

CanadaWatch

UPDATING YOU

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Be kind to your MP

"Keep up the good work!" is a message we hear sometimes from the people who support the work of the EFC. We share these messages with the entire team because they are so uplifting. A well-timed word of encouragement is wonderful to receive.

That's why the EFC is encouraging Canadians to reach out to their newly elected members of Parliament with a warm greeting in the next four weeks. It's easy to do, and everyone can do it. Emailing, calling or even mailing a card is simple – and we've included one for you with this *Canada Watch*. It doesn't even cost you a stamp.

On top of the demands of their work, our elected officials face near-constant criticism and personal attacks, vitriol and at times even threats, particularly on social media. The Bible tells us that those in authority are God's servants to do good (Romans 13:4). We can and

should recognize our MPs' public service – and that they are created by God and loved by Him – even as we ask for laws and policies to be changed.

It's also a good idea to form a positive relationship before a problem or issue comes up. Later, you might want to interact with your MP to ask for a bill to be changed or ask them to represent their constituency with a particular position.

Here's a look at some of the issues you might want to contact your MP about in the months ahead. We expect to engage on these major bills and committee studies.

MAID: MPs and senators will carry out a review the Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID) law. This special committee will also consider whether to extend MAID to mature minors and will study issues relating to mental illness, the state of palliative care in Canada and the protection of Canadians with disabilities. The EFC strongly opposes

ethanasia and assisted suicide, and is deeply concerned about expanding access to children and youth.

Conversion therapy ban: A bill to ban conversion therapy is also likely to be a priority in the new Parliament. The Liberal Party platform committed to an expanded ban on conversion therapy that prohibits the practice for both adults and minors. We agree that coercive and abusive practices have no place in our communities. However, the previous bill had an overly broad definition that could infringe on religious teaching and practice. Bill C-6, the previous bill, died at the election call.

Online harms: The Liberal Party platform committed to introduce a bill to regulate online harms as a priority

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How you can help

- Send the postcard we've provided to your MP c/o House of Commons, Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6.
- Confirm the name of your MP, if needed, at www.ourcommons.ca/members/en
- Commit to praying for your MP and for our government.

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once Parliament reconvenes. This could require digital platforms to act quickly to address child pornography and intimate images posted without consent. The EFC supports initiatives to make digital platforms responsible to remove these images.

The EFC will also encourage MPs and senators to continue with three positive initiatives on sexual exploitation from the last Parliament. The Ethics Committee issued a strong report calling for pornography platforms to be held accountable for hosting videos of minors and non-consensual abuse. The report called for age and consent to be verified before intimate images are posted. MP Arnold Viersen also introduced a private member's bill to verify age and consent. The EFC strongly supports these recommendations and will encourage MPs to adopt them.

As well, Senator Julie Miville-Dechéne introduced a private member's bill that would restrict children and youth's access to sexually explicit materials. This bill passed in the Senate and moved to the House of Commons for debate but died at the election call. The senator intends to reintroduce her bill and the EFC is pleased to support it.

While the EFC interacts with MPs on issues of concern on behalf of our constituency, the impact is greater if MPs are also hearing from individual Canadians on the same issues. Please join with us, in prayer and by engaging with your MP, to seek the good of our country. We are more effective together.



Collaborating for the good of the Church and Canada

The EFC's Centre for Partnership and Ministry Innovation is dedicated to the work of uniting Evangelicals and fostering collaboration for the good of the Church and all of Canada.

Building on the EFC's longstanding history as a convener, the Centre has taken on a new focus of facilitating resource creation through collaboration with partners. Ilana Reimer, editor of *Love Is Moving* magazine, has joined the Centre as the resource and content coordinator.

One Centre project called Reconciliation Through Relationships brings Christians together for mutual transformation, pairing Indigenous and non-Indigenous Christians together for a series of guided conversations.

Through these relationships, participants are gaining valuable insights into each other's ways of life and learning Indigenous principles for developing relationships. Most of the pairs are still in contact and have growing friendships.

The Centre also helped write and publish *Conversations That Shape Us*, a discussion guide on racism now available at www.TheEFC.ca/racism. An Abuse Awareness and Prevention Network and a Welcome Church initiative are also in the works. Watch for updates on these projects in the next *Canada Watch*.

**FREE
KIT!**

Helping us interact with government

The EFC's *Civic Engagement Kit* is free, easy to use and newly updated. It includes tips on how to contact MPs and how to plan for meetings and phone calls. If you've ever wondered how your input can actually impact things in Ottawa or how a bill becomes law, these topics and more are all addressed in the kit at

www.TheEFC.ca/EngagementKit. The EFC's Be Kind to Your MP campaign springs from the materials in the *Civic*

Engagement Kit. Our belief is: It's good to engage, it's easy to engage, and every Canadian Christian can engage with the political process and our MPs. As a first step, please send the enclosed postcard to your MP to thank them for their dedication to Canada.



Message from the President, Bruce J. Clemenger

The EFC gathered evangelical leaders from across Canada for our annual Presidents Day on Oct. 28, held virtually for the second year. For all the disappointment of not being able to meet in person, an online gathering also offers some advantages. The online chat function was lively all day long with presidents of seminaries, ministries and denominations sharing ideas and experiences. We had excellent speakers examining our current challenges and opportunities in ministry, and our breakout rooms gave leaders an opportunity to share their experiences – and very importantly to give the EFC feedback on how we can continue to serve them in the months to come. It was a strategic day, a time to listen and strategize and prepare to act – all crucial parts of the work of the EFC, made possible by your ongoing commitment to the Church in Canada. Thank you.



