



CanadaWatch

CENTRE FOR FAITH & PUBLIC LIFE

The EFC in the courts and on Parliament Hill.

SPOTLIGHT

Spotlight on the EFC's presence in Quebec, with Pierre Bergeron.

EFC RESOURCES

The editors of *Faith Today* would love to give you a call!



WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Foster positive dialogue with friends, neighbours and co-workers about the role of religious beliefs and communities.
- If you encounter disinformation about religious beliefs, address it respectfully and graciously.
- Support interventions in court cases that will influence how religious freedom in Canada is understood. Thank you!
- In light of the CPSO case, ask legislators to uphold and strengthen protection for religious freedom and conscience.

UPDATES ON THE ISSUES
www.TheEFC.ca

You and the EFC, protecting the conscience rights of doctors

The EFC is in court this month seeking intervenor status in a case to protect the conscience rights of doctors, so they do not have to refer their patients for euthanasia or assisted suicide. Here is a simple guide to the case and the issues behind it. Your prayerful and financial support for the EFC make this essential freedom work possible.

JUST THE FACTS: The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO) is requiring doctors to provide an effective referral for procedures against their conscientious objection, such as euthanasia and assisted suicide. A court challenge of this policy has been launched by Christian doctors (Evangelicals and Catholics) and several organizations. The EFC is seeking to intervene in this case with the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario to argue for the protection of conscience for doctors.

AND NOW THE THEOLOGY: Christians believe we are stewards of this life, but that it actually belongs to God. God calls us to live the life He has given us. We may decline medical treatment, but it is not for us to choose the timing of our death. For physicians, the right to live out this belief in their workplace is essential.

Allowing euthanasia and assisted suicide shifts our medical system from a presumption for life to one in which a patient, amid scarce resources, may feel the need to justify not choosing death. Causing someone to justify their continued care and their very existence denies the dignity we affirm in us all.

Canadian physicians and surgeons need to have their consciences protected if they choose not to participate or actively refer patients for euthanasia and assisted suicide.

WHY THIS CASE MATTERS SO MUCH: This CPSO policy matters greatly to the protection of conscience and life in Canada, as well as for religious freedom in Canada. Religious freedom is one of the first fundamental freedoms listed in the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and is also protected in provincial human rights codes. Religious freedom is also protected in specific areas of federal and provincial legislation, as well as international human rights agreements.

The *Charter* upholds freedom of religion, but does not define it. The courts are clarifying what this term means and how it is to be applied, including how the Charter protection of religious freedom will be balanced with other Charter guarantees.

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History shows that when religious freedom is protected, all other rights and freedoms are more secure. When religious freedom is curtailed, other freedoms are soon compromised and lost.

AND WHAT THE EFC IS DOING, WITH YOUR HELP: The EFC promotes religious freedom and the freedom of religious communities to exist and flourish. The EFC has intervened in many important legal cases on religious freedom, including this CPSO case. We will be in court again, speaking to this issue and impacting this issue.

NOW, WHAT YOU CAN DO: This CPSO case touches on two vital issues: euthanasia and assisted suicide, and religious freedom and conscience protection. You can be active on both those issues, along with your support to the EFC’s activity protecting life and freedom in Canada.

Many people who are ill or at the end of life are concerned about being a burden and may be afraid of what lies ahead. The compassionate response is to support and encourage them, to provide high quality palliative care, not to end their lives.

YOU CAN:

- Reach out to people who are depressed or struggling, living with a terminal illness or a disability
- Offer practical, tangible help to seniors and those with a terminal illness or disability, and their caregivers, by developing or joining existing programs, such as Meals on Wheels
- Support palliative care and hospice programs with your time and/or resources.

The right of doctors to not actively refer their patients to be euthanized is a religious freedom right. Religious freedom needs to be protected or it will be lost.

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Spotlight on the EFC’s presence IN QUEBEC

WITH PIERRE BERGERON



Pierre Bergeron is the part-time Directeur – Québec for L’Alliance Évangélique du Canada (The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada). He builds bridges with and between Evangelicals in Quebec on behalf of the EFC. We asked Pierre a few questions so our friends and donors can better understand the EFC’s impact in Quebec.

■ **CW:** You are the director for the EFC in Quebec. Can you tell us what you do?

PB: My main responsibility with EFC is to represent the ministry among French-speaking Evangelicals. I do that as a member of the Réseau Évangélique du Québec (Evangelical network of Quebec), keeping in touch with France’s evangelical alliance, by attending various functions and representing the EFC. I plan conferences like an upcoming one on pastoral approaches to minister in a society with a range of sexual preferences. We are developing a website in French called *Evangelique.co* and we are working with the team at *Faith Today* magazine to produce a booklet of French articles.

■ **CW:** What is one of the main challenges facing the Church in Quebec, and how does the EFC help with that?

PB: One of the greatest challenges in French-speaking Canada is for Evangelicals to speak with one voice. English Canada is privileged to have the EFC and the Centre for Faith and Public Life that has developed an expertise in addressing social issues that affect Evangelicals and Canadian society. Francophones need to develop a relationship with the Quebec Legislative Assembly similar to the one the EFC has developed with Ottawa. We need to be able to address social issues of concern to Francophones. The EFC can assist by providing translation of key literature and other resources to facilitate roundtables in Quebec and the promotion of Evangelicals.

■ **CW:** How can English Canada pray for and support the Church in Quebec?

PB: Our greatest need is spiritual and requires a fresh and powerful move of God. French Christians have limited resources because of fewer churches, trainers, workers, writers, etc. We need prayer for workers for church planting and leadership development.

