

CanadaWatch

UPDATING YOU

On Canada's most immediate issues. (Page 3)

SPOTLIGHT

Welcome to the *Faith Today* Podcast. (Page 2)

EFC RESOURCES

The EFC and the *Stewarding Sacred Seeds* Report. (Page 3)

The EFC ready for new law proposals

The streets of downtown Ottawa have been unusually quiet for months, with COVID-19 reducing travel to our nation's capital and many employees – even politicians – working from home offices. Federal politics has been anything but silent however, with one party choosing a new leader, another party continuing to answer questions about the We controversy – and then the proroguing of Parliament until late September.

Prorogation meant an end to the business of Parliament and then a fresh start with the Speech from the Throne. There are exceptions, but when Parliament prorogues it means unfinished business, like bills making their way through the system, are terminated. Some are expected to be picked up again by the new Parliament.

Bill C-7 to expand euthanasia and Bill C-8 on conversion therapy are both bills

that died when Parliament was prorogued. These were pieces of potential legislation that EFC worked on in various ways for months. We will continue to do so, as we expect the government to reintroduce them quickly.

The former Bill C-7 was the proposed law to expand access to euthanasia to those who are not dying, and to remove key safeguards from the process. We know broadening access to euthanasia in Canada remains a priority to the government. The justice minister hopes to have new legislation passed by December 18. The EFC will continue to speak into this crucial issue. We are urging Canadians to contact their local MPs, and our team has created resources to help us all communicate in the most effective way.

The former Bill C-8 was the government's bill to ban conversion therapy, another piece of legislation the EFC



expects to see reintroduced in the new Parliament. Coercive or involuntary efforts to change sexual orientation or gender identity have no place in our communities. However, the government's definition of conversion therapy is overly broad and needs to be amended to protect freedom of expression and the ability of Canadians to live according to their religious conscience or personal convictions.

The government's definition expands beyond discredited practices – which are rightly condemned – to include “any practice ... that seeks to ... reduce sexual attraction or behaviour between persons of the same sex.” Our team is creating resources to help Canadians interact well on this issue, and they are also available on our website.

...continued on page 2

How you can help

- Take a few moments right now to brush up on these important pieces of legislation that we expect to be central to the new Parliament.
- For our action kit on the expansion of euthanasia, www.TheEFC.ca/Euthanasia.
- For information on conversion therapy, www.TheEFC.ca/ConversionTherapy.
- For the prostitution law review, www.TheEFC.ca/Prostitution.

...continued from page 1

We also expect to focus on laws around prostitution in Canada, with the current law – passed in 2014 – past due for a scheduled review. The EFC worked hard advocating and educating around that law, which recognized commercial sexual exploitation as inherently harmful. The current law criminalizes sex buyers and pimps, rather than the individuals who are bought and sold. Our team is preparing resources now to help support the current law when it is reviewed.

Even as so much of our attention has rightly focused on COVID-19, and the very real difficulties and serious challenges it has presented to our churches, ministries, schools, workplaces and communities, the business of our country continues on. That includes passing laws that require our close attention and interaction. Our diligence and careful work, carried out together, is needed more than ever. Our families and churches need us, and so do the next generation of Canadians who will inherit the country we build today.

In Ottawa, where things certainly do feel more quiet than usual, the EFC is, with your help, hard at work in the task of public engagement in our parliamentary and judicial systems, right where we believe we are called to be.



Welcome to the *Faith Today* Podcast



For approximately 130 episodes, the EFC Podcast has interviewed Canadian Christian leaders, digging into the issues of the day. Many episodes have turned popular articles from *Faith Today*, Canada's Christian magazine, into audio for podcast listeners.

As of this fall, the EFC Podcast will be renamed the *Faith Today* Podcast, conversations inspired by Canada's Christian magazine. The show will focus on interviews, insights and encouragement to

help us all live a more authentic and engaged life of faith in today's Canada. contemplates expanding our podcast

"It made sense for us to do this slight rebranding now, especially as the EFC offerings. To have one only named The EFC Podcast didn't make sense," says Karen Stiller, who often serves as podcast host. "We are excited to continue to interview people and feature an even broader range of topics and subjects than we can capture in the print magazine. It's a lot of fun, and we encourage *Canada Watch* readers to check it out."

Peace and Reconciliation Network developing resources

The Peace and Reconciliation Network North America (PRN), an initiative of the World Evangelical Alliance and supported in Canada by the EFC, continues to grow. The team is currently working on a devotional series on spiritual growth, at the invitation of Promise Keepers Canada/Impactus.

"We are seeking to serve other organizations and networks in their scope of ministry and provide a broader view on peace and reconciliation this way as a holistic approach," explains Manuel Böhm, director of network development for the PRN. Other possible publishing projects are being considered as well, including a curriculum for peace and reconciliation training.

Faith Today magazine is also partnering with the PRN on a bi-weekly blog series offering inspiration and equipping related to peace and reconciliation (www.FaithToday.ca/Reconciling).

"In North America, we are beginning a collaboration with Association of Christian Schools International to bring peace and reconciliation into the school context," says Böhm. "School can be a ground for the next generation to become ambassadors of peace and reconciliation." The PRN has also been supporting the COVID task force of the World Evangelical Alliance and considering how the Church can help to handle situations of injustice and conflict that have in many cases gotten worse under the pandemic.





Message from the President, Bruce J. Clemenger

The end of one parliamentary session and the beginning of another means that some pending government work died, but most of it will see a rebirth in the next few months. There are bills that matter greatly to Canadian Christians, like the expansion of euthanasia in Canada, the review of a prostitution

bill we fought hard for in 2014, and the government's overly expansive definition of conversion therapy. The EFC has been working diligently these past months to prepare to grapple well, with compassion and integrity, with these legislative initiatives that we are sure to see reemerge soon – if they haven't already – in the new Parliament. We are here in Ottawa, standing with you, and thanks to you.

