of the project, dozens of Canadian businesses are expected to develop advanced capabilities and products transferable to future applications in the health, defence and telecommunications sectors – helping to create and maintain high-quality jobs in communities across Canada.

Canada's contribution will also secure a viewing share for Canadian researchers at the TMT once it is operational in 2023-2024. This access will help to maintain Canadian scientific leadership in astronomy, paving the way to important scientific discoveries and helping to train highly-qualified personnel at post-secondary institutions across the country. Canada's pursuit of new scientific discoveries will also help spark young Canadians' interest in science disciplines for decades to come.

#### Quick Facts

Canada has world-leading expertise in astronomy and astrophysics, as noted by the Council of Canadian Academies in its 2012 State of Science and Technology. Canadian research publications in this field are highly impactful and Canadian expertise in astronomy is sought after internationally.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development reports that Canada is first in the G-7 in terms of our support of research and development through our universities and colleges, relative to the size of our economy, since 1996.

Prime Minister Harper also recently announced a new \$1.5 billion legacy investment to make Canadian research world-leading through the Canada First Research Excellence Fund. This new program is for world-leading research that will raise Canada's standing globally.

Canada's Space Policy Framework positions our domestic space industry at the forefront of cutting edge space activities; it strengthens strategic relationships with international partners in the interest of science and technology; and it advances Canada's excellence in the key capability of space optics.

The TMT will employ advanced adaptive optics systems that will allow for the correction of atmospheric turbulence (what makes stars "twinkle") and enable the clear observation of some of the faintest celestial objects and bodies.

The TMT's enclosure, to be built in Port Coquitlam, British Columbia, will incorporate a unique design to protect the telescope both from temperature and winds.

When completed, the telescope will stand in an observatory 22 stories tall, with a primary mirror extending 30 metres across, giving it approximately half the surface area of a National Hockey League rink.

#### Council of Canadian Academies

The Council of Canadian Academies is an independent, not-for-profit organization that began operation in 2005.

The Council supports independent, authoritative, and evidence-based expert assessments that inform public policy development in Canada.

Assessments are conducted by multidisciplinary panels of experts from across Canada and abroad. The Council's blue-ribbon panels serve free of charge and many are Fellows of the Council's Member Academies. [more...]

The Council's completed assessments are published and made available to the public free of charge in both English and French. Council reports can also be found on Scribd and Google Books.

See <http://www.scienceadvice.ca/en.aspx> for further information.

The Scottish Minister of Veterans Affairs, Keith Brown, was in town this past Tuesday and invited a small group to meet with him over lunch at the RCMI. It was an interesting discussion and helpful to hear how another jurisdiction treats its veterans. The Minister went away saying he had picked up a couple of new ideas that might prove helpful in his work.

National Alliance of Indo-Canadians speak to the importance of PM Modi visit

See <https://youtu.be/1LSC-8qldfc>

PM Marks Successful Visit to Canada by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi

Prime Minister Stephen Harper today marked the conclusion of a highly productive visit to Canada by Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India. The two-day visit, which included stops in Ottawa, Toronto and Vancouver, was Prime Minister Modi's first visit to Canada since taking office and the first bilateral visit by an Indian Prime Minister since 1973.

During the visit, Prime Minister Harper and Prime Minister Modi committed to elevate the bilateral relationship to a strategic partnership and further broadened its scope through a number of important initiatives.

The leaders also saw the completion of memoranda of understanding in a range of areas, including civil aviation, rail regulation, education and skills development, and space cooperation, and projects focused on maternal, newborn and child health. Canada and India also finalized all steps necessary

for the entry-into-force of the Social Security Agreement, which will take place on August 1, 2015.

Prime Minister Harper also welcomed Prime Minister Modi's announcement that India will issue visas upon arrival, which will make it easier for Canadians to travel to India.

On the margins of the visit, several commercial agreements between Canadian and Indian companies were announced. With a combined value of over \$1.6 billion, these agreements will benefit a range of sectors, including aerospace and defence, education, energy, mining, infrastructure, sustainable technologies, and information and communications technology. They further demonstrate the significant growth taking place in the Canada-India bilateral commercial relationship.

One commercial agreement involving Saskatchewan-based Cameco will see the company supply India with over seven million pounds of uranium over the next five years. This deal was made possible due in part to the Canada-India Nuclear Cooperation Agreement negotiated by our Government.

Prime Minister Harper and Prime Minister Modi welcomed the progress made on negotiating a Bilateral Foreign Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement and agreed to intensify discussions to finalize the outstanding issues.

The prime ministers also participated in several cultural events where they met with members of Canada's vibrant Indo-Canadian community. During these events, Prime Minister Harper paid tribute to the tremendous contributions this community continues to make to our country's social, cultural and economic landscape.

The leaders issued a joint statement reaffirming and further expanding the scope of the new strategic partnership between Canada and India.

#### Quick Facts

Canada and India have long-standing and positive bilateral relations based on shared values of democracy, pluralism and a mutual interest in expanding trade.

India is Canada's largest trading partner in South Asia and is a priority market under Canada's Global Markets Action Plan.

With bilateral merchandise trade totalling nearly \$6.3 billion in 2014 in addition to the over \$1.5 billion in bilateral services trade in 2013, a market of more than 1.2 billion people, and a predicted economic growth of 7.5 per cent in 2015, India represents exciting opportunities for Canadian businesses.

Canada's approximately 1.2 million Indian diaspora community is one of the largest Indian diasporas in the world.

Prime Minister Harper first met Prime Minister Modi on the margins of the G-20 Summit in Australia in November 2014. Prime Minister Harper also visited India in November 2012 and November 2009.

This is the first bilateral visit to Canada by an Indian Prime Minister since 1973.

You can read the India Canada joint statement at:

<http://pm.gc.ca/eng/news/2015/04/15/india-canada-joint-statement>

#### PM announces new Canadian military contribution in Ukraine

Prime Minister Stephen Harper today announced that the Government of Canada will provide significant additional military resources to help train and build the capacity of Ukrainian forces personnel. The announcement was made following a briefing on the current security situation in Ukraine with Jason Kenney, Minister of National Defence and Minister for Multiculturalism, and General Tom Lawson, Chief of the Defence Staff.

Canada will be deploying approximately 200 Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) personnel to Ukraine until March 31, 2017, to develop and deliver military training and capacity-building programs for Ukrainian forces personnel. CAF members will be deployed on both a sustained and periodic basis depending on the type of training being conducted. Their activities will include explosive ordnance disposal and improvised explosive device disposal training, military police training, medical training, flight safety training, and logistics system modernization training. Canada will also be providing individual and unit tactics training to Ukrainian National Guard personnel along with the United States.

Canada's latest military contribution, which addresses a number of requests from the Government of Ukraine, is being provided to help the country in its efforts to maintain sovereignty, security and stability in the face of Russian aggression. The support being announced today was informed by consultations with key allies.

Canada's position on Ukraine has been clear since the outset: we recognize the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine and will never recognize the illegal Russian occupation of Crimea or any part of that country.

#### Royal Canadian Military Institute

The Institute is a private members' organization which provides a forum to promote education on defence, security and foreign affairs in a unique collegial environment.

#### Our Vision:

The Institute will be recognized as the pre-eminent Canadian forum for discussion, research and education on defence, security and foreign affairs.

#### The RCMI 1890 - 2014

In 1890, the Officers of the Toronto Garrison founded the Royal Canadian Military Institute with the then Governor General of Canada, Lord Stanley, as its patron. Earl Grey laid the cornerstone of the first premises in 1907. From the 1930s until 2010, the heritage building was well known to the public as a city landmark – an Edwardian edifice flanked distinctively by two 19th-century cannons, with substantial space devoted to Museum galleries displaying exhibits drawn from the Institute's extensive collections. It also housed a 15,000 volume research library whose holdings include significant books detailing Canada's military history.

In June 2014, our fully redeveloped University Avenue site proudly re-opened its doors. The new quarters house leading-edge facilities for the Institute and for our Library and Museum.

A core element of the Institute's activities is the field of Defence Studies, particularly on issues related to Canadian Military Heritage and Contemporary Canadian Security. We carry out extensive outreach and educational activities in this area, including a vigorous publications and events programme, and are fortunate to have at our disposal for this purpose the multi-purpose lecture, seminar and conference facilities of the RCMI building.

The Institute's founding President, Lieutenant Colonel William Otter went on to become one of Canada's most distinguished military figures, ending his career as General Sir William Otter KCB CMG CVO, Inspector-General of Militia of Canada. Colonel Otter set the founding objectives of the Institute, to be "the Promotion and Fostering of Military Art, Science and Literature in Canada."

The Institute has since flourished as a pre-eminent library and military museum, and an informal forum for discussion related to matters of "security and defence." For over a century, our members have formed a special community of men and women interested in military arts, science, literature and affairs, as well as the independence and success of Canada.

In keeping with our mandate and the current needs of educational and military organizations, the RCMI's membership has become increasingly diverse. Today, membership of the Institute is drawn from all walks of life, including the Reserves, the Regular Forces, academe, and business across Canada and abroad. Increasingly, our new members are concerned with information technology and other business affairs related to security issues.

In the second decade of the 21st century, civilian opinion and involvement are critical. The threats facing Canada are no longer "over there" and we can no longer rely on others to defend us. Public debate of the security issues facing Canada is essential to ensure our place in the world, and in that regard, the work of the Institute has never been more vital.

Learn more at <http://www.rcmi.org/>

Several of our members are also members of RCMI and RCMI is accepting new memberships and if interested, see a member to be sponsored.

Five-year-old's lemonade stand raises thousands

A five-year-old Canadian girl has raised thousands of dollars for charity by selling lemonade from a stand in her driveway, it's reported.

