



CanadaWatch

CENTRE FOR FAITH & PUBLIC LIFE

The EFC in the Courts and on Parliament Hill.

SPOTLIGHT

Going Deeper on Euthanasia – Q and A with EFC President Bruce Clemenger.

EFC RESOURCES

What *Faith Today*, Canada's Christian magazine, offers you in May/June.

EUTHANASIA



How you can make a difference

- **WRITE to your MP**, expressing your concerns and urging them to be prepared to fight for the strictest possible laws regulating euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide in Canada.
- **READ *Not to be Forgotten: Care of Vulnerable Canadians*** available online at www.pcpcc-cpspsc.com/report.
- **WATCH in the May/June issue of *Faith Today*** as we speak to well-known ethicist Margaret Somerville for her insights on what is happening in Canada.
- **CONTINUE TO STAND with the EFC** on such issues.

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TOGETHER, we can make a difference.

Why Should We Be Involved in the Euthanasia Issue in Canada?

Christian activists have a long history of being a voice in the wilderness. Today's wilderness is Canada. The issue is how we value – or don't value – life itself. With the Supreme Court of Canada's removal of the ban on physician-assisted suicide and euthanasia, a new and dangerous day has dawned in our country. Here is why we must be strategically engaged in protecting life in Canada:

- We believe every life has intrinsic and immeasurable value because we are created by God and in God's image. Dignity is ours, because God has given it to us. Life is to be nourished, protected and defended at all stages.
- A central argument in support of physician-assisted suicide and euthanasia is that humans are and should be autonomous, in total control of their own life and destiny, even to the point of controlling the moment they die. Christian theology teaches that God alone is sovereign and that we are given our lives as gifts. Autonomy is not an absolute.
- Christians also believe that the "social nature of being human also limits our freedom. Such acts [euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide] also involve the one doing or aiding the killing and a complying society," writes Richard Gula, a California professor of moral theology. "A commitment to the common good stands in constant tension with autonomy because it forces us to ask whether we should forgo some of the things which we want for ourselves so that the good of the whole might better be served" (www.religion-online.org). Society changes when we say that in some cases, killing each other is acceptable.
- Physicians may be required to refer patients, even if they deeply disagree with euthanasia. The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario voted recently that a physician's moral or religious convictions can't impede a patient's access to treatment they desire.
- Canada's Supreme Court now says even non-terminal patients must be allowed euthanasia. In country after country, euthanasia is ushered in with strict guidelines and restrictions that tend to weaken over time, until, as in Belgium's case, even children are considered candidates.
- Even if the motivation is compassion – and even if consent is given – it does not change the ugly reality that euthanasia and assisted suicide is the killing of one human being by another.

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When Christians speak out against euthanasia, we are not being insensitive to the very real suffering of those with mental and physical illnesses. We are called to care for the suffering.

In today's highly advanced medical world, there are many ways to gently manage pain, bring true dignity to the dying, and lovingly support someone made in God's image on the journey from this life to the next. The hospice movement does wonderful work across the country. Palliative care needs to be made more available, more robust and better known.

As moral theologian Richard Gula continues: "From the Bible we learn that mercy and compassion are the ways that God loves, provides for and protects God's people. Out of mercy and compassion Jesus restored the broken to wholeness. He healed the blind, taught the ignorant, raised the dead and fed the hungry. The merciful are faithful to those who suffer by compassionately accompanying them, not by killing them. Mercy keeps us from abandoning hope when life is hard. Resorting to euthanasia... is failing to embody the trust that sustains life and the commitment to be companions to one another" (www.religion-online.org).

In the months ahead, you will be hearing more from the EFC about this issue, and how you can be involved. You are invited once again to help shape the future of a defining issue for our country.

"If no new law is put in place, then the situation would be similar to that of abortion: no law regulating assisted suicide and euthanasia."

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SPOTLIGHT:

Going Deeper on EUTHANASIA

Q and A with EFC President Bruce Clemenger



Bruce Clemenger

Bruce Clemenger explains why this issue matters so much, and what – together – we can do about it.

Q: If Canadians don't become involved in the issue of euthanasia, what do you think could happen in our country?

The Supreme Court has ruled that in some situations physician-assisted suicide and euthanasia is permissible. Some are arguing that the Court has made it a right. While the EFC remains opposed to assisted suicide and euthanasia, the Supreme Court ruling means we now urgently need laws that will ensure that the practice is rare, and do all we can to promote life and protect the vulnerable.

If no new law is put in place, then the situation would be similar to that of abortion: no law regulating assisted suicide and euthanasia. Then, as in other jurisdictions where euthanasia has been legalized, the practice would expand.

Q: What action steps can Canadian Christians take right away to voice their concerns?

First, communicate with your Member of Parliament and the Minister of Justice asking for a careful and comprehensive review of the Court decision. Second, ask that clear legislation be passed that will limit the harm of legalizing assisted suicide and euthanasia.

