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Essential work on Canada's prostitution laws

“I'm glad I'm on this team.” Those were the words in an email between EFC staff who worked to edit the [EFC's submission](#) on current prostitution laws, which we believe are a critical tool in fighting sexual exploitation.

The EFC submitted the brief Feb. 25 to the parliamentary committee on justice and human rights which is reviewing the *Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act*.

This is important work, made possible by EFC donors – the sometimes invisible but always essential members of our team. These laws are intended to protect people in Canada who are being sexually exploited. They are intended to protect and promote human dignity and equality.

The EFC's brief (and all the work and research it represents) was a moment for Canadian Evangelicals to speak up in support of girls and women who are at risk of exploitation and who are being prostituted in our country. When the EFC submits a brief like this one, it is good to pause and consider the thousands of EFC friends and affiliates who stand with us, as we stand with those with whom we journey on the path to mercy and justice.

As Christians we seek the well-being of those who are being prostituted and who are vulnerable to exploitation. We want to uphold the human dignity of these individuals. No one has the right to buy access to another person's body.

We know prostitution isn't merely a series of interactions between purchaser



and purchased that exist independently of one another. It is part of a system of exploitation that is based on structural inequalities. It preys on vulnerabilities.

Entry into prostitution is often the result of multiple risk factors and socioeconomic factors such as poverty, mental health issues, disability, family breakdown or disruption, early home leaving, being in government care, or a history of childhood abuse or neglect. Such factors work together to create the conditions under which a woman or girl feels she has no other genuine choices in her life, like prostitution is her only or best option for survival.

Paying attention to this is part of our work and our calling as Evangelicals in Canada.

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How you can help

- Stay up to date on this issue and more at www.TheEFC.ca
- Ask your MP to support the prostitution laws. See www.TheEFC.ca/Prostitution-Law-Review.
- Is there anyone working with prostituted persons, or those who are in vulnerable situations, that you could help in your own community?
- Pray with us that the government considers the recommendations in the EFC submission. Read it at www.TheEFC.ca/Prostitution.



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We need to pay attention to the fact most victims in sex-trade-related offences are women, 94 per cent according to the [most recent statistics](#). And they are often young women. More than 4 in 10 victims in violent offences involving at least one sex-trade-related offence are 12- to 17-years old. Indigenous women and girls are [highly overrepresented](#) due, at least in part, to the lasting effects of colonization and the residential schools system. Indigenous women and girls are only [four per cent](#) of the population, yet they are the majority of those trafficked and prostituted on the streets of Canada. This is alarming and requires our attention and action. In fact, [a study of sexual exploitation and trafficking of Indigenous persons](#) in Winnipeg noted that the average age of entry into sexual exploitation was 13.8 years of age and most participants remained entrenched an average of 9.75 years.

When there are Canadians living in poverty, unable to afford housing, experiencing marginalization, racism or lack of social support, we must respond with genuine options to address those needs, rather than accepting the sale of the person's sexuality as the answer.

The EFC is called to this work and with your help we are able to do it. Canada can and must do better than to accept prostitution as a solution to poverty, racism and a range of other underlying social issues. The current prostitution laws, the *Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act*, are a critical tool in fighting sexual exploitation. We will keep you updated on the results of the parliamentary justice committee study.

"... the average age of entry into sexual exploitation was 13.8 years of age and most participants remained entrenched an average of 9.75 years."



EFC research update: Discipling children, small church study

The Canadian Evangelical Family Faith Formation Study is progressing well in its investigation of how Canadian evangelical parents understand their roles as disciple makers of their children.

This partnership of 11 groups is examining what helps or hinders parents or guardians in disciple-making and how best churches and ministries can support them.

The EFC team has completed a literature review – which helps inform us on what material is already available on this topic and glean its wisdom – and a round of interviews with ministry experts and parents. They've also completed two interim reports on trends found in those interviews.

EFC researchers Rick Hiemstra and Lindsay Callaway are working on two surveys that will launch in the spring.

One will be for pastors who have family ministry responsibilities. The other will be for evangelical parents with children under the age of 18 in the home.

"What we've learned from these parents is important or our understanding of how faith

formation works in families, and we pray that ministry and parents can use these findings to be more effective in their faith formation," says Hiemstra.

