



CanadaWatch

MINISTRY SERVICES SPOTLIGHT: What you need to know about the EFC's work in Ottawa.

ON PARLIAMENT HILL: How does the EFC strategically engage with a bill?

MEET YOUR EFC TEAM: Profile of Gina Waugh, Director of Marketing.



The Latest News



There are more ways than ever to stay connected with the EFC and to keep informed on pressing social issues. Check out:

www.theEFC.ca/activateCFPL: The blog of the EFC's Centre for Faith and Public Life is the go-to place for candid, insightful blogs on law and public policy issues in Canadian life – from a biblical perspective.

www.facebook.com/theEFC: With 13,675 likes, the EFC's Facebook page is a source of connectivity with Evangelicals around the world and quick updates on EFC progress on social and public policy issues.

www.facebook.com/FaithToday: The *Faith Today* Facebook page is a growing headquarters for easy access to *Faith Today* articles, and news from Christian thinkers and writers.

www.twitter.com/activateCFPL: Short. Not always sweet. But a helpful, informative Twitter feed directly from the EFC.

How I Spent My Summer Vacation: The CFPL Restored My Faith in the Role of Christians in Public Life, Says EFC Intern Luke Zijlstra

Sometimes it feels like I've always been a student. Growing up in a faithful, Christian home and attending Christian schools made the transition to a secular university difficult. Christian education was invaluable, and I remember those years fondly. But as a student at the University of Toronto, I had to quickly overhaul my expectations and practices as my grounding in biblical worldview clashed with new educational and cultural realities.

Interning at the EFC's Centre for Faith and Public Life (CFPL) in Ottawa is restoring my faith in the place of Christians in public life. The work I've done, the experience of meeting Christians in the office and working elsewhere in the world of Canadian politics have been a great encouragement.

Meeting others passionate about affecting change in both people and policy, and seeing for myself that they're doing so, is enough to keep believing the endeavour is not a lost cause. The cynicism developed in my university experience, fuelled by the pessimism of my professors toward both politics and religion, is fading.

The effectiveness of the CFPL team working to advance biblical principles in public policy is a big part of the reason for that.

In September, I'll begin the fourth year of my undergraduate degree. Adjustment to a social sciences and humanities education in a secular setting, with teachers and peers who are predominantly apathetic, agnostic or actively hostile to the gospel, involved rapidly figuring out how to identify and internalize the new skills required to succeed.

At the same time, I needed to filter the information being provided to fit its application within the Christian narrative established by my upbringing.

Learning to think critically and to read and write competently and professionally are useful results of my university education. The experience also forced me to question the role of Christianity in the world of politics, asking whether or not it could be done with the simultaneous effectiveness, truth and grace required by the foundations of the faith.

It was difficult to be optimistic about the prospects of a faithful Christian to affect change in a democracy whose electorate seems increasingly estranged from the gospel.

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The diversity of the initiatives the CFPL undertakes is encouraging, given the mischaracterization of evangelical politics. Christian involvement in politics, as I've now seen in practice, goes beyond both the left wing "social gospel" and right wing "morally conservative" talking points.

My experience this summer makes it clear that hot button, media grabbing issues of the last decade have not taken precedence over the EFC ensuring that a reasoned biblical perspective is communicated to Church and government on a wide variety of issues: abortion, euthanasia, poverty, bullying, marriage and prostitution among them.

The EFC's messages on these issues are both biblical and evidence-based argument for the general good of all Canadians concerned with safety, freedom and hope for Canada's future.

These constructive arguments are not going unnoticed by our elected or appointed representatives. Attending the EFC intervention at the Supreme Court of Canada in the prostitution case *Bedford v. Canada* was particularly encouraging. Christians can present arguments that are seen as beneficial and are well received by Canada's decision makers.

In the research I've been part of, it is also clear the work being produced at the CFPL is done with integrity, produced at a high level of diligence and consistency in terms of the extent and quality of their research, and in the opinions expressed.

Perhaps the most encouraging moment for me has been the realization that the gospel is not lost to politics. God's work in Canadian culture is a labour intensive effort that may, at times, appear fruitless to the passive observer, but with longer range vision can be seen to offer useful and productive critique and change.

Luke Zijlstra spent the summer as an intern at the EFC's Centre for Faith and Public Life. He will return to the University of Toronto in September.



Spotlight on the CFPL

The EFC's **Centre for Faith and Public Life** in Ottawa intervenes before government and the courts on issues of concern to Evangelicals. The CFPL is engaged with the most pressing social issues facing Canada today, including care for the vulnerable, religious freedom, sanctity of human life, marriage and family, and freedom of conscience.

Canada Watch asked CFPL staff to answer three questions that we thought EFC donors might ask.

Q: | **What are the most important things an EFC donor needs to know about the CFPL?**

Donors need to know that the EFC's Centre for Faith and Public Life (CFPL) is staffed with passionate, equipped and connected people. This team is often the EFC's public face, speaking to some of Canada's most controversial and difficult issues. And they're the right team for the job.

