

CanadaWatch

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Helping Canadians engage with politicians and public policy

The rumours had been circulating for a while, so when the EFC heard there would be a federal election Sept. 20, we were ready to share the *2021 EFC Election Engagement Kit* with Canadian Christians (www.TheEFC.ca/ElectionKit).

A common concern for churchgoers is around what churches are allowed or not allowed to do during an election campaign. Answering that question well was one of the anchor pieces of the kit. We produced an animated two-minute video that explains the do's and don'ts for churches registered with the Canada Revenue Agency.

The kit included questions voters could ask candidates on 15 key issues of concern, along with other pieces designed to help inform and equip Canadians.

The EFC also tried to generate some conversation through short videos and blogs around the topic of *why to vote*. As a non-partisan organization, the EFC would never tell people how to vote, but we do encourage voting as a civic duty and as a tangible way we can love our neighbours and help make our communities better.

Of course, our engagement can – and should – continue after election day is over. The EFC encourages Canadians to reach out to our communities and to engage with government officials, businesses or community leaders, as part of our Christian witness.

The EFC also offers an updated *Civic Engagement Kit* to help inspire and equip you to engage with elected officials (www.TheEFC.ca/CivicEngagement).



As always, a new Canadian Parliament offers us all an opportunity to engage in a new way. The government will set out its plans and priorities in a speech from the throne soon, likely later this month.

The new Parliament is likely to act quickly on a review of the Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD) law. A bill that passed last March requires a special committee of MPs and Senators to review MAiD and issues relating to mature minors, mental illness, the state of palliative care in Canada and the protection of Canadians with disabilities. A special committee was formed to begin this review last spring, but it was dissolved at the election call. A special committee is likely to be

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How you can help

- Visit www.theEFC.ca/Citizenship to find resources like the EFC's *Civic Engagement Kit* that will energize you to be more involved.
- Subscribe for free to *Faith Today*, a magazine published by the EFC, to connect you to Christians across Canada and inspire you to be present in your community even more.
- Keep praying. Keep giving. Your prayers and donations make this work possible. Thank you.



RELIGIOUS FREEDOM



SANCTITY OF LIFE



CHURCH & MISSION



FAMILY & COMMUNITY



CARE FOR THE VULNERABLE

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formed again quickly, and it will have one year to report back to Parliament after it begins its review.

Another issue likely to be tackled in the new Parliament is a review of the prostitution laws. A five-year review of the law is overdue. Canada's laws on prostitution target the demand for paid sex. They recognize prostitution is inherently exploitative and dangerous. They penalize sex buyers and pimps, not those who are prostituted. The EFC supports the current laws as essential to fighting sexual exploitation in Canada.

We hope to see more positive work in Parliament to protect children and youth from the harms of online pornography. Earlier this year, the House of Commons ethics committee heard from survivors whose intimate images were posted on Pornhub without their knowledge or consent. One of the ethics committee recommendations is to verify the age and consent of anyone depicted in pornographic material before it is posted.

Also, a Senator's private member's bill proposed to protect children and youth from sexually explicit material which is available online for a commercial purpose. This bill, Bill S-203, passed in the Senate and was sent to the House of Commons, but died at the election call.

We encourage you to contact your new MP and take steps to develop a positive relationship. Pray for your MP. Research the issues you care about and plan to connect with your MP on them.



The EFC and Prayer Ministry

My role as the EFC prayer ambassador is to pray with and for EFC affiliates and staff, collaborate with other prayer leaders, and write and speak on prayer. Here's a summary of the adventure to date.

From September 2020 to June 2021 we held several Zoom prayer gatherings where we prayed with and for each affiliate group on a different month: denominations, academic institutions, ministry organizations, and churches. Twice, we prayed as EFC ambassadors for each EFC staff and board member by name. We held a special prayer gathering focused on Bill C-7 and another where we focused on Covid-19 and its effect on people, medical personnel, churches and communities.

More recently we joined together with nine other prayer initiatives to

pray for global church unity and have other prayer events scheduled for November 23 and February 12 sponsored by The Canadian Bible Society.

We also had a special prayer gathering in September co-hosted by the National House of Prayer to focus on the federal election. We plan to develop a team who will pray together for a variety of social issues together quarterly.

I also led a devotional and prayer for the staff of the Billy Graham Association and The Canadian Bible Society, and wrote two articles with accompanying videos on prayer.

I offer my heartfelt appreciation to all of you who support the ministry of the EFC as we partner together and "unite as Evangelicals to bless Canada in the name of Jesus."

*By Roger Helland,
EFC Prayer Ambassador*

The EFC helps churches determine action during election

The EFC's lively two-minute video detailing what churches can and cannot do during an election helped familiarize congregations with the rules governing their participation in election campaigns, if they are registered with the Canada Revenue Agency. You can still watch the video at www.TheEFC.ca/Videos.



Message from the President, Bruce J. Clemenger

Thank you for your ongoing and faithful support of the work of the EFC. Sometimes our work is meeting with MPs and Senators, making submissions to parliamentary committees and presenting arguments in courtrooms – speaking compassionately into issues that help determine what kind of country Canada will be in the years ahead. At other times the work of the EFC team results in a concrete, tangible resource, such as the EFC 2021 Election Engagement Kit that helped Canadians sort through some of this year's election issues, and helped them approach candidates with information and thoughtful questions. The do's and don'ts video our team created helped churches contribute during the election while remaining non-partisan and safely following CRA guidelines. It is our team's hard work and creativity that make this work come to life, but it is your financial support that makes it possible. Thank you, as always, for helping us bless Canada in the name of Jesus.