Na'ama Uzan set up the stand last year to try and help her older brother, Nadav, who suffers from the rare genetic disorder Angelman Syndrome, the CTV News website reports. "It's going to make a cure," she tells the channel, while showing off the goodies on offer on her stand. Her family says the venture has now raised about 25,000 Canadian dollars for the Foundation for Angelman Syndrome Therapeutics, which is trying to find a cure for the condition. Her seven-year-old brother suffers from seizures, and has difficulty walking and talking. Na'ama doesn't just sell lemonade - she's adapted to Canada's seasonal changes, selling hot chocolate during the winter, and offering muffins and bread for any peckish customers.

According to CTV, her entrepreneurial spirit has been an inspiration to another family thousands of miles away in the US state of California. A couple there, whose son has the same condition, have raised a further \$20,000 which they're putting towards a research grant in Na'ama's name. Closer to home, the youngster gets a helping hand from her friends, who take it in turns to join her on the stand, the Toronto Star reports. Na'ada tells the paper she enjoys doing it because it helps her brother, adding that she loves him "more than a tonne. I can't say how much. It never ends."

Canada holds 4.4% of the production of oil on a global scale

The percentage has started to grow over the past few years, mainly because of the country's unconventional ways of yielding productivity.

Advanced technology is changing the way oil is produced in Canada; as soon as it becomes economically viable, the country may occupy a 3rd place, after Saudi Arabia and Venezuela. Its reserves are about 180 billion barrels. In 2012, Canada's refinery capacity was 2.06 million barrels/day, thus making it the 10th largest refiner worldwide.

As for its overall capacity per day, Canada's accounts for 2.2%. With 17 operational refineries, the country is the 6th largest producer of oil in the world.

Iqaluit has the 6th most remote airport in the world

Iqaluit is the capital of the Canadian territory of Nunavut. There are about 6,700 people living in this space today. Most of these people are Inuits who are native to the land.

Iqaluit has opened itself up to tourists as there are a number of hotels and restaurants around the area. Even with this in mind, Iqaluit is very difficult to reach as it is located on a spot on Baffin Island that is impossible to access by car.

There is an airport in the town with occasional flights to and from Ottawa but most of the flights into and out of the area are to other sparsely-populated spots in the Arctic Circle.

While the region is built along the water, the land is not particularly good for agriculture. The fishing industry is relatively strong, though.

In Canada you have a greater risk of developing MS than in any other country. 100,000 Canadians live with MS. Even people who are new to Canada are susceptible. Why Canada? Is it our climate? Our diet? A lack of vitamin D? We're getting close to understanding why.

It is important to understand the geographical characteristics of our country, While it is a vast territory, the population, about 20 million inhabitants, are spread thinly across the country. Consequently we lack the concentrated areas of population which might be found in Europe, and only Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg and Vancouver could be called cities in the European sense of the word. This, in itself, creates difficulties of organization because of the distances involved.

Multiple sclerosis is a cold climate disease, and it can be said that Canada qualifies as a cold climate

country.

Very little support is received from our one Federal and ten Provincial Governments. Funds for research must be forthcoming from the public and are collected by the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada. The Society is organized by Chapters which operate in the territory allotted to them, but all Chapters are in every way a part of the National Society. We have 30 Chapters in various cities and communities across Canada.

Several surveys have been made in Canada and it is estimated that there are between 20,000 and 25,000 cases in the country.

Multiple sclerosis is the most common neurological disease of the central nervous system affecting young adults in Canada.

The cause of multiple sclerosis is still undetermined, but it is known that the myelin sheath — the coating around the nerve fibres in the brain and spinal cord — is affected. Myelin aids in the transmission of nerve impulses through nerve fibres. If the damage to the myelin is slight, nerve impulses are transmitted with minor interruptions; but if the damage is severe, scar tissue replaces the myelin, and the nerve impulses may be completely disrupted. The name of the disease is derived from this process: "multiple" (many) since it occurs in a number of places within the nervous system, and "sclerosis" (scars) because of the hard tissues which replace the damaged myelin.

MS varies greatly from person to person and in the severity and course of the disease. For some, the disease follows a pattern of a series of attacks (exacerbations) punctuated by periods of complete recovery (remissions) throughout their lives. Many people have one or two attacks and are then symptom-free for the rest of their lives. Others may have a slowly progressive course with no remissions whatsoever.

Multiple sclerosis is a disease of young adults. It is most often diagnosed in those aged 20 to 40, although it has been found in people younger as well as older. The average age at diagnosis is 30. MS also occurs somewhat more frequently in women than in men.

Learn more at <http://endms.ca/> and watch a short video at: <https://youtu.be/CFdp32AEnhI>

I might add my Doctor prescribed me a daily pill of vitamin D a couple of years ago which I've taken ever since. She said she also takes this as well but double the dose she gives to me as women are more likely to get this condition.

PM marks successful visit to Canada by His Majesty King Abdullah II of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan



Prime Minister Stephen Harper and His Majesty King Abdullah II bin al Hussein of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan walk down the Hall of Honour.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper today marked the conclusion of a highly productive one-day visit to Canada by His Majesty King Abdullah II bin al Hussein of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. The visit was His Majesty's third visit to Canada.

During the visit, Prime Minister Harper and King Abdullah II discussed the Canada-Jordan bilateral relationship and a broad range of regional and international matters, including the fight against the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and the influx of hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees into Jordan.

Prime Minister Harper announced a series of initiatives that will assist Jordan with security and development challenges resulting from ISIS' actions and the Syrian crisis. The two countries also announced a memorandum of understanding on development cooperation effectiveness that will formalize the overarching framework for the Canada-Jordan development cooperation relationship, and the launch of negotiations toward an audiovisual coproduction treaty.

#### Quick Facts

Canada and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan enjoy strong bilateral relations based on shared strategic interests, a common commitment to peace and security and strong people-to-people ties between our two countries. Canada values Jordan's role as a moderate, tolerant and constructive influence in the Middle East and beyond.

Canada and Jordan are active members of the international coalition of over 60 countries addressing the serious threat to global and regional security that ISIS continues to represent.

In 2014, Canada identified Jordan as one of 25 countries of focus for bilateral development assistance programming. Canada also committed significant support in development assistance to Jordan to reinforce long-term development objectives in education, where Canada plays a leading role; promote sustainable economic growth; and support Jordan's efforts to cope with spillover from the crises in Syria and Iraq.

Canada commends Jordan for its generosity in accepting hundreds of thousands of refugees from Syria. A significant amount of Canada's humanitarian assistance goes to help conflict-affected people

in Jordan.

Canada is also providing security assistance to Jordan including to help Jordanian authorities provide safe transport of refugees from the border to registration centres, provide security and other essential services in and around refugee camps, mitigate chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear threats, and enhance their capacity to conduct counter-terrorism operations.

Jordan has consistently demonstrated its leadership in the pursuit of peace in the Middle East, promoting efforts to bring about a negotiated solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It is one of two Arab countries that have signed a peace treaty with Israel.

The Canada-Jordan Free Trade Agreement (FTA) entered into force on October 1, 2012 and is Canada's first FTA with an Arab country. This agreement provides Canadian businesses with greater access to markets in Jordan and throughout the region, creating new opportunities for the Canada-Jordan bilateral trade partnership.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper last met with King Abdullah II on the margins of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization summit in September 2014, in Cardiff (Wales), United Kingdom. The two leaders previously met in Jordan in January 2014 during Prime Minister Harper's visit to the Middle East. King Abdullah II last visited Canada in July 2007.

PM announces additional humanitarian support for people affected by crises in Iraq and Syria

Prime Minister Stephen Harper announced additional life-saving humanitarian assistance for those affected by the ongoing crises in Iraq and Syria. He made the announcement during a visit to Iraq.

As violence has intensified in Iraq and Syria, the humanitarian situation has deteriorated. Since January 2014, more than 2.6 million people have been displaced in Iraq as a result of the barbarity being perpetrated by the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). In Syria, the continued civil war, which began four years ago, has left 12.2 million people, including 5.6 million children, in desperate need of assistance, and forced over 3.9 million more to seek refuge outside of Syria.

The additional assistance will help meet the needs of those affected by the conflicts in Iraq and Syria – including the exodus of refugees to neighbouring countries – by supporting the provision of food, clean water, shelter, sanitation, health care and other basic services, and to address sexual and gender-based violence.

#### Quick Facts

As one of the largest country donors to the humanitarian crises in both Iraq and Syria, Canada's assistance is helping to provide food, clean water, shelter, sanitation and hygiene services, medical and relief supplies; protecting victims of sexual and gender-based violence; and improving access to educational opportunities for children in conflict-affected areas.

Canada continues to provide humanitarian support and development assistance in Iraq to help alleviate the suffering caused by ISIS. To date, Canada has provided \$67.4 million in humanitarian assistance to United Nations agencies, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and non-governmental organizations. In 2014, Canadian assistance contributed to the efforts of our humanitarian partners to provide food to 1.7 million people; shelter and relief supplies (such as hygiene kits, cooking materials and blankets) to 1.26 million people; and improved access to education opportunities for up to 500,000 children.

Since the beginning of the Syrian civil war in 2011, Canada has committed more than \$710 million in humanitarian, stabilization and security programming for Syrians affected by conflict and for countries neighbouring Syria.

Canada's contribution includes a leading role in launching the "No Lost Generation" initiative in Iraq. This initiative is providing education and protection assistance for up to 150,000 conflict-affected children.

In 2014, Canada also identified Iraq as a development partner country for bilateral assistance to help it meet its development objectives and build resilience to withstand conflict. Bilateral development assistance will support stability and prosperity in Iraq over the long-term, through initiatives aimed at building resilience, inclusive governance and decentralized decision-making.

