

CanadaWatch

UPDATING YOU

On Canada's most immediate issues
(Page 3)

SPOTLIGHT

Family faith formation research –
beliefs and behaviour (Page 2)

EFC RESOURCES

Introducing two new EFC staff –
Jon Fuller and Karen Fishwick (Page 3)

Challenging hastened death for minors

A special committee of MPs and Senators has recommended making minors eligible for medically hastened death. Their report also recommends allowing advance requests, thus opening Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD) to people no longer able to consent. The committee's February report recommends the government make these changes to the law.

The report recommends no minimum age limit, thus expanding MAiD to minors deemed able to make the decision. It says parents should be consulted "where appropriate" when their minor children are considering MAiD but the will of the minor takes priority. It would ultimately be the child's decision.

This change would be harmful, as minors are still developing the capacity to make informed decisions. The part of

the brain that controls decision-making and judgment doesn't fully mature until around age 25.

Currently minors make medical decisions of increasing importance as they age. Mature youth may be able to refuse treatment, so some argue they should be able to choose to end their lives via MAiD.

But refusing treatment is completely different from MAiD. In the first instance it's the disease or illness that causes death. In the second it's the intentional action of another person that ends a life.

The first MAiD law, passed in 2016, limited MAiD to people nearing death. When a lower court in Quebec found that limit unconstitutional, the government didn't appeal the decision. Instead it introduced a bill to expand MAiD to people who were not dying.



This same shift could happen again with minors. The new committee report does recommend limiting MAiD to youth whose natural death is reasonably foreseeable. But it seems likely that initial limit would be removed over time.

Another problematic recommendation, allowing advance requests for MAiD, means a person no longer able to consent could have their life ended via MAiD.

This would remove a critical safeguard and set a disturbing precedent. In fact the committee heard from witnesses who proposed MAiD for severely disabled infants, who clearly would not be able to consent.

An advance request is made by a person who thinks life would not be

...continued on page 2

How you can help

- Pray for Canadians who are vulnerable, for lawmakers and for the good of our country.
- Find your MP's contact information at ourcommons.ca/members. Tell your MP you do not want MAiD expanded to minors or by advance request.
- Share your concerns about this issue with friends and family. Pass along this issue of *Canada Watch*.



RELIGIOUS FREEDOM



SANCTITY OF LIFE



CHURCH & MISSION



FAMILY & COMMUNITY



CARE FOR THE VULNERABLE

...continued from page 1

worth living if they were no longer able to enjoy certain activities or became too reliant on the care of others. A person who makes an advance request could have their life ended by MAiD, even if they do not seem to be unhappy or suffering at the time.

A person can't know how they will feel ahead of an event. It's a presumption based on fear or rejection of anticipated suffering.

Advance requests usually assume life with a disability isn't worth living. It's a misconception that people with disabilities are less happy or less able to enjoy life than others. This also flies in the face of the gospel. The Bible teaches that all humans are made by God and loved by Him, and thus all have dignity and worth.

A committee report by itself does not change the law. It only recommends changes. The government may point to a report as a reason to change the law or use it to gauge public opinion about a possible change.

With your support the EFC continues to advocate for the protection of children and youth. Please join us in asking the government not to expand MAiD any further. We are asking for Track Two MAiD (for people who aren't near death) to be repealed, to end this special pathway to hastened death for people with disabilities. Let's continue to seek protection for Canadians in vulnerable moments.

Please continue to pray. Pray for God's intervention. Pray for God's people to reach out to support those who are vulnerable. Pray for wisdom for our lawmakers.

It's best to let your MP know you don't want these changes *before* a law is introduced. Now is the best time to contact your MP to say you don't support MAiD for mature minors or by advance request. Ask your MP to stop MAiD expansion.



FAMILY FAITH FORMATION RESEARCH



Why we measured the faith-related activities of 3,000 children

Successfully passing on a faith legacy from one generation to the next means children adopt the beliefs and behaviours of their parents. This is important from a research perspective because it points to things that can be measured – beliefs and behaviour.

In a partnership of 16 ministries called the Canadian Evangelical Faith Formation Study, our researchers measured respondents' *beliefs* at different points but even more significantly also measured faith *behaviours*.

We asked over 1,000 parent survey respondents about what we called the *faith formation activities* of each of their children. (We did not survey children directly.) Over 3,000 children are thus represented in the national survey, which makes for rich data

on how faith formation activities are being practised by children at different ages.

For example, participation can be dependent on developmental stage. We don't expect children to memorize Scripture before they are verbal, nor do we expect children to read the Bible by themselves before they are literate. However, we do expect that as children approach adulthood their level of faith-related behaviours would begin to converge with that of their parents – if faith formation is truly succeeding.

This data can help identify gaps in faith practices, along with opportunities for engaging children and youth as we guide them into a life of following Christ and participation in His Body, the Church.

The final report *Parenting Faith: Parental Faith Formation of Children in the Home* will be available this month at TheEFC.ca/ParentingFaith.

"...our researchers measured respondents' *beliefs* at different points but even more significantly also measured faith *behaviours*."



