

# Always Forward Church Planting Conference

*Denver, Colorado: August 25<sup>th</sup>—27<sup>th</sup>*

The Reverend Canon Scott Seely

Over a hundred people gathered at Wellspring Anglican Church in the Denver area August 25<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> for the Always Forward Church Planting Conference. Always Forward is the church planting initiative of the ACNA. The main plenary speakers were Archbishop Foley Beach, who spoke on the importance of prayer in the life of a church planter, and Bishop Steve Breedlove, who spoke on worship in the Anglican tradition. Four tracks were offered for attendees: 1) current church planters, 2) potential church planters, 3) churches that want to plant churches, and 4) church planting leaders.

Our Diocese of CANA West had six representatives at the gathering participating in three of the four tracks. Overall I thought this conference was the most helpful church planting conference ACNA has ever hosted in that it embraced our polity and was structured to actually facilitate discussion with instructors. Always Forward seeks to come alongside dioceses and support local church planters, and they have a number of resources available at [www.always-forward.com](http://www.always-forward.com) to help anyone no matter where they are on the road to church planting. I strongly encourage us all to peruse their website for continued education as they offer coaching and training in a number of various subjects pertaining to church planting and mission in a post-Christian culture.



Addressed at the conference (and repeatedly in my personal study) is that there are 180 million people in North America who are not connected to a local congregation. Church planting must continue to be a prominent part of our ministry going forward. CANA West has planted several churches in the last couple of years; however, we are only beginning to create a culture of church planting throughout our Diocese. My hope for the future is that we will eventually get to the place in CANA West where we find it odd if churches are not planting churches. Throughout the next several years, we must labor to build stronger systems and constructs—ranging from funding, assessment, coaching, training, and leadership development—that fuel more spontaneous multiplication. In this way our convictions will have resulted in a church planting culture supported by the systems and constructs we have put into place.

A key word for us on our journey ahead is collaboration. With the many challenges we face in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, churches can do more through partnership. I exhort us to prayerfully consider how we can work with sister churches for the propagation of the gospel in our local contexts. In our Diocese churches are gradually coming together to plant other churches and this should be celebrated, for it reveals a robust witness of unity to the divided secular culture in which we live. Please pray with me that our Lord will empower us in this next season of our ministry together.