



# CanadaWatch

## CENTRE FOR FAITH & PUBLIC LIFE

The EFC in the Courts and on Parliament Hill.

## SPOTLIGHT

What You Need to Know About Praying in Public and the Saguenay Case.

## EFC RESOURCES

What *Faith Today*, Canada's Christian magazine, offers you in July/August.



## HOW YOU CAN HELP

- **LISTEN** to a recording of EFC President Bruce Clemenger answering questions on this issue, at [www.theEFC.ca/WebinarArchive](http://www.theEFC.ca/WebinarArchive).
- **READ** *Faith Today's* interview with ethicist Margaret Somerville in the May/June issue. Email us at [editor@faithtoday.ca](mailto:editor@faithtoday.ca) to request copies to give to friends and colleagues.
- **DONATE** to the EFC to enable us to continue to be an active force on this issue and others.
- **PAY CLOSE ATTENTION** to developments, and write and call your MP ([www.theEFC.ca/MP](http://www.theEFC.ca/MP)) to express your support for the strictest laws possible around euthanasia and assisted suicide in Canada.

PHOTO ABOVE: EFC President Bruce Clemenger with Geoffrey Trotter

## The Importance of Showing Up An Interview With the EFC's "Life Lawyer"

Geoffrey Trotter was the lawyer for the EFC in *Carter v. Canada*, the case that resulted in the Supreme Court of Canada loosening legal restrictions around euthanasia and assisted suicide in Canada.

Our "moral imagination...will be re-shaped by killing becoming an acceptable 'solution' to certain 'problems,'" Trotter wrote recently at [www.theEFC.ca/CarterTrotter](http://www.theEFC.ca/CarterTrotter). "No one knows exactly how this fundamental change will percolate throughout Canadian law and society, but its impact will be far-reaching."

*Canada Watch* interviewed Trotter to find out what it was like to be in the Supreme Court with this landmark case, what he feels the loss could mean for Canada, and why it was essential to be there – no matter the outcome.

### ■ What is it like to stand in a courtroom and put forward very important – literally life and death – arguments based on biblical values?

It's a privilege. My theology is that I'm not responsible for what the Court decides, but I am responsible for speaking the truth. Then it's on their shoulders. We need to expect that our side will not always prevail when we are advocating for religious freedom issues or public good issues from a Christian perspective. And that's because we are speaking to an audience that has some very different assumptions about who we are and how things should work. We need to expect we will lose some cases we ought to win. It's a prophetic role. There are times prophets are not listened to and times they are heeded. Our responsibility is to be obedient to the call.

### ■ How disappointed were you and the other interveners working with the EFC on this case when the Supreme Court released its decision that opens the doors for euthanasia and assisted suicide?

I'm obviously disappointed. I'm not surprised. It was clear to everyone in the courtroom we had lost the case the day of the hearing. When we heard how quickly the decision was going to come out, we knew it was likely unanimous. It's a nation-shaping law. If people think it's just about an exception for a few, they are mistaken. History will show it will change how we think about dying and suffering and what dignity means.

(Continued on next page)

– Continued from page 1

## ■ As a lawyer, tell us what kind of a law you will be hoping to see developed now that this is permissible in Canada?

I would want to see a really robust law, vigorously enforced to keep euthanasia and assisted suicide very rare. The trial judge used the language of a “carefully-designed system imposing stringent limits.” For the Supreme Court to say the current law was unconstitutional, they needed to adopt the trial judge’s finding that it is possible to safely permit assisted suicide and voluntary euthanasia in certain cases. That means if there is no responsive law, even the trial judge and the Supreme Court would say you are putting people at risk. At a minimum, the Court itself recognized that a carefully designed law with stringent limits is needed for the protection of the public.

## ■ What do you want donors to know about their role in cases like this?

I don’t do this type of work for the money, and it’s not the most lucrative. Donations make it possible for me to take more of this kind of work. I’d want donors to know that their gifts mean that the truth is presented.

