



TOGETHER FOR INFLUENCE, IMPACT AND IDENTITY • DECEMBER/JANUARY 2015



CanadaWatch

CENTRE FOR FAITH & PUBLIC LIFE

The EFC in the Courts and on Parliament Hill

MINISTRY SERVICES

The EFC and its donors: A warm community of friendship

EFC RESOURCES

The EFC magazine *Faith Today* continues to thrive after its redesign.

HOW YOU CAN HELP



- Visit www.theEFC.ca for updates on *Saguenay* and other cases where the EFC is involved.
- Write or call your MP to encourage them to pay close attention to this case and others involving religious freedom and protecting the vulnerable.
- Pray. Talk. Give. Pray for religious freedom in Canada. Talk about these issues with your church and friends. Give to the EFC Legal Fund so we are always prepared.

UPDATES ON THE ISSUES

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

What's it like to talk about the Bible in the Supreme Court of Canada?

An EFC lawyer takes us behind the scenes

Albertos Polizogopoulos is an Ottawa-based lawyer fresh from a Supreme Court appearance where he presented arguments in defense of religious freedom on behalf of the EFC. Polizogopoulos offered specific input on the legitimacy of public prayer in the *Saguenay* case, where the EFC was an intervener.

We asked Polizogopoulos what it's like to be a voice for biblical influence, impact and identity in Canada's highest courts.

What should EFC donors know about our provincial and Supreme Court appearances?

We bring the evangelical Christian and biblical perspective on these issues to the courts. It's an important perspective to put forward on cases involving freedom of religion, sanctity of life, the family and so on. In the cases I've been involved in, the EFC consistently argues for religious freedom.

The EFC has intervened in Canadian courts more than 50 times. How is the EFC received in court?

We are usually well received. We are welcomed because the perspective we bring is unique. It's intelligent and it's based on biblical perspectives. We are generally well respected by the courts. They don't always agree with us of course, but we take an approach that is not overly aggressive or judgmental. And the courts appreciate that.

In some cases, judges disagree with us totally, in other cases they latch on to the arguments and the perspective we put forward – and you really see that resonate throughout their written judgment. In terms of a national voice, there is no other Christian group with such a wide-ranging constituency and with the experience that the EFC has. We've been doing this for 30 years.

Tell us about the preparation that goes into each appearance and submission.

It's a going over the lower court decisions – going over the evidence, doing research of the law and the issues being argued by the parties, drafting the materials for the case

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and preparing oral arguments. It's more than most people would imagine.

Do you practise your presentations?

I prepare a script. I usually don't take the script into court with me because I don't want to be reading it. The preparation of the oral argument is also to anticipate questions you might receive and be prepared to answer them. With *Saguenay*, I had four or five questions so I spoke for 15 minutes. Usually when they are asking questions it's because they are interested. It's a good sign.

How does it feel to know there is this huge body of EFC supporters thinking about you and praying for the EFC when you appear in court?

It brings about a sense of peace and comfort and confidence. When I'm in court, even in cases that don't involve national issues, I have my wife praying for me. When you have a team of thousands praying for you, it instills a lot of confidence.

What are the most important things donors can do to support the work of the EFC in the courts?

In addition to donating – which is absolutely necessary – prayer is an important tool of ours. Apart from that, they can research and learn about these issues and understand what's at stake. They can read the arguments and perspectives we are putting forward. The more informed we all are, the more we will see the need to get involved, the more we will support.

The EFC is often described as “the voice of biblical principles in the public square.” What does having that voice mean to Evangelicals?

It's a blessing, a responsibility and a privilege. Although I'm the one on my feet, there are other lawyers and people within the EFC who have played a big role. If somebody donated money to the EFC for an intervention to help pay the cost, or someone gave advice, or raised awareness, or wrote letters, or prayed, they are a part of it.

The EFC and its donors: A warm community of friendship

EFC donors contribute the funds that empower the EFC to be Canada's biblical voice of compassion, reason and justice on the issues that matter to all of us the most. But donors also contribute great energy, friendship and encouragement to the EFC team and our mission.

As our 50th year draws to a close, here are three specific areas where EFC donors have a huge impact.

- 1 Donors offer massive amounts of encouragement.** The prayers, emails and calls that donors send our way have an impact beyond what one might think. These thoughtful messages are shared with our staff. They brighten our day and encourage us for the long run.
- 2 Donors bring fellowship and community.** When you respond to the EFC mission with prayer support and financial contributions, we are reminded the evangelical community in Canada is alive, aware and engaged in the important issues of the day. We are all brothers and sisters in a family of faith. This is a community that cares about its country today and in the days to come.
- 3 Donors give and receive trust.** It is a privilege when donors share prayer requests with us, and it happens often. The EFC staff pray for these requests every Thursday during our staff devotional time. We know our donors also pray for the EFC and the issues they face in Canada. What a blessing it is to trust and be trusted. To give and to receive in prayer, knowing that Jesus Christ is the one we turn to with our common concerns.

Here is just a sampling of some of the encouragement we have received lately from EFC donors. We can't thank you enough!

