

Canada Watch

UPDATING YOU

On Canada's most immediate issues (page 3)

SPOTLIGHT

Conference affirms common calling (page 2)

EFC RESOURCES

The EFC helps host abuse prevention conference (page 3)

The EFC launches Anti-Christian Incident Report

And why we're going to the Supreme Court over prostitution

The EFC will launch a new monitor to track discrimination and hate crimes against Christians in Canada.

As of October 21, TheEFC.ca will provide an avenue for Christians to report incidents of anti-Christian discrimination, vandalism or violence in Canada. The EFC will track changes and trends in the frequency and intensity of incidents that infringe on the human rights of Christians.

This monitoring of incidents will equip the EFC to better advocate for religious freedom and call governments to follow through on their human rights obligations.

"We believe this monitor is needed as anti-religious sentiment increases,"

says David Guretzki, president of the EFC. Canadians have seen an alarming increase in antisemitism in recent months, and fatal attacks against Muslims in recent years. Religious groups in these communities track hate crimes to report on trends and needs. It's time for the Christian community to do the same."

Evangelicals don't often face physical threats, but anti-evangelical commentary and moves to exclude Christians from public life are not uncommon. "At the EFC, we've seen Christian groups who apply for government grants be flagged for review based on their beliefs," says Julia Beazley, the EFC's director of public

policy. Canadian university faculty have proposed excluding applicants to medical school if they would be conscientious objectors to practices such as MAiD or abortion.

Declining church attendance and religious literacy may indirectly foster intolerance of religious beliefs and practices. Anti-Christian bias may be as mild as social exclusion or as intense as church arson. The EFC's website will track the more serious incidents.

If you know of situations of anti-Christian discrimination, vandalism or violence, please encourage those involved to report the incident at **TheEFC.ca/ReportIncident**.

...continued on page 2



Please join us

- Share the news about the new monitor to track anti-Christian activity in Canada.
- Consider becoming a monthly donor to the EFC, if you haven't already. We need your help to keep doing the work we do across Canada.
- Please pray for the work of the EFC. We depend on the prayer of our partners and supporters. We also love to pray for you!

...continued from page 1

IN OTHER EFC NEWS, the EFC will be making arguments at the Supreme Court in November, as a co-intervener with the Association for Reformed Political Action.

In this case, known as *Kloubakov v. Canada*, two men who worked for an escort agency run by convicted traffickers were found guilty of procuring women into prostitution and financially benefiting from prostitution. The men are challenging the constitutionality of these laws.

The EFC and ARPA will be arguing in support of the laws, arguing that they protect human dignity and equality.

The EFC has worked hard to see the purchase of sexual services criminalized and intervenes to uphold these laws. Our actions are grounded in our belief that prostitution violates human dignity and exploits those who are vulnerable. It degrades people – treating them like a commodity.

As Christians, we know that each person is created in the image of God, after His likeness, loved by Him, and with inherent dignity. We must respect and uphold each person's inherent worth, and not stand for them being treated as objects for another's personal gratification.

Including this case, the EFC has been an intervenor at the Supreme Court more than 30 times.

To be an intervener means the EFC can make legal arguments as "a friend of the court." This allows for more and different legal arguments to be made that aren't being made by either of the two sides in a case.

The understanding of law and the application of the *Charter* builds in each new case. If an argument isn't made in a particular case, it won't be considered in the court's decision.

Even when decisions are not in our favour, arguments made by the EFC are often reflected in the written decisions, which set precedent for future cases and how the *Charter* will be applied.



Conference affirms common calling

What happens when God's people gather without an agenda or well-known speakers but with a passion to hear Him speak? More than 100 people did just that at a recent gathering organized by Our Common Calling, an EFC-supported partnership.

Rather than listening to a plenary speaker, attendees from across Canada spent two full mornings "dwelling in the Word" – studying Luke 24, sharing in small groups and seeking to listen to God together.

"I love the format that we (and God) were the speakers of the conference," said one participant.

Times of prayer and worship were built on the foundation of trust from dwelling in the Word together.

Organizers had sent invitation to ensure 40% of attendees were under 30, with equal numbers of men and women and representation from the church, ministry organizations, educational communities and the marketplace.

Interactive sessions – held May 23–25 at Ambrose University in Calgary and Redeemer University in Hamilton – looked at relationships between church, agency, academy and agora (marketplace).

"I've always known that we were better together, that we need each other, but I've experienced it on a different level because we've come to the table with no one in charge and so people have felt free to share," said another attendee. "So, I think I've learned a different level of how rich and deep that is, and how important."

**"I love the format that we
(and God) were the speakers
of the conference."**

– CONFERENCE PARTICIPANT





A note from EFC President David Guretzki

We thank God for you, literally. At gatherings of our staff and in my own devotional life, you are being upheld in prayer. Prayer is a priority for our work at the EFC. We ask God to direct and energize our work, and we ask God to bless you even as you bless us. I want to remind you of our prayers for you because we so often ask you to pray

for us. It is good when God's people join in prayer. Thank you for walking with us in mission and in prayer. Our work is made possible because of the faithful support of our donors and praying friends. Bless you.



