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CanadaWatch

CENTRE FOR FAITH & PUBLIC LIFE:

The EFC in the Courts and on Parliament Hill

MINISTRY SERVICES: Survey Will Shed Light on Why Youth Stay in Church — and Why They Leave

PARTNERS IN FAITH: Culture shapes everything. What are you doing to shape culture?

How you can help



- Visit www.theEFC.ca/human for the latest information on this issue.
- Pray that this Special Committee will be formed and that a healthy discussion will take place.
- Financially support the EFC's continuing work on this issue.

"Canada's Criminal Code states that a child in the womb is not human."

UPDATES ON THE ISSUES that the EFC is currently involved with are always available at www.theEFC.ca 1-866-302-3362

The EFC Calls on Canada to Re-define Human Being

According to Canada's Criminal Code, a "child becomes a human being...when it has completely proceeded, in a living state, from the body of its mother..."

And not one moment before.

On Feb. 6 Member of Parliament Stephen Woodworth (Kitchener–Centre, CPC) filed a Motion (M-312) requesting that Parliament form a Special Committee to study Canada's Criminal Code definition of the term 'human being.' The proposed Committee would hear expert evidence and then report back to Parliament with options to deal with the law.

The EFC has encouraged all MPs and Senators to support Motion M-312.

The logical consequences of the current definition of 'human being' are deeply disturbing. An Ottawa area criminal court case dealt with this section. A mother was charged with attempted murder after she used a pellet gun to shoot her nearly full-term son while he was still in the womb.

The boy, born two days later, survived after surgery. The charges were later dropped because the child was not considered by law to be a human being at the moment he was shot.

According to section 223 of the Criminal Code, the mother would not have been charged had her son died before he was born. If her child had died from his injuries after he was born, she would have been charged with homicide.

The EFC has encouraged MPs to recognize that these provisions do not make sense. They are not consistent with a 21st century understanding of life and human rights.

The 'born alive' definition of human being has its roots in British legislation from 1644, a time when little was understood about fertilization, gestation and the child in the womb. Today, medicine recognizes a point of viability for a child in the womb. Science is even prepared to experiment using pre-natal human tissue from conception onward.

Yet, Canada's Criminal Code states that a child in the womb is not human.

The EFC has called on Parliament to examine these provisions; consider their historical roots; and debate and decide whether they make sense in 21st century Canada. The EFC supports the Motion presented by Mr. Woodworth, and we are confident – based on Scripture, science and medicine – that, to quote Woodworth, "modern medical science will inform us that children

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are in reality human beings at some point before the moment of complete birth.”

This Parliamentary discussion will necessarily touch on the issue of abortion.

As EFC supporters well know, there are no laws in Canada regulating abortion. This is due in part because the child in the womb is not regarded as a human being. Canada is the only nation in the developed world that takes this position and permits legal abortion of the child in the womb through all nine months of pregnancy. “A law which denies that someone is a human being without any relevant or scientific evidence is not a just law,” said Woodworth.

The EFC agrees.

As a nation that prides itself on being a global human rights leader, Canada is in need of a contemporary decision on who we consider to be human.

The EFC has long advocated for children at all stages of life; from conception, through gestational development, birth, childhood and adolescence.

As a nation, it’s time we had the discussion about the child in the womb. We are hopeful that a Parliamentary study will make space for all Canadians who wish to do so to engage in the conversation. Let’s talk.



Survey Will Shed Light on

Why Youth Stay in Church – and Why They Leave



The EFC, through the Youth and Young Adult Ministry Roundtable, a partnership operating on the administrative and communications platform of the EFC, and research partners (see below), is set to deliver the results of a ground-breaking survey into the spiritual formation of young adults (ages 18-34) in Canada.

“We set out to answer the question, ‘Why do young adults stay in church or leave church?’” explains Rick Hiemstra, director of research and media relations for the EFC. “We specifically targeted young adults who indicated they’d been raised Christian.” The results of the survey will help churches build better ministries to serve young adults, and could even help parents who hope to raise children who will still attend church as an adult.