The Iraqi-Canadian relationship has expanded considerably in recent years. Canada opened a new diplomatic mission in Baghdad in April 2013, followed by the opening of a trade representation office and a visa application centre in Erbil in 2014.

#### PM Wraps up successful visit to Iraq and Kuwait

Prime Minister Stephen Harper today concluded a successful visit to the Middle East that included stops in Iraq and Kuwait.

During the visit, Prime Minister Harper met with Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi and President of the Iraqi Kurdistan Region Masoud Barzani, to hear first hand of the security, humanitarian and development challenges facing the country. The leaders discussed Canada's military contribution and collaboration within the international coalition against the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), strengthening bilateral relations, and ways to support stability and prosperity in Iraq over the long-term.

To help address a number of the challenges discussed, in Baghdad, Iraq, Prime Minister Harper announced significant new support for life-saving humanitarian assistance for civilians affected by the ongoing crises in Iraq and Syria. Among other things, this additional assistance will support the provision of food, clean water, shelter, sanitation, health care and other basic services, and help address sexual and gender-based violence.

In Erbil, Iraq, the Prime Minister announced additional Canadian support for development and stabilization initiatives that will help improve water, sanitation and hygiene; rehabilitate infrastructure and schools; provide psychosocial and child protection services; improve governance; assist investigations into human rights violations in conflict-affected areas; and clear explosive remnants of war. The Prime Minister also announced that Canada would be providing bomb disposal robots and night vision goggles to help support security in Iraq and further protect the lives of Iraqi and international coalition forces.

In Kuwait, the Prime Minister joined members of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) stationed there for a meal and an overnight stay to thank them personally for their courage and efforts in the fight against ISIS. He was joined by retired National Hockey League stars Paul Coffey and Ryan Smyth. The Prime Minister also met with the Amir of Kuwait, His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, whom he thanked for hosting the CAF. The leaders discussed regional security and humanitarian challenges, as well as bilateral issues, including trade and investment. They highlighted 50 years of strong diplomatic relations.

#### Quick Facts

Canada is a leading member in the international coalition against ISIS. Canada's current military contribution to the coalition, known as Operation IMPACT, was recently extended to March 30, 2016. It includes: up to 69 Canadian Special Operations Forces personnel to advise and assist Iraqi forces in northern Iraq; a key aerial enabler force package consisting of approximately 280 aircrew and other personnel, one CC-150 Polaris aerial refuelling aircraft, up to two CP-140 Aurora aerial surveillance aircraft, as required; a strike force package consisting of approximately 320 aircrew and other personnel, and up to six CF-188 Hornet fighter aircraft, participating in coalition air strikes against ISIS targets in Iraq and Syria. In addition, Canada has provided approximately \$10 million in non-lethal equipment to Iraqi forces and transported over one million pounds of military equipment and ammunition donated by allies for Iraqi forces.

Canada is a top tier humanitarian donor to help alleviate the suffering caused by the crises in Iraq and Syria and has contributed generously to international efforts to aid the people in the region.

During the trip, Prime Minister Stephen Harper paid a visit to the St. Elia Church in Erbil, Iraq, one of

the new projects designated to receive support. The assistance (\$200,000) will help the church address the basic needs of families fleeing religious persecution by ISIS, including shelter, food and clean water.

The Catholic Church has opened its doors to thousands of Christians, Shia Muslims and other minorities—including the Yazidi—who have fled their homes in fear of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, or ISIS. In Erbil, Iraq, the St. Joseph and St. Elia churches are housing the families that escaped.

Many of the families lived middle-class lives just months ago. They are now sleeping in the same clothes they have worn for days and weeks at a time. They sleep on the ground or on thin mattresses in tents, in a Church warehouse, or under an open sky. The priests welcome all displaced families, but Church resources are stretched thin.

### 10 Mind-Boggling Facts About Canada

You might know a lot about your hometown or favourite city, but these surprising stats about Canada will make you look at our beautiful country in a whole new way.

#### Cold as Mars

If you've ever had to chisel your car out of a block of ice on your way to work or wear a thermal nose-warmer, you know Canada can get pretty cold in the winter. The average low for the month of January in Ottawa, Ont. is -14.4 C (6.1 F). That's pretty cold. However, a temperature recorded in 1947 in Snag, Yukon makes the rest of Canada's winter weather seem like a beach vacation. A temperature of -63 C (-81.4 F) was recorded in the small village of Snag on Feb. 3, 1947. That's roughly the same temperature as the surface of Mars.

#### Three Million Lakes

Canada has a lot of great things in abundance, like hockey players, parkas and Tim Hortons franchises. But did you know we also have more lake area than every other country in the world? It's true. The Great White North has 563 lakes larger than 100 square kilometres. The Great Lakes alone contain about 18 per cent of the world's fresh lake water. That's a lot of water. Makes you wonder if all of our country's allies are actually just thirsty.

#### Bigger Than the European Union

Ever had someone ask you if you know Joan from Vancouver or Paul from Toronto when you told them you were from St. John's? The vastness of our great country seems to be a little known secret to outsiders. Here are some facts to put Canada's size in perspective: It's bigger than the entire European Union (33 times bigger than Italy and 15 times bigger than France), more than 30 per cent larger than Australia, five times as big as Mexico, three times as big as India and about the same size as 81,975 Walt Disney Worlds put together. So, in other words, no, you don't know Joan or Paul.

#### Northernmost Settlement

At the northern tip of Ellesmere Island, just 817 kilometres from the North Pole, you'll find the northernmost permanently inhabited place in the world: Alert, Nunavut. It might not have malls or movie theatres but Alert is the temporary home to military and scientific personnel working in the area. The temporary home part will make sense once you see how cold this place gets: the warmest month, July, has a balmy average temperature of 3.4 C (38.1 F). By January, the coldest month, the mean temperature has plunged to -32.19 C (-26 F). No wonder they named it Alert.

#### The Longest Coastline

If you walked and walked and never stopped — not to eat, not to rest your feet, not to get some sleep— it would take you four and a half years to walk the length of Canada's coastline. While our country might not conjure up images of blue waters and white sandy beaches, Canada has the world's longest coastline, bordered on three sides by three different oceans: the Atlantic, Arctic and Pacific. To put that in perspective, Canada has 202,080 of the world's total 356,000 kilometres of

oceanfront property. The only other country that even comes close is Indonesia, which has 54,716 km of coastline.

### 10% of the World's Forests

Sure, everyone knows we have a lot of trees but did you know that Canada actually has 30 per cent of the world's boreal forest and 10 per cent of the world's total forest cover? An incredible 396.9 million hectares of forest and other wooded land can be found across the country — about 68 per cent of Canada's forests are coniferous. The best part of all? Most of Canada's forest land is publicly owned.

### The Only Walled City in North America

Quebec City has a special feature that makes it unique in Canada (and the U.S., for that matter): it has walls. No, really, Quebec City is the only city north of Mexico that still has fortified walls — known as the Fortifications of Quebec. First the French and later the British built up Quebec City's fortifications between the 17th and the 19th centuries. Quebec's entire historic district, including the ramparts, has since been declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO.

### The Most Bitumen

It's thick, it's sticky and Canada has an estimated 176.8 billion recoverable barrels of it. That's right, crude bitumen — a semi-solid source of petroleum — is available in abundance in Canada's oil sands. There's an estimated 249.67 billion accessible barrels of the black stuff in the world and Canada has about 70.8 per cent of it — four times more than Kazakhstan and six times more than Russia.

### National Parks Bigger Than Countries

Canada is so big that even our parks are bigger than countries. Just look at Nahanni National Park Reserve in the Northwest Territories: not only is it a sight to behold with massive waterfalls, it's also an incredible 30,050 square kilometres — bigger than Albania and Israel. Wood Buffalo National Park in Alberta and the Northwest Territories is even bigger at 44,807 square kilometres, which makes it bigger than Denmark and Switzerland.

### North America's Strongest Current

Get out your lifejacket and be ready for the swim of your life if you ever visit Seymour Narrows in British Columbia. The stretch of the Discovery Passage has some of the strongest tidal currents ever measured with flood speeds of 17 km/h and ebb speeds of 18 km/h.

Brooke Henderson, 17, cashing in on big-time golf talent  
Canadian pocketed more than \$150K in 2 LPGA events

After the whirlwind of the past 10 days, Brooke Henderson spent the better part of Monday morning carefully answering questions at Whistle Bear Golf Club, near Cambridge, Ont., where she'll compete in next month's LPGA Manulife Classic.

Learn more about her at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LwbkOwWs3B0>

Prime Minister Stephen Harper met today with Prime Minister Mark Rutte of the Netherlands.

The leaders met in the context of commemorations marking the 70th anniversary of the Liberation of the Netherlands at the end of the Second World War.

The leaders reaffirmed the unique and enduring bond between Canada and the Netherlands due to the Canadian military's leading role in liberating the Dutch people from enemy occupation, and the ongoing importance of memorializing our shared sacrifice in preserving freedom.

With respect to international security, Prime Minister Harper and Prime Minister Rutte reiterated the importance of maintaining a firm and united stance on Russia's aggression in Ukraine and of continued close cooperation in countering the threat from the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS).

They also confirmed the great value and strength of bilateral ties and their mutual desire to further enhance relations, including within the framework of the Canada-EU Trade Agreement.

They discussed the state of the global economy and the current challenges being addressed in Europe. In addition, they agreed to further cooperation in the promotion internationally of maternal, newborn and child health.

The two leaders agreed to stay in close touch on these and other issues.

Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters Canada (HIPPY)

Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) is an evidenced-based program that works with families in the home to support parents, primarily mothers, in their critical role as their child's first and most important teacher. HIPPY strengthens families and communities by empowering mothers to actively prepare their children for success in school.

