

CanadaWatch

CENTRE FOR FAITH & PUBLIC LIFE

The EFC in the courts and on Parliament Hill.

SPOTLIGHT The EFC welcomes David Guretzki – new Executive Vice President on June 1, 2017.

EFC RESOURCES The latest EFC resource booklet is now available, *Battling Pornography: A Guide for Canadians*.

The EFC helps roll out distinctly Canadian research on missions

The EFC and the Canadian Missions Research Forum, a group of denominations and mission agencies, have conducted a remarkable research project on the missions engagement of Canadian Evangelicals and their congregations.

Like most research, this one started with a good question. Are Evangelicals pulling away from global missions? Is there, in fact, a disengagement with global missions, perhaps as a result of increased local preoccupations? Do we need to change how we understand and how we do missions?

What we have in our hands now is the *first ever comprehensive national research on how Canadian Evangelicals engage with "mission" or "missions."* The series of reports produced from 3,400 Canadians polled and qualitative interviews with 56 Evangelicals

provides a snapshot of how and why Canadian Evangelicals engage with missions. It also marks a baseline for future study.

As EFC donors, your prayer and financial support help make this kind of groundbreaking research possible. When we understand ourselves better, we can do better and plan more effectively for the future. We can understand better what is behind certain trends, and what they mean for the present and future health of the Church.

The first portion of research we want to share in *Canada Watch* are insights into evangelical practice and belief with respect to **short-term missions**: We've only chosen highlights below, please visit www.TheEFC.ca/CMRF to download the free, full report.



Who goes on short-term mission trips?

Pastors, frequent attenders and younger Evangelicals are more likely to go on short-term mission trips, as are evangelical lay people from larger congregations or in Canada's western provinces.

- Two-thirds of evangelical pastors (67%) and one-fifth of evangelical lay people (22%) reported going on at least one short-term mission trip (STMT) in the past decade.
- Lay people who attended religious services at least weekly in the last year were eight times more likely to have taken a STMT in the last decade than those who attended religious services just once or a few times in the last year.

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Checking in with you

- Do these findings resonate with your experience?
- Are you surprised by any of these statistics?
- Do you go on short term-missions trips?

Share your response to these findings on Facebook at www.Facebook.com/TheEFC.

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INTERVIEW



The EFC welcomes David Guretzki

Where do they go and for how long?

Many short-term mission trips are close to home and the duration is usually two weeks or less.

- One in five STMTs by lay people in the last decade were to locations in Canada. A common sentiment in the qualitative interviews was that STMT and mission resources needed to be "rebalanced" back to Canada to deal with spiritual and physical poverty at home.
- Nearly one-third of missions trips were to locations in the United States, Mexico or the Caribbean.

How much do they spend?

- On average, pastors reported spending \$2,118 on their most recent STMT compared to \$1,691 for lay people. Generally speaking, pastors reported spending more on STMTs than lay people even for trips to the same locations.
- Older lay Evangelicals, those from larger churches and those from the West tended to spend more on STMTs than those who were younger, from smaller churches or lived in the East.

Why do they go?

- About two-thirds of pastors and half of lay people agreed that the spiritual growth of STMT team members was the primary purpose of these trips.
- Many see participation on STMTs by non-Christians as a form of outreach to those non-Christian team members. Two-thirds of pastors agreed that spots on STMTs should be made available to non-Christians who have skills and abilities to contribute.

What do they do on these trips?

The STMT tasks most frequently reported were those that could be accomplished in a short timeframe.

- The five most common: building, construction and repair; vacation Bible school; evangelism and discipleship; encouraging missionaries; and working with orphans and orphanages.



David Guretzki will join the EFC as its new Executive Vice President on June 1. Most recently he served as both Dean of Briercrest Seminary and its Professor of Theology, Church and Public Life.

CW: David, what are you most looking forward to with your new position?

DG: I'm looking forward to engaging with the issues the EFC works with, the audiences, and of course meeting people. My role will be as Executive Vice-President, but also as our resident theologian. I'll be helping us think strategically through the theological implications of those issues. We will be both reacting to issues that arise, but also trying to be proactive. And I love the convening part of the EFC, bringing together thinkers and influencers and leaders.

CW: Why is it important to look at the theological dimensions of issues like euthanasia, palliative care and pornography?

DG: Far too often the public debates proceed as if there were no theological aspects to these problems. A lot of the conversations around assisted dying, for example, are taking place without reference to the theological or religious domain. They are being talked about in very pragmatic, individualistic ways, without addressing the fact that most of these decisions are made before God, and a community of people created in His image.

There's such an absence of religious and theological input into public issues that

very few people, even in the Church, see the importance of it. And it is essential that we think biblically and theologically about these things.

CW: How can the EFC help with all these things?

DG: Let's consider our mission statement, "Uniting Evangelicals to bless Canada in the name of Jesus." Uniting Evangelicals is the convening aspect. One of the strengths of the EFC is the ability to gather Evangelicals together and in different ways. There aren't too many other organizations doing that.