“This is the biggest Canadian survey of this type, that I know of, where we have practitioners that are interested in it from the point of view of engaging their youth,” explains Hiemstra. “We are doing this at a high academic standard, but we’re motivated by our love for our youth and our concern for our kids.”

Two thousand respondents answered 80 questions, in both official languages, that ranged from what their experiences with different people in their churches had been like, to conflict in the church, to the relevance of sermons. “We also asked all kinds of questions about their family of origin and the spiritual discipline practices of their parents,” says Hiemstra. “We were specifically interested, if they left the church, what was the cause of that transition out of church. People are concerned with what they perceive to be an absence of young adults in our churches. People are concerned about their kids and if they are continuing in the faith. We wanted to find out why they might not and why they might.”

Aileen Van Ginkel, vice president, ministry services, for the EFC, says this research project was a great coming together of partner interest and timing. “The results of this project will impact the Church in Canada and how it relates to youth. The initial results give insight into

the importance of connecting youth and young adults to a relationship with Jesus through a trusted community that emphasizes the essentials of faith and discipleship,” says Van Ginkel. “We are so pleased that the EFC could partner with youth and young adult ministry practitioners in taking on this initiative. And we’re thankful to our partners who share our concern and our passion for this vital group in our Church.”

The survey results will be released in the Spring.

Who Did the EFC Work With on This Youth Survey?

- The Great Commission Foundation
- Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship Canada
- James Penner & Associates
- Muskoka Woods Leadership Studio
- Youth for Christ Canada

Message from the EFC’s President – Bruce J. Clemenger



The EFC is pleased to have the issue of defining ‘human being’ back before Parliament. We will continue to press for a constructive conversation about the child in the womb. We will see how the recommended consultation continues. Canada is unique for all the wrong reasons on the issue of abortion, with unfettered access up and including the ninth month of pregnancy. Protecting children and vulnerable citizens is a large part of our mandate. That goes for school-age children as well. That is why we stand against bullying for any reason, even as we want to be a constructive voice in determining the best way to fight that ancient problem. We couldn’t do what we do without your participation. We are partners in our tireless work to create a Canada that is good for *all* Canadians, including our children.



EFC Sends Open Letter on Bullying

In Nov. 2011, the Government of Ontario introduced Bill 13, the Accepting Schools Act, intended to "make Ontario schools safe and more accepting places to learn." The Bill addresses the issue of bullying and proposes several amendments to the Education Act. The EFC agrees with the Ontario government that bullying is wrong. In fact, our faith stands strongly against the intimidation or harmful treatment of any group or individual. However this Bill goes too far. The rest of Canada is watching to see how this Bill will be resolved and implemented. Here are excerpts from the EFC's Open Letter:

"...Bill 13 has been criticized by many Ontarians, including members of the Jewish, Muslim, Evangelical Christian and Catholic communities. This should give reason to pause. Ontario is a diverse province, and each citizen – and identifiable minorities that have suffered discrimination and bullying themselves – deserves to have their concerns heard and addressed by their elected officials..."

A more democratic and inclusive solution, one that invites conversation with representatives from a number of cultural, religious and other identifiable groups, should be pursued.

Ontario children, parents and teachers expect to live in a peaceful, tolerant province that respects their sincerely held beliefs, their inclusion in a plural, multicultural society and to have hard-earned tax dollars spent in the most appropriate and considerate fashion possible..."

To read the full letter visit
www.theEFC.ca/acceptingschoolsact



On Parliament Hill



The EFC presented its proposals on the 2012 budget and tax incentives for charitable giving before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance on February 14. You can read the 10 page submission "Families, Compassion & Charities: Key Components to Maintaining a Strong Canada" on our website.

The EFC has encouraged all MPs and Senators to supportively engage on Motion M-312 – calling for a special committee to study the legal definition of "human being" – which is schedule to receive debate in March, April and May. You can read more in this issue of *Canada Watch*.