Over the past 15 years, HIPPY Canada has reached out to provide more than 6,200 low-income newcomer, Aboriginal and other Canadian mothers with structured lessons and practical information that develop their own and their children's personal skills, ensuring both children and families a better opportunity to succeed in school and society.

In Canada, HIPPY's efforts to measure results, combined with more than 20 years of research in the United States and eight other countries, have proven the benefits of the program for children, mothers, families and communities.

Her Excellency Sharon Johnston received the inaugural Because Mothers Matter Award on May 6th 2015.

Learn more about them at <http://hippycanada.ca/>

PM Announces New Initiatives that will deepen relations between Canada and the Philippines



Prime Minister Stephen Harper today marked the conclusion of a highly productive visit to Canada by Benigno Aquino III, President of the Philippines. The three-day state visit, from May 7 to May 9, 2015, which included stops in Ottawa, Toronto and Vancouver, was President Aquino's first to Canada and

the first by a Filipino president since 1997.

The two leaders welcomed a number of key initiatives that will deepen the strong Canada-Philippines bilateral relationship.

In the area of commerce, the two countries launched exploratory discussions towards a free trade agreement and agreed to work towards upgrading the existing Foreign Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement. Canada sees increased engagement with the Asia-Pacific region, and with the Philippines, as a priority for Canada's economic growth.

The leaders also welcomed the signing of an important framework on mutual accountability for development cooperation that outlines the commitments of both governments to work together toward reducing poverty in the Philippines. As well, a number of projects were announced that will continue to help the Philippines recover from Typhoon Haiyan (locally known as Yolanda).

In addition, the leaders held in-depth discussions on regional and global security challenges. The Prime Minister announced Canadian support to a number of initiatives aimed at improving maritime security, countering terrorism in the Asia-Pacific region, and supporting the President's Bangsamoro Peace Process.

The two leaders also participated in a cultural event where they met with members of Canada's vibrant Filipino community. At this event, Prime Minister Harper paid tribute to the tremendous contributions this community continues to make to Canada, and the importance of the strong people-to-people ties to the Canada-Philippines bilateral partnership.

#### Quick Facts

Canada and the Philippines enjoy long-standing and positive bilateral relations based on shared democratic values and a mutual interest in expanding trade and commercial relations.

The relationship is strengthened by the roughly 700,000 people of Filipino origin now residing in Canada.

Prime Minister Harper made an official visit to the Philippines in November 2012, the first by a Canadian Prime Minister in 15 years. Prime Minister Harper and President Aquino met again on the margins of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Summit in Beijing in November 2014.

The Philippines is Canada's sixth-largest trading partner in Southeast Asia and is a priority market under Canada's Global Markets Action Plan. The Philippines is also a country of focus for the Government of Canada's international development efforts.

With bilateral merchandise trade totalling \$1.8 billion in 2014 and a population of approximately 100 million people, the Philippines is an important market for Canadian businesses.

Canada is proud to have supported the development of the Bangsamoro peace agreement through our contribution to the work of the Government of the Philippines' Independent Commission on Policing.

#### Gordie Howe International Bridge

Prime Minister Stephen Harper today announced that the future publicly-owned bridge between Windsor, Ontario, and Detroit, Michigan, will be named the Gordie Howe International Bridge. He was joined by Diane Finley, Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lisa Raitt, Minister of Transport, Jeff Watson, Member of Parliament for Essex, Michigan Governor Rick Snyder, and members of Gordie Howe's family.

The Gordie Howe International Bridge is expected to be completed and in service in 2020. The bridge will accelerate the flow of goods and services and provide a much-needed alternative at the busiest commercial land border crossing on the Canada-United States (U.S.) border, creating thousands of jobs and opportunities on both sides of the border. The bridge will feature a total of six lanes, associated border inspection plazas, and direct connections to Highway 401 in Ontario and Interstate-

75 in Michigan.

Today's announcement builds on the work done to date between Canada and the U.S. on the Beyond the Border Action Plan and Regulatory Cooperation Council Action Plan to strengthen our long-term security and trade relationship. These plans outlined concrete measures to facilitate trade and travel, improve security and economic competitiveness, and align regulatory approaches between the two countries.

#### Quick Facts

Gordie Howe was born in Floral, Saskatchewan, and during his career was known as "Mr. Hockey". He has distinguished himself as one of the most prolific and talented hockey players of all time.

The future Gordie Howe International Bridge will be undertaken as a public-private partnership to allow the Government to leverage the expertise and innovation of the private sector to deliver this complex project on time and on budget.

The Windsor-Detroit trade corridor is the busiest commercial land border crossing on the Canada-U.S. border, handling 31 per cent of Canada-U.S. trade carried by truck. In 2014, approximately 2.5 million trucks carrying over \$100 billion in trade used this corridor.

Canada and the U.S. have the largest bilateral trading relationship in the world, with two-way trade in goods and services of nearly \$870 billion in 2014. Almost \$2.4 billion worth of goods and services crosses the Canada-U.S. border every day – approximately \$1.7 million every single minute.

Since the North American Free Trade Agreement came into effect in 1993, Canada-U.S. trade has more than doubled.

Canada is the top export destination for 35 states.

The U.S. is a priority market under Canada's Global Markets Action Plan.

#### Major new tourism campaign

Prime Minister Stephen Harper today announced support for a major new tourism campaign to attract more American visitors to destinations across Canada. The Prime Minister also announced further support for the Grosse Île and the Irish Memorial National Historic Site, the tourist destination where he launched the new tourism campaign. He was joined by Denis Lebel, Minister of Infrastructure, Communities and Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, Maxime Bernier, Minister of State (Small Business and Tourism, and Agriculture), and Blake Richards, Member of Parliament for Wild Rose.

The Connecting America campaign, which will be undertaken from 2015 to 2018, will use new technologies and innovative approaches to reach out to travellers from the United States (U.S.). The initiative will enable the Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC) to collaborate with partners in the private sector, international travel trade (e.g., travel agents, tour operators) and the provinces and territories to promote Canada as a premier tourism destination, creating exciting new opportunities for the sector. It will also help promote economic growth by creating or maintaining an estimated 2,900 jobs across Canada.

The support being provided for the Grosse Île and the Irish Memorial National Historic Site will help create jobs and opportunities by ensuring the integrity of the site is maintained for Canadians and international tourists to enjoy for years to come.

Today's announcements are some of many measures undertaken by the Government of Canada to strengthen Canada's tourism sector. Other notable examples include a campaign to increase awareness for the 100th anniversary of the Calgary Stampede, efforts to boost Japanese visitors to Prince Edward Island, a campaign promoting Ontario to British tourists, as well as funding for tourism promotion activities such as the Québec City Summer Festival and support for the restoration of the historic walls around Old Québec City. The recently announced Canada 150 Community Infrastructure Program will also provide significant support for existing community and cultural infrastructure across

the country that tourists visit.

## Quick Facts

The U.S. is Canada's largest inbound tourism market, representing approximately 70 per cent of overnight tourists to Canada. In 2014, 11.5 million overnight tourists from the U.S. came to Canada. With growth from U.S. tourists at 0.3 per cent last year, marketing opportunities exist to raise awareness of Canada's exciting and authentic tourism experiences.

Tourism makes an important contribution to the Canadian economy, with businesses large and small employing hundreds of thousands of workers in communities across the country. In 2014, the tourism sector provided nearly 628,000 direct jobs, and tourism revenues in Canada reached \$88.5 billion.

Today's announcement also supports the small and medium-sized tourism businesses that make up approximately 98 per cent of the tourism market in Canada, creating jobs and economic growth.

The Grosse Île and the Irish Memorial National Historic Site commemorates the importance of immigration to Canada, particularly via the port of entry of Québec, from the early 19th century to the First World War. Grosse Île also reminds Canadians of the tragic events experienced by the Irish immigrants on this site, primarily during the typhus epidemic of 1847, and the role the island played as a quarantine station for the Port of Québec from 1832 to 1937. At the time, the island was the main point of entry for immigrants coming to Canada.

The CTC is Canada's national tourism marketing organization. A federal Crown corporation of the Government of Canada, it leads the Canadian tourism sector in marketing Canada as a premier four-season tourism destination where travellers can enjoy extraordinary experiences. It provides a consistent voice for Canada in the international tourism marketplace.

According to a study from the Reputation Institute, Canada is the top country in the world to visit, live in, study and attend or organize events. A beautiful and enjoyable country, friendly and welcoming people, contributions to global culture and safe environment were key drivers in the rankings.

Parks Canada is located in every province and territory in Canada. With 44 national parks, four national marine conservation areas, and 167 national historic sites, Parks Canada is the premier heritage tourism provider in Canada, receiving approximately 20 million visitors annually.

## Canada's Potential

Here are two areas where Canada can do better...

### 1. Why is Canada so far behind in geothermal power?

There is great potential to deploy the natural energy sources beneath the ground, but economics and lack of will have stalled development

The steam rising from nearby hot springs is still the only real trace of the liquid treasure that flows deep underneath the Lakelse region south of Terrace, British Columbia.

By springtime, however, there are likely to be a lot of manmade clues signifying the springs' growing importance. That's when crews with Calgary-based Borealis GeoPower expect to begin drilling a series of narrow holes up to 3.5 kilometres into the Earth's crust in a bid to find super-heated water.

The project is still in the early exploration phase. But the next few months could mark a major turning point in what's been a long and heavily bureaucratic battle to develop the country's first commercial geothermal power plant. Depending on what they find underground, it also promises to be a satisfying 'I-told-you-so' moment for those who feel Canada has been too slow to invest in the next generation of renewable energy. "We are pretty determined," said Tim Thompson, Borealis CEO. "We think the government has missed the boat, broadly speaking, on the geothermal opportunity and we would love to prove them wrong."