Now, blessing Canada, that is the hard one. Blessing requires conviction and compassion. Blessing Canada means not only having compassion on people and saying nice things about them, but also speaking the truth in love.

The "in Jesus' name" part of our statement asks us to consider how it is that we are concretely Christian in all that we do. What does it look like to be Christian and not just religious? What are the concrete ways we serve and work in Jesus name? It's easy to say, it's harder to do.

Our mission will guide us as we determine what it means to have a concretely Christian presence in Canada.

Download the full report at www.TheEFC.ca/CMRF.



Message from the President, Bruce J. Clemenger

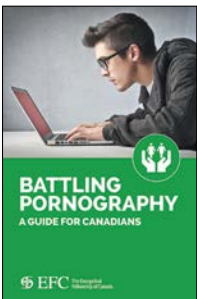
Thank you again for your ongoing support for the work of the EFC, uniting Evangelicals to bless Canada in the name of Jesus. You are an integral part of our mission. You make it possible, and your impact is being felt throughout our country. The work of the Canadian Missions Research Forum is one recent example. Now we have at our fingertips purely Canadian research on short-term mission trips. I encourage you to download the entire report at www.TheEFC.ca/CMRF. Remember, research is never just for the sake of information, we look at it for impact. Such research can impact how we do mission(s) in the future. I'm encouraged by what David Guretzki, our new executive vice-president, says about our mission statement in the brief *Canada Watch* interview. Those words – conviction and compassion – help define what we do together, with you, at the EFC.



Battling Pornography: A Guide for Canadians now available

The latest EFC resource is now available to help you, your church and community contend with the prevalence and addictive nature of pornography. "Almost one in three teens and half of young adults encounter porn daily or weekly, by accident, without seeking it out. Almost one-fifth of practising Christians report that they are attempting to stop using pornography. What impact is this epidemic of pornography having on our lives and our society?" asks the free booklet. It brings together short articles, statistics, resources and discussion questions. Here are two sample discussion questions to give you an idea of how the booklet can be used:

- Consider the lies about sex, relationships and pornography that we hear and see. How can we respond to these false ideas in a constructive and compassionate way, and still protect our youth and children? Consider 1 Corinthians 13 and how it describes love. Is there help to be found in that passage, both for our response and for a true definition of what love is?
- Pornography consumption leads to desensitization, meaning pornography users generally consume porn that is more and more hardcore over time. The Bible talks about the progression of sin and becoming hardened by the deceitfulness of sin (Hebrews 3:13). In your experience or observation, what stops this progression? How can community and other Christians help?



To request copies of *Battling Pornography: A Guide for Canadians* call 1-866-302-3362 x221 or visit www.TheEFC.ca/BattlingPornography.



Updating you on Canada's most immediate issues

■ **Conscience protection:** The court challenge of policies that require doctors to make an effective referral for euthanasia and assisted suicide against their deeply-held beliefs is scheduled to be heard by the lower court in Ontario this month. Five doctors and several organizations representing doctors are challenging these policies put in place by the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario. The EFC is arguing for conscience protection for physicians with co-intervenors the Christian Legal Fellowship and the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario.

■ **Palliative care:** Private member's bill C-277, to establish a framework on palliative care, is expected to pass with all-party support. The EFC made a submission to the Standing Committee on Health in support of the bill which flagged the need for increased support for palliative care across the country. EFC President Bruce Clemenger recently joined other faith leaders in a public call for a palliative care strategy for Canada.

■ **Religious discrimination:** Private member's motion M-103 on Islamophobia

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and religious discrimination has passed. The EFC will ask the Canadian Heritage Committee to consider religious discrimination across Canada broadly, and to clearly define the term Islamophobia in a way that safeguards free speech.

■ **Euthanasia:** The EFC is preparing to participate in federal studies on expanded access to euthanasia and assisted suicide. We are researching concerns and findings on access to euthanasia and assisted suicide for mature minors and those with mental illness as the sole underlying condition, and by advance request. The new federal law required studies on these three areas, and the government has asked the non-profit Council of Canadian Academies to conduct the studies.

■ **Pornography:** The Health Committee has concluded its study on the public health effects of violent and degrading Internet pornography and is expected to table its report at the beginning of June. During the debate on M-47, many Parliamentarians expressed deep concern about the impact of these images, and the Committee heard strong testimony about the range of harms from a number of experts. The EFC made a submission and will be watching to see if the committee puts forward strong recommendations to address the harms.

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EFC DONOR WRITES: "Thank you to all of you for standing in the gap for Christ and His Church. A special thank you to Bruce Clemenger ... [The EFC helps to] keep the representation of the Christian mindset and Christian values ever present in the court proceedings. May God bless you for this important ministry."

FT The Faith Today blog posts exclusive new material several times per week, following up on important issues raised in Canada's Christian magazine. Blog.FaithToday.ca

f Join the conversation and like us on Facebook. www.Facebook.com/TheEFC

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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.