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“OUR GREATEST NEED IS SPIRITUAL AND REQUIRES A FRESH AND POWERFUL MOVE OF GOD.”



I'm so thankful for the unity we have been seeing among Evangelicals in the last few years. We need greater collaboration and to find creative ways of pooling our resources together. We need churches from English Canada to partner with smaller French churches.

When they support French-speaking churches in Canada, they are helping to develop resources for French-speaking churches worldwide. The support of other Canadians has allowed us to grow to the point where we are training, sending and supporting missionaries around the world. Thank you for partnering with Quebec!

The editors of *Faith Today* would love to give you a call!

Perhaps you pick up *Faith Today*, Canada's Christian magazine, free at your church every two months. We are asking you to go one step further and help us keep going strong, and keep Canadian Christian journalism the strong, vibrant force we all need it to be.

CANADA'S CHRISTIAN MAGAZINE
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If you pay to subscribe to *Faith Today*, even if it is still offered at your church, you are helping to ensure the stories that make us strong together keep coming, that we can pay our writers even a modest sum, and that the quality magazine you have grown to expect will continue on. You help keep Canadian Christian print journalism alive and well in Canada.

We want to make this as easy and attractive as possible to you by offering the special price of just \$14.99 a year.

If you subscribe in response to this *Canada Watch*, you will receive a call from a member of the *Faith Today* team to thank you personally. **Call toll-free 1.866.302.3362 or visit www.FaithToday.ca/CanadaWatch.**



Thanks to those of you who responded to this opportunity with the last *Canada Watch*. We enjoyed our chats!

Message from the President, Bruce J. Clemenger



In this *Canada Watch* you will be reminded again of how essential the mission of the EFC is, to gather Evangelicals to bless Canada in the name of Jesus, and how that mission is played out at so many levels in so many different ways. 2017 will bring opportunities for witness and engagement, and also challenges that will stretch us. As our culture shifts and changes, the need for Canadian Christians to be present as a compassionate and truth-telling force only grows. Thank you for your support. If you ever have any questions about the work we are doing together, please email us. It is essential that you know how vital you are as we move ahead together this year.

On Parliament Hill



Updating you on Canada's most immediate issues

◆ **Prostitution:** As the federal government reviews criminal record suspensions, the EFC has asked the Public Safety Minister to consider allowing prostitution-related charges to be expunged from the criminal records of prostituted persons. As the EFC's letter states, this change would help end a "revolving door of abuse, marginalization and neglect for a vulnerable population."

◆ **Palliative Care:** The EFC joined with interfaith partners to write a letter expressing support for the intent of Bill C-277. This private member's bill by MP Marilyn Gladu requires a palliative care framework to be developed, which would increase caregiver support and data collection, as well as identifying palliative care education and training needs. It is estimated that only about 30 per cent of Canadians who need palliative care have access to it. For more information, see www.TheEFC.ca/PalliativeCare.

◆ **Euthanasia:** Bill C-14, which passed last year, included a requirement for the federal government to initiate three independent studies on expanding access to medically assisted death. The government has

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asked the Council of Canadian Academies to study requests for assisted death by mature minors, the use of advance requests for assisted death, and requests where mental illness is the sole underlying medical condition. The Council of Canadian Academies will form review panels to review evidence and hear from stakeholders and other groups. The EFC is preparing for these reviews.

Drop by and see the new EFC website

If you've stopped by www.TheEFC.ca recently, you have noticed that things look different. Brighter. Cleaner. Easier to navigate. It was time to upgrade the EFC website and make it even more of the one-stop information and inspiration source you need it to be.

Now, it is easier than ever to find the latest updates on the most vital issues facing our country, and an evangelical response to it. You can be quickly informed about the facts of current and upcoming court cases, and quickly scroll to find out what you can personally do in your own life, church and community.

www.TheEFC.ca



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



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www.Facebook.com/TheEFC

What we can expect in Ottawa in 2017

Here are a few things we anticipate taking our attention in 2017.

- The health committee hearings on the public health impact of violent sexual images online. The committee must finish its study and report back to Parliament by July. We have educated MPs and other politicians by holding information sessions on Parliament Hill. We have also toured Canada with our partner ministry Defend Dignity, teaching Christians how pornography hurts our young people, our marriages, our churches and our culture and society.
- Euthanasia and assisted suicide will likely continue to expand their reach in Canada. The EFC will expand its response, with your help. At least 744 assisted deaths were recorded in the six months after legalization, and the numbers are expected to rise, according to CTV News. The EFC will continue to educate MPs, politicians and all Canadians on how euthanasia and assisted suicide erodes respect and protection for life in Canada, and the better ways to respond to pain and suffering.
- The EFC will continue to develop resources this year, such as a discussion booklet on pornography as a public health issue. This interactive booklet will help you navigate this difficult topic in your own communities. The EFC will also continue its partnership with Defend Dignity, presenting forums across Canada on the harmful effects of pornography.
- You will also hear more about the EFC's ongoing dialogue with the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs. The agreement we signed in December will bear fruit this year in biennial dialogue sessions on issues of common cause, including palliative care, affordable housing, religious freedom in Canada, peace and security in the Middle East, and support for persecuted minorities in the region.
- Watch for the roll out of the EFC's research on Canadian Evangelicals and church engagement with missions.
- *Faith Today*, Canada's Christian magazine, will continue to produce excellent Christian journalism for our print readers across the country and our digital readers around the world. Watch for more webinars related to *Faith Today* content – and podcasts are also on their way.



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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.