Christian-interest litigation is only going to become more important. I’m also assisting on the EFC legal team in its intervention in the TWU challenge to the B.C. Law Society’s refusal to accredit its law school. I’ve represented someone recently who was let go because her boss was uncomfortable with her faith.

There are times when organizations like the EFC need to intervene. It matters. The cases will happen with or without us – if we don’t show up, we can’t complain about what happens.



## About Praying in Public and the Saguenay Case



**The recent decision of the Supreme Court of Canada on prayer before a town council meeting in Saguenay, Quebec, has generated a lot of commentary. Many city councils have suspended their practice of opening their meetings with prayer until they have had a chance to review the ruling.**

**T**he Court concluded that the context and the circumstances of the regular prayers offered in Saguenay conflicted with the government’s responsibility to be secular or neutral with respect to religions and discriminated against some on the basis of religion. The Court stopped short of ruling that all such prayers be banned.

The EFC was there – with your help – and intervened to argue that municipal councils and other government bodies should be the ones to decide if they will have a prayer or other forms of religious observance as part of their deliberations. We noted that such bodies have to respect the religious diversity of their communities and not privilege one religion over others.

The decision places the issue back in the hands of city councils. The court has said what is not acceptable. If a government or group of elected officials wishes to include

religious observance in their meetings, they must ensure that they are not advancing a particular religious purpose and violating the principle of state neutrality. They must ensure they are not creating a space which discriminates against people on the basis of conscience and religion, including against atheists and agnostics.

### Message from the President, Bruce J. Clemenger



“**M**y theology is that I’m not responsible for what the Court decides, but I am responsible for speaking the truth. Then it’s on their shoulders.” I appreciate this statement from Geoffrey Trotter, a litigation lawyer based in B.C. who is a vital member of the EFC team. We must show up. And then we must show up again. And again. It is part of what we are called to do. It is part of our public witness. It is an opportunity to explain the wisdom of the Bible and its principles which protect life and promote well-being. With your help, that is what the EFC does. We show up, speak truth with mercy, compassion and practical implications and offer solutions. Thank you for helping make that possible.

 **For more on this decision visit**  
[www.theEFC.ca/Saguenay](http://www.theEFC.ca/Saguenay)



## Donors Engage With EFC Webinars

*"I get why Christians object, but how do we argue against others having the right to euthanasia and assisted suicide?"*

That was one of the questions posed by a participant to a recent EFC webinar, the first in a new series. The question was deftly answered by EFC President Bruce Clemenger, who educated and equipped the webinar audience on the latest developments in this crucial issue in Canada. If you didn't participate live, you can still listen to the recording of the webinar on euthanasia and assisted suicide at [www.theEFC.ca/WebinarArchive](http://www.theEFC.ca/WebinarArchive).

The next EFC webinar is on Religious Freedom: Do we have it in Canada? How do we keep it?

Watch for details and register at [www.theEFC.ca/webinars](http://www.theEFC.ca/webinars).



Next webinar is on Religious Freedom



### Updating you on Canada's most immediate issues

◆ The Parliamentary session is winding down as we anticipate a fall federal election. One prime focus will be on the need to expand the provision of palliative care across Canada. While health care is a provincial issue, there are things the federal government can do, such as establishing a national palliative and end-of-life care strategy. In the federal budget the government announced plans to extend the Employment Insurance compassionate care benefit to six months – significant for those taking time from work to care for loved ones at home. There is more to be done.

◆ The Nova Scotia Barristers' Society has appealed the Jan. 28 ruling in favour of Trinity Western University (TWU) by the Nova Scotia Supreme Court. The EFC is seeking to intervene in the appeal and defend the positive ruling of the lower court, which ruled that it was wrong for the barristers' society to refuse to recognize any law student who graduates from TWU's proposed law school.

