

CanadaWatch

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Looking forward to a year of engagement

Thank you for empowering the EFC as we collaborate to make Canada better for everyone. For 2022, we have some clarity about issues the government will focus on.

Prime Minister Trudeau released mandate letters for his cabinet ministers in December, which reflect the priorities of the prime minister and indicate some of the issues coming to Parliament. These letters sketch out a map for the months ahead as we see where the government will be focusing.

Conversion therapy: As Canadians know, the conversion therapy ban came into force January 7. The EFC has been interacting with this bill (C-4) and with previous versions of the ban, consistently affirming that coercive and harmful

practices have no place in Canadian society or the Church, while also expressing concern that the definition of conversion therapy in the bill was too broad and advocating for needed clarity.

The EFC has worked with partner organizations on an analysis of the bill for churches and ministries and we will be monitoring how the ban is applied and interpreted as we move forward together.

Charitable status of pro-life organizations: Protection and care for those who are vulnerable, including the unborn, is an area of focus and concern for the EFC.

Canada's finance minister has been asked to work with the minister for women and gender equality to "introduce amendments to the *Income*



Tax Act to make anti-abortion organizations that provide dishonest counselling to pregnant women about their rights and options ineligible for charitable status." We wrote to the finance minister in November, requesting clarification.

While we believe all charities should carry out their activities honestly and ethically, the EFC is very concerned these measures seem directed only at organizations with a particular view on abortion.

We asked the minister how "dishonest counseling" would be defined and identified. If it is based solely on a particular premise of when life begins or disagreement with abortion/ending life, this would raise serious concerns about compliance with the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

The EFC is also concerned by the

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What you can do:

- Find out more about the conversion therapy ban that passed: www.TheEFC.ca/C-4.
- Learn more about protecting pro-life organizations: www.TheEFC.ca/CharitableProLife.
- Join in the EFC's commitment to reconciliation: www.TheEFC.ca/IndigenousRelations.
- Please continue to pray and donate to make this work possible.



RELIGIOUS FREEDOM



SANCTITY OF LIFE



CHURCH & MISSION



FAMILY & COMMUNITY



CARE FOR THE VULNERABLE

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mischaracterization implicit in the government's position. We affirm that pregnancy care centres are a vital source of support for many Canadian women and are often run by Christians concerned for both mother and child. The EFC will continue to monitor this situation and share our concerns and guidance with the government.

Online harms: Online hate and harm continue to be a topic of discussion in Canada. We know that the justice minister has been asked to work with his colleagues to develop legislation to combat harmful online content, including child sexual abuse materials, the uploading of intimate images without consent, and online hate.

The EFC has interacted with the government on these issues, and we will continue to call for the careful balance required when dealing with legislation that touches on both societal care and personal freedoms.

Positively, we applaud the government's focus on introducing legislation to "eradicate forced labour from Canadian supply chains and ensure that Canadian businesses operating abroad do not contribute to human rights abuses," as outlined in the mandate given to the minister of labour. We're also encouraged by the focus on reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples that was highlighted in each minister's mandate letter. The EFC has been working hard to fulfill our own commitment to move towards reconciliation and help the Canadian Church do that more effectively and consistently by providing resources for individuals and congregations.

There is no doubt that the next session of Parliament will be busy. Please pray for God's grace and discernment in tackling complex policies and continue to join with us as we work together on these issues and more. It is vital that we are present.

Read the EFC's 2021 Impact Report with this *Canada Watch*.



Resource helps Canadian churches welcome newcomers

The Canadian Church has a practical, new resource to help congregations better welcome newcomers to Canada into deeper community.

Welcome Church is a video-based training program produced by a partnership of four national groups: the EFC, Lausanne Canada, the Canadian Centre for Christian Charities, and Christian Higher Education Canada. The partnership, called Our Common Calling, launched the program Feb. 1.

"The videos include teaching from EFC's resident theologian David Guretzki, along with others such as a professor, pastors, ministry leaders and a spiritual director, all helping to equip us to better serve the needs of people around us," says the EFC's Joel Gordon.

"The teaching is lively and accessible.

There are topics such as what hospitality looks like — and really practical things like how to start a welcome team." Every video concludes with an interactive quiz to help participants remember what they've learned.

Welcome Church can also provide tailored and deeper learning for churches that want to better welcome specific people groups in their areas. After churches complete the free program, their congregation will appear on a Canadian online map that helps newcomers navigate their way to friendly congregations.

Churches can register and find out more at www.WelcomeChurch.ca. Your support helps make innovative resources like this possible for Canadian churches. Why not introduce this program to your own congregation?

"WELCOME CHURCH CAN ALSO PROVIDE TAILORED AND DEEPER LEARNING FOR CHURCHES THAT WANT TO BETTER WELCOME SPECIFIC PEOPLE GROUPS IN THEIR AREAS."

To register or to learn more visit, www.WelcomeChurch.ca



Message from the President, Bruce J. Clemenger

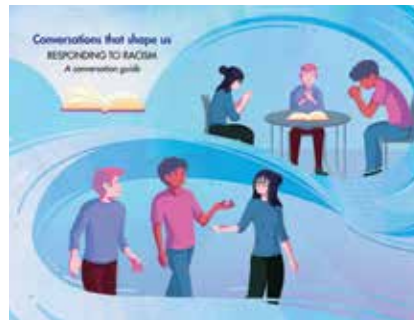
We are pleased to include the 2021 EFC Impact Report for you with this *Canada Watch*. Although we know many different readers receive *Canada Watch*, most of you are donors who give sacrificially to the mission of the EFC. In this brief summary of our work this past year, you will see evidence of the significant impact of your support. The

donations you made, the prayers you offered, your affirmation – all contributed to the effectiveness and impact of the EFC. Our ministry highlights demonstrate what we can accomplish with your help. Thank you. We anticipate another year of impact, as we gather Evangelicals together to bless Canada in Jesus' name.