Geothermal energy is generated using the naturally-occurring heat found in rocks and liquid deep underground. A geothermal power plant uses steam captured directly or indirectly from the heat to

drive a turbine, which, in turn, produces electricity. Environmentalists have long championed the renewable nature of the process. Most geothermal facilities operate on a closed-loop system, where the extracted water is pumped directly back into the ground after it's been used for electricity production, and can be reused for decades.

Energy experts say Canada has the potential to be a global leader in geothermal power production. The Canadian Geothermal Energy Association (CanGEA), a non-profit advocacy group, estimates the country could produce 5,000 MW of geothermal power by 2025. That's enough to power five million homes and replace the installed coal-fired power plant fleet in Alberta, as well as all of the coal- and natural-gas-fired power plants in Saskatchewan, CanGEA says. Yet Canada has virtually no commercial power facilities planned. The handful of proposals that are on the books, including the Lakelse project, are years from completion.

Read more about this at:

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/partners/ge-innovation/why-is-canada-so-far-behind-in-geothermal-power/article21086087/>

And also <http://borealisgeopower.com/>

## 2. Canada's Strawberry Crop

Canada is home to some of the best berry-growing conditions on earth, not to mention our farmers are tops for environmental responsibility. But how are local Canadian strawberry growers doing these days anyway? Not too good. Coupled with a short growing season - lasting roughly one month - the farmer has only a small window of a couple of days to harvest the ripe fruit and get it to market before the delicate strawberry flesh turns to mush.

This month I read a very interesting article about the UK Strawberry Crop in which it said...

The miracle of the 20-week strawberry season

The UK strawberry industry is expected to smash its sales record this year by £50m, a record it only set last year. What's behind the blooming strawberry?

In 1990 the British strawberry season lasted about six weeks. Now it typically stretches from May to October - about 20 weeks.

And that's just the official season, which marks the point when supermarkets are stocked 100% with British strawberries - replacing foreign imports from the likes of Israel, Jordan, Morocco and Spain. These countries have an inherent advantage over the UK - a warmer, sunnier climate.

But British strawberry growers have been innovatively trying to squeeze every last strawberry from the UK's unpredictable climate. And last year there were still British strawberries on the shelves in December for the first time.

And so it would seem that there is tremendous scope to increase our own crop were we to follow the UK model.

Read more about this at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/transport/agriculture/strawberries.htm>

## Ontario

What are the first things that come to mind when you think of Ontario? For me, it's the splendour of Niagara Falls, the coziness of Muskoka, skating on Rideau Canal and, of course, the excitement and electricity of Toronto. But there's so much more than that: with nearly 14 million people, Ontario has the highest population of any of Canada's provinces and territories and it employs close to 50% of Canada's high-tech, financial and knowledge-intensive industries. In other words, Ontario means business.



Miss World Canada says father threatened in China

The newly-crowned winner of the Miss World Canada beauty pageant says her father has been threatened in China because of her stance against human rights abuses.



Anastasia Lin, 25, won the Miss World Canada beauty pageant in Vancouver on May 16. She says she received a text message from her father four days later, urging her to stop talking about human rights abuses in China.

"You must stop all the political and human rights work you are doing, otherwise I will stop all support to you," he told her. Lin says she tried to call her father back after receiving the text, but he refused to speak to her out of fear his phone might be tapped.

"Whatever you have sent to me, anything political, has been censored," he told her via text. "Do you know the secret security force has come to me?"

Lin says she won the Miss World Canada pageant in part because of her passion for human rights activism, and her efforts to spread awareness about abuses in China. She says her work seems to have upset the Chinese government, and her father is feeling pressure because of it.

#### Aga Khan

Prime Minister Stephen Harper today held a productive meeting with His Highness the Aga Khan, who was visiting Ottawa in his capacity as Imam (spiritual leader) of the Ismaili community.

During the meeting, Prime Minister Harper once again expressed his deepest condolences to the Aga Khan for the cowardly terrorist attack that took place earlier this month in Pakistan targeting Ismaili Muslims. The two leaders discussed the threat posed by violent extremists and their persecution and murder of religious and ethnic minorities. They also spoke about efforts to increase support for international development around the world, including improving maternal, newborn and child health.

The Prime Minister reiterated Canada's commitment to continuing to work with the Aga Khan on areas of mutual interest, including through partnership with the Aga Khan Foundation Canada.

#### Quick Facts

Prime Minister Harper last met with His Highness the Aga Khan in September 2014 during a ceremony marking

The Aga Khan was formally granted honorary citizenship in May 2010 during an official visit to Canada.

In February 2014, the Aga Khan became the first faith leader to address the Joint Session of Canada's Parliament.

The Government of Canada and the Aga Khan Foundation Canada cooperate in development projects around the world, including in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Eastern Africa. Collaboration has been particularly strong on promoting maternal, newborn and child health – one of Canada's top development priorities – including in Afghanistan, Mali, Mozambique, Pakistan and Tanzania.

Established in 1980, the Aga Khan Foundation Canada is a registered Canadian charity and an agency of the worldwide Aga Khan Development Network, a group of development agencies with individual mandates that address social, economic and cultural dimensions of development. Active in 30 countries, these agencies share a mission to improve living conditions and opportunities for the poor, without regard to their faith, origin or gender.

Our longstanding development partnership was evidenced in May 2014, as the Aga Khan attended Prime Minister Harper's Saving Every Woman Every Child Summit in Toronto, where His Highness made a keynote address.

As one of the largest country donors to the humanitarian crises in both Iraq and Syria, Canada's assistance is helping to provide food, clean water, shelter, sanitation and hygiene services, medical and relief supplies; protecting victims of sexual and gender-based violence; and improving access to educational opportunities for children in conflict-affected areas.

King Willem-Alexander thanks Canada for Dutch liberation during Ottawa visit  
Government of Canada honours Veterans during wreath-laying ceremony with King and Queen of The Netherlands

The Honourable Erin O'Toole, Minister of Veterans Affairs, took part in a wreath-laying ceremony at the National War Memorial with Their Majesties King Willem-Alexander and Queen Máxima of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

It is an honoured tradition that visiting dignitaries from Canada's allies lay a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, at the National War Memorial.

At the ceremony, the Royal Netherlands Air Force Band performed the Canadian National Anthem while the Central Band of the Canadian Armed Forces performed the National Anthem of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Read more of the visit at  
<http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/king-willem-alexander-thanks-canada-for-dutch-liberation-during-ottawa-visit-1.3089247>

Reilly Group of Companies  
Integrated Security and Risk Management Solutions

As the Prior of St James Priory is also the President of this company I thought you might be interested to know that I have done a profile on them on the Electric Canadian web site. It's part of the work I am embarking on to produce profiles of significant Canadian companies. You can view this at:  
<http://www.electriccanadian.com/transport/reilly/index.htm>

Should any of you have your own companies or indeed work for significant Canadian companies I'd be very happy to receive similar information from you. So perhaps talk to the boss of the company to persuade him or her to provide us with a profile?

Canada hosts FIFA Woman's World Cup Football in Canada  
FIFA has of course been much in the news this past week but the women's game is flourishing and our Canadian team are serious contenders to win the event. Next week will see the start of the

competition so do support our Canadian Women!

For more information see:

<http://www.fifa.com/womensworldcup/index.html>

<http://www.canadasoccer.com/>

#### Pan Am Games

The Pan-American or Pan American Games (also known colloquially as the Pan Am Games) are a major sporting event in the Americas featuring summer sports, in which thousands of athletes participate in a variety of competitions. The competition is held between athletes from nations of the Americas, every four years in the year before the Summer Olympic Games. This year they are in Toronto during July.

The Americas, or America, also known as the Western Hemisphere, and the New World, are the combined continental landmasses of North America and South America. Along with their associated islands, they cover 8.3% of the Earth's total surface area (28.4% of its land area). The topography is dominated by the American Cordillera, a long chain of mountains that run the length of the west coast. The flatter eastern side of the Americas is dominated by large river basins, such as the Amazon, Mississippi, and La Plata. Since the Americas extend 14,000 km (8,700 mi) from north to south, the climate and ecology vary widely, from the arctic tundra of Northern Canada, Greenland, and Alaska, to the tropical rain forests in Central America and South America.

You can learn more at <http://www.toronto2015.org/>

#### Medical Alert Foundation Canada

The voice for over 1.1 million Canadians

MedicAlert didn't start in a boardroom.

In 1953, a teenage girl named Linda Collins cut her finger badly. The hospital gave her a tetanus shot, but Linda had an allergic reaction and went into anaphylactic shock. She almost died. Her terrified parents, Dr. and Mrs. Marion Collins, began attaching a note about her antitoxin allergy to her coat whenever she had to leave home.

Eventually, they had a silver ID bracelet custom-made for Linda with her medical needs engraved. As more people began discovering how rapid access to medical information could save lives, the Collins family project eventually grew into a charity; and their living room headquarters became a worldwide network.

Canadian Medic Alert Foundation Inc. has protected over 1 million Canadians since 1961. It's the only medical ID bracelet that supports Canadians with 24-hour notification of loved ones, and a special hotline for paramedics to get access to detailed health records in less than 5 seconds.

Feel safer doing the things you love to do knowing you have 24/7 protection with MedicAlert. When seconds count, paramedics will immediately know your medical conditions and treat you effectively.

#### YOUR LIFESAVING MEMBERSHIP INCLUDES:

A comprehensive electronic medical profile with unlimited updates

A 24-hour Emergency Hotline staffed with medically trained specialists available in 140+ languages

Family notification immediately after the hotline is called

Follow-up with you after the Emergency Hotline is contacted

A wallet card with your emergency contacts and health information

#### MEDICALERT MEMBERSHIP FEES:

The MedicAlert membership fee is \$5 per month plus a one-time \$24 registration fee to cover the initial set-up of your medical record.

