



CanadaWatch

CENTRE FOR FAITH & PUBLIC LIFE

The EFC in the courts and on Parliament Hill.

GOING GLOBAL WITH THE EFC

The EFC represents you at a global evangelical gathering.

CHECKING IN ON TWU

Another update on a case we all care about: Trinity Western University law school.



HOW YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

- **Write and call your MP.** Now is the time to make your voice heard.
- **Add your name** along with more than 20,000 other Canadians to the Declaration Against Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide at www.euthanasiadeclaration.ca.
- **Donate to the EFC's work** on this issue and others.
- **Pray** that our government will create safeguards for human life in our country.
- **Visit www.theEFC.ca/EuthanasiaUrgentAction** for more guidance on how to be active on this issue.

UPDATES ON THE ISSUES available at www.theEFC.ca

You Can Help the EFC Protect Life in Canada

Now is a critical time to engage with your Member of Parliament on the issue of euthanasia and assisted suicide. At the end of February, a special parliamentary committee made a series of deeply troubling recommendations to Parliament on what our new laws should allow.

The EFC opposes any introduction of euthanasia and assisted suicide in Canada. But the government is proceeding with legislation, so now is the time to work on imposing the strictest boundaries possible to ensure occurrences are rare.

The Special Joint Committee on Physician-Assisted Dying has suggested far more expansive access to assisted death than expected. In fact, the committee recommends that Canada establish one of the most permissive regimes for hastening death in the world.

The committee would not restrict euthanasia and assisted suicide to people at the end of life, to people with a terminal illness, or even to those with a physical illness. They recommend that individuals with a psychiatric condition, or whose suffering is psychological, be eligible for assisted death, even in the absence of physical illness. They would not require psychiatric assessment of these patients.

Persons experiencing mental illness are particularly vulnerable to ideas of suicide. The committee's recommendations fail to offer any protection.

The committee recommends that assisted death be made available initially to persons 18 years of age and older, but that within three years, access be extended to mature minors. This means that children and teens who may be viewed as competent to make certain decisions related to their own medical care would be given the ability to request their own death.

This is profoundly disturbing, but coupled with the recommendation that eligibility not be restricted to persons with a physical, terminal illness, it is especially alarming.

The committee agreed with the Supreme Court that physicians who object to euthanasia and assisted suicide should not be required to perform what they have rebranded as "medical assistance in dying." However, they recommend that those physicians should be required, at a minimum, to make an effective referral for a patient requesting assisted death.

For some physicians who object on the basis of conscience or deeply held beliefs, to make

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a referral is to participate in the taking of a life.

There is also no protection recommended for institutions that object to euthanasia and assisted suicide. In fact, the committee recommends that the government ensure that all publicly funded institutions provide these services. Many faith-based hospitals, extended care facilities and hospices receive varying degrees of government funding. If the committee's recommendations were followed, those organizations would be compelled to provide assisted death within their facilities.

The court envisioned a "carefully designed system imposing stringent limits that are scrupulously monitored and enforced."

The committee's recommendations fail to meet the court's standard of stringent safeguards to protect those who are vulnerable. Evidence from jurisdictions that have allowed assisted death tells us that no safeguards are fully effective, but the committee's proposals are wholly inadequate in this regard.

As the EFC responds to the committee report, we uphold the sanctity of life and work to protect the vulnerable. We ask for your prayers and your participation. Pray for us as we meet with MPs and Senators and work with like-minded faith-based and secular groups to minimize the harms and inherent risks of going down this path. Pray also for the legislators who will be making decisions about how to proceed.

The timeline is short. The extension given by the Supreme Court expires on June 6.

Your Member of Parliament needs to hear from you.

As Christians we are called to promote life, protect the vulnerable and care for those who are sick and dying. Let's continue to work together to be faithful witnesses and agents of God's love.

EFC represents you at GLOBAL GATHERING



WORLD EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE

Bruce J. Clemenger, president of the EFC and member of the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) International Council, joined some 90 other leaders from 40 countries

to strengthen partnerships and consider key issues facing the global Church at the recent International Leadership Forum of the World Evangelical Alliance.

Held in Seoul, South Korea, February 29–March 4, the annual gathering was considered particularly strategic this year as leaders met with representatives from the Korean Church and considered responses to issues including the persecution of Christians, evangelism and discipleship, interfaith relations, refugees, and women and girls in the Church.

"It's always wonderful to meet with our global family," says Clemenger, "and to be reminded of the strong leadership role and respect that Canada has at such gatherings and our global influence."

Another update on a case we all care about: **Trinity Western University**

The EFC will continue to support TWU's proposed law school by seeking intervener status in a case involving the Law Society of British Columbia. The law society is appealing a recent decision of the Supreme Court of B.C. which examined the law society's denial of accreditation to TWU's proposed law school and found flaws in its process. Originally the benchers of the law society (akin to a board) had decided in favour of TWU's application, but then the society's membership voted in a referendum to reverse the benchers' decision. The judge ordered that the original decision of the benchers should stand. The EFC has also been granted intervener status in the two other related cases before appeal courts in Nova Scotia and Ontario.