◆ The EFC will be in court in Ontario alongside TWU in the first week of June when they challenge the Law Society of

– Continued on back

## Coming up in Canada's Christian magazine

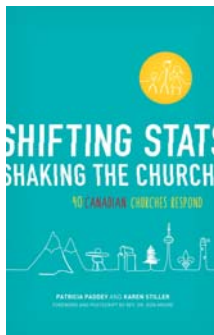
The July/August *Faith Today* will:

CANADA'S CHRISTIAN MAGAZINE  
**FAITH TODAY**

- Equip you to have tough, honest, crucial conversations
- Give you insight into what the latest religion research in Canada means, from none other than sociologist Reg Bibby
- Introduce you to one of the largest French-speaking evangelical congregations in the world – right here in Canada
- Prompt you to consider unhooking from the online world for your spiritual health – at least for a little while.

.....  
■ **Subscribe now to all-new *Faith Today* and receive a free copy of *Shifting Stats Shaking the Church: 40 Canadian Churches Respond*.**

This 300+ page book is co-authored by *Faith Today* editor Karen Stiller and published by World Vision Canada. It offers encouraging stories of the impact Canadian churches are having on their communities, plus dozens of practical ideas.



**Book retail value: \$18.99**

[www.FaithToday.ca/CanadianSubscriptions](http://www.FaithToday.ca/CanadianSubscriptions)

– Continued from page 3

Upper Canada's decision to refuse to accept TWU law school graduates. The EFC has applied to intervene in B.C. where the Law Society of British Columbia announced they would refuse to allow TWU law school graduates from practising law in B.C.

*The EFC is partnering with Christian Higher Education Canada, which represents Christian colleges, universities and seminaries across Canada. Together with our donors and partners, it is vital we stand with TWU to defend religious freedom in Canada, to explain the important contributions institutions like TWU make to our society, and to defend the ability of people of faith to develop and maintain schools and other expressions of our faith. Thank you for making this essential work possible.*



Did you know that supporting the EFC is as easy as collecting **Air Miles?**

You can help reduce our travel costs just by using an EFC **Air Miles** card!

[www.theEFC.ca/airmiles](http://www.theEFC.ca/airmiles)  
or call toll-free 1-866-302-3362



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](http://blog.faithtoday.ca)



Join the conversation and like us on Facebook.  
[www.facebook.com/theEFC](http://www.facebook.com/theEFC)



## Will the **legacy** you leave reflect the **life** you lived?

The EFC is working together with **ADVISORS with Purpose** to offer you a unique, complimentary and confidential service as you seek to create a legacy that will impact both the next generation and the Kingdom. **ADVISORS with Purpose** offers the benefit of competent Christian advisors and professionals who are trained to release the life changing principles of Biblical stewardship.

Visit [www.theEFC.ca/legacy](http://www.theEFC.ca/legacy) or call 1-866-302-3362 for more information.

## In Your Own Words

*"Just a brief message, to let you know that we really appreciate your ministry, on behalf of all our churches. God will bless you as you stand up for what is right and honouring to Him. We are an elderly couple, but still enjoy keeping up with the times, and so we very much appreciate your magazine Faith Today. We do live in terrible times in some respects, but as we put our trust in the sovereignty of our Almighty God we know nothing can hinder His work or thwart his plans. We are praying that you will keep up this good work and that many more will see the value of it. May God bless and encourage you."* – warm words recently received from EFC donors



**EFC** The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada

Box 5885 West Beaver Creek Post Office, Richmond Hill, ON L4B 0B8  
Tel: 905.479.5885 • Toll Free: 1.866.302.3362 • Fax: 905.479.4742  
Email: [efc@theEFC.ca](mailto:efc@theEFC.ca) • [www.theEFC.ca](http://www.theEFC.ca)



*The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada is the national association of Evangelicals, gathered together for influence, impact and identity in ministry and public witness. Since 1964 the EFC has provided a national forum for Evangelicals and a constructive voice for biblical principles in life and society.*