Learn more at <https://www.medicalert.ca/>

If you are not already a member get a FREE \$39 MedicAlert ID or \$39 OFF your purchase and FREE shipping with any new membership enrolment. Enter coupon code 'W0515N' in shopping cart.

## Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada

There is an emerging and compelling desire to put the events of the past behind us so that we can work towards a stronger and healthier future. The truth telling and reconciliation process as part of an overall holistic and comprehensive response to the Indian Residential School legacy is a sincere indication and acknowledgement of the injustices and harms experienced by Aboriginal people and the need for continued healing. This is a profound commitment to establishing new relationships embedded in mutual recognition and respect that will forge a brighter future. The truth of our common experiences will help set our spirits free and pave the way to reconciliation.

Canada's TRC is unique from other commissions around the world in that its scope is primarily focussed on the experiences of children. Its focus of research spans more than 150 years, one of the longest durations ever examined. It is also the first court-ordered truth commission to be established. As such, the court plays an ongoing role in the implementation and supervision of the commission.

Learn more about their work at: <http://www.trc.ca/>

Read a CBC article at <http://tinyurl.com/nm28nc4>

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## Canadian History

### Life in Early Canada

This is a series of old films produced by the National Film Board of Canada. You can watch these at [http://www.electriccanadian.com/pioneering/early\\_canada.htm](http://www.electriccanadian.com/pioneering/early_canada.htm)

### Jam Tin Bombs

'The Damson and Apple jam, so plentifully supplied to the Canadian warriors, is made by one Tickler. Henceforth he will be doubly famous. The tin receptacles of this delicious compound, when empty, are filled with high explosives, fitted with fuses and used as bombs, or hand grenades. Hence the men specially detailed for bomb throwing are now known as 'Tickler's Artillery.' - Thanks to the RCMI newsletter for this snippet.



Read more at <http://www.rodcollins.com/wordpress/ticklers-jam-grimsby-a-look-at-the-history>

### Canada at War

I have to say that I don't think that our Canadian Forces get anything like the publicity they deserve both in history or today. While I can't do too much about our forces of today without contributions coming in I can do something about telling the story of our role and achievements in history. The following stories and videos paint an astonishing picture of just how good our forces have always been even though the world is sadly ignorant of the role we have played in history.

### Waging Peace: Canada in Afghanistan

Canada's Only Independently funded and filmed documentary on our mission in Afghanistan.

Follows Canadian Richard Fitoussi on a personal quest into the fiercest parts of Afghanistan's war-torn southern frontier to learn why Canadian soldiers are dying in a mission that has sparked more controversy than any other military intervention in Canadian history.

Embedded with the Canadian military alongside established war correspondents. Fitoussi sees for himself what is at stake for the Afghan people and the Canadians who serve in our name.

As his journey unfolds, Fitoussi is faced with the realities of modern day peacekeeping, and tries to distinguish between the reality on the ground and the rhetoric of the U.S. led "war on terror". In the end he witnesses the ultimate sacrifice of young Canadians in a journey that nearly costs him his life.

You can watch this video at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/forces/afghanistan.htm>

### Canada and the Korean War

After the Second World War, Canada rapidly demobilized. When the Korean War broke out, Canada needed several months to bring its military forces up to strength, and eventually formed part of British Commonwealth Forces Korea. Canadian land forces thus missed most of the early back-and-forth campaigns because they did not arrive until 1951, when the attrition phase of the war had largely started. Canadian troops fought as part of the 1st Commonwealth Division, and distinguished themselves at the Battle of Kapyong and in other land engagements. HMCS Haida and other ships of the Royal Canadian Navy were in active service in the Korean War. Although the Royal Canadian Air force did not have a combat role in Korea, twenty-two RCAF fighter pilots flew on exchange duty with the USAF in Korea. The RCAF was also involved with the transportation of personnel and supplies in support of the Korean War.

Canada sent 26,791 troops to fight in Korea. There were 1,558 Canadian casualties, including 516 dead. Korea has often been described as "The Forgotten War", because for most Canadians it is overshadowed by the Canadian contributions to the two world wars. Canada is a signatory to the original 1953 armistice, but did not keep a garrison in South Korea after 1955.

See this video series at <http://www.electriccanadian.com/forces/korean.htm>

John Weir Foote, VC, CD (May 5, 1904 – May 2, 1988)  
By Stephen Hayes



Library and Archives Canada / Bibliothèque et Archives Canada  
[www.collectionscanada.gc.ca](http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca)

PHOTO: Rev. John Weir Foote was awarded a Victoria Cross for his valour during the Second World War. The Presbyterian chaplain was on the beach during the attack on Dieppe and, after his capture, he spent about three years in various prisoner of war camps.

Rev. John Weir Foote, a Presbyterian chaplain, served both at Port Hope, Ont., and Fort Coulonge, Que., prior to signing up for duty in the war. At the back of Honorary Major Walter Steven's book, *In This Sign*, we are given a list of honours and awards for all World War II chaplains. At the top of the list is the Victoria Cross, followed by, "H/Maj. J.W.Foote." Foote is the only chaplain in Canadian history to be awarded a V.C.

We can be assured of the bravery of many of the 800 chaplains who served our forces in that conflict, and the courage of tens of thousands of women and men who suffered and died in that war.

While serving as the minister of St. Andrew's, Cobourg, Ont., I got to know Foote rather well and in May 1988 I conducted his funeral, an event made quite spectacular by the extensive military presence in the small town. The military honours at the funeral of a V.C. recipient are the same as those accorded the funeral of a Governor General. It was a memorable and moving sight to see all those soldiers giving honour to one of their own. In fact, Foote talked very little about the war and in his exceedingly few references he insisted that he was not a hero. But clearly he was.

The actual citation includes the following account: "Honorary Captain John Weir Foote ... was regimental chaplain ... with the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry at Dieppe on the 19th August, 1942. Upon landing on the beach under heavy fire, he attached himself to the Regimental Aid Post ... During the subsequent period of approximately eight hours, while action continued, this officer not only assisted the regimental medical officer in ministering to the wounded, but time and again left this shelter to inject morphine, give first aid and carry wounded personnel from the open beach to the Regimental Aid Post. On these occasions with utter disregard for his personal safety Honorary Captain Foote exposed himself to an inferno of fire and saved many lives by his gallant efforts." We then read that he refused an offer to escape from the beach on one of the boats returning to England, a decision that could well have cost him his life but in fact led to about three years of imprisonment in a German prisoner of war camp.

Actually, he spent time in no less than three camps, often preaching to as many as 1,000 men on a Sunday. His presence there would have been invaluable spiritually and, through leadership, he helped keep up camp morale. In addition to services, Bible studies and pastoral work, he was involved in many other activities. One camp went on to have not only a theatre group, but an orchestra, lectures and educational efforts. Hundreds of men took the University of London matriculation examinations, all conducted under the supervision of the chaplains. Foote was also allowed to visit one day a week at the large prisoner of war hospital in Stargart. In February 1945, as the Russians approached, the camp was evacuated and for 37 days the men marched westward and ended up at Stalag 10B, near Bremen, where they remained until liberated by the British on April 29, 1945.

When Foote was freed he worried that he might be punished for having allowed himself to be captured. Instead, he discovered he was famous, a hero whose actions humble us still. He donated his V.C. to the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa. Amazingly, we actually have a photo of him and others surrendering to German troops taken on a street in Dieppe; it's a group of about 25 men with arms raised.

Why Vimy Ridge will be remembered forever  
Ottawa, April 08, 2015

Ninety-Eight years ago, on April 9th, 1917, 100,000 Canadians attacked a German army deeply entrenched in the French countryside. By the time the Battle of Vimy Ridge was over, 3,598 Canadians were dead. But, by their sacrifice, one of the most significant battles of the First World War was won.

Vimy was a turning point in the war and a turning point for Canada. For the first time, the entire Canadian Army had fought together on the field of battle under their own flag. For many, the Battle of Vimy Ridge marks the beginning of modern Canada. And today, a proud memorial stands there on what the grateful French nation has proclaimed to be Canadian soil, so that the courage and sacrifice of those brave men will be remembered forever.

"There may be no place on earth that makes us feel more Canadian," Prime Minister Stephen Harper said when he visited Vimy to mark the 90th anniversary of the battle in 2007. "Because we sense, all around us, the presence of our ancestors."

"If we close our eyes we can see them, dressed in their olive khaki uniforms, rifles slung over their shoulders, the distinct Canadian wide-brimmed helmet perched on their heads. They are emerging from the filthy trenches, trudging through the boot-sucking mud, passing skeletons of trees and the shell holes washed in blood, enveloped in the horrible noises of war. Overhead, the red ensign is fluttering in the breeze."

The Prime Minister told the assembled crowd, which included the Queen, thousands of school children and Canadian veterans, that the battle of Vimy Ridge was in many ways the creation story of

Canada.

“Often the historical importance of events is only realized with the benefit of hindsight,” he said. “But at Vimy everybody immediately understood the enormity of the achievement.”

Brigadier General Alexander Ross famously said that when he looked out across the battlefield he saw ‘Canada from the Atlantic to the Pacific on parade,’ and that he felt he was witnessing ‘the birth of a nation.’

“There are no Canadians alive today who remember the battle first hand. But, the Prime Minister said that “the veterans of Vimy passed their stories to their children, who passed it to theirs, who passed it to us, who are passing it to our children thousands of whom are with us today. And some of them will return here someday with their children and grandchildren.”

The Prime Minister spoke of the monument that stands there to remind the world forever of the 11,285 Canadians who fell in France and who have no known grave.

“Nothing tells our story of the First World War as eloquently or as powerfully as Walter Allward’s extraordinary monument,” The PM said.