In February, the EFC's Religious Liberty Commission released "The Overlooked Demographic: A Report on the Impact of Religious Persecution on Children." With 200 million Christians facing persecution in over 130 countries around the world annually, the EFC hopes to engage Parliamentarians and others in discussion and action on the well-being of children who suffer the effects of persecution. Read the report at www.theEFC.ca/overlookeddemographic

Your Impact

Religious Education



► **THE SUPREME COURT** of Canada released its decision in *S.L. v. Commission Scolaire des Chênes* on Feb. 17. The case focused on the parental right to request a child's exemption from a school curriculum that conflicts with their religious beliefs, because it equates all religions as being essentially the same. The parents did not "lose" the case, but more accurately were disqualified from the court process on technical grounds. In the lower court, the parents had argued that the program itself infringed their right, rather than demonstrating that it had interfered with their ability to pass their religion on to their children. The EFC was there as an official intervener in the case, standing for the freedom of parents to lead their children's religious education. The Court commented on specific points made by the EFC, including the fact that the right of parents to bring up their children in their faith is part of the freedom of religion guaranteed by the Charter. For a complete analysis of this case, visit www.theEFC.ca/SL.

Your support enabled the EFC to present important points that were later affirmed by the Court. Thank you! Together, we are strong.

For more on this case visit www.theEFC.ca/SL

Together We Are Stronger

Your voice. Your platform. Your public witness. The EFC welcomes our newest affiliates, gathered together for influence, impact and identity.

- Global River Basin Ministries _____ Toronto
- Crescent Heights Baptist Church _____ Calgary
- Faith Worship Centre _____ Toronto
- The Stone Church _____ Toronto

We appreciate all our EFC affiliates. Your affiliation strengthens our influence in the public square. Contact Paul Hilsden at 905.479.5885 ext. 238 to discover all the great benefits of being an EFC affiliate, and to join us today.

Faith Today and our Global Village

Faith Today now has 13 countries in its Global Village series, a unique look at countries around the world and how Evangelicals are making a difference there. They are all available online, including the latest on Egypt, Brian Stiller's first-hand account of his visit there as the World Evangelical Alliance's global ambassador. Check it out at www.faithtoday.ca

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Activate CFPL is the EFC's law and public policy blog – Visit
www.activateCFPL.theEFC.ca

Culture shapes everything. What are you doing to shape culture?

The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada's Partners in Faith giving program makes you a culture-shaper.

- You join EFC donors who recognize that biblical values are a positive reality that we offer to help make our country a better, more just and compassionate place to live.
- You enable the EFC to plan ahead for the most effective response possible when issues arise.
- Your donations to go even further by reducing administrative costs even more, and magnifying the EFC's efforts at the global, national and local level of biblical activism.

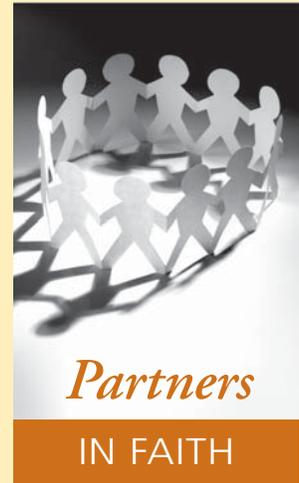
Our country is part of the faith-legacy we will leave for future generations. We can work together to build a Canada that is shaped by biblical values like truth, compassion, mercy, righteousness and justice.

By speaking strongly today, we can help assure that our children's Canada will be known for how well it treats its most vulnerable citizens, and how paramount religious freedom is held. A place where the Church is valued as a positive, life-affirming presence helping all Canadians.

The EFC speaks with a respected, experienced voice of compassion, justice, mercy and truth.

Raise your voice. Shape your culture.

Find out more at www.theEFC.ca/partners.



EFC

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The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada is the national association of Evangelicals, gathered together for influence, impact and identity in ministry and public witness. Since 1964 the EFC has provided a national forum for Evangelicals and a constructive voice for biblical principles in life and society.