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Sanctuary from euthanasia

Canadians and their families want to receive care from doctors and medical staff who respect their values and beliefs. For many of us, that means we want doctors we can trust to provide life-affirming care – the kind of care that recognizes the value of each person's life. We want that for ourselves and for the vulnerable people in our lives.

Such care should not pressure us or our loved ones toward euthanasia even if we might qualify under Canada's laws.

"Feeling like a burden" is a reason identified by more than one in three Canadians who has their life ended by medical assistance in dying (MAiD). When doctors bring up MAiD to patients who have not requested it and may not want it, patients can feel their lives don't have value if pressured to ask for MAiD.

Health Canada's Model Practice Standard for MAiD proposes that provinces should *require* doctors to raise MAiD with patients who may be eligible – even those patients who haven't expressed a wish to die – if they think MAiD is consistent with the patients' values or goals of care.

The EFC has repeatedly argued physicians must not be the ones to suggest MAiD to their patients. Conversations about MAiD should be patient-initiated. This is a key part of protecting patients from feeling pressured to request MAiD in moments of vulnerability.

When a person whose death is considered "reasonably foreseeable" asks for euthanasia, no mandatory waiting period or reflection period is required. A person's life could be



ended as soon as they are assessed by two doctors or nurse practitioners. Their family may not know what's happening and does not need to be consulted. The patient's regular family doctor may not be involved. As some have said, this means a person's worst day could be their last day.

Hospitals and long-term care homes where euthanasia is not available provide a safe space for patients. They also offer conscience protection for doctors and medical staff whose deeply held beliefs exclude them from participating in euthanasia.

There are doctors and nurses who believe every life has value and who cannot participate in intentionally

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How you can help

- Please pray for Canadians in vulnerable situations who may feel their lives don't have value. Consider how you can reach out to express the love of God in tangible ways.
- Pray for strong conscience protection for doctors and health care professionals.
- Your support enables the EFC to monitor these issues and intervene strategically. We deeply value your prayers and donations. See TheEFC.ca/Get-Involved

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ending the life of any patient. There are some who object to ending the life of a patient who has decades left to live. Others object to ending the life of a patient who may be eligible but is asking to have their life ended by MAiD because they can't afford to live or access treatment. There will be some who object to ending the life of a patient who has mental illness as their sole medical condition.

For many conscientious objectors, making an effective referral – connecting a patient with a doctor who is willing and available to end the patient's life – is a form of participation in the death that follows. Objectors required to participate in the process may retire early, leave their practice and profession altogether, or they may suffer moral injury.

Given the already fractured state of Canada's healthcare systems, it is especially important that we protect doctors from moral injury. No one should be coerced or pressured to participate in euthanasia against their deeply held beliefs – that is a respect for freedom of conscience that benefits doctors and patients.

With your support the EFC is asking for a high bar to be set to protect conscience and to have sanctuaries from euthanasia for patients and doctors. Freedom of conscience is fundamental and must be respected and maintained in laws and policies. The EFC has asked the regulatory bodies for doctors in several provinces to protect conscience and not require effective referrals.

We are aware of court challenges being launched against the ability of faith-based institutions not to provide MAiD on their premises. The EFC is monitoring these developments closely and will apply to intervene in strategic cases.

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 Centre for Research on Church and Faith

Churches again call for action on Russia-Ukraine war

After two years of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Canadian church leaders continue to pray and call for action. Forty-five of them, including many EFC affiliate leaders, released a shared statement in advance of the February invasion anniversary.

Phil Wagler is the EFC's global liaison. "The body of Christ is commissioned to be a peacemaking and reconciling community in a chaotic world," he says. "This collaboration of the Canadian Christian family is a call to live out that calling for the healing of the nations."

Signatories encouraged a day of prayer and remembrance on February 24, ongoing prayers for peace in Ukraine and around the world, support for Ukrainian refugees, urging diplomatic steps towards a just and sustainable peace, the building of collaborative relationships and holding on to hope for reconciliation.

Part of the pastoral statement reads: "Without in any way minimizing or ignoring the suffering and sorrow caused by war and violence in other areas of the world, we stand together in inviting Christians and all people of good will to prayerfully consider how we are all called, and might contribute to, the achievement of peace in and for Ukraine."

The statement was prepared and endorsed by The Canadian Council of Churches, the EFC and the World Evangelical Alliance's Peace and Reconciliation Network (Wagler is global director). The 45 Canadian leaders who signed it come from Orthodox, Catholic, Evangelical and other Christian traditions.

"Ukraine has been an area of great concern for Canadians. We need to keep praying and working for peace," says EFC President David Guretzki.

The full document is available in English, French or Ukrainian at [TheEFC.ca/Statements](https://www.TheEFC.ca/Statements).

"The body of Christ is commissioned to be a peacemaking and reconciling community in a chaotic world."



A note from EFC President David Guretzki

Christians are a people called out from political ideologies and idolatries of all kinds to focus on Jesus as the centre. This has become increasingly clear to me in my recent study of the book of Revelation. The imagery of the Lamb worshipped by all the elders, angels and creatures everywhere is a crucial vision for us here and now. And so is the repeated description of God's people being "from every tribe, language, people and nation." The EFC and the Canadian church community today reflect those images, sometimes only "dimly" to use the words of Paul, but we take heart that God is making them more real among us. Thank you for your support of the EFC and our affiliate churches and organizations as we seek to exhibit that developing reality as we love both God and our diverse neighbours.