“We appreciate what EFC is doing; going to the Supreme Court on our behalf is a thing that very few of us could do.”

“Praying for you and thanking you for all you do as our representative at government level.”

“I appreciate you keeping me informed about the critical changes in our country. Will surely be praying about them.”

“God bless you, the joy of the Lord is your strength, Nehemiah 8:41.”



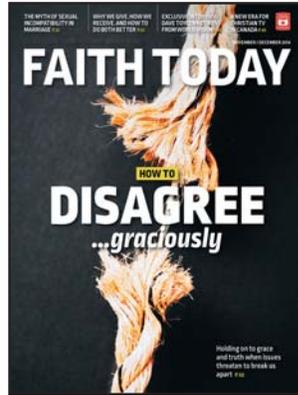
Faith Today Thrives

Thanks to a beautiful new design with enhanced new content, *Faith Today* magazine, published by the EFC, continues to thrive.

A new blog at blog.faithtoday.ca offers additional depth to the great topics covered in the print magazine. Our Facebook page is busier than ever serving up blog posts, links to great things happening across Canada and news that interests *Faith Today* readers.

Here's some of what you can read in the Nov/Dec issue of Canada's Christian magazine.

- An important cover story on how the Church can disagree well. Gordon T. Smith, president of Ambrose University, offers a blueprint for grace in tumultuous times.
- An exclusive interview with Dave Toycen, retiring president of World Vision Canada. What are his biggest lessons?
- An investigation into Christian television in Canada, an industry facing many changes and challenges.
- A thoughtful feature examining why we give and how we receive, especially at this time of year.



And much, much more of the excellent content *Faith Today* readers expect.



Subscribe to Canada's Christian magazine for just **\$4.99** an issue at www.faithtoday.ca/subscription or call 1-866-302-3362.

Message from the President, **Bruce J. Clemenger**



I have stood with Albertos Polizogopoulos and other EFC lawyers in the Supreme Court of Canada as they boldly promoted biblical principles of truth, compassion, mercy and wisdom on all our behalf. I am so glad to hear Albertos share in the *Canada Watch* interview how much the EFC is respected. That has been my own experience time and time again. We are listened to, not laughed at. We are dialogued with, not dismissed. We offer invaluable perspective to the courts, and the courts acknowledge and appreciate it. When defining religious freedom in the *Saguenay* case, this is part of what Polizogopoulos said – on the behalf of all of us: "Freedom of religion ensures individuals are able to practise their faith without fear of hindrance or reprisal or without any state interference." Thanks, Albertos. And thank you for supporting such important work.

On Parliament Hill



◆ Bill C-36, the *Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act*, was passed by the Senate of Canada and received Royal Assent on November 6. Under the new laws, buying or trying to buy sex will be illegal for the first time in Canada. The bill also maintains previous prohibitions against pimping and benefiting materially from the sale of someone else's sexual services. It adds a new offence making it illegal to advertise the sale of someone else's sexual services. The Act also initiates a critical shift in how prostituted persons are reviewed in law. The new laws reframe the historic understanding of people who are prostituted as public nuisances and

recognizes that the vast majority of persons in prostitution are not there by choice. The Government has made it clear that in the spirit and intent of the law, those who are prostituted are to be seen as vulnerable, as victims of exploitation, and are therefore to be afforded immunity from criminal charges, except under specific circumstances, just as the EFC has argued. We celebrate this important moment in Canadian history.

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◆ The Government introduced Bill S-7, the *Zero Tolerance for Barbaric Cultural Practices Act*. This act, which amends the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*, the *Civil Marriage Act* and the *Criminal Code*, addresses early and forced marriage, polygamy and other types of “barbaric cultural practices.” The bill would make permanent residents or foreign nationals inadmissible to Canada if found to be practising polygamy. It also amends the *Civil Marriage Act* to legislate federally the legal requirement for free and enlightened consent and the requirement for ending an existing marriage prior to entering another in order for a marriage to be declared valid. To protect children from early marriage, the bill would also establish a new national minimum age for marriage of 16. The EFC will be monitoring this bill.

THANKS TO YOU!

The EFC is grateful for Canada’s new prostitution laws. Thank you for standing with us as we intervened and helped shape the outcome of this long, important process.

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Come join the EFC on Facebook.
www.facebook.com/theEFC



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

The Sky Is the Limit. Collect Air Miles for the EFC



It is easier than ever to collect Air Miles for the EFC. Using Air Miles can save the EFC thousands of dollars in flight expenses each year.

Together, we can pool enough points to pay for the travel expenses of Court appearances, speaking engagements and research trips. You will enable us to be what we need to be: **bold and biblical all across Canada.**

HERE’S HOW EASY IT IS:

- Request an EFC Air Miles card by emailing airmiles@evangelicalfellowship.ca, or calling 1-866-302-3362, or visiting www.theEFC.ca/airmiles.
- Use the card when you buy things like groceries, gas, even some toy stores offer Air Miles. There are more than 200 venues across Canada and online that offer points.
- The points multiply in the EFC’s account, enabling us to be where we need to be.

And that is how simple it is. Thank you for signing up today!



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.