



CanadaWatch

CENTRE FOR FAITH & PUBLIC LIFE

The EFC in the Courts and on Parliament Hill.

SPOTLIGHT

On What We All Learned From the Passing of Bill C-36.

COURT UPDATE

Trinity Western University Celebrating a Victory.

TOGETHER, we can make a difference.



How you can put your power to work:

- **Send a thank-you note** to your MP, commending them on the passing of Bill C-36, the *Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act*. A warm thank you goes a long way.
- **Read** (or skim!) *Not to be Forgotten: Care of Vulnerable Canadians* available at www.pcpcc-cpspsc.com.
- **Watch** for the At Issue page in the March/April issue of *Faith Today* for a helpful primer on the palliative care crisis in Canada.
- **Continue to stand** with the EFC on these issues and more.

What could Prostitution and Palliative Care Possibly Have in Common?

How you are shaping two top issues in Canada

At first thought, it seems impossible that the issues of prostitution and palliative care would be related. What could women and youth entrapped in a life of sexual slavery and violent oppression have to do with dignified and compassionate care for the dying in Canada?

The surprising answer is: you! And The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada.

When Bill C-36, the *Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act*, was made into law, a new day dawned in Canada. Pimps and purchasers of sex are now the targets of the well structured law. The women and youth entrapped in a life no one would ever freely choose will eventually have more options for escaping the violent and oppressive reality of life on the streets.

As you know, the EFC was involved from the beginning, as an intervener in the Supreme Court *Bedford* case that struck down the old laws all the way to the shaping of the Bill. We were active every step of the way on this issue. We could not have done it without your prayerful and financial support. Your contributions enabled us to do thorough research and have our day in court. Your partnership with us meant that the EFC was there at the right place, at the right time, meeting with the right people, with the right recommendations. And it worked.

Together, we share in the satisfaction of seeing what can happen when Canadian Christians are committed to our country and work together to make a better life for those who have been exploited for so long.

And now together we are gathering up our energy, expertise and experience to focus our high beams on the issue of palliative care in Canada. With your participation, along with a dedicated group of parliamentarians and physicians, the EFC will be helping to craft a strategy to help create a national palliative care policy in Canada.

In the months ahead the EFC will be meeting with Members of Parliament and other government officials. We will marshal support across Canada, meet with other stakeholders

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and make a strong push for universal access to adequate palliative care. Right now in Canada, universal access to palliative care does not exist. Only one-third of Canadians have access to palliative care. There are only 86 palliative care hospices in Canada, for a population of 35 million people.

The Parliamentary Committee on Palliative and Compassionate Care, in their excellent report *Not to be Forgotten: Care of Vulnerable Canadians*, writes: "Palliative care is not only the best model for caring for vulnerable and dying Canadians; it also embodies truths that could be transformative for our whole health care culture."

The prevailing culture in Canada seems to suggest that euthanasia is a valid option for dealing with the ill and the elderly. Let's work together to present the practical and compassionate alternative of palliative care.

- **RECOGNIZE:** something is deeply wrong in our country
- **RALLY:** against something that needs to change
- **RESOLVE:** we come up with something much, much better

That is what we did together to help usher in a new age for women and youth trapped in prostitution in Canada. We recognized the problem. We rallied against it. We resolved it by proposing and working toward a compassion-based solution that better reflects biblical principles. And now that is what we can do together for palliative care in Canada.

On the surface, prostitution and palliative care would seem to have little in common. The clear connection, of course, is the bold and biblical response from you and the EFC.

"All women and girls are safer in a society that stands up against the idea that people can be bought or sold."



SPOTLIGHT:

On What We All Learned From the Passing of Bill C-36

Q&A with Julia Beazley

The work behind the passing of Bill C-36, *the Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act*, shows us all what happens when we stand together and become activists of the heart and the hands. Julia Beazley, who helped lead the EFC charge on this issue, shares her insights – and her thanks.

Q The passing of Bill C-36, although imperfect, is a victory of sorts for Christians who got involved. What does this show us about making positive change in Canada?

Change is possible when we work together, when we pray together, when we stand together. What made the advocacy on this issue so effective was the breadth and variety of voices and groups, which included the Church, who came together and called for change. We found common ground and purpose with groups who might disagree with us on other issues, and worked together toward a common goal. It was powerful.

Q Were they surprised to have Evangelicals workings beside them?

I think they were surprised to have Evangelicals agreeing with them and being willing to learn from them. Pleasantly surprised. I'm hoping that some of the relationships that were built during our work on Bill C-36 will give us a bit of a foundation for tackling something like the issue of pornography together.