Faith Trends: New EFC podcast series serves the Church and the academy

Faith Trends Podcast launched in November as an initiative of the EFC's research department to better connect research with its ministry implications for the Church in Canada. Our vision for the podcast is to highlight Canadian researchers, both established and emerging, and provide a platform for their work. "We want to help build a bridge connecting researchers to ministry practitioners who might benefit from their work," says Rick Hiemstra, the EFC's director of research. He co-hosts *Faith Trends* along with EFC researcher Lindsay Callaway.

Often the outworking of a research project is motivated by a deep personal desire to know and love God and His people more. We've seen this in the interviews we've done so far in the PhD work of a pastoral spouse who wanted to learn how pastors develop resilience in ministry (episode 3, Margaret Clarke) and the research on Gen-Z and evangelism that flowed from an impassioned desire for the next generation to know Jesus (episode 2, Shaila Visser and Tim Gonsalves).

Research doesn't exist to benefit just the researcher, but to benefit the wider research population and community. With *Faith Trends*, we're excited to provide a glimpse into the heart and community behind research that is happening for the Church in Canada. "The Canadian Church is often exposed to research and literature that is written from an American perspective that doesn't acknowledge the many cultural and regional distinctives in Canada," says Callaway. "We will highlight researchers and the research that helps us understand who we are as Canadians and the Canadian Church."

Each monthly episode will include a 30- to 40-minute conversation with a researcher, followed by a debrief with Rick Hiemstra and Lindsay Callaway about their impressions and the takeaways. Please find it at www.TheEFC.ca/Podcasts. It is the commitment of EFC donors that make important work like this possible. Thank you.

FAITH TRENDS
PODCAST
CONVERSATIONS THAT CONNECT RESEARCH AND MINISTRY



Updating you on Canada's most immediate issues

■ **New Parliament:** The House of Commons reconvenes Nov. 22. Any bill that didn't pass before the election has died. One of the first topics to be debated in the House will be the Throne Speech which sets out the government's plans and priorities. The Liberal Party platform committed to make several issues a priority and introduce bills within the first 100 days of Parliament. The platform committed to reintroduce an expanded ban on conversion therapy, as well as bills to address online harms like child pornography and online hate.

■ **Conversion therapy ban:** The Liberals have committed to introduce Criminal Code offences on conversion therapy more expansive than those in the previous Bill C-6. Their platform commits to ban the practice for adults as well as minors. The definition in former Bill C-6 was overly broad and the EFC was concerned it would have limited freedom of expression as well as religious teaching and practice.
www.TheEFC.ca/ConversionTherapy

■ **Euthanasia/assisted suicide:** A committee to study the Medical Assistance in Dying law is likely to be

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formed quickly in the new Parliament. A law passed in March 2021 mandated this study and gave Parliament a deadline of a year to conduct it and report back to Parliament. The committee will consider issues related to mature minors, mental illness, the state of palliative care in Canada and the protection of Canadians with disabilities. The EFC is preparing resources to submit to the committee.

www.TheEFC.ca/MAID

■ **Religious freedom:** The EFC will argue for the ability of religious groups to rent their facilities in a way that is consistent with their beliefs. The EFC has been granted intervener status in B.C. case involving the Star of the Sea Parish. The EFC will argue that religious charities should be able to contribute to the broader community by allowing access to their facilities while ensuring their facilities aren't used in ways that would violate their religiously founded principles.

www.TheEFC.ca/StarOfTheSea

UPDATES ON THE ISSUES

that the EFC is currently involved with are always available on our website www.TheEFC.ca

Heart and hands

Ilana Reimer is resource and content coordinator for the EFC's Centre for Partnership and Ministry Innovation and editor of Love Is Moving.



I started with the EFC as editor of *Love Is Moving* in 2019, and I'm grateful to participate in encouraging and cultivating younger generations of creatives. I feel strongly that artists and storytellers play a crucial role in challenging and building up the Church.

In April of 2021, my role expanded to resource and content coordinator for projects flowing from partnerships with our affiliates. Two of our current projects are a conversation guide on racism for church small groups and a resource hub that equips churches to welcome new Canadians.

As we develop resources to serve and support you, I am so thankful for the wisdom and expertise that our affiliates and others in our network contribute to these projects.



This collaborative process strengthens relationships and enriches the final products. Thank you for partnering with us through your prayers and financial support. You help this work to flourish.

Join us in prayer

During our recent Presidents Day, EFC staff member Ilana Reimer closed the day in prayer. Here is an excerpt from her benediction.

You are the vine, the giver of life. We are the branches. As nutrients from the vine cause its branches to flourish, so your power strengthens us and produces fruit in us. May we, your Church, be united as one body; Help our flailing arms and wayward feet find symmetry. May we dare to treat each other like true family, Loving each other with humility and trust. Help us to act faithfully and wait patiently for your coming kingdom. Thank you for promising that you will restore and renew all things.

Please join us in prayer all year long using the ENCLOSED PRAYER CARD. We value your prayers!

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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.

