

CanadaWatch

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Youth research will help young people keep faith

EFC director of research Rick Hiemstra has been helping lead the Young Adult Transition Research project, made possible in part by the generosity of EFC donors. Rick shares with us what we can expect, and his personal thanks to those who support the EFC.

The 2011 *Hemorrhaging Faith* study revealed that Canadian Evangelicals were losing one third of our young people by the time they became young adults. The study clarified for us some of the *drivers* and *barriers* to faith among our young people. So much has changed since then, but letting them slip quietly out the back door of the Church is still a major concern.

The latest EFC project to address this concern began in 2015, when the EFC started a research partnership with Power to Change—Students, InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, Youth for Christ, Truth Matters Ministries, and The Muskoka Woods Leadership Studio.

It examines how we could help young adults stay connected to church and faith as they move from high school to the next phase in life. This project was named the Young Adult Transition Research (YATR) study – the resulting report is called *Renegotiating Faith* and will be released in the fall.

For nearly three years, we have been talking with young adults and ministry experts about their experiences. We've been reading what others have written. We've conducted large national surveys with both young adults and ministry experts – and we have analyzed and prayed over what we discovered. We have consulted widely, testing our



findings with the lived experience of those who minister with youth and young adults.

What we have unearthed can change how we do youth ministry in Canada today, especially during times of transitions. Doing this research with a partnership has been especially powerful and significant. Few denominations or ministry organizations have the capacity to do national ministry research on their own.

Research partnerships build ministry networks and trust within the church in Canada, and we have seen that happen through the YATR partnership. These broad ministry partnerships help shape our research to Canadian realities and builds confidence in the relevance of the findings. We are grateful for the

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What you can do:

- Pray for the coming weeks of report writing and finalizing.
- When *Renegotiating Faith* is available, download it for free! Share it widely.
- Let your church leaders and denominations know about *Renegotiating Faith*. Offer it to them as the gift it is.

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partnership that has brought YATR into the world.

On May 15, we gathered more than 100 ministry experts in Burlington, Ont., for a first look at the YATR findings. We're still learning, and we are convinced that God has given His wisdom to His church. We asked these experts to help us understand and apply what we've learned. Over the summer we'll be incorporating their insights, and the insights of others into the final report that will be released in the fall.

We have learned just how important local churches are for the spiritual well-being of our young adults – especially when they are networked with other churches and ministries. We have also learned the profound influence home church mentors have on the spiritual lives of young people.

The YATR ministry research partnership wants *Renegotiating Faith* to be a gift to the Canadian Church. We are happy to make *Renegotiating Faith* freely available as a PDF download, and we will let you know when it is available. We believe these findings will make an eternal difference in the lives of many of our young people and in their churches. There will be practical applications that every church and ministry can start right away that will make a difference in the lives of our young people.

Thank you for supporting this Canadian ministry research. The Apostle Paul and the Philippian church set a pattern for ministry partnerships that was forward-looking and Kingdom-focused (Philippians 4). YATR has been just such a partnership. Many of you have participated in the surveys or interviews and/or supported the EFC or one of our partners financially. All of us care deeply about the faith of our young people and their capacity to step up and lead in the church. You make national Canadian research possible with your ongoing support.



THE YOUNG ADULT TRANSITION RESEARCH IS BUILT ON PARTNERSHIP. The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, Power to Change-Students, InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, The Muskoka Woods Leadership Studio, Youth For Christ, and Truth Matters formed a research partnership to enable and fund the YATR project.



The power of partnerships in EFC research

HERE IS WHAT SOME OF THE PARTNERS SAY ABOUT THIS PROJECT AND THE RESEARCH IT HAS MADE POSSIBLE.

"It has been a great honour to be a part of the partnership behind YATR. Years ago, a group of friends coined the phrase 'low ego, high trust' as a way to define Kingdom partnerships, and this group has embraced that ethos once again. When organizational leaders humbly set aside ego and intentionally embrace trust with one another, synergistic Kingdom work takes place. God is glorified, and we have the great joy of experiencing His will on earth as it is in heaven. I believe we have had a taste of that reality once again." – Sid Koop, executive director, Truth Matters

"Youth and young adult ministry is relational, fun and life-giving both for those ministering and being ministered to. Hemorrhaging Faith taught us that we were losing youth from the Church at an alarming rate after they graduate from high school, but what were the factors involved in the lives of those who didn't leave the Church, who in fact deepened their faith in Jesus? We want to discover those factors and be intentional about building them into the ministries we lead across Canada to reach and disciple even more youth into young adulthood."
– Tim Coles, national director designate, YFC Canada

"As Power to Change celebrates our 50-year anniversary in Canada we know first-hand how the college and university environment can be a challenge for students having grown up in a Christian context. In 2015 we initiated the start of this research project because we felt a collective and collaborative response was needed from churches and para-church organizations. The EFC played a significant role in assembling the commissioning team of organizations to spearhead this national research."
– Anton Lim, The NEXT initiative leader of Power to Change-Students



Young adults will be blessed because EFC donors believe in the Canadian Church and top-notch Canadian research. Thank you!