Q What do you want EFC donors to know about the passing of this bill?

For the first time in Canada, buying sex is illegal. The legislation recognizes that the vast majority of persons in prostitution are not there by choice. It makes it really clear that the intent is they be treated as victims of exploitation. By focusing on criminalizing buyers and exploiters, it challenges the belief that men are entitled to pay for sexual access to women and children. It also says that buying sex is not inevitable in our society. The ultimate goal of the law is to put an end to exploitation, and that is a victory for all women. All women and girls are safer in a society that stands up against the idea that people can be bought or sold. There are also practical helps for exploited persons that will be unfolding.

The government has begun the work of figuring out where best to direct the funds committed to helping women to leave prostitution.



Top Photo: Julia Beazley, Policy Analyst for the EFC, speaking to affiliate leaders on Bill C-36.



Q What are your top tips about activism, taken from this experience?

1. **Be humble enough to learn and listen.** We listened to survivors of prostitution but also to other groups, like front line women's organizations. Our activism wouldn't have been nearly as impactful if we hadn't done that. Their stories and experience shaped our language and approach.
2. **Network and find strength in coalitions.** Many of our partners and allies shared our faith, but many did not. The value in finding points of agreement and common ground, and standing together was significant. And ultimately effective.
3. **Tap into the passion out there.** We were intentional about informing our constituency. This sparked their passion, and donors – our partners – sprang into action. It was amazing. Through our partnership with Defend Dignity, a ministry devoted to the abolition of prostitution, we saw what can happen when we educate and equip.

Q What encouragement would you offer EFC donors about how their churches can be involved?

At every church event we hosted with Defend Dignity (almost 30), people signed letters. Hundreds of letters went out to government on this issue. Some churches took a step further, with small groups going as a group to meet with their MP. Or groups of local pastors got together and visited their MP. There is nothing that quite replaces the value of an in-person meeting.

Other churches are looking at ways they can engage their communities in a practical way. People can watch for more action steps, in partnership with Defend Dignity, in the near future.

Celebrating a Victory!

The freedom of religious institutions in Canada was affirmed by a recent Supreme Court of Nova Scotia ruling. The Court ruled the Nova Scotia Barristers' Society (NSBS) did not have the authority to refuse to recognize law degrees from Trinity Western University's (TWU) proposed law school.

The NSBS had refused to recognize TWU law degrees unless the university changed its policy on student conduct. The university's Community Covenant prohibits sexual intimacy for students outside of the marriage of a man and a woman.

The EFC celebrates this ruling as a milestone on the journey we have been on with TWU, the courts and our donors as we work to protect religious freedom in Canada.

With your help, the EFC intervened in this case along with Christian Higher Education Canada (CHEC), an association of Christian higher education institutions. Thank you!

Visit www.theEFC.ca/TWUlaw for ongoing updates on this important case.



On Parliament Hill



Updating you on Canada's most immediate issues

◆ Last October, the Supreme Court heard arguments about whether or not to decriminalize assisted suicide and euthanasia. Usually the Court will render its decision within six months to a year. The EFC was an intervener in the *Carter* case, helping to present biblical values of the sanctity of life, compassion for the suffering and care of the most vulnerable among us.

◆ There are three bills on the issue of assisted suicide and euthanasia before Parliament. One (C-581) would legalize physician-assisted death and the other (C-582) would establish a commission to monitor physician-assisted death and make recommendations on access to assisted suicide. Not only would assisted suicide be decriminalized, but also it would be provided for by the health care system.

◆ Recently a bill was introduced in the Senate (S-225) by Senator Nancy Ruth that parallels MP Stephen Fletcher's bill legalizing physician-assisted death. Due to procedural differences between the House of Commons and the Senate, the Senate bill can proceed much more quickly.

With your help, the EFC is actively promoting better access to palliative care for all Canadians.



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

The EFC, because of how you empower us through your prayers and gifts, are not just hearers of the word – and speakers – we are doers. (Yes, I’m borrowing liberally from James 1:22.) We are not just speaking out against euthanasia and assisted suicide, we are also working to help craft a national palliative care strategy for all Canadians. This two-pronged approach sums up for me what you enable the EFC to do so well: help stop what is wrong. And help create what is right. Thank you.

In Your Own Words

“It has been a great privilege to participate in giving and prayer to an organization that speaks on issues that we cannot. Thank you for presenting the biblical principles in both politics and in the courts on behalf of so many people in this nation. Thank you for your representation of minorities, underprivileged and defenseless.”

– a long-time donor from B.C.



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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.