A note from EFC President David Guretzki

Canada's medically assisted dying regime continues to expand to more groups of people. The EFC and other concerned groups are rallying Canadians to reverse this expansion, partly because it pressures vulnerable people to choose death as an escape. God's call on us to love our neighbour means we and our government

must work to offer them better care, not death. Your prayers and support are necessary and enable the work we do on this issue and so many others. Thanks to your support, our capacity is growing, as you'll see below with the introductions of two new staff. Thanks also to all of you who have so kindly welcomed me in my new role as EFC president and CEO. May God bless our collaborative ministry.

Meet Jon Fuller, new EFC resident missiologist



I grew up in the Philippines, where my parents served as missionaries. I and my wife Marilyn had the privilege of returning to the Philippines with OMF International to serve in a Filipino Muslim community for many years. More recently, I've been based in Singapore and Canada as a mission leader, traveling frequently in Asia and globally.

In January 2023 I took up a new role as resident missiologist with the EFC. As a missiologist, I spend time connecting to church, agency, academy and marketplace leaders around the intersection of church, gospel and culture.

I also serve as executive director for Our Common Calling, a partnership of the EFC, Lausanne Canada, the Canadian Centre for Christian Charities, and Christian Higher Education Canada. My passion continues to be investing in the next generation, helping them become everything God has called them to be.

Learn more about me or invite me for a speaking engagement at TheEFC.ca/JonFuller.

Meet Karen Fishwick, new EFC VP admin and finance



I am thrilled to be joining the EFC as vice-president of administration and finance, taking over most of the portfolio David Guretzki was managing prior to his appointment as president in January.

On a professional level, I've been longing for an opportunity to shift my focus from the private sector to the not-for-profit space, to leverage my skills and experience in the marketplace to further God's kingdom on earth. I've always viewed the marketplace as my mission field, and I've been blessed with meaningful work and incredible opportunities; but at this stage in my career, I'm happy to have landed with a Christian organization.

Learn more about me at TheEFC.ca/KarenFishwick.



Updating you on Canada's most immediate issues

■ Reversing MAID for mental illness:

A bill to delay the expansion of Medical Assistance in Dying to those with mental illness as their sole underlying medical condition passed in March. Bill C-39 delays the expansion for one year until March 2024. However, a delay is not enough. The EFC is asking for a reversal. A new private member's bill would do that. MP Ed Fast introduced Bill C-314 in February 2023. The EFC has written a letter of support and has a sample MP letter you can use at TheEFC.ca/C-314.

■ Protecting pregnant women:

The EFC supports a new bill that would consider the intentional injury and harm of a pregnant woman to be an aggravating factor that affects sentencing. Courts would consider these offences more seriously and may assign higher sentences. MP Cathay Wagantall introduced Bill C-311 on Jan. 31. More details and a sample MP letter at TheEFC.ca/C-311.

■ Asking for human rights protection:

The EFC is submitting a brief to the UN Human Rights Council for its review of human rights in Canada. The brief, co-submitted by the EFC and World Evangelical Alliance, will recommend

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...continued from page 3

changes to Canadian laws. It deals with issues such as sexual exploitation, religious freedom, treatment of people with disabilities and MAiD. The EFC and WEA are recommending conscience protection for medical practitioners, support for Canada's prostitution laws, protection for children from online pornography, and more.

■ Challenging hastened death for

minors: More than 50 leaders of Christian organizations have signed a statement lamenting hastened death. They affirm the sanctity of life and dignity of every human being. They commit to show the love of God to those who feel abandoned and alone. They resolve to mobilize their communities to care for those who are suffering and isolated. The EFC invites churches to use the statement and affirm the commitments at

TheEFC.ca/DeclareAndResolve.

Other new related resources include a webinar (*Supporting Canadians to Live: An update on MAiD and how the church can engage* at **TheEFC.ca/Webinar**), a blog about how a woman used EFC resources to help her church address MAiD laws (**TheEFC.ca/Blog**) and, for small groups and individual reflection, a new 56-page booklet *Life Together: Disability and belonging in the Church* (free print/online at **TheEFC.ca/LifeTogether**).

Heart and hands

Donald F. McNiven is the EFC's Regional Director, Central Canada.



I joined the EFC team in 2016, primarily working with affiliate organizations. In that role I had the privilege of travelling across Canada, meeting with EFC supporters. Those meetings provided a rich tapestry of insight into the work of Canadian Evangelicals, allowing me to give the EFC feedback on their strengths and concerns. It was fulfilling to see, in practical ways, how our work helps "unite Evangelicals across Canada."

The last few years my work has been mainly with pastors and churches. I find it a joy to learn about their ministry and mission strategies – and share how the EFC can partner with them to fulfil the Great Commission. They are often amazed at the depth and breadth of resources available from the EFC. It's a blessing to be a part of a great team.

Warm words from donors

We appreciate your warm words and encouragement. We pray for you regularly, and we thank you for praying for the work and mission of the EFC.

We gratefully received this message recently from an EFC donor:

"I am happy to be able to support the work of the EFC. You are in a position to be able to take a stand and speak out against the evil of abortion, child pornography, euthanasia and other important issues in a way none of us can. Keep up your good work. I pray God will bless your witness. Let 1 Corinthians 15:8-58 encourage you: 'Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.'"

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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.



RELIGIOUS FREEDOM



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