

CanadaWatch

UPDATING YOU

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The EFC is arguing for vigorous protection for the vulnerable right now in Canada

As 2018 winds down, the EFC is gearing up – with your help – to again speak biblical principles of truth and compassion into several areas of concern for Canadian Evangelicals. When you donate and pray for the EFC, you become an active agent of change in these crucial areas. We are so thankful for your participation.

There are five strategic areas of concentration that the EFC has long focused on: Religious Freedom, Church and Mission, Family and Community, Care for the Vulnerable and the Sanctity of Life. These areas help direct the activities that you empower with your prayers and financial sacrifices. Here's a quick recap on what

your support has enabled us to do recently, and what we will be working on in the coming weeks.

The EFC made a written submission and an oral presentation to the House of Commons justice committee on Bill C-75 in September. Among other things, Bill C-75 would allow some serious offences related to human trafficking, sexual exploitation, infanticide and assault of clergy to be considered as relatively minor summary conviction offences.

We argued that the laws in place for protecting clergy should remain rigorous. We also argued that human trafficking-related offences be

maintained as serious offences.

The EFC's brief also includes commentary on removing the *Criminal Code* provisions on abortion which were struck down by the Supreme Court in 1988. The EFC reminded the committee that Canada has no criminal laws regulating or prohibiting abortion, and that we are the only Western nation and one of the few in the world without any legal restrictions on abortion. "The courts have said that protection of the foetus is a legitimate legislative objective and should be pursued. There is a role for the legislature in protecting the foetus and in clearly defining its legal standing."

The EFC will also be continuing our interactions on medical assistance in dying (MAID) as Canada studies expanding access to mature minors

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How you can be even more involved:

- Read more about Bill C-75 at www.TheEFC.ca/C75 and contact your MP to discuss it. Encourage them – say that you are cheering them on – even as you exhort them.
- Sign up for our weekly *EFC Update* emails if you don't already receive them, so you can receive new information on this and other issues as they happen. You can sign up right at the bottom of the home page www.TheEFC.ca.
- Please continue to pray for these and all the issues you help the EFC be involved with.

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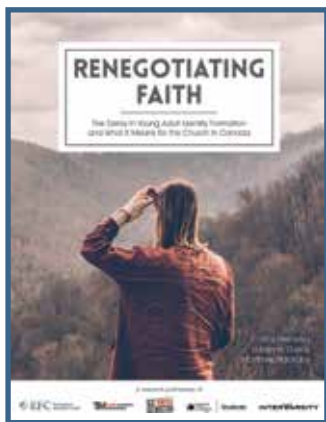
and individuals for whom mental illness is the sole underlying medical condition. These questions, and whether to allow advance requests for MAID, will be discussed in a Council of Canadian Academies report to Parliament in December.

The practices of euthanasia and assisted suicide are fraught with risk, particularly for the vulnerable, as we have always argued. Our review of studies of the effectiveness of safeguards used to protect people particularly vulnerable to MAID indicates that no safeguards are completely effective. We will continue to speak into the developments surrounding MAID as they arise, repeating our message of the sanctity of all life.

As we wrote in our brief to the Council of Canadian Academies: "It is essential that very strict safeguards be put and kept in place to minimize the harm to our societal commitment to the respect for life and to protect the vulnerable; both those made vulnerable because of a grievous medical condition and those whose vulnerability pre-existed any grievous medical condition."

Meanwhile, our work on the Canada Summer Jobs file has continued full throttle throughout the fall and early winter. This story is not over yet. The community of church- and faith-based ministry organizations in Canada – led in part by the EFC and our efforts – has had an impact on the government's thinking on this file. We are waiting, along with you, to see what will happen next and tweak our strategy as we seek to reinstate fair access to government benefits for all citizens.

In the work we do, there are wins and there are losses. And always, there is being faithful. That is what we are called to do, and what we are able to do because of your partnership.



UPDATE

Our new partnership research on young adults, called *Renegotiating Faith*, has had the fastest pick-up that researcher Rick Hiemstra has seen on an EFC project.



The difference research makes: Update from Rick Hiemstra

By early October we had 1,800 unique downloads of the report, and I'm sure the report was shared in other ways as well. I've spoken on the research 14 times since it was released, and I have another 20 speaking engagements lined up between now and the spring.

The research looks at how emerging/delayed adulthood affects spiritual formation. Ministry leaders clearly care about this issue and are looking for ways to help young adults persist in the faith.

This research, more than any other I've worked on, points to very practical, effective steps churches can take – such as making intentional connections with campus ministries, new churches or Christian higher education institutions. We are also trying to demystify mentoring and show how powerful these friendships with young adults can be.

We are also sharing some unexpected things we found in the research. The ancient heresy of Gnosticism is alive and well, and we need to shift our apologetics to meet it head on. Part of the conversations I'm having with churches is about how to recognize and address Gnosticism. It's been fascinating, and I'm currently

doing some writing on that.

The research partners are just about to release our second report, this one about the difference Christian higher education makes in faith development. Pastors and parents are going to want to pay close attention to the data in this report, called *Competition for Character Education*. It is time for a serious discussion in our churches about what education is for, and why at least one year at a Christian higher education institution might be an excellent way for our kids to enter adulthood.

Over at www.RenegotiatingFaith.ca we'll also soon be releasing a booklet outlining practical ministry responses. We will let you know when these new resources are ready.

I'm so grateful for the partnership with our formal partners, with the participating denominations and churches, with our financial supporters, and with those who pray for our work. Thank you.