Introducing Dave Tod, Major Gifts Officer for Western Canada



Hello from Calgary! As a fundraiser, I like to think that I should be a servant – a servant to a person's philanthropy. My job is to listen intently to what our faithful supporters are saying.

And so, in the next months I'd like to meet and listen to as many of you as I can.

I'd love to hear how you got involved with the EFC and the issues that you feel are important. It is because of you that our work continues.

I believe the work of the EFC has eternal value. That's why I'm interested in working here. The issues in our society today require a strong Christian voice to be heard. One of the great things about the EFC is its involvement in so many areas and topics. There is something for everyone to think about, pray about and support – that's obvious from all the information and resources on the EFC website.

You can reach me at davetod@theefc.ca or 587-891-3924. If you're in Calgary, give me a call or text or Facetime and we can meet for a coffee or a game of golf maybe. Outside of Calgary we can meet by Zoom or by phone or hopefully face to face.

Faith Today magazine's Witness series

Since the Jan/Feb issue of *Faith Today*, the EFC's increasingly popular magazine has welcomed a series of First Nations Christian writers in a column space called Witness. Writers are invited to share reflections that might touch on faith and identity, and their journey as Indigenous persons of faith.

"It's been eye-opening and inspiring to read these stories, like what it meant for a theology professor when he first realized his family was First Nations, or how a filmmaker processed her mother's residential school experience," says Bill Fledderus, one of the editors. "This series is an example of how our team can contribute to important conversations happening now in Canada. We're grateful so many different Christians can meet and talk through *Faith Today*."



Updating you on Canada's most immediate issues

■ **New Parliament:** A speech from the throne will outline the priorities and plans of the government in the new Parliament. Any bills not passed before the election would have to be reintroduced and go through the process again.

■ **Euthanasia/assisted suicide:** A study of the Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD) law is likely to be a priority in the new Parliament. A law passed in March mandated this study and gave it a deadline of a year to conduct and report back to Parliament.

Canadians with mental illness alone will be eligible for MAiD in 2023. Experts will be asked to recommend protocols, guidance and safeguards to apply to requests for MAiD by people who have a mental illness. The experts will not consider whether or not Canadians with mental illness should be eligible for MAiD, as the law passed in March has already legislated that change.

www.TheEFC.ca/MAID

■ **Regulating digital platforms:** A Canadian Heritage consultation has asked for feedback on how to regulate online harms, such as child

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pornography and intimate images distributed without consent, on digital platforms. The EFC has been advocating for a stronger response to online sexual exploitation.

www.TheEFC.ca/Pornography

■ **Prostitution:** The EFC is preparing for a review of the current prostitution laws. A five-year review of the laws was built-in to the legislation when it passed and is now overdue. The laws approach prostitution as inherently exploitative and penalize sex buyers and pimps, rather than those who are prostituted. The EFC supports the current laws as a necessary tool to fight sexual exploitation.

www.TheEFC.ca/Prostitution

■ **Conversion therapy ban:** A bill to ban conversion therapy in the Criminal Code died when the election was called. A ban is broadly supported by Canadians and is likely to be reintroduced. Coercive, involuntary and abusive practices have no place in our communities. The definition of conversion therapy in former Bill C-6 was overly broad, leading to concern from the EFC and others that the law would overreach and limit expression and the teaching and practice of religious beliefs.

www.TheEFC.ca/ConversionTherapy

Heart and hands

Valerie Hunter is human resources director for the EFC and executive assistant to the president.



My official start date with the EFC was January 1, 2000, and the buzzword was Y2K. We sure have encountered a few more buzzwords over these 20-plus years, and I have encountered many wonderful people who have enriched my life. I serve as executive assistant to the president and human resources director which encompasses administration liaison to the board of directors and a supervisor roll to the Richmond Hill office staff.

I feel incredibly blessed to support a team of individuals who do what they do each day so that our voice may be heard. To you our donors: your words of encouragement, prayer and financial support trickle down to every one of us at the EFC. As we celebrate this season of harvest with thanksgiving my prayer is that "You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God" (2 Corinthians 9:11).

Building dialogue between Catholics and Evangelicals

The Roman Catholic–Evangelical Dialogue, a joint initiative of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops and the EFC, recently released *We Are Neighbours: Catholics and Evangelicals in Canada*.

This new study guide is designed to help build a bridge between individuals from these two Christian traditions. It invites Catholics and Evangelicals to form fellowship groups, and it includes suggestions for study questions, icebreakers and ideas for joint action.


The guide leads participants through four steps: building relationships; studying the previously published document *Our Roman Catholic Neighbours*; studying *Our Evangelical Neighbours*; and then considering action together in their community.

The formal Catholic–Evangelical dialogue behind the resource began in 2010. It met bi-annually and included pastors, theologians, bishops and priests engaging in a variety of theological discussions about commonalities and also differences as Christians in Canada. The study guide is considered a fruit of what is now a national relationship between Catholics and Evangelicals.

Download it at www.TheEFC.ca/We-Are-Neighbours.

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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.

