



CanadaWatch

CENTRE FOR FAITH & PUBLIC LIFE

The EFC in the courts and on Parliament Hill.

SPOTLIGHT

Disappointed but not giving up: The Trinity Western University case.

EFC RESOURCES

How you can use *Faith Today* to introduce friends to issues that matter.

HOW YOU CAN HELP



- Ask around about palliative-care options in your community. Find out what is available and what is needed.
- Contact your MP and share your views on this issue. Point them to EFC educational resources to help them.
- Visit www.TheEFC.ca/PalliativeCare for updates on this issue and more.

UPDATES ON THE ISSUES

that the EFC is currently involved with are always available at www.theEFC.ca

Physician opens up about assisted suicide and what palliative care has to offer

Canada has crossed a significant threshold by legalizing physician-assisted suicide. The EFC is fundamentally opposed to this development, and we have worked hard – with your help – to impact the process in the courts and on Parliament Hill.

The EFC continues to call government to ensure palliative care is available to all Canadians. This is a way to minimize physician-assisted suicide and to practise the biblical value of caring for the vulnerable.

Dr. Michael Koke (MK) of Kitchener, Ont., is a palliative care physician and general care physician in oncology. *Canada Watch* asked him about his concerns.

■ **CW:** What would you like Canadians to understand about palliative care?

■ **MK:** Most people don't understand that with adequate palliative care the majority of people don't want or need physician-assisted suicide. When I hear surveys that say Canadians are okay with assisted suicide, I think part of what Canadians are saying is they don't want to die with pain and suffering. If they understood palliative care could help, they wouldn't be as condoning of assisted suicide.

■ **CW:** How do you think the availability of assisted suicide in Canada might impact your work in palliative care?

■ **MK:** A palliative-care consult is now required with a referral for physician-assisted suicide. I don't know how this will be accomplished, because palliative care is not currently available nationwide.

This requirement for a palliative consult will force the issue of palliative care in areas where it's not yet available. People will now be talking about things like advanced directives, end-of-life care – all the topics people don't like to discuss in a culture which glorifies being young as opposed to accepting aging and dying.

■ **CW:** How are objecting physicians feeling about making referrals?

■ **MK:** The new law doesn't require conscience-objecting doctors to actually carry out assisted suicide. But whether one is required to refer is being left up to each province and their governing medical college.

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In Ontario physicians are required to make an “effective referral.” I don’t feel comfortable making that, and so I’m working with various physician groups to determine the best way forward. We are struggling with how to approach this issue without compromising our beliefs.

Physician-assisted suicide goes against the nature of what we’re trying to accomplish in palliative care. We took the Hippocratic Oath that we wouldn’t kill people.

■ **CW:** What can we do to encourage palliative care and discourage assisted suicide for families and friends?

■ **MK:** It still blows me away that there’s a sizeable number of Christians who think assisted suicide is okay. When we start to talk about it we see that people haven’t really thought about it. When they really think about the implications, people start changing their minds. It’s about education.

Seeing what the Bible says about this is obviously the most important thing. Churches could focus on death and dying issues in adult Sunday School and in men’s and women’s groups, in sermons and of course at home. We should be getting people talking about the issues, even though it is uncomfortable at first.

Additionally, when a loved one is dying it’s good for the family to know what to expect. Often we are treating the suffering of the family as well as the suffering of the patient. Sometimes it takes days for a loved one to die, but usually the person is not suffering. If they are getting good palliative care, they are sedated and they are usually quiet and peaceful.

■ **CW:** What is your greatest satisfaction as a palliative care physician?

■ **MK:** Seeing a good death of course, and connecting with patients and their families around that. There is a very different feel about a Christian death. Standing on the cusp of eternity with them, it’s very beautiful. They are just about to see God.

Disappointed but not giving up: The Trinity Western University case



The EFC is deeply disappointed with the recent Ontario court ruling related to Trinity Western University (TWU). The province’s law society refuses to accredit TWU’s proposed law school, and the June 29 Ontario Court of Appeal ruling said that refusal is justified.

Friends of the EFC know we have been involved in several cases related to the TWU law school since the beginning and that we continue to stand beside TWU in these very important religious freedom cases.

The Ontario Court of Appeal did recognize that the refusal to accredit the law school violates the religious freedom of TWU and its students in a significant way. “We disagree that the Law Society was justified in overriding these rights in deciding not to accredit the law school,” said Bruce Clemenger, EFC president, in a press release distributed immediately after the ruling. “Freedom of religion is an enduring component of Canadian society and faith based institutions continue to make significant contributions to the public good.”

On the *Faith Today* blog, Amy Robertson of Trinity Western University wrote: “The point is that in Canada, government institutions don’t tell citizens what to believe and how to practise their faith – or lack of faith. Whether the majority agrees with our Community Covenant is irrelevant. It defines us as a religious community, and our beliefs about marriage are a core part of that. Changing our Covenant because a few law societies don’t like it would be to deny the freedom upon which our country was built.