“It reminds us of the enormity of their sacrifice and the importance of the duty all of us have to follow their example: to love our country and defend its freedom to the end.”

He recalled that Allward was inspired by a dream.

“He saw thousands of Canadians fighting and dying on a vast battlefield. Then, through an avenue of giant poplars, a mighty army came marching to their rescue. ‘They were the dead,’ Allward said. ‘They rose in masses...and entered the fight to aid the living...I have tried to show this in this monument to Canada’s fallen, what we owed them and will forever owe them.’

“It is sometimes said that the dead speak to the living,” the Prime Minister concluded. “So at this special place, on this special day, let us, together, listen to the final prayer of those whose sacrifice we are honouring today. We may hear them say softly: I love my family, I love my comrades, I love my country, and I will defend their freedom to the end.”

Read more at:

<http://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/memorials/overseas/first-world-war/france/vimy>

See video at <https://youtu.be/w2OslpiDVwI>

Vimy Ridge Heaven to Hell - Full Documentary

<https://youtu.be/xaywRnWrhzI>



**Educational Tours**

Canada's History Tours

Experience our past. Shape our future

Vimy Ridge. Beaumont-Hamel. Juno Beach. The Plains of Abraham. Imagine your students or cadets having truly life-changing travel experiences by giving them the chance to stand in the places where our country's history was shaped.

We are Canada's leaders in developing awe-inspiring, immersive history tours that celebrate the achievements of great people, the crucial events that shaped our nation, and will make your textbooks and cadet program come to life.

Together with organizations like The Vimy Foundation, Canada's History Society, and the Canadian War Museum, we're proud to be part of giving students and cadets a better understanding of Canada's past, so they can help shape our future.

Learn more and watch a video about this company at:

<http://www.eftours.ca/educational-tours/collections/canadas-history-tours>

See what an EF Tour is like in this Ottawa film clip at:

<http://www.eftours.ca/educational-tour/war-ottawa>

National Commemoration of the Battle of the Atlantic

Canadians from across the country gathered to commemorate the sacrifices made by thousands of Canadians who fought during the Battle of the Atlantic - the longest, largest and most complex campaign of the Second World War.

The national commemoration was held in Ottawa at the National War Memorial, on the 70th anniversary of the storied battle.

Dignitaries on hand for the national event included Canada's Governor General David Johnston, Pierre Lemieux, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Vice-Admiral Mark Norman, Commander Royal Canadian Navy.

You can learn more about this battle at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/forces/battleatlantic.htm>

See a video at: <https://youtu.be/jnG27sehkk4>

VE-Day: Why Dutch-Canadian connections have stayed so strong

Second World War ties, liberation of Holland still cherished by Dutch-Canadians. Read an article about this at:

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ve-day-why-dutch-canadian-connections-have-stayed-so-strong-1.3057318>

WWII : Canada & The Netherlands. See a 7 part video at:

<https://youtu.be/WEnKaRYaCYo>

The Liberation of Holland

[https://youtu.be/5LAPz\\_DD\\_mQ](https://youtu.be/5LAPz_DD_mQ)

Dutch Liberation Parade Toronto, May 2, 2015

[https://youtu.be/6Zt9Qy\\_f6-8](https://youtu.be/6Zt9Qy_f6-8)

The Liberation of the Netherlands

<https://youtu.be/PzeuixDhsAw>

PM speaks at 70th VE-Day celebration

<http://www.cbc.ca/player/News/World/ID/2666359922/>

And of course you can learn more from a first hand account of Matthew Gaasenbeek, Prior II of St James Priory, in his book "An Immigrant's Story: Memoirs of a Dutch Canadian" which can be read at:

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

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The Self-Interpreting Bible by the Rev. John Brown

I got in an email from an old friend in Scotland, now in his eighties, commenting on some of the topics in the last newsletter. He is a son of the manse and is well versed in religious matters.

Alastair, thank you for the links, very interesting, but the article about the present fighting is very depressing.

I can do no better than give the link from the Self Interpreting Bible, on your site.

<http://www.electricscotland.com/bible/brown/bible%20051.jpg>

In the second column under the line 1866 or 150 years from then.....

There are Bible reference, given to justify the comments. Well worth looking up these references.

That gives us 2016, and what do we have ongoing world wide?

The comments mentioned in the Bible are...

About this time, or 150 years later, Christ's witnesses, who have been much persecuted, and often reduced very low, will be almost utterly extirpated by Antichristian influence. But God,—who has already scourged the Antichristians by the wars of the Saracens, Seljukian and Ottoman Turks, and by the contests between the popes and emperors of Germany, or between rival popes, or by the Protestant reformation,—will, by terrible wars, or some other means, continued perhaps for thirty years, pull down the Antichristian and Mahometan powers, and introduce the glorious thousand years of the saints; Ps.2.9.; 21.8...12;—110.5,6; Is.66.6,15,16; Dan.2.34,35, 44,45;—7.14,26,27;—11.45;—12, 11,22; Rev. 11.2, 7...19;—14.8...20;—17.14...17;—xvi. xviii.xix.—20.1...6; Eze. xxxvii. xlviii, &c.

I've always been impressed with this Bible and if interested in it you can learn more about it and download the 4 volume version I have on the site at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/bible/brown/>

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The Written Defense of the Rev. Mehdi Dibaj Delivered to the Sari Court of Justice - Sari, Iran December 3, 1993

A born Muslim who decided to follow and serve Jesus and paid the price with his life.

The depth of Iranian Christians' commitment to Christ came to the forefront when both the secular and Christian news media published Rev. Mehdi Dubai's written defense in early 1994. Christian leaders have since recognized it as one of the most important documents ever produced by the Church.

"In the Holy Name of God who is our life and existence"

With all humility I express my gratitude to the Judge of all heaven and earth for this precious opportunity, and with brokenness I wait upon the Lord to deliver me from this court trial according to His promises. I also beg the honored members of the court who are present to listen with patience to

my defense and with respect for the Name of the Lord.

I am a Christian. As a sinner I believe Jesus has died for my sins on the cross and by His resurrection and victory over death, has made me righteous in the presence of the Holy God. The true God speaks about this fact in His Holy Word, the Gospel (Injil). Jesus means Savior "because He will save His people from their sins." Jesus paid the penalty of our sins by His own blood and gave us a new life so that we can live for the glory of God by the help of the Holy Spirit and be like a dam against corruption, be a channel of blessing and healing, and be protected by the love of God.

In response to this kindness, He has asked me to deny myself and be His fully surrendered follower, and not to fear people even if they kill my body, but rather rely on the creator of life who has crowned me with the crown of mercy and compassion. He is the great protector of His beloved ones as well as their great reward.

I have been charged with "apostasy!" The invisible God who knows our hearts has given assurance to us, as Christians, that we are not among the apostates who will perish but among the believers who will have eternal life. In Islamic Law (Sharia'), an apostate is one who does not believe in God, the prophets or the resurrection of the dead, We Christians believe in all three!

They say "You were a Muslim and you have become a Christian." This is not so. For many years I had no religion. After searching and studying I accepted God's call and believed in the Lord Jesus Christ in order to receive eternal life. People choose their religion but a Christian is chosen by Christ. He says, "You have not chosen me but I have chosen you." Since when did He choose me? He chose me before the foundation of the world. People say, "You were a Muslim from your birth." God says, "You were a Christian from the beginning." He states that He chose us thousands of years ago, even before the creation of the universe, so that through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ we may be His. A Christian means one who belongs to Jesus Christ.

The eternal God who sees the end from the beginning and who has chosen me to belong to Him, knew from the beginning those whose heart would be drawn to Him and also those who would be willing to sell their faith and eternity for a pot of porridge. I would rather have the whole world against me, but know that the Almighty God is with me. I would rather be called an apostate, but know that I have the approval of the God of glory, because man looks at the outward appearance but God looks at the heart. For Him who is God for all eternity nothing is impossible. All power in heaven and on earth is in His hands.

The Almighty God will raise up anyone He chooses and bring down others, accept some and reject others, send some to heaven and other to hell. Now because God does whatever He desires, who can separate us from the love of God? Or who can destroy the relationship between the creator and the creature or defeat a life that is faithful to his Lord? The faithful will be safe and secure under the shadow of the Almighty! Our refuge is the mercy seat of God who is exalted from the beginning. I know in whom I have believed, and He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him to the end until I reach the Kingdom of God, the place where the righteous shine like the sun, but where the evil doers will receive their punishment in the fire of hell.

They tell me, "Return!" But to whom can I return from the arms of my God? Is it right to accept what people are saying instead of obeying the Word of God? It is now 45 years that I am walking with the God of miracles, and His kindness upon me is like a shadow and I owe Him much for His fatherly love and concern.

The love of Jesus has filled all my being and I feel the warmth of His love in every part of my body. God, who is my glory and honor and protector, has put his seal of approval upon me through His unsparing blessings and miracles.

This test of faith is a clear example. The good and kind God reproves and punishes all those whom He loves. He tests them in preparation for heaven. The God of Daniel, who protected his friends in the fiery furnace, has protected me for nine years in prison. And all the bad happenings have turned out for our good and gain, so much so that I am filled to overflowing with joy and thankfulness.

The God of Job has tested my faith and commitment in order to increase my patience and

faithfulness. During these nine years he has freed me from all my responsibilities so that under the protection of His blessed Name, I would spend my time in prayer and study of His Word, with a searching heart and with brokenness, and grow in the knowledge of my Lord. I praise the lord for this unique opportunity. God gave me space in my confinement, brought healing in my difficult hardships and His kindness revived me. Oh what great blessings God has in store for those who fear Him!

They object to my evangelizing. But if one finds a blind person who is about to fall in a well and keeps silent then one has sinned. It is our religious duty, as long as the door of God's mercy is open, to convince evil doers to turn from their sinful ways and find refuge in Him in order to be saved from the wrath of the Righteous God and from the coming dreadful punishment.

