



The Evangelical Fellowship  
of Canada

# CANADA WATCH



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## Thanksgiving and Prayer

*Bruce Clemenger, President  
The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada*

Have you paused recently to consider all that you have to be thankful for? It is important to take time to consider what God has accomplished through you and how He has enabled you to be a witness for Him. We each have gifts and abilities, and we each have experiences and knowledge that enable us to make a unique contribution in our families, churches, communities and in our country.

As the national association of Evangelicals, the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC) has a unique place and role in the life of the Church and our country. We are the gathering place for Evangelicals nationwide and when Evangelicals gather, two things happen.

First, connections are made, and we begin to ask in what ways we can work together to accomplish what we cannot accomplish alone. In consultation with pastors and ministry leaders, the EFC identifies areas of possible cooperation and gathers the relevant ministry leaders together. The EFC then assists in the formation of a partnership or becomes the platform on which ministry roundtables can be formed. Through our Center for Ministry Empowerment we facilitate and support the coming together of ministries and ministry leaders for more effective service.

Second, we seek ways to give common expression to the wisdom of the biblical principles we share and affirm, and we explain how obedience

to these principles will bring healing and wholeness to our homes, churches, communities and nation.

In Ottawa our Centre for Faith and Public Life undertakes research, interacts with government officials, make submissions to Parliamentary Committees and intervenes in key court cases. We also produce resources designed to assist Evangelicals to apply

that track the stories and ideas of the Evangelical movement. They provide a range of resources that prepare and encourage ministry initiatives in Canada and internationally in partnership with the World Evangelical Fellowship.

Throughout the past year the staff of the EFC have prayerfully sought first to discern the initiatives and communications that God would have

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biblical principles to a variety of issues and constructively advance these principles in a plural and increasingly secularized society.

In support of these efforts we conduct seminars for pastors, publish a news feature magazine and an innovative website ([www.christianity.ca](http://www.christianity.ca))

the EFC undertake on behalf of the Body of Christ in Canada, and second, to petition Him for grace, favour and ability to carry out the assignments.

We invite you to rejoice with us at the accomplishments. For the tasks still in progress, join us in prayer that God's will be done through the EFC.

**The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada**  
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## Ministry Advancement

### Connecting pastors:

From Alberta to Ontario, Church Leaders Connection seminars with the EFC's team members and president Bruce Clemenger have given church leaders an opportunity to connect with each other and to focus on spiritual trends and social issues that could affect them and their congregations (the redefinition of marriage and religious freedom). More are being planned for fall 2004 and spring 2005 in British Columbia, Alberta, the Maritimes and Ontario.

### Engaging congregations:

"Marriage on the Rock" was a nationwide event initiated by the EFC in partnership with six ministries during

the Valentine's Day week in February. Congregations across Canada were encouraged to uphold and affirm marriage as God designed it – a unique social institution that benefits all of society. A recent survey confirmed a positive response. As a result, "Marriage on the Rock 2005" is planned for the week of February 13-20. Pastors, mark you calendars!

### Extending affiliation:

Affiliation undergirds Canada's Evangelicals as the EFC intervenes before the courts and provides thoughtful insights, position papers and public policy research to lawmakers. It identifies a congregation with the

broader Body of Christ and backs the EFC in its activities of monitoring and addressing religious freedom issues nationally and internationally. Affiliation also promotes greater ministry effectiveness through cooperation and interaction among congregations. The EFC helps equip pastors and congregations with many resources that assist their effort to impact their communities for Christ.

**For further information on Marriage on the Rock, Affiliation, or Church Leaders Connection events, please contact Linda Milke, at [linda@efc-canada.com](mailto:linda@efc-canada.com), or call (519) 842-2797.**

## Ministry Empowerment

### Addressing homelessness:

In June 2003, leaders of several ministries involved with the homeless met in a two-stage consultation on homelessness. A Poverty & Homelessness Roundtable for ongoing ministry partnerships was launched in October 2003 and met in Ottawa in early May 2004. The partnership is currently focussing on advocacy with government and churches and on organizing the "Street Level" conference for Christian street workers in 2006.

will help churches and ministries enhance their ministry and missional efforts to further God's kingdom.

### Connecting youth ministry leaders:

Over 50 youth ministry leaders participated in the EFC's Youth Ministry Forum in January 2004 to discuss how to work together more effectively in reaching Canadian youth with the Gospel. Plans to form ongoing ministry partnerships are being developed as an outcome of that event.