“We’re not taking this journey just because we want to open a law school. We’re also taking this journey because we believe in freedom – for everyone. We know it will be messy, and that there will be some pain along the way. But it will be worth it – because it is right and just to ask the courts to continue to honour the freedoms we’re guaranteed in the Charter.”

“Freedom of religion is an enduring component of Canadian society and faith based institutions continue to make significant contributions to the public good.”

“In a free society,” says Clemenger, “a robust pluralism includes the recognition of the public benefits of religious institutions and communities that promote respect and tolerance, and affirms the contributions of those institutions and communities to our society.”



How you can use *Faith Today* to introduce friends to issues that matter

We are making it easier than ever for you to use *Faith Today* magazine to educate your friends on the issues that matter to you. Buy them a gift subscription for half price!

The *Faith Today* team works hard to create a magazine with high quality journalism and design – at least as good as anything else you'll find on a newsstand. They interview Canada's Christian leaders and thought-shapers. The features and news stories tell our stories, the stories of Canada's Christians.

CANADA'S CHRISTIAN MAGAZINE
FAITH TODAY

Faith Today is Canada's Christian magazine, and the publication of The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. The concerns of the EFC feature prominently in the award-winning magazine. For example, with the topic of physician-assisted suicide in Canada, *Faith Today* has presented interviews (ethicist Margaret Somerville), features and news stories to educate and motivate readers to understand this issue as thoroughly as possible.

The *Faith Today* team, led by veteran editors Karen Stiller and Bill Fledderus, takes the important issues of the day and examines and presents them in unique and diverse ways, with excellent reporting and writing.

All of this makes *Faith Today* the perfect vehicle to introduce friends and colleagues to the issues and beliefs close to your heart.

> To request half-price gift subscriptions to *Faith Today* visit www.faithtoday.ca/CanadaWatch or call 1-866-302-3362.



The EFC gathers leaders to discuss hope and change

The EFC recently hosted a group of ministry leaders in Toronto to discuss a faithful response to the changes in our culture and churches. This is the first of several gatherings planned in regions across Canada.

Participants expressed concern but also hope for the Church in Canada. The gathering was a powerful reminder of the unity of the evangelical Church in Canada (even with all of our legitimate differences) and the value of time spent together in thought, prayer and consultation.

◆ **Pornography:** The EFC will be raising awareness of the public health impacts of pornography during the fall session of Parliament. We will also submit a brief to a parliamentary committee studying violence against young women and girls in Canada.

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Updating you on Canada's most immediate issues

◆ **Conscience Protection:** The Christian Medical and Dental Society Canada (an EFC affiliate) and other physicians' groups are challenging an Ontario policy that requires doctors to provide a referral against their conscience. The EFC will request intervener status before the court to support these groups in arguing that the Ontario College of Physicians and Surgeons policy must respect freedom of conscience.

◆ **Palliative Care:** The EFC has mailed copies of its new booklet *Euthanasia + Palliative Care* to all MPs and Senators. As well, the EFC joined with Christian, Muslim and Jewish organizations in an Interfaith Statement on Palliative Care that calls all levels of government to increase support for palliative care.

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◆ **Religious Freedom:** The EFC was in court to uphold the ability of Trinity Western University to have the credentials of its proposed law school recognized by law societies in B.C., Ontario and Nova Scotia. At time of publication, we were still awaiting decisions from the appeal courts in two of these provinces.

◆ **Euthanasia:** A new federal law, passed in June, commits the government to initiate studies on access for mature minors, for cases where mental illness is the sole underlying medical condition, and on the question of advance directives. These studies are to be set up within six months and to report back to Parliament within two years of their start date. The EFC is researching these issues and will seek to join these conversations.

More than 25,000 Canadians signed the Declaration Against Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide, developed by the EFC and the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops. The Declaration calls for clear conscience protection and increased support for palliative care, as well as opposing euthanasia and assisted suicide. The EFC sent the Declaration to the federal ministers of justice and health during the critical debates on the assisted-suicide bill.



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



Join the conversation and like us on Facebook.
www.facebook.com/theEFC

A word from the President, Bruce J. Clemenger



The recent ruling against Trinity Western University is a reminder to me, and I hope to you, that we must be in this for the long haul – in this case, in our country and in our communities. We must continue to be a voice for religious freedom in Canada. Because if we don't speak up, the rights of Christians and Christian organizations will continue to erode, I am certain of that. I am equally certain that we are not fighting enemies, we are standing with friends. We must remember to remain compassionate and merciful, remembering our calling to bless Canada in the name of Jesus. Thank you for how you enable us to do just that.

Warm words from donors

We love to hear from you.



I so appreciate all that you and your associates do in representing Jesus and His church in the high places of our country, particularly in bringing our values as Christ's followers to bear on decisions regarding euthanasia and the issue of a law school at Trinity Western. May God continue to give you His wisdom, strength and guidance in all your work. I pray for you often.



We pray for you too! Every Thursday the EFC staff gathers for devotions and prayer. Donors and friends share concerns with us regularly and we are happy to pray for you too.



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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.