

UPDATING YOU

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

SPOTLIGHT on Ministry Services with Aileen

Van Ginkel, EFC's vice-president, ministry services, (Page 2)

EFC RESOURCES

Latest webinar and podcast resources for you. (Page 3)

Charter values, neutrality and what it all means for religious freedom

Bruce J. Clemenger answers our questions

As a member of the EFC community, you are more than aware of the challenges facing religious freedom in Canada recently. We asked Bruce J. Clemenger, president of the EFC, to dig into the issues for us.

CW: Have there been an unusual number of challenges to religious freedom in Canada recently?

BC: A number of religious liberty issues have made headlines in the last year. The Canada Summer Jobs grant program has captured our attention and significant concern. It is impacting hundreds of evangelical churches and organizations across the country. There has been the proposed law school at Trinity Western University and the EFC's supportive Supreme Court of Canada intervention in December. There was the Quebec

government's attempt to refuse public services to people wearing face coverings, and, of course the rules in Ontario that require effective referrals be given to patients requesting euthanasia and other procedures even when they go against the conscience of the medical professional.

CW: More people in our society seem to be advocating that the state has to be neutral, and that somehow this means treating religious groups differently. What does neutrality actually mean?

BC: In public policy the historic Canadian approach to government neutrality has meant government needs to act in a fair way. When this is happening well, the government does not play favourites and treats every group and person the



same. When it comes to funding, and we can think about this in terms of the Canada Summer Jobs grant controversy, the government would be acting with an indifference to whatever faith is held and practised by the group they are working with. The focus would be on the activities being funded, not the beliefs and values of the group that is contributing to the public good.

CW: Have we seen this before in Canada, this barring of government funding for faith-based organizations?

BC: Historically, there has not been a barrier to government funding for programs of faith-based organizations in Canada. When the state is successfully implementing the fairness approach to neutrality for the public good, it funds

... continued on page 2

What you can do:

- Continue to interact with your MPs on the specific issue of the Canada Summer Jobs grant situation, and the overarching issue of how we define state neutrality and religious freedom in Canada.
- Check www.TheEFC.ca regularly for updates on these issues.
- Ask your local church if they've been impacted by the changes to the CSJ issue, and see if you can help out with their summer programs!



RELIGIOUS FREEDOM



SANCTITY OF LIFE



CHURCH & MISSION



FAMILY & COMMUNITY



CARE FOR THE VULNERABLE

...continued from page 1

projects that benefit all and works with organizations regardless of whether they are Christian, humanist, atheist or holding some other world view.

CW: So what is actually happening, in the big picture, with situations like the Canada Summer Jobs grants?

BC: There seems to be a new approach emerging which we can call *selective neutrality*. You can guess that this means some religious organizations benefit from the government's favour, while others do not. A benefit is withheld, as we are witnessing with the Canada Summer Jobs grant situation, if the organization does not affirm and align with a set of rights and "Charter values" – think of the required attestation we have been talking so much about. We keep pointing out, over and over again, that the "other rights" and "Charter values" mentioned have not actually been identified or confirmed by any court or by Parliament.

CW: So what exactly are Charter values?

BC: Well, there is no official list and they are not legally defined. They are never actually mentioned in the *Charter* itself, but they are often invoked to defend a certain interpretation of the *Charter* and the freedoms and rights it protects. These undefined values are being used to determine when freedoms can be restricted, and to make broad interpretations of what is in the public interest.

When we lose the idea that the *Charter* exists to protect all Canadians from government activity that may violate our freedoms and rights, we lose something incredibly important. These issues go deep. They are about more than the accreditation of a law school or a church receiving a grant to hire summer students. This is about what it means to live in a liberal democracy and how our governments treat us – particularly those of us with minority views.

JOIN US IN
PROTECTING
RELIGIOUS
FREEDOM
IN CANADA.



UNITING EVANGELICALS
TO BLESS CANADA
IN THE NAME OF JESUS

Spotlight on Ministry Services

Uniting Evangelicals to bless Canada in the name of Jesus is the mission of the EFC. The work of Aileen Van Ginkel, EFC's vice-president, ministry services, in gathering leaders together is a key part of how that mission is lived out. Aileen shares with *Canada Watch* readers how she carries out that work and how we can all be supporting her in prayer.

What is your experience networking with all these different denominations, and sometimes even other faith groups in Canada?

It's very encouraging. Over the years, I've seen increasing willingness among leaders of groups affiliated with the EFC to understand better what others are doing and to collaborate in strategic

ways. There are higher degrees of humility and trust between leaders; it's great that we can start with sharing ministry hearts and praying together. The work with other faith groups is becoming increasingly fruitful when it comes to enhancing interfaith relations and the role of religion in society; there is a strong desire to act out of high degrees of respect and friendship with one another.

What should EFC donors and friends know about the work you are doing?

I would like them to be encouraged by the sense that God is moving not

only to adapt our ministries in relation to the changing world around us but also to draw us into closer dependence on God and one another.

What ministry milestones do you anticipate in the year ahead?

