

Canada Watch

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The EFC's 2024 year in review

It's our pleasure to share with you several highlights from work conducted by the EFC's three centres in the last 18 months.



The CFPL in Ottawa brings biblical principles to bear on law and public policy, witnessing through constructive engagement in public life (TheEFC.ca/CFPL).

Prostitution/Sexual Exploitation: We engaged internationally on the violence and exploitation inherent in prostitution, with submissions to a UN Special Rapporteur and a UN committee reviewing discrimination against women.

Religious Freedom: We continued to advocate for conscience protection for doctors, with submissions to Alberta and Nova Scotia regulatory bodies. The CFPL raised concerns with a parliamentary committee that some Canada Summer Job grant applications were being screened on the basis of beliefs. We're preparing a new tool to monitor anti-Christian incidents.

Protecting Kids Online: We advocated for the protection of children and youth online, with a new brochure and submissions to a parliamentary committee and to the Office of the Privacy Commissioner. We also collaborated with Defend Dignity on a webinar series.

Euthanasia: We continued to press for a delay or repeal of MAiD for mental illness, with a submission to a parliamentary committee. We also raised concerns to a UN committee about MAiD's impact on women with disabilities.

Online Harms/Hate Crimes: We prepared an overview of Bill C-63, known as the Online Harms Bill. The EFC supports changes to protect children online but has strong concerns about the bill's provisions on hate crimes and hate speech.

HOW YOU HAVE HELPED – Thank you for your prayers and your financial commitment to the work of the EFC and its three centres gathering Evangelicals to bless Canada in the name of Jesus.



The CMPI facilitates collaboration between EFC affiliates and partners to support ministries, denominations, educational institutions and congregations across Canada. CMPI finds innovative ways to respond to felt needs and challenges.

Abuse Awareness and Prevention Network: Comprised of reps from Karis Disability Services (formerly Christian Horizons), The Alliance (C&MA), Mennonite Central Committee, the Christian Reformed Church, Small Church Connections and the EFC, the network held its first conference Reducing the Risk in Toronto. AbuseAwareness.net

Canadian Christian Women's Network: Cathie Ostapchuk represented the EFC in

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Kenya at the WEA's Women's Commission where reps met from nine regions around world to develop a strategic plan. [TheEFC.ca/CCWCN](https://www.thefc.ca/ccwcn)

Our Common Calling: The EFC continued this partnership with The Canadian Centre for Christian Charities, Lausanne Movement Canada, and Christian Higher Education Canada. [OurCommonCalling.ca](https://www.OurCommonCalling.ca)

Welcome Church: This initiative provides training and resources to help Canadian churches welcome newcomers to Canada. Welcome Church is now a ministry of the EFC after being launched by Our Common Calling in 2021. The Welcome Church database and map has grown to 100+ churches. [WelcomeChurch.ca](https://www.WelcomeChurch.ca)



The CRCF conducts ministry research for our affiliates and in partnership with them to help frontline ministry workers make better informed decisions and to help those outside our movement understand us.

Women in the Canadian Evangelical Church study: The EFC and 13 EFC affiliates, with research conducted by the CRCF, have partnered to study how Christian women understand their role in their local church and the factors that influence participation. Literature review and ministry expert interview phases are complete. Interviews with 40 women about their experiences in local churches will begin soon. Research wraps in 2025 with a national survey followed by the public research report in 2026. [TheEFC.ca/Women-in-Church](https://www.TheEFC.ca/Women-in-Church)

Identifying Evangelicals: The CRCF and other researchers rely on the Christian Evangelical Scale to identify Evangelicals in public opinion polls. The CRCF team is planning and fundraising to host a consultation on revisions so that ours, and others', representations about Evangelicals faithfully represents our movement in Canada.



Study digs into the effects of social media

As students returned to the classroom a few months ago, many school boards across the country banned the use of social media and smartphones in the classroom. Society's enchantment with social media is wearing off.

Meanwhile the EFC is deep into a study with 10 partner affiliates and Alpha Canada looking at how social media affects the faith formation of teens participating in evangelical youth ministries, and how youth ministry workers use social media in their ministries.

The #influencing_faith_study will ask youth about the faith content they share or consume, and why they do it. We'll be listening for how social media shapes their understanding of the Church and what it means to be a Christian. We'll explore what influencers youth follow, what they like about them and why. Do they pray or share prayers on social media, or study the Bible? We'll be listening carefully to hear the subtle ways they're drawn to or away from Jesus.

We'll explore similar themes with youth ministry workers, but we'll also want to know what social media policies or guardrails they have in place when they minister using social media. How do youth pastors do digital discipleship, and what place does social media have in large group meetings? How has social media changed youth ministry, and what do we need to change now to use it more effectively?

The 2023 *Parenting Faith* study (Parenting Faith.ca) exposed parent's concerns with digital media. This new study will look at the same topic through the eyes of youth and those who do ministry with them.

The EFC's research team has been commissioned by the #influencing_faith_study partnership to conduct the research. The team is now interviewing ministry experts and youth ministry workers. Still to come are interviews with youth, national youth and youth ministry worker surveys, and a final public report expected in 2026. [TheEFC.ca/IFS](https://www.TheEFC.ca/IFS)

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A note from EFC President David Guretzki

The EFC turned 60 in 2024. One of the ways we marked that event was a public discussion in Toronto in October, where we considered the question, "What will a healthy and vibrant Canadian Church look like in 10 years?" Part of the answer was collaboration and intercultural competency. I'm excited to think about how

the EFC can contribute to both of those important needs of the Church in the years ahead. You have been part of our history up to this moment, and I pray you will be part of the EFC's work and mission for years to come. Thank you.