The EFC and the Stewarding Sacred Seeds Report



Members of the EFC Indigenous-Settler Relations Working Group presented *Stewarding Sacred Seeds* earlier this year at a symposium held by NAIITS: An Indigenous Learning Community. Alison Lefebvre (AL), a member of the working group and a minister with the Evangelical Missionary Church in Canada, shares more about the paper.

CW: What do EFC friends and donors need to know about the *Stewarding Sacred Seeds* paper?

AL: I think it represents a commitment to continue a solemn and sacred conversation that began more than two decades ago. It tells the story of an important commitment rooted in relationship, the challenges and barriers that commitment has faced over the years and ways to begin walking forward in relationship.

CW: What difference can we all make in healing relationships?

AL: It's important to understand that this commitment to relationship belongs to each one of us. As Jesus followers, we all need to understand our history and the devastating impact of colonization. Some of us need to acknowledge that we don't know our own story. Knowing our story can provide a foundation for a different kind of "embodied engagement," a term used by members of the working group to describe tangible ways we participate in working together toward right relations and make an impact. Collectively, that has potential for tremendous impact, but it starts with me.

CW: Is there a recommendation we can all work on in our daily lives?

AL: I'm not sure there is only one. My advice would be to find the one that prompts questions in your mind. Perhaps we've never heard of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples or we know very little about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. A simple Google search will give us an opportunity to discover not only important commitments but critical stories about our past.

Asking ourselves why this is important can begin to open our eyes to some of the realities of life for Indigenous people both in our own land and around the world. The EFC website offers other great resources as a good place to expand our understanding.

CW: Thank you, Alison!

TO LEARN MORE VISIT:
www.TheEFC.ca/StewardingSacredSeeds



Updating you on Canada's most immediate issues

■ **Religious freedom court case:** The EFC is applying for intervener status before the Supreme Court of Canada. The case, *Aga v. Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church of Canada*, will consider whether ecclesiastical decisions about theology and membership are outside of the scope of judicial review. Get the latest news at www.TheEFC.ca/Aga.

■ **Conversion therapy bill:** The government is likely to bring back a bill in the new Parliament to ban conversion therapy. This is a good time to ask MPs to revise the overly broad definition of conversion therapy used in the previous Bill C-8. For an overview of the issue and suggested wording to contact your MP, see www.TheEFC.ca/ConversionTherapy.

■ **Review of existing euthanasia law:** A review of the law on Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID) was mandated in the original 2016 bill. This requires that Parliament review the law itself, as well as whether the law should be expanded to include mature minors, mental illness as the sole underlying medical condition, and advance requests for euthanasia. It will also study the state of palliative care in Canada. The review was to begin in

...continued on back

...continued from page 3

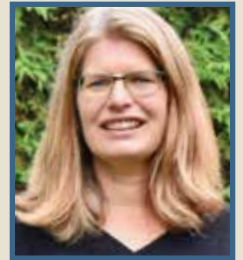
June 2020 and is expected anytime.
Latest news at www.TheEFC.ca/MAID.

■ **Push to expand euthanasia law:**

Former Bill C-7, a proposed law that would have expanded access to euthanasia to those who are not dying, was dropped when the parliamentary session ended. However, these changes are a priority to the government. The Justice Minister hopes to have them passed by December 18. This is a crucial time to contact local MPs, and the EFC has resources to help at www.TheEFC.ca/Euthanasia.

Heart and hands

Beth Hiemstra is policy analyst for the EFC



I monitor what's happening in the House of Commons and Senate. I track bills and motions, as well as studies by parliamentary committees. I prepare submissions to Parliament, as well as letters to MPs and Senators.

One of my favourite tasks is to work on resources to help people understand policy issues, including what is happening in Parliament on these topics and how they might engage.

Part of living out God's call can be asking our MPs to put in place laws that will protect those who are vulnerable or that uphold the sanctity of life. This is one of the ways we seek the best for our country.

It is through the generous support of EFC donors that I am able to monitor what's happening in Parliament and bring biblical principles to bear on federal bills and studies."

The EFC and the persecuted Church



The EFC is a partner in the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church on Sunday, November 1. The Canadian partners have produced high-quality, free downloadable resources, including a new video to help congregations, groups and individuals pray effectively for the persecuted church. You can register to access the resources at www.IDOP.ca.

"We encourage everyone who donates or is involved in the EFC to participate in this important day. We remember together our sisters and brothers around the world in harsh conditions and that we are one Body," says Anita Levesque, international religious freedom coordinator at the EFC.

Welcome the Stranger: A Canadian Church Guide to Welcoming Refugees

The EFC, along with its partners in the Refugees Resettlement Initiative, are excited to publish a practical new resource to help churches and private sponsors welcome and settle individuals and families into a new life in Canada.

Welcome the Stranger: A Canadian Church Guide to Welcoming Refugees is a 68-page booklet that will help churches and individuals be better prepared for both the work and the rewards of welcoming refugees to Canada.

Those who have walked the path of sponsorship from the very first stages of inquiry to building relationships with the individuals and families who arrive in Canada share their stories, along with insights from new Canadians, and discussion group questions can help anyone considering sponsorship.

Preview part of the booklet and sign up for a full copy at www.TheEFC.ca/WelcomeTheStranger.

Facebook.com/TheEFC

Twitter.com/The EFC

TheEFC.ca/Podcasts

Instagram.com/FaithTodayEFC

LinkedIn.com/company/The-Evangelical-Fellowship-of-Canada



103 - 9821 Leslie Street, Richmond Hill, ON L4B 3Y4
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.