Message from the President, Bruce J. Clemenger

As we bid farewell to 2018, we know we are entering a busy year for religious freedom and protection of the vulnerable in Canada in 2019. The EFC will be there, speaking biblical principles of compassion, mercy and truth into the most

high-level conversations in the country. Your support makes this work possible. We ask you as well to enter into conversations about these issues in your spheres of influence. Introduce the work of the EFC to your friends and neighbours. Let them know there is a group of concerned and compassionate evangelical Christians working together to bless Canada in the name of Jesus. Thank you.



EFC leaders gather on Presidents Day

More than 100 Canadian Christian leaders gathered in Toronto recently for the EFC's Presidents Day. This annual event connects, equips and gathers feedback from the top-level leaders of affiliate organizations across Canada.

The day included strategic discussions around several EFC initiatives including the *Renegotiating Faith* research. Institutional leaders who have reflected on community covenants, including Bob Kuhn of Trinity Western University, offered insights and hard-earned wisdom on such covenants. Crandall University professor John Stackhouse ended the event with a talk on the challenges facing evangelicalism in Canada today.

Presidents Day was a reminder of the breadth of coast-to-coast representation within the EFC, and also the incredible value of gathering together to share, discuss, encourage and cheer each other on in challenging times.

A movie your church can use to spark conversations and reach out

A unique screening opportunity available to EFC affiliate congregations

More than 80 people showed up at the Metropolitan Bible Church in Ottawa recently to watch one of the first Canadian church screenings of *Because of Gracia*. "It's a must-see film for youth groups, churches and schools, thanks in part to its strong production values, compelling story, and thought-provoking companion study guide," says Joel Gordon, creative director for the EFC.

The EFC is inviting Canadian churches and ministry affiliates to host ticketed screening events of the film. The EFC will list your screening on a free community calendar and help create awareness for all the screening events across Canada.



Visit www.TheEFC.ca/movietour and www.becauseofgracia.com



Updating you on Canada's most immediate issues

■ Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide:

Parliament will receive three reports in December about expanding access to mature minors, to those with mental illness as the sole underlying condition, and by advance request. The legislation passed in 2016 requires studies on these areas. The EFC made a submission last fall on why access should not be expanded. Updates at www.TheEFC.ca/Euthanasia.

■ Canada Summer Jobs:

Applications for this grant program for 2019 will open soon. Last year's application included a troubling attestation of respect for certain values. More than 1,500 applications, many from faith-based groups, were rejected in 2018 due to the attestation. Many have asked that the attestation be removed or revised. Updates at www.TheEFC.ca/SummerJobs.

■ **Conscience Protection:** A new private member's bill would protect health care professionals who object to euthanasia or assisted suicide. Bill C-418, introduced by MP David Anderson, clarifies that health care

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professionals must not be compelled to participate, directly or indirectly, in the provision of medical assistance in dying. The EFC has written in support of this bill. Please use our letter at www.TheEFC.ca/C418 as a sample for contacting your MP.

■ **Human Trafficking:** A report on human trafficking by the House of Commons justice committee is expected this fall, and the government intends to launch a new national strategy this winter. The EFC asked the committee to take steps to reduce the demand for paid sex that fuels sex trafficking, to maintain the current prostitution laws, to support victims and to improve data collection. Please contact your MP on these issues using our sample letter at www.TheEFC.ca/HumanTrafficking.

■ **Sexual Exploitation and Obstructing Clergy:** The EFC appeared before the House of Commons justice committee on Bill C-75 this fall. We asked that offences related to human trafficking, assaulting clergy and infanticide, among others, continue to be treated as more serious indictable offences. However, the committee did not make the changes we requested. The EFC will soon submit a brief to the Senate committee to reiterate these concerns and ask for changes. www.TheEFC.ca/C75.

EFC Ambassadors working for you

We currently have EFC ambassadors in parts of Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario and all of Atlantic Canada available to come and update your church or ministerial on the work of the EFC. Sheldon MacLeod is the EFC's regional director for Atlantic Canada. "I believe in the EFC because the work they do is critical in a nation that is seeking answers to the challenges we face. Churches and Christians are great at serving their local communities; they are also often great at supporting work overseas in areas of need," says MacLeod. "The gap that exists is in understanding how churches and citizens can make an impact at that national level. That is what I see the EFC doing in a thoughtful, articulate and faithful way: stepping into the gap nationally on behalf of our churches and people." MacLeod says it's been "an amazing privilege to meet with pastors and leaders and hear their hearts, struggles, victories, and see them serve faithfully."



To book an ambassador call us toll-free 1-866-302-3362 x 223 or email Anita Kwan at speakers@TheEFC.ca.

We will do our very best to fulfill your request.



At the parliamentary forum on religious freedom


EFC executive vice-president David Guretzki spoke about religious freedom and state neutrality at the **7th Annual Parliamentary Forum on Religious**

Freedom held in October in Ottawa. Guretzki, who also serves as the EFC's resident theologian, was part of a panel that included other Canadian thought leaders and activists in religious freedom. Guretzki presented ways religious communities can work together in Canada to protect and further religious freedom. He also called on individual Christians to reach out to their communities. "What will this mean practically? At the very least, it means developing personal relationships by walking across our streets, and into each other's homes to listen and to learn." The full address is available, by text and video, at www.TheEFC.ca/GuretzkiPRF.

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Box 5885 West Beaver Creek Post Office,
Richmond Hill, ON L4B 0B8 Canada
Tel: 905.479.5885 • Toll Free: 1.866.302.3362 • Fax: 905.479.4742
Email: EFC@TheEFC.ca • www.TheEFC.ca



The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (*Alliance évangélique du Canada*) is the national association "uniting Evangelicals to bless Canada in the name of Jesus." Since 1964 the EFC has provided a national forum for Evangelicals, fostered ministry partnerships, conducted research on religious and social trends and provided a constructive voice for biblical principles in life and society.