Q: The EFC is also involved in the issue of palliative care. What is the connection we should be seeing between these two issues?

Palliative care is an interdisciplinary approach to life-threatening illness that seeks to improve the quality of life of patients and their families. It includes the treatment of pain, caring for the related personal, familial, emotional and Spiritual. It includes physical, psychosocial and spiritual issues. It can involve options like home care and hospice care.

Studies show that only 16 to 30 per cent of Canadians have access to good quality palliative care. This is a tragedy. And since the primary reasons people request assisted suicide or euthanasia can be addressed through palliative care, this reinforces the need for better access to that care in Canada.

Q: How can our donors partner with the EFC in this issue?

Please continue to stand with us in your prayers and through your financial support. The EFC is an influential voice promoting the sanctity of human life and protecting the vulnerable in Canada. Our country needs that voice more than ever.



Webinars to inform, inspire and equip you on Canada's most pressing issues coming your way soon!

You want more insight and action steps on the issues of the day. We want to equip, inform and interact with you on these issues. That is why the EFC is so happy to announce our first foray into the world of webinars. Watch for more information to come on the EFC Webinar, an engaging (and we hope lively!) practical webinar experience providing insight and action on Canada's most important issues.



On Parliament Hill



“ In Your Own Words

“How often I have thanked God for you as you hold onto the principles of God's Word in the House [of Commons]. May God bless you. I am now 87 and for years have read in the EFC paper the boldness with which you hold to the Scriptures. All of Christian Canada thank God for you and the EFC.”

“Just a wee note to let you know we appreciate your work and labours of love. Thank you for being our voice on capital hill. We continue to pray for you who hold high the banner of the cross. Keep flying it high! Yours in the wonder of HIS love and grace.”



May/June
Issue

What *Faith Today*, Canada's Christian magazine, offers you in May/June:

- An interview with Margaret Somerville, one of Canada's best-known – and most outspoken – ethicists.
- A look into how Canadian Christian organizations can hire better – and even fire better.
- Voices from Canada's pro-life movement: what everyday activists are saying about the issue that just won't go away.
- How best to partner with First Nations communities in Canada.

CANADA'S CHRISTIAN MAGAZINE

FAITH TODAY

And of course, much more of the probing articles and inspiring features you expect. *Faith Today's* “best price ever” subscription special continues, but only until the end of April.

Call toll free at 1.866.302.3362 to subscribe for **\$2.99 an issue.**

Updating you on Canada's most immediate issues

◆ The Supreme Court recently concluded that Canada's laws prohibiting assisted suicide and euthanasia are unconstitutional in some situations, and gave Parliament one year to amend the *Criminal Code*. With a federal election scheduled within this time frame, Parliament needs to move quickly. The EFC deeply disagrees with the decision and continues to oppose assisted suicide and euthanasia. In the wake of the Court ruling we need strong legislation that will ensure assisted suicide remains rare. The Court says safeguards can be put in place to ensure vulnerable Canadians will be protected and no one will be killed against their will. However, the experience of other jurisdictions where assisted suicide is legal is that the practice expands. The EFC will be pressing for stringent safeguards to ensure the risk is as minimal as possible.

◆ The EFC is pressing all federal parties to work to ensure good quality palliative care is available to all Canadians. Members of Parliament across party lines have acknowledged this need. We want to encourage action by the government and help make the access to quality palliative care an election issue.

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◆ The EFC, in partnership with Christian Higher Education Canada, will intervene in Trinity Western University's challenge to the decision of the Law Society of Upper Canada (Ontario) and a similar decision by the Law Society of B.C. not to accept graduates of TWU's proposed law school. These decisions deny TWU graduates the ability to practise law in those provinces. Thankfully a court in Nova Scotia found a similar law society decision there to be wrong, so we need to stand with TWU and try to build on that. The EFC will continue to pursue justice in Ontario and B.C. to ensure the religious freedom of TWU and the rights of its graduates are respected.

◆ The EFC is also planning to intervene in support of a challenge to a new policy of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario that will require doctors to make effective referrals, and in some situations, perform procedures that violate their freedom of religion and conscience. The Christian Medical Dental Society (an EFC affiliate) and a Catholic organization also representing doctors are launching a constitutional challenge to the policy. The EFC will stand with them and seek to intervene in support of their cause.



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



Blake Weller – Donor Services



"Part of my work at the EFC is talking to and sometimes praying with our donors. I am amazed every day at donors' deep appreciation and understanding of the work the EFC is doing in Canada. People who give touch and bless my heart each day with their words of encouragement and support. I especially love when they tell me they are praying for the EFC's ministry as this means we have a special place in their hearts. Donors' prayers are so important to the effectiveness of our ministry."



Did you know that supporting the EFC is as easy as collecting Air Miles?

You can help reduce our travel costs just by using an EFC Air Miles card!

www.theEFC.ca/airmiles or call toll-free 1-866-302-3362



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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.