



CanadaWatch

CENTRE FOR FAITH & PUBLIC LIFE

The EFC in the courts and on Parliament Hill.

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How you can help

- Help us help Trinity Western University. When you give to the EFC, your gifts help with interventions like this one. We need to be there. You help make that possible.
- Talk to your friends and neighbours about this case and how strategic and important it is for religious freedom in Canada.
- Visit www.theEFC.ca/TWUlaw for updates on the TWU case and more.

UPDATES ON THE ISSUES

that the EFC is currently involved with are always available at www.theEFC.ca

“The most important religious freedom case since the Charter” – and how you are helping

The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada is standing beside Trinity Western University (TWU) in their struggle to overcome the legal obstacles to creating their own law school.

As you are probably aware, TWU obtained all the formal approvals required to launch its own law school and grant degrees. Provincial law societies in British Columbia, Ontario and Nova Scotia voted to create obstacles for TWU graduates wishing to practise law in those provinces, by either refusing to admit TWU graduates, or to not consider TWU an accredited school. The law societies object to TWU’s Community Covenant which upholds the biblical definition of marriage and asks students to refrain from sexual intimacy outside of that biblical framework.

TWU launched legal challenges in those provinces. Initial rulings have come down in N.S., Ont., and B.C., and all are being appealed. The EFC has submitted joint interventions with Christian Higher Education Canada in all of these cases.

Canada Watch thought EFC friends and donors might like to hear directly from one of the lawyers working with the EFC on these interventions. Here is our interview with Ottawa-based lawyer Albertos Polizogopoulos (AP).

■ CW: How does it help the case to have the EFC there as an intervener?

■ AP: First, it creates balance. There are a lot of groups on the other side intervening against TWU. In a broader sense, we bring a different perspective. While they are an evangelical university, they aren’t an organization devoted to forming policy. The EFC does play a role in that, particularly with regard to religious freedom. We can make arguments they aren’t in a position to make.

■ CW: How does the Court generally respond to the EFC?

■ AP: My experience is that the courts respect the EFC. I’ve acted for them in a number of cases, and I’ve been met with what I think is a welcome attitude from the court. I believe that’s because the EFC is sophisticated and experienced in these matters. We are a reasonable voice. The EFC understands the law. We appreciate the law. When we make our

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submissions, we use that knowledge and appreciation in formulating our arguments. Our arguments complement the law as it is, and as it should be.

■ **CW: Why is this TWU case so important?**

■ **AP:** I think it's the most important religious freedom case since the Charter has been implemented. The only other case, which could potentially come as close is actually the first TWU case [TWU faced similar challenges with its teachers college]. If we are unsuccessful, it will open up a Pandora's box on religious communities and religious professionals. We have law societies saying to TWU, 'You don't get to put together a law school and produce lawyers because of your views on marriage and sexuality.'

If that's allowed to stand, why would a religious organization train teachers or nurses or any other profession? And why stop with marriage? What about other beliefs? If it's allowed to stand, it permits the notion that the state can police religious beliefs. It is the most important case, certainly in my career. The ramifications of it are severe.

■ **CW: Thank you, Albertos.**

"I think it's the most important religious freedom case since the Charter has been implemented.... If we are unsuccessful, it will open up a Pandora's box on religious communities and religious professionals."

– LAWYER ALBERTOS POLIZOGOPOULOS

Visit www.theEFC.ca/webinars to find out what's coming up.



Webinar ministry continues to grow

The EFC's latest webinar on May 24 was on "The Problem of Pornography" with Julia Beazley, director of public policy for the EFC. If you've never participated in a webinar, let us explain how it works and how welcome you are.

- Visit www.theEFC.ca/webinars to find out what's coming up.
- Register by changing the individual count from 0 to 1 in the registration box.
- Click "continue" and enter your name, address and email where indicated.
- You will receive a confirmation email containing a hyperlink to follow to the webinar.
- When the webinar begins, you sit comfortably at your computer screen and watch and listen. You can participate anonymously by sending in questions on a chat box that will appear on the side of your screen.
- The moderator of the webinar will ask appropriate audience questions to the featured expert.

EFC webinars connect you directly with experts on some of the leading issues of the day. They focus on equipping and informing you, and hearing from you directly through your questions and comments during the session. The spirit of the webinars is: Tell us what we need to know. Share with us what we need to do.

You can watch them again later online, and forward them to friends and colleagues. Visit www.theEFC.ca/WebinarArchive to access recorded webinars on topics like helping refugees, euthanasia and palliative care, religious freedom, Evangelicals around the world, and clergy wellness. We hope you will join us!



The spirit of the webinars is: Tell us what we need to know. Share with us what we need to do.



Your magazine wins at Canadian Church Press awards

CANADA'S CHRISTIAN MAGAZINE

FAITH TODAY

Do you remember the interview we did on

ethics and euthanasia with Margaret Sommerville in *Faith Today*? We thought what the professor of law and medicine from McGill University had to say was so important we put in on the cover of the May/June 2015 issue of the magazine.