Message from the President, Bruce J. Clemenger

Thank you for your ongoing gifts, prayers and support for the work of the EFC. I'm sure you have been following our work on the Canada Summer Jobs grant attestation issue, and how we have been gathering stories and providing support and practical guidance to the churches and organizations across

Canada impacted by this development. We will continue to keep you up to date on the latest developments with that issue and so many more. As Christians, our task is to participate in these conversations and issues as they develop. We bring a constructive and compassionate application of Scripture to the debates and to the public square. It is your gifts that help us do this essential and timely work in our country. Thank you.

Palliative care toolkit

The latest EFC resource booklet will help Canadians think strategically through end-of-life issues and the role excellent palliative care can play in providing comfort and care, especially in light of Canada's legalization of physician-assisted death. The booklet contains short articles, interviews, research and practical tools – along with discussion questions – that introduce the topic of palliative care and end-of-life issues, as well as providing a theological framework to help Canadians sort through them.

"Palliative care is an approach that truly allows people to die with dignity. Palliative care empowers people, especially those with a life-limiting terminal illness or disability, to live life as fully as possible. They are supported and cared for until the natural end of their lives. Palliative care particularly resonates

with Christians as it embodies the principles taught by our faith: to care



for the vulnerable and uphold the sanctity of human life" (Introduction, *Palliative Care Toolkit*).

"This toolkit will help equip Canadian Christians to understand what palliative care is, why it matters and to advocate for, support and engage in local palliative care," says Julia Beazley, director of public policy for the EFC. "We want to provide solid, practical resources for Canadians. We're not just critiquing physician-assisted suicide in our country, we are also building up and empowering Canadians to make truly life-affirming choices, and they don't have to do that alone."

The booklet will be available for free download at www.TheEFC.ca/PalliativeCareToolkit, or by calling 1-866-302-3362 or emailing efc@TheEFC.ca to request free copies. Ideal for personal use and reflection, the booklet is also designed to be used for group discussions.



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Updating you on Canada's most immediate issues

■ **Religious freedom:** The applications of over 1,500 groups to the Canada Summer Jobs program were rejected this year, compared to 126 last year. Among this number are many churches, faith-based camps and others who objected to the new attestation committing to respect for undefined values and "other rights," including access to abortion. A limited number of objecting groups were approved for a grant. The EFC is asking for the attestation to be changed for next year. Find our sample letter to MPs at www.TheEFC.ca/SummerJobs.

The Supreme Court decision in the case of Trinity Western University's proposed law school is expected this spring. At the time of publication, the decision had not yet been announced. The EFC co-intervened with Christian Higher Education Canada to argue that it is a violation of religious freedom for law societies to refuse to accredit the proposed law school.

■ **Human Trafficking:** The EFC made a submission to the parliamentary justice committee study on human

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trafficking this spring. The EFC's brief noted that most human trafficking charges laid in Canada relate to the sex trafficking of Canadians. We asked the committee to support the current prostitution law that criminalizes buying sex, pimping and running a brothel. We also asked for renewed support for victim services, a public education campaign on how to recognize trafficking victims, and more. The EFC's brief and a sample letter to MPs are at www.TheEFC.ca/HumanTrafficking.

■ **Palliative Care:** The EFC's new resource will help equip Christians learn more and get involved in palliative care. See details in story on previous page. Download at [www.TheEFC.ca/PalliativeCare Toolkit](http://www.TheEFC.ca/PalliativeCareToolkit).

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

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Tap into these recent webinars and podcasts to resource you and your ministry

The EFC, with your help, supports Christian journalism in Canada and resources that help build the Canadian Church. Here are the most recent webinars and podcasts produced by the EFC. You can find links to them at www.TheEFC.ca/Webinars and www.TheEFC.ca/Podcasts.



Webinars

- How churches and organizations can communicate more effectively (May). In this webinar, we drew on our expert guests to offer practical advice on communicating our messages well to our communities and constituencies.
- Human trafficking in Canada (April). The EFC's Julia Beazley, director of public policy, explained the alarming state of human trafficking in Canada, and offered practical advice on how we can help protect the vulnerable.

Podcasts

- Voices from the national March for Life
- When is a heresy a cult, with Brian Stiller
- Interacting with other world religions, with Mathew P. John
- What churches are learning from their work with refugees
- Help your kids embrace faith
- "Youth inspire me." An interview with Renee Embree, Canadian Baptists of Atlantic Canada
- The Humboldt Broncos hockey tragedy and how the church can respond. An interview with Dave Wells, sports chaplain and general superintendent of The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada
- Sexual ethics in the church, with Aimee Patterson of The Salvation Army Ethics Centre
- Politics and faith, an interview with Preston Manning

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

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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.