Jesus Christ says "I am the door. Whoever enters through me will be saved." "I am the way, the truth and the life. No-one comes to the father except through me." "Salvation is found in no-one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved." Among the prophets of God, only Jesus Christ rose from the dead, and He is our living intercessor for ever.

He is our Savior and He is the (spiritual) Son of God. To know Him means to know eternal life. I, a useless sinner, have believed in this beloved person and all His words and miracles recorded in the Gospel, and I have committed my life into His hands. Life for me is an opportunity to serve Him, and death is a better opportunity to be with Christ. Therefore I am not only satisfied to be in prison for the honor of His Holy Name, but am ready to give my life for the sake of Jesus, my Lord, and enter His kingdom sooner, the place where the elect of God enter everlasting life. But the wicked enter into eternal damnation.

May the shadow of God's kindness and His hand of blessing and healing be and remain upon you for ever. Amen. With Respect,

Your Christian prisoner,  
Mehdi Dibaj

Rev. Mehdi Dibaj who was born into a Muslim family became a Christian 45 Years ago. On December 21, 1993 an Islamic court in the city of Sari condemned him to die. The conviction was based on the charge of apostasy, i.e. that Rev. Dibaj had abandoned Islam and embraced Christianity. Once the news of Rev. Dibaj's death sentence reached the rest of the world, the reaction was one of disbelief followed by prayer and action. One of the persons who worked very hard to overturn Rev. Dibaj's sentence was Bishop Haik Hovsepian-Mehr. Bishop Haik, an Armenian pastor, shared the news of Rev. Dibaj's death sentence as well as other violations of religious freedom of Christians in Iran with the world. Due to the world's reaction, Rev. Dibaj was released on January 16, 1994.

Five months after the release from prison, Rev. Mehdi Dibadj was abducted mysteriously and suffered martyrdom in June, 1994.

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## Quite a Perspective - No Matter Your Beliefs

Thanks to Ronald Matthewman for sending this into us.

Harvard Professor: 90 seconds you won't regret seeing! Now here is something that absolutely everyone should see, it is stunningly simply, and so totally profound! Note that at the bottom of the clip it gives permission to use this clip provided it is not altered.

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/YjntXYDPw44>

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## Could a bean grown in Canada make scrambled eggs?

'Eggs are functionally incredible, they do everything from hold oil and water in mayo to making the muffin rise and holding scrambled eggs together,' he said 'I started to think what if we can find plants that can do this. We have about 12 plants pre-selected, including a pea already widely grown in Canada.'

Read more about this at:

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-2561374/The-artificial-egg-set-China-San-Francisco-firm-reveals-backing-Asias-richest-man-radical-plant-based-egg.html>

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## Templar Seals

These seals, one being the 64 Lodge Greensberg, PA with one seal being "The Knights Templar Asembly" has been traced back to Coldstream officers and regiments in Nova Scotia and Boston!



The document had it all.... We find the names of everyone now with the earliest information of the American Templars in Boston! The Scottish Grand Lodge granted one of the charters so this marriage happened between the English and Scottish in Boston. The 22nd foot called themselves the Glittery Star Lodge in Boston. Again as far back as 1769 we see them all using the garter star symbolism.

This is very implicating and with these few original documents of the development of the Templars in America and Canada we can start trying to find relics surviving. Where the 64 Templar seal of 1782 may be the oldest surviving.

Relations between Boston, Massachusetts and Halifax, Nova Scotia date back to the founding of Halifax in 1749, when Boston businesses had an interest in the new settlement for shipping and fish trade. The bond between the two cities became strongest following the Halifax Explosion in 1917, after Boston sent significant aid and disaster relief to Halifax.

More information on the links between Boston and Nova Scotia can be found at:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boston-Halifax\\_relations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boston-Halifax_relations)

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Recommended Videos for you to watch

Building of Rogers Pass CP Rail line

Documentary film by CP Rail. The building of the new line through Rogers Pass between 1982 and 1988. Found this old tape on Beta format. Has significant historical value. Any railway buff will find this interesting. Enjoy.

You can watch this video at the foot of the page at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/transport/steelndx.htm>

I got a comment in from Hugh on this video and the accompanying story...

The story of the C.P.R. is very interesting and because my Dad worked for them. I travelled extensively on that RR, from Vancouver to Quebec city, parts of it many times over. I especially loved going through the Rockies and reading about the construction of the tunnels and trestles, especially the curved trestle which is in a photograph. Some of the waterfalls are amazing and I always tried to watch for Surprise Creek as the trestle was very high and the chasm very deep and it was only possible to see it for a minute or so. Marvelous engineering!

Wild Life in Canada

There is a series of 5 videos made by National Geographic on wild life in Canada which you might well enjoy and one of the videos also tells how these were filmed.

You can watch these at <http://www.electriccanadian.com/lifestyle/wildlife/index.htm>

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Canon Andrew White

Passover and Easter Appeal – Canon Andrew White  
April 2nd, 2015

See a video of him at <https://youtu.be/jEs9l8qQSRs>

Dear Friends and Family,

As we come to this most Holy Season of Passover and Easter we are acutely aware of how much we have to give thanks for. As I sat down with my former teacher, a Hassidic Rabbi, the other day here in Jerusalem I asked him; what does Passover mean to you? With great joy he answered that it is a feast of liberation. Liberation – past, present and future. Just like Easter he said and indeed it is. As many of us celebrate this time of the year we must not forget the many we are called to serve who have nothing. No homes, little food and yet they know without doubt that they have been through the waters and G-d is still with them.

As we look back at the last few months it is phenomenal to see what we have been doing and been able to achieve. Our work continues to focus on Iraq, Israel/Palestine and Jordan serving particularly Iraqi refugees and internally displaced people. The stories are so terrible that it is difficult to transmit them but what we have been able to achieve is simply phenomenal. We now have in place a highly successful school for the Iraqi refugee children in Jordan. We have an extensive feeding and medical program and have been able to provide a significant amount of housing for people who were living in worse than slums.

So the work has been divided very clearly into the following genres:

Food and Relief  
Medical Help and Clinic Support  
Children's Education  
Provision of Housing and Accommodation

This provision has changed the lives of those most in need. We can only do all this with your help and support. We thank you for what you have enabled us to do. These are not far flung distant people, they are our family and our people. I give thanks to the Almighty for the privilege of serving these people. Dr Sarah serving the thousands in Northern Iraq gives thanks to G-d for what we are called to do together. Will you stand with us and help us to make G-d's love known at this time of LIBERATION.

Just the other day I was with a grandmother and her granddaughter. The 15 year-old had come home from a night with her grandmother and found both parents and her four brothers shot dead on the floor. At first all we could do was hold her and cry with her. We started to provide for her then one day we got a little smile from her. Then just the other day we got two of the former members of our Church in Baghdad to take her shopping for clothes. Then suddenly the smile returned to her face and she became ours. Her grandmother cried so hard and said she had and prayed so hard that G-d would send somebody to see them then we arrived as if from heaven. You helped us get there.

Please will you help us to keep going to them and many other people. One little girl just run up to me and held me tight and told me over and over again that I had poured the water over her. Whenever I see her she is holding the picture of me baptising her. When the family fled the ISIS terrorists all they took with them was the picture of me marrying the parents and baptising Myrna.

Your help of just a few £'s or \$'s will help us bring hope to our family this Easter. May you truly know the liberation power of G-d this Passover and Easter.

Blessings my Friend and Family,

Our work

Jordan

FRRME are working to meet the needs of Iraqi refugees fleeing the conflict in Iraq supporting 270 refugee families in the Markaa region of Amman with cash transfers to help them pay for accommodation, healthcare and food. FRRME have also partnered with Father Khalil and the Messengers of Peace Association who run the Roman Catholic Latin School in Amman. Together we provide teaching to over 100 Iraqi refugee children three days a week, without FRRME's assistance these children would not be receiving education.

Northern Iraq

FRRME has been providing emergency relief in the North of Iraq since July 2014 when the crisis escalated. We have been providing food packages, water, clothing, bedding and mobility aids for the disabled to internally displaced Iraqis in and around Erbil and Dohuk. FRRME supports established churches in the North of Iraq such as the Armenian and Syrian Orthodox Churches who are assisting Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) by delivering regular relief supplies. FRRME also delivers relief supplies to IDP camps and centres across the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

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## What I learnt from 46 consecutive days in church

Broadcaster Adrian Chiles recently set himself a challenge - to go to church every day for more than a month, and never the same one twice. Why?

For the Lent just gone by, I resolved to go to church every day. I'm a Catholic, so it would be Mass every day for more than a month. It felt like it would be a real struggle - a penance. It turned out to be anything but. It was a rich and enriching experience - spiritually, obviously, but I was also enraptured by the churches themselves, the communities they serve, and the people with whom I shared all those Masses.

I made it extra hard for myself by undertaking to go to a different church every day, so by Easter Sunday I'd been before 46 different priests in 46 different churches in 46 days. Someone pointed out to me at around the 35-priest mark that even the Pope probably hadn't heard Mass said by so many different priests in so many different churches in such a short space of time.

A most interesting article from the BBC which you can read at:

<http://tinyurl.com/kt8262b>

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A Wee Bit of Humour

Some humour in pictures...



I'd rather hold it!



Tattoo of the Year



This is what Sorry looks like



How to deal with a problem neighbour



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Notable Upcoming Events  
Canadian International

September 26 - Toronto Investiture, St. James Cathedral, 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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Priory of the Ascension of our Lord, Windsor

[H. E. Major Sir Roy Embury, CD, GOTJ](#)

St James Priory, Toronto

[H. E. Sir Nick Migliore](#)

Priory of Simon Peter, Ottawa

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