The CFPL is the EFC's law and public policy office. Situated in Ottawa, it is staffed with lawyers, policy analysts and researchers. The office was established 21 years ago and was located to Ottawa in 1996. Over the years our staff have forged relationships with Parliamentarians, government officials, journalists, academics, experts and leaders of NGOs in our pursuit of justice, protection of the vulnerable and religious freedom.

Each of our staff cares deeply and personally about the issues being addressed, whether engaging for protection of unborn children, advocating for the vulnerable living in poverty, or raising the profile of the persecuted church. Guided by biblical doctrines of truth, justice and love, and in consultation with our affiliates and Evangelicals with expertise and experience, we advance biblical principles in the language of the public square, with government and the courts – including 24 interventions before the Supreme Court of Canada.

The team is well equipped, have received training by recognized experts on political engagement, media relations and coalition building. We stay on the leading edge of issues that demand a credible Christian response by monitoring political and judicial developments, continuing study, and networking with government and non-governmental policy leaders. When the EFC steps out to be a voice on these issues, it does so with confidence.

Because of the EFC's long history of consistent, effective and reasoned advocacy, the organization is considered a leading and respected national, and in some circumstances international, voice on its issues. CFPL staff members are invited to speak at conferences and to assist Parliamentarians and other elected officials in understanding and working through the complex social challenges they face. Staffers are also



members of a variety of boards, roundtables and strategic associations. The relationships formed through these networks assist in advancing the EFC's purposes and ensure that evangelical perspectives are present and expressed in culture-shaping settings.

Q: | What can donors expect to see as CFPL priorities in the months ahead?

In the next three months, the CFPL will focus primarily on three issues. We will continue to address attempts to decriminalize euthanasia and assisted suicide. We will urge Parliamentarians to adopt strategies that protect women and children from sexual exploitation in light of the Bedford case – a decision which risks legalizing prostitution-related activities in Canada. And we will continue to raise the profile of the persecuted Church. There is escalating violence directed at Christians in Nigeria and parts of the Middle East in particular.

Q: | Your blog is called ActivateCFPL, so we assume that ideally you would like EFC supporters to also be active on some of these issues. If you could ask people to take one action, what would it be?

Prayer is not to be taken for granted. If supporters could take one action, other than prayer, we encourage them to contact and build relationships with their local, provincial and federal elected representatives. In doing so, supporters will gain insight into how best to pray for them, as well as creating opportunities to respectfully communicate any concerns about government action. We have suggestions on how to best engage at www.theEFC.ca/TakeAction. Such relationships can be transformative, impacting our understanding of government, as well as officials' understanding of Canadian Evangelicals and our beliefs.



This is the section of *Canada Watch* where EFC donors normally check for updates and progress on EFC engagement with bills and court cases dealing with issues that matter to Canadian Evangelicals and our country as a whole.

But in this issue of *Canada Watch*, we'd like to decode for you what we mean when we say that the EFC is strategically engaged with a bill on Parliament Hill.

Depending on the bill, and what stage it is in Parliament, strategic engagement might mean the EFC is:

- Meeting with MPs to discuss the issue.
- Preparing background papers to facilitate conversation and study about the issue from an evangelical perspective.
- Informing you, our donors and the broader evangelical community about this activity and how we can be engaged with this issue as part of our Christian witness.
- Legal Interventions in the courts of Canada on the same or related issues.
- Appearing and presenting before a parliamentary committee.
- Actively participating in the broader public debate on the issue through various media.
- Praying in earnest about this issue.
- Reporting back on the bill's progress to you, our donors, and other partners on this issue.

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Message from the President, Bruce J. Clemenger

This Aug/Sept issue of *Canada Watch* is being created halfway through the summer – a bittersweet reminder of the fleeting nature of the Canadian summer. We know to grasp the opportunities for fun in the sun as they present themselves. The same could be said for our strategic engagement with social policy issues in our country. There are moments that we must seize to impact the lives of the vulnerable, the oppressed and those treated unjustly, and to defend our shared freedoms. There are moments when ordinary people must stand up for what is right and good and true. Because it's ordinary people who change things. In this *Canada Watch* we introduce you even more closely to the EFC's Centre for Faith and Public Life in Ottawa, our mandate and our mission and what we have accomplished over the past few decades. Having moved to Ottawa to establish the EFC office, I especially loved hearing Luke Zijlstra's story of how interning at the CFPL has restored his faith in the place of Christians in public life.

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



Meet Your EFC Team

PROFILE: GINA WAUGH

Gina Waugh – Director of Marketing

"I am grateful that I have had the opportunity to work at the EFC for so many years (since 2001) and believe strongly in the work. I think one of my favorite things I like to do is promote the EFC at conferences and events. I have the privilege of speaking with people for the first time about the EFC and also talking with many of our wonderful donors who have supported us for years. Thank you to all of you for your prayers and financial support. Without you we couldn't do what we do."



Visit www.theEFC.ca/calendar to find out about events across Canada that might interest you and your church.

You can post your own event online for free.



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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.