Partnership and Innovation update

The EFC Centre for Ministry Partnership and Innovation welcomed new members to its team last year, enhancing its collaboration and expanding its impact.

Jon Fuller, the EFC's resident missiologist, focuses on diaspora engagement and fostering relationships across diverse communities. He speaks at conferences, presents papers and is initiating a potential Diaspora Research Project. He also represents the EFC in an ongoing partnership called Our Common Calling. Its projects include Welcome Church, Faith at Work, Prayer, Marketplace Mission and an upcoming OCC 2024 Gathering.



Phil Wagler, the EFC's global liaison, helps connect with global mission initiatives, including prayer events, collaborative writing and podcasting, bridge-building with the World Evangelical Alliance, and advocacy engagement. He ensures the EFC remains well-informed about global issues and effectively engaged with partners worldwide. (He also serves the World Evangelical Alliance as global director of its Peace and Reconciliation Network.)



Matthew Gibbins, an EFC veteran who leads the EFC Global Mission Roundtable, works alongside both Wagler and Fuller, drawing on relationships with mission agencies as well as congregations, educational institutions and missional workplace initiatives. He participated in many events last year including a global consultation by the World Evangelical Alliance Mission Commission, MovElnet23, Missio Nexus, Amplify, Lausanne4 Gathering, and a Jaffray Centre/Ang Missiological Symposium.



This centre's team will continue to work with its director **Joel Gordon** to be collaborative, strategic and continually learning in the ever-evolving landscape of missions. Key emphases for the year ahead continue to be fostering connections, staying informed, and innovating to address emerging challenges and opportunities.



Updating you on Canada's most immediate issues

- Delaying MAiD for mental illness:** A bill has passed to delay medical assistance in dying for mental illness for three years, until March 2027. The government introduced the delay because several provinces, the territories and expert groups said Canada's medical system is not ready for MAiD for mental illness. This bill also requires a parliamentary committee to study the eligibility of those whose sole medical condition is mental illness to receive MAiD. The study of eligibility will begin in 2026.
- Online harms:** The government tabled the *Online Harms Act* on Feb. 26. Bill C-63 addresses online content such as child sexual abuse images, intimate images published without consent, and online hate. The EFC is studying this bill and will be engaging on it.
- Protecting minors from online explicit content:** A bill to create an offence for making pornography available to minors online for commercial purposes is now with a parliamentary committee for consideration. Bill S-210 is narrowly focused on sexually explicit material and would take a major step toward limiting

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minors' access to this content online. Other countries like Germany and the UK have implemented legislation requiring age verification for pornography sites online. The EFC will prepare a written submission for the committee. Learn more at TheEFC.ca/S-210.

■ **Addressing the violence in prostitution:** In a submission to the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, the EFC has pointed to the violence inherent in prostitution and how it is inextricably linked to human trafficking and other forms of sexual exploitation such as pornography. Most victims in prostitution-related crimes in Canada are young women, many from at-risk groups. The submission notes, "Prostitution is a system of exploitation that is based on structural and gender inequalities and preys on vulnerabilities." It recommended Canada's current laws against buying sexual services be maintained and enforced, and that Canada raise awareness about the law and provide funding for exit services. Read it at TheEFC.ca/UN2024.

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UPDATES ON THE ISSUES
are always available on
our website www.TheEFC.ca

Love Is Moving: Digital is the way forward

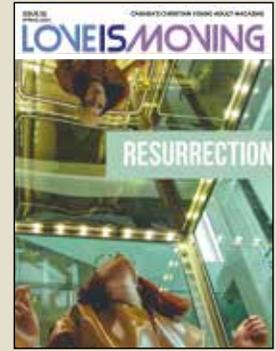
The EFC's magazine for younger generations is now ten years old, and it's making major changes as it enters its second decade.

The most obvious change has already happened – the resources that for the last eight years have been directed to producing printed magazines are now going into the online magazine, expanded social media and – starting later this year – a new podcast.

"Our primary audience's greatest interaction has always been online," says editor Iana Reimer of Vancouver. "It's definitely the best use of our donor-supported resources to commit fully to the channels where we can best reach our audiences."

With the stop of printed issues, the website LovesMoving.ca becomes the focused home base for thoughtful conversations among young Christians about topical issues.

Subscribing to *Love Is Moving's* email newsletter is the best way to hear about new articles, podcast episodes, and more. www.TheEFC.ca/LIM



Warm words from donors

We love to hear from our donors and partners in our mission to "unite Evangelicals to bless Canada in the name of Jesus." Thank you for praying for us and our work, and we consider it a privilege to pray for you as well.

Here are two recent notes of encouragement from our donors.

"We thank God for you at the EFC. May God continue to bless and help you fight for the right and the good of all of us! We'll be praying."

"The causes you are supporting are definitely things that as a Christian Canadian tug at my heart strings."

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 **EFC** The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada

10 Huntingdale Blvd, Scarborough, ON M1W 2S5
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.