Training on reducing the risk of abuse

Canadian ministry experts from across Canada presented important training in early November at Reducing the Risk, a conference hosted by the EFC and the Abuse Awareness and Prevention Network. The Toronto gathering was a meaningful step toward creating safer, more supportive ministry spaces.

Amanda Benckhuysen invited leaders to reflect on how their influence can uplift others while also guarding against the misuse of authority. Randal Rauser illuminated how Scripture is sometimes misused to cause harm. Steve Snider's session on abuse prevention emphasized respect and clear values to establish healthy ministry environments.

Peter Neumann challenged Christian leaders to navigate power dynamics with humility and responsibility. Peter Schuurman shared insights on clergy sexual abuse, offering lessons from real-life examples. Theatre of the Beat led an insightful workshop about reducing the risk of elder abuse. Finally, Melodie Bissell offered critical guidance on insurance standards for abuse coverage, ensuring participants are well-prepared to safeguard their ministries.

The event was made possible by sponsors Veritas Solutions and Plan to Protect. The donations of EFC supporters also contributed to this essential work that ripples out through the Canadian Church community. Such support is crucial to this vital work of fostering healing and congregational resilience.



Updating you on Canada's most immediate issues

■ **At the Supreme Court:** The EFC was at the Supreme Court in November with ARPA Canada in support of the current prostitution laws. This case involved two men convicted of procuring and financially benefitting from the prostitution of others. The EFC and ARPA argued the prostitution laws, known as PCEPA, protect human dignity and promote equality. We believe the courts should respect Parliament's determination that there is exploitation inherent in prostitution. Read more at TheEFC.ca/Kloubakov.

■ **Coming legislation that politicizes charities:** The government has announced new legislation related to charities that offer pregnancy options counselling. In a news conference, cabinet ministers used language that disparaged and mischaracterized pregnancy care centres as deceptive. The EFC is concerned about the mischaracterization and targeting of pregnancy care centres and the politicization of charities. Read more at TheEFC.ca/CharitableProLife.

■ **Protecting kids online webinars:** The EFC partnered with Defend Dignity

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2025
PRAYER
CARD

We'd love for you to keep praying for the work of the EFC with the **ENCLOSED PRAYER CARD.**

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in a series of webinars on protecting kids and youth online. These webinars provided parents with helpful information, tools and strategies for keeping kids safer in online spaces.

■ **Preventing image-based abuse:**

The EFC asked the Justice Committee to support a bill that helps prevent devastating, life-long consequences for those whose images of abuse have been posted online. Bill C-270 would require pornography platforms to verify the age and consent of each person depicted before images are posted. The EFC's brief outlined the scope of the problem, its impact and the need for this bill. Read the EFC's brief at TheEFC.ca/C-270.

■ **Religious freedom court case:**

A Quebec court has granted intervener status to the EFC, the Canadian Centre for Christian Charities (CCCC) and the Réseau Évangélique du Québec (REQ). In this case, the rental agreement of a faith-based organization was cancelled by a Quebec cabinet minister because of the organization's beliefs.

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UPDATES ON ALL THE ISSUES

are always available on our website www.TheEFC.ca

Scriptural teaching on six key issues



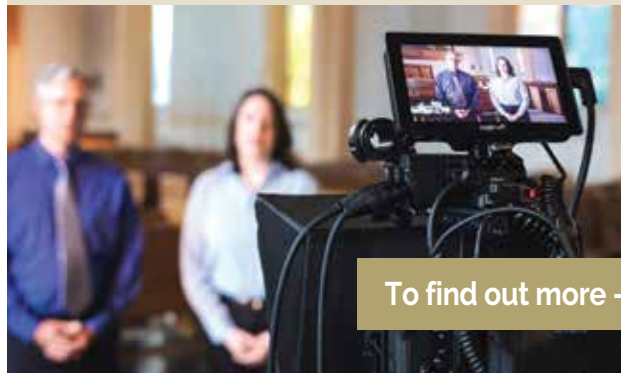
F *aith Matters* is a brand new EFC video series that helps viewers consider some crucial questions in Canada today. *How can Christians speak compassionately and effectively into our country's public life? How should Scripture inform our thinking on key issues?*

In these videos, shot on location at a church in Ottawa and in the new EFC Media Studio in Ottawa, leaders from the EFC introduce six major areas for biblical engagement and explore how Christians can act justly and walk humbly with our neighbours and fellow citizens.

The series comes with a free downloadable discussion guide for individual or group reflection. EFC affiliates have access to special bonus material that go even deeper into video topics in discussion with additional experts.

THE TOPICS ARE:

- 1 - The value of human life:** Being pro-person Christians;
- 2 - Care for the Vulnerable:** Loving our neighbour;
- 3 - Religious freedom in Canada:** Stewarding it well,
- 4 - Indigenous relations:** Working for right relationships,
- 5 - Discipleship:** Our calling to make peace, and
- 6 - Parenting faith:** Inviting our children to believe.




NEW FAITH MATTERS VIDEO SERIES

To find out more - TheEFC.ca/FaithMatters

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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.