Racism discussion guide now available

So much of the good work the EFC is able to do happens in partnership. *Conversations that Shape us: Responding to Racism* is a recent example. This guide explores biblical concepts that prepare followers of Jesus to respond to racism in a God-honouring way. The guide is a joint creation of the EFC, the Canadian Bible Society, Canadian Christians for Justice and Mercy, and Cardus.

Designed especially for small groups, Bible studies and churches, the guide gently leads participants through a process of learning, transparency and honest dialogue to do with the sin of racism. The guide aims to spark conversations about racism that are grounded in biblical reflection and prayer. This guide can help remove some of the barriers that might hinder individuals from talking about racism and encourages the creation of a safe environment.



The desired outcome is small groups journeying deeper in biblical reflection, conversation and transformation as they respond to God's heart of love and justice. The journey can continue in ongoing conversation about racism and how it relates to us – both individually and within our churches.

Download the guide at www.TheEFC.ca/Racism. It is the steadfast generosity of EFC donors that make valuable initiatives like this possible. Thank you for helping us speak into this essential topic and deepen this conversation in Canada.

The EFC administrative office has moved!

We are happy to announce a new address for the EFC administrative offices formerly based in Richmond Hill, Ont. As of February 1, 2021, this branch of the EFC will be located at: **10 Huntingdale Blvd, Scarborough, ON M1W 2S5. Toll free 1-866-302-3362.** This is a move that will increase our efficiencies as we share a building with several other ministries and decrease our costs. We thank God for His provision. (The address of our national office in Ottawa is unchanged.)



Updating you on Canada's most immediate issues

■ **Prostitution:** The EFC is applying for intervenor status to defend the current prostitution laws that criminalize sex buyers and pimps. The laws consider prostitution to be exploitation and are intended to reduce the demand for paid sex. This Ontario case is in its early stages, and the judge will decide which of the groups applying will be able to make arguments as a friend of the court. www.TheEFC.ca/Prostitution

■ **Euthanasia/assisted suicide:** In March 2023, people with mental illness alone will become eligible for Medical Assistance in Dying. Former Bill C-7, passed in March 2021, made this change in the law with a two-year delay until it takes effect. The government has yet to set up a committee of experts to consider what safeguards will be needed for this change, as the bill requires. As well, a special committee of MPs and senators is expected to be set up to study the MAID provisions and whether to expand access for mature minors, the protection of people with disabilities, and more. www.TheEFC.ca/MAID

■ **Protecting youth from explicit sexual content:** A bill to protect young persons from exposure to commercial porn-

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ography sites is moving through the Senate. Violent and degrading pornography has a significant impact on children and youth. It is easily accessible to them online. The EFC supported the previous version of this bill (former Bill S-203), which had passed in the Senate and moved to the House of Commons before it died at the election call. To learn more and add your support, see www.TheEFC.ca/S-210.

■ **Conversion therapy ban becomes law:** A bill to ban conversion therapy came into force on January 7. Bill C-4 was passed very quickly without study or amendment, and without recorded objection in both the House of Commons and the Senate. Learn more at www.TheEFC.ca/C-4.

■ **Reconciliation:** Each of the prime minister's mandate letters for cabinet ministers underlines the need to further the work of reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples. The EFC's website describes our commitment to move towards reconciliation and provides resources for individuals and congregations. www.TheEFC.ca/IndigenousRelations.

UPDATES ON THE ISSUES

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

Heart and hands

Brian Lopez is the EFC's digital media manager, a new position that started in 2021.



Merging two of my biggest passions as a full-time job was only a dream when I was in college. Merging digital media with faith had been just a dream for me. But in September 2021 I became the newest addition to our communications team.

Being at the EFC has made me realize how my life journey prepared me for the next step. As its digital media manager, I have realized how wide the scope of the Church in Canada is. The Church needs organizations like the EFC to step out and be involved in social and spiritual issues that cover the country and helps inform the local church. It is a Body working together. So now the objective is, how can we make the digital world serve Christians and even non-Christians alike?

In 2022 I will, along with the rest of the communications team, set out to answer that question and be the hands and feet of Jesus wherever they are needed.

EFC Family of Podcasts and *Faith Today*

If you've never listened to a podcast, why not give it a try by listening to the Faith Today Podcast? Or try the newest member of the EFC podcast family, the Faith Trends Podcast.

The latest releases from both are at www.TheEFC.ca/Podcasts. Think of a podcast as an episode of a radio show that you can listen to right on your computer, iPad or other device.

The Faith Trends Podcast will give you a glimpse into Canadian research into church and faith trends, while the Faith Today Podcast is more topical and often includes an interview connected with an article from the print magazine.

Speaking of *Faith Today*, Canada's Christian magazine continues to grow, adding new subscribers since we made it free of charge to Canadians. If you haven't subscribed yet, please sign up at www.FaithToday.ca/SubscribeFree.


We view both the podcasts and the magazine as essential work of the EFC, telling the stories of Canadian Evangelicals, churches and trends in a unique and accessible way.

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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.