### Gathering Aboriginal Christian Leaders:

More than 50 attended the Aboriginal Christian Leaders Consultation hosted by the EFC in Winnipeg in May 2003. The Native Church assessed its unique gifts and sought to determine its voice and role within the broader Church in Canada. An Aboriginal Ministries Council is being established to help identify further collaborative opportunities.

### Advancing evangelism and mission ministries:

The EFC's Roundtable for Evangelism Ministries partnered with Ipsos-Reid to conduct a nation-wide poll about religious beliefs and practices in Canada to gain a clearer understanding of trends that relate to religious practices (e.g. church attendance and Bible reading) and Evangelical identification. The results of this poll

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[www.Celebration2005.ca](http://www.Celebration2005.ca)



# Law and Public Policy

## Countering Bill C-250:

- The EFC team worked tirelessly to try to stop *Bill C-250* that added “sexual orientation” to the *Criminal Code* prohibitions on disseminating hatred from being passed in its present form. Janet Epp Buckingham appeared before the Senate Justice Committee (broadcast on CPAC). The EFC staff in Ottawa sent several letters and broadcast e-mails to all Senators pointing out the potential threat to religious freedom. They updated the EFC’s website ([www.evangelicalfellowship.ca](http://www.evangelicalfellowship.ca)) daily so Christians across Canada could respond to the latest news. Also, Janet Epp Buckingham and Brian Wilkie undertook numerous media interviews on the impact of *Bill C-250*, including on American radio and television networks. Buckingham was interviewed by Fox TV, one of America’s largest news networks.
- The EFC team continues to seek protection for the Bible and for the ability of Christians to hold and express their religious views on sexual morality. The EFC will continue to keep affiliates and donors informed as issues develop.

## Intercepting unfair polling:

The EFC responded swiftly to the news that The Liberal Party of Canada was conducting polling questions targeting Evangelical Christians. We were very pleased that the media supported us and denounced this polling tactic. We also appreciated the Liberal MPs who publicly encouraged their party to apologize. We have been assured that this type of polling has been stopped and this will not be an election issue.

## Informing the media:

The Ottawa Office has had numerous media interviews on issues coming up to the election. We have been providing

background information and statistics to national media outlets.

## Developing resources:

The Ottawa Office has developed resources for pastors and Christians on a variety of issues including preparing your ministry for the legalization of same-sex marriage, dealing with religious freedom challenges and the implications of *Bill C-250*.

## Defending the persecuted:

- Janet Epp Buckingham represented the EFC in Geneva, Switzerland in April at the UN Commission on Human Rights for the second consecutive year. She addressed issues on North Korea, China, Belarus, Sri Lanka and Belarus. It is vital that Evangelical Christians have a strong voice at these hearings so that governments that persecute believers are called to account.
- Policy researcher Anne Brandner participated in a Department of Foreign Affairs roundtable on human rights with respect to religious freedom for Christians in Pakistan.
- The EFC co-sponsored, with the Christian Legal Fellowship, a one-day seminar on Law and Church Leadership. This seminar brought leading legal experts to Moncton, NB to update Christian leaders on tax, religious freedom and pro-family issues. Janet Epp Buckingham was one of the theme speakers on the topic, Religious Freedom and Your Ministry in Canada.

## Defending marriage:

- Much of the past year was dominated by work on the definition of marriage issue. The EFC staff was very involved with the House of Commons Justice Committee hearings on this issue. As lead

partner in an interfaith coalition, the EFC had intervened in the marriage cases in British Columbia, Ontario, and Quebec.

- The EFC, with the Interfaith Coalition, filed its written legal arguments in the Supreme Court of Canada Marriage Reference. This is the next step in our long legal battle to protect the historic definition of marriage. The Coalition argues that the *Charter* does not require that marriage be redefined. The EFC also argues that if marriage must be redefined, there is an obligation to protect religious freedom, not only for clergy but also for civil officials and for religious institutions. Janet Epp Buckingham worked closely with our lawyers to develop strong arguments to protect marriage and religious freedom. The Supreme Court will hear our concerns when it reviews the government’s draft legislation to redefine marriage in the fall of 2004. As the debate in Parliament continues, staff will continue to work with MPs to preserve the heterosexual definition of marriage.
- The EFC is collaborating with theologians, public policy experts and Christian legal counsel to develop materials for clergy related to religious freedom in the face of the change in the definition of marriage.

## Fighting child pornography:

The EFC, Focus on the Family and other pro-family groups and MPs had called on the government to strengthen Canada’s child pornography laws. In response, the government introduced *Bill C-20* (reintroduced in 2004 as *C-12*).

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