The very good questions asked and answered in EFC webinars



EFC webinars provide a unique opportunity for our community to hear from experts in subjects of critical importance – and then interact with them in a direct and immediate way. We have hosted webinars on topics including euthanasia, clergy wellness, the refugee crisis, religious freedom and the changing nature of the Canadian Church.

The webinars are archived at www.theEFC.ca/WebinarArchive for viewing anytime. Here is a taste of some of the questions asked by viewers and answered by webinar experts.

PHYSICIAN-ASSISTED SUICIDE (aired live Feb. 17)

1. Other countries have ushered in euthanasia, what can we learn from them?
2. Do most MPs understand the concerns and risk to the vulnerable?
3. What can church leaders and pastors do within their church families concerning this issue and what is the best way to communicate our concerns to federal and provincial representatives?

CLERGY WELLNESS (aired live Jan. 20)

1. Should you call your pastor on his day off?
2. Is the rate of depression higher in clergy? And how can we help?
3. Are there patterns of clergy burnout?
4. How can churches show better appreciation and love to clergy?

HOW CAN YOUR CHURCH HELP REFUGEES (aired live Dec. 8)

1. Does a sponsorship group give money right to the refugees or manage the finances for them?
2. Do you have to select a country to sponsor a family from?
3. Are there other ways to help besides sponsoring a family?



To find out what webinars are coming up, sign up to attend one or suggest your own topic for a future webinar, visit www.theEFC.ca/webinars



Updating you on Canada's most urgent issues

◆ **ASSISTED SUICIDE:** The EFC urged the Special Joint Committee on Physician-Assisted Dying to protect life and to care for the vulnerable in a written submission in early February. In response to the committee's lack of safeguards and protections for vulnerable Canadians, the EFC has joined with more than 35 organizations in supporting the Vulnerable Persons Standard (www.vps-npv.ca). The Standard was developed by more than 40 advisors with expertise in medicine, ethics, law, public policy and the needs of vulnerable persons. It calls on Parliament to establish strict safeguards to protect vulnerable people in any legislation allowing access to physician-assisted death.

◆ **VIOLENT SEXUAL IMAGERY ONLINE:** MP Arnold Viersen has introduced a motion calling for the Standing Committee on Health to study the public health effects of the ease of access and viewing of online violent and degrading sexually explicit material on children, women and men. The EFC has posted a sample letter that individuals can use to write to

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Message from the President, Bruce J. Clemenger



My time in Korea with church leaders from around the world was a happy reminder that we are not alone as an association and as a body of believers working to be faithful witnesses and blessing our country in the name of Jesus Christ. There are millions of Evangelicals around the world doing in their own countries what we are doing in ours: being advocates for the gospel, defending and promoting biblical principles, working for change, sharing compassionate strategies for caring for the vulnerable and shining a light where darkness attempts to take over. Thank you for the vital role you play in that mission.


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their MP in support of Motion M-47 (www.theEFC.ca/pornography).

◆ **REFUGEES:** The EFC's Middle East Refugee Resettlement Initiative facilitates a working group of denominational Sponsorship Agreement Holder representatives. The group has met regularly over the past year to share resources and updates on new developments, find solutions to challenges and develop communications strategies for government. Representatives of this group will continue to communicate with Citizenship and Immigration Canada, making them aware of Canadian churches' resources to assist and welcome newly arrived refugees (www.theEFC.ca/MiddleEastRefugees).

◆ **PALLIATIVE CARE:** In March the EFC hosted an interfaith gathering on palliative care, exploring ways different faith communities can work together to advocate for better access and availability of quality end-of-life care for all Canadians and to support those who are sick or dying. MP Charlie Angus has introduced a new motion on palliative care. M-46 calls on the government to enhance the quality and availability of palliative care in Canada (www.theEFC.ca/PalliativeCare).

 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

The Gift of Giving



It will come as no surprise to you to hear that the work of The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada is completely dependent on the prayerful and financial support of Christians in Canada. We receive no government assistance. Your gifts are what make our powerful witness in Ottawa and beyond possible. Thank you.

Here is a simple guide to how you can give in a way that suits you the best:

- Online by credit card. You can give a one-time or recurring gift on our secure website. Gifts of any size are welcomed.
- Become a Partner in Faith by making regular, monthly gifts through a pre-authorized payment plan. You will receive one annual tax receipt.
- You may also donate RRSPs/RRIFs, publicly listed securities, property, annuities, trusts, endowments, gifts in kind and life insurance.
- Give a gift to honour, pay tribute, or celebrate someone special.
- Legacy Giving. The EFC has a complimentary, no obligations Will Planning Work Sheet to help friends of the EFC with their estate planning.
- Collect Air Miles. A simple way everyone can help. Sign up for an EFC Air Miles card. The points you collect help the EFC with travel expenses.

You can find out more about all these options at www.theEFC.ca/Contribute, or by calling toll-free 1-866-302-3362.

Warm words from donors

 *You are greatly appreciated! Thank you so much for all you do. May the Lord pour out His wisdom, strength and battle-plans on you. May He make you "wise as serpents, harmless as doves" and fill you with joy.* 

Thank you for your encouraging words. We pray for our friends and supporters every Thursday during our devotions.



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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.