How Your Gifts Matter

Q and A with the EFC's Director of Development

Cecilia Wu sees firsthand the generosity of Canadians and the difference it makes for issues like religious freedom and protection of those who are vulnerable through the work of the EFC. We asked her to offer encouragement to *Canada Watch* readers.

What do the gifts of EFC donors mean to the work of the EFC?

The prayers and generous gifts of our donors have been crucial to our work and allow us to continue serving the millions of Christians in Canada who share our vision to "bless Canada in the name of Jesus" by uniting Evangelicals across Canada to pray together, work collaboratively and speak boldly and credibly.

How has your work as director of development impacted your faith, or vice-versa?

My faith in the goodness and providence of God is constantly being strengthened. Even during times when fundraising has been extremely challenging, I've seen God provide, through the generosity of His people, the funds needed to continue the work He has called us to do.

How do EFC donors know their gifts are put to good use?

We recognize our donors have many choices about where to direct charitable gifts, and we take very seriously our role as stewards of the resources entrusted to us. Donations are used wisely to ensure serious issues that impact the welfare of the Church and of all Canadians do not go unchallenged.

Any last words of thanks to EFC donors?

I thank God for all our donors – those who have only given once, those who give regularly, and those who remember us in their wills – and for all their gifts, big or small. We'll be facing many challenges ahead, but we fully trust that with God, and through the prayers and support of His people, all things are possible.



Updating you on Canada's most immediate issues

■ **Submission to the Privacy Commissioner:** The EFC made a submission to Canada's Privacy Commissioner in September in support of age assurance technologies to protect kids online. The EFC recommended that pornography platforms be required to have meaningful, privacy-compliant age assurance to verify users are over a minimum age. The EFC has also developed resources to help Canadians advocate to protect kids online, such as a new brochure to raise awareness and sample communications to MPs. TheEFC.ca/ProtectKids.

■ **Submission on discrimination against women in Canada:** The United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) explores how UN member countries provide support and protection to women. In a review of Canada, the EFC outlined to the UN CEDAW the link between human trafficking and prostitution, and the negative impact of Canada's euthanasia laws on women with disabilities. The EFC recommended Canada maintain the current prostitution laws, establish a permanent

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Uniting Evangelicals to bless Canada in the name of Jesus

...continued from page 3

national strategy to combat human trafficking and repeal the law allowing euthanasia for mental illness.

TheEFC.ca/CEDAW2024

■ **Supreme Court intervention:** The EFC and ARPA (the Association for Reformed Political Action) will appear before the Supreme Court in mid-November in a case called *R. v. Kloubakov*. (See lead story)

■ **Advance requests for euthanasia:** Quebec announced it is going ahead with advance requests for euthanasia, even though this is prohibited in the *Criminal Code*. A bill moving through the Senate would allow advance requests, so that a person's life may be ended by MAiD when they are no longer able to consent. The EFC is preparing a submission on the bill and other resources on euthanasia.

■ **Supporting religious freedom:** The EFC has applied for intervener status with the Canadian Centre for Christian Charities and the Réseau Évangélique du Québec before a lower court in Quebec. A faith-based organization had rented a public venue in Quebec to hold a conference. A Quebec cabinet minister cancelled the rental agreement two weeks before the event because of the religious pro-life beliefs of the organization.

The EFC helps host abuse prevention conference

The Abuse Awareness and Prevention Network is holding a Reducing the Risk Conference on Nov. 2 at Willowdale Baptist Church in Toronto. Open to all, the conference will help equip participants to reduce the risk of abuse in their ministries, and provide them with tools, connections and resources for the work of risk reduction. Workshops topics will include The Use and Abuse of Power, Consent and Healthy Boundaries, Church Culture Literacy: Purity Culture & Porn Culture within the Church, and Insurance, Policy & Risk.

The network (**AbuseAwareness.net**) is a partnership of denominations, churches and ministry organizations dedicated to resource sharing, networking and training around abuse awareness.

"Many partners and friends of the EFC have expressed a desire to have more courageous conversations in supportive spaces to raise awareness about reducing the risk of abuse," says Joel Gordon, director of the EFC Centre for Ministry Partnership and Innovation. "We hope to make a real and lasting impact on abuse prevention in Canadian ministry settings."

The EFC to host discussion on the future of the Church in Canada

On the eve of Presidents Day, when the leaders of EFC affiliate organizations gather for mutual support and resourcing, the EFC is hosting a public dialogue in Toronto on the future of the Canadian Church.

"What will a healthy and vibrant Canadian Church look like in 10 years?" is one of the guiding discussion questions to be considered on Oct. 23 by EFC President David Guretzki, Lee Beach of McMaster Divinity College and Dorothy Pang of the Tyndale Intercultural Ministries Centre.

We all wonder how our beloved and diverse Canadian Church will fare now and in the days and years ahead. Our three church specialists – each bringing their own expertise and love for the Church – will dialogue on what a healthy and vibrant Canadian Church will look like in 10 years, and how we can arrive there together as a multi-ethnic community of Christ followers in Canada. The event is free and will be held at Evangel Temple on Yonge Street in Toronto. TheEFC.ca/VibrantChurch

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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.