The Canadian Church Press agreed and awarded this piece first place in their recent awards. Here's one memorable Somerville line from the interview, which you can read online at www.faithtoday.ca/Somerville: "I believe that not seeing humans as special in some ways is currently the world's most dangerous idea."

Hop into the creative waves of *Faith Today*

The Jul/Aug *Faith Today* will set your creative juices flowing. Our cover story by author and recording artist Carolyn Arends examines the role of the arts in spiritual formation.

Our interview with acclaimed West-Coast author Sarah Bessey will ignite thinking on how we live out our faith and what we hold as essential. We will also take you inside Trinity Western University's ongoing law school situation to bring you the latest, and share a remarkable profile of the CEO of CanadaHelps.

Do you know someone who might like *Faith Today*? Why not spring a gift subscription on them as a pleasant spring surprise. Visit www.faithtoday.ca/subscriptions to sign up, or call 1.866.302.3362 and let's introduce them to Canada's Christian magazine.

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On Parliament Hill

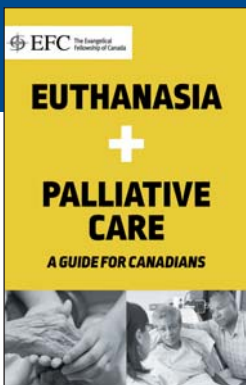


Updating you on Canada's most immediate issues

◆ **Euthanasia:** The federal government has introduced and fast-tracked Bill C-14, to decriminalize euthanasia and assisted suicide. The bill creates a *Criminal Code* exemption to allow "medical assistance in dying" for competent adults with a serious and incurable illness, disease or disability, who are in an advanced state of irreversible decline, and whose natural death is "reasonably foreseeable." While the EFC opposes legalization of assisted suicide and euthanasia, we participated in the review of C-14 to urge Parliamentarians to include conscience protection for health care providers and institutions, and ensure additional safeguards are in place to protect the vulnerable and restrict the practices as much as possible.

◆ **Conscience protection:** The EFC supports a private member's bill by MP Mark Warawa to provide conscience protection. This bill would make it a criminal offence to compel a health care professional to participate in medical assistance in dying. Bill C-268 would also make it an offence to dismiss or refuse to hire a medical professional because they refuse

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Canadians are asking for the EFC's *Euthanasia + Palliative Care* booklet

Thank you for helping us make it happen.

It is clear that Canadians need to understand what is at stake as our country ushers in regulations around physician-assisted death. Canadians also need to be aware of what our country lacks in palliative care.

This EFC booklet, comprised of original *Faith Today* articles supplemented with new discussion questions for your church or

small groups, can help open up a conversation we all need to be having. They are in high demand. Please call 1.866.302.3362 to request one or more copies today.

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to participate in medical assistance in dying. The EFC has posted a sample letter that individuals can use to write to their MP in support of Bill C-268 (www.theEFC.ca/ResourcesOnEuthanasia).

◆ **Palliative Care:** The EFC and other Christian, Jewish and Muslim groups are issuing an interfaith statement, urging all levels of government to address the urgent need for high quality palliative care across Canada. The statement points out that visiting those who are sick and caring for those who are dying are core tenets of these faiths.

◆ **Religious freedom:** The EFC is in court to support Trinity Western University and its fight to ensure accreditation for its proposed law school. The Nova Scotia Court of Appeal hearing was in April; the Ontario and BC appeal court hearings are in June (see interview with Albertos Polizogopoulos).

◆ **Refugees:** The EFC's Middle East Refugees Resettlement Initiative coordinates regular meetings of the denominational Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAHs), who gather to discuss the challenges faced by church groups sponsoring refugees and best practices in refugee resettlement. The group meets Members of Parliament to discuss the status of refugees and attends government committee hearings on refugee sponsorship developments.



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

A word from the President, Bruce J. Clemenger



When the EFC is an intervener in a court case, as we are with the Trinity Western law school cases, we play an invaluable role. I was as happy as you to hear EFC lawyer Albertos Polizogopoulos comment on how well respected the EFC is in these situations: "sophisticated, reasonable and experienced" are the words

Albertos used. Those are good words to describe the logical, biblical and compassionate view we bring as interveners to all the cases we are involved in, but particularly this one, a case whose significance cannot be overstated. It is your support that enables us to be there, and to do the work that needs to be done. Thank you.

Warm words from donors

We love to hear from you. The EFC staff prays for our friends every Thursday morning during devotions.



Thank you so much for the work you do on behalf of we who are evangelical Christians. I firmly support the work you are doing to advocate on behalf of those who can't speak for themselves. I strongly believe in the sanctity of human life, that God is the giver of life and we have no right to interfere with his plan. To me to ask for assisted dying says that God is not enough to help us through the pain and suffering. He has promised to meet our needs and never to leave or forsake us. Praying for you.



EFC

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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.