I hope that we will have a strong inter-denominational network focused on helping congregations to participate in reconciliation efforts with Indigenous communities, and that we'll successfully identify and possibly network a wide range of congregationally-focused efforts in local, regional and global mission and evangelism.

How can we pray for you and your work?

We need to guard against running ahead of God's actual leading in our efforts to impact the world around us, no matter how positive our intentions are. I would like prayers for discernment – knowing when and how God's ways are opening up to us – and ever-deeper reliance on God as we follow Jesus into the world.



Message from the President, Bruce J. Clemenger

We are still hearing almost every day from churches and organizations impacted by the Canada Summer Jobs grant situation. The conversations have shifted from the initial shock and surprise as Canadians realized the enormity of the change and its impact, to questions about how to work through the process; and now to churches determining how they can possibly still offer the programs and help to their communities they normally did with the help of the grants. We are hearing about some programs being trimmed and some cancelled completely. We are also hearing about generous individuals stepping up to make donations that will keep some form of programming afloat. What I am sensing most of all is a coming together within the evangelical community with a sense of common purpose to protect our religious freedom, and also to serve our communities. The EFC is standing beside you as we do this together.

Latest webinar and podcast resources for you

When you support the EFC, you also make possible the production of unique, 100% Canadian resources to help you in your own Christian walk and witness in our country. Thank you. Here are some of the most recent podcasts and webinars designed to do just that.

>> WEBINARS:

How to create a great food ministry

In this webinar we discussed how churches can do food ministry well and do things like present community dinners even more effectively. Our guests were the experts featured in "The Healing Plate," the Mar/Apr cover story in *Faith Today* magazine.

Youth Ministry in Canada Today

Hear from leading youth experts in Canada today about what youth volunteers (of all ages!) need from us, how to help youth in this digital age, and be encouraged by the work of the Canadian Youth Workers Conferences.



>> PODCASTS:

- Toronto City Mission responds to the Canada Summer Jobs grant controversy
- Fort Langley Evangelical Free Church responds to the CSJ controversy
- Calvary Temple in Saint John, N.B., responds to the CSJ controversy
- It's good to take a break from tech, with Carolyn Arends
- Youth ministry in Canada today, with Sid Koop
- Remembering Billy Graham, with Fred Weiss
- Grace in Vietnam, with Brian Stiller



Updating you on Canada's most immediate issues

■ **Conscience Protection:** A court recently upheld an Ontario policy that restricts doctors' freedom of conscience. This disappointing decision will likely have implications for other provinces if allowed to stand. The Ontario Superior Court of Justice ruling in January says policies that require doctors to provide an effective referral for euthanasia do violate religious freedom, but that the violation is reasonable. The EFC co-intervened in this case with Christian Legal Fellowship and the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario to argue for freedom of conscience. www.TheEFC.ca/Conscience

■ **Religious freedom:** The EFC is asking the federal minister of employment to remove or change the attestation in the Canada Summer Jobs application for next year. The EFC is encouraging people concerned about a values-test being required to access a government program to continue to communicate to MPs and others about it. A sample letter and action suggestions are at www.TheEFC.ca/SummerJobs.

...continued on back

Watch webinars at www.TheEFC.ca/webinars
To listen to all of these podcasts visit www.TheEFC.ca/podcasts

...continued from page 3

At the time of publication, we are still waiting for decisions in two Supreme Court cases dealing with religious freedom. The *Wall* case on whether churches can make decisions about internal membership decisions without court or government interference was heard on Nov 1, 2017. The Trinity Western University case about accreditation for a proposed law school and its graduates was heard on Nov. 30 and Dec. 1.

■ **Human Trafficking:** The EFC is preparing to make a written submission on human trafficking to the parliamentary Justice Committee this spring. We will recommend that the government maintain the prostitution laws, renew the National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking and improve data collection.

UPDATES ON THE ISSUES

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

Canada Summer Jobs grant work continues

Hundreds of faith-based groups across the country who applied for a Canada Summer Jobs grant – but did not affirm the required attestation that would confirm their alignment with the government’s own position on abortion, sexual orientation and gender identity or expression – have learned their application for summer funding has been denied. The EFC has continued to support and collect stories of churches and organizations that have been affected by this situation, and the programs they will not be able to run as fully or as easily this summer. These programs benefit countless communities across Canada with activities like hot meals and outreach to senior citizens, poverty reduction initiatives and summer camps for low income families.



Check www.TheEFC.ca/SummerJobs regularly for updates on the CSJ situation.

Warm words from donors

We love hearing from friends of the EFC. Thank you for your kind words.

"Thank you for going where we can't go. We stand with you in prayer for our country and to be an encouragement to you. You are making a difference. Keep shining and sharing God's message of power and truth."

"We are thankful for you! Thank you for what you do to faithfully represent our Lord in places where we cannot go! May the Lord continue to bless and provide for all your needs."

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



Box 5885 West Beaver Creek Post Office,
Richmond Hill, ON L4B 0B8 Canada
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.