The researchers are simultaneously working on a different study investigating the ministry and mission opportunities that small churches engage in, as well as the challenges that hinder vitality in congregational life and ministry.

The Canadian Evangelical Small Church surveys launched earlier this year for evangelical pastors of churches with 150 people or less. The study is now hearing participant stories about the value of the small church in Canada.

To keep up with Canadian research related to churches, check out the EFC's newest podcast series, Faith Trends. You can listen to hosts Rick Hiemstra and Lindsay Callaway interview other researchers, and sometimes talk about their own work at the EFC. Listen at www.TheEFC.ca/Podcasts.



Message from the President, Bruce J. Clemenger

The EFC's Zoom prayer gathering on the conflict in the Ukraine in early March was a meaningful expression of the commitment of evangelicals in Canada to respond together. In the gathering we prayed for an end to the conflict, and for Christians in Ukraine and in Russia, and more. The evangelical Church in Canada is broad and diverse, and

yet we pull together on behalf of our sisters and brothers around the world to intercede in prayer and respond to the great humanitarian need through the efforts of many evangelical ministries. It is a testament of our faith and a manifestation our desire to collaborate to bless others in the name of Jesus. I hope you feel part of something bigger, broader and stronger through your connection with the EFC.

New EFC resources available for you and your church

The EFC has recently launched four new resources to help churches engage with politicians, host conversations on racism, participate in reconciliation, and welcome newcomers to

Canada. We want to gather them here to remind you of their availability and encourage you to tap into all we are able to create for the Canadian Church, with the help of our partners and those who give prayerfully and financially to the EFC.



Welcome Church – This video-based resource offers biblical hospitality training for church leaders and networking opportunities for ministries and congregations serving newcomers to Canada. www.WelcomeChurch.ca

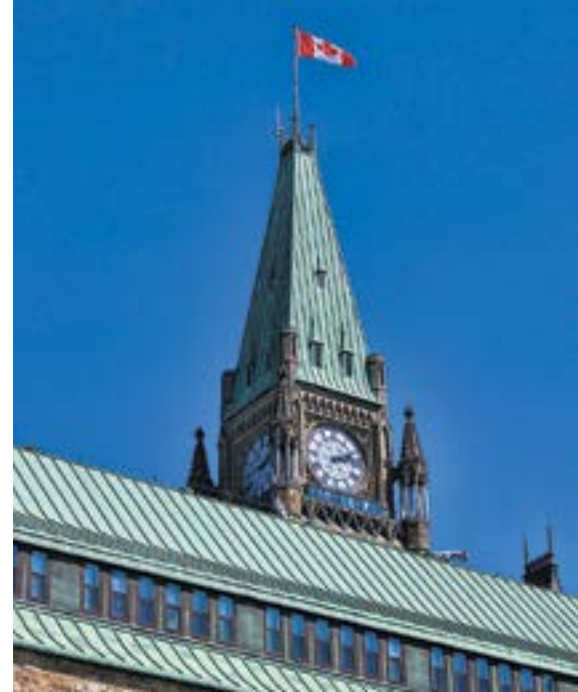
Conversations That Shape Us: Responding to Racism - This conversation guide on racism explores biblical concepts that prepare followers of Jesus to respond to racism in a God-honouring way. www.TheEFC.ca/Racism

Reconciliation Through Relationships – RTR is an educational initiative pairing Indigenous and non-Indigenous Christians together to spark reconciliation one friendship at a time. www.TheEFC.ca/RTR (and see our story in this *Canada Watch*)

Civic Engagement Kit – The renewed and refreshed EFC Civic Engagement Kit, available in English and French, offers advice and explanations about interacting with your elected government representatives. www.TheEFC.ca/EngagementKit

Prayers for Ukraine

More than 160 evangelical leaders from across Canada joined together at the invitation of the EFC and the Peace and Reconciliation Network on March 3, to pray for the crisis and conflict in Ukraine. The Zoom gathering featured an update on the conflict and then an hour of prayer and intercession hosted by Roger Helland, the EFC's prayer ambassador.



Updating you on Canada's most immediate issues

■ **Sexual exploitation:** The EFC has submitted a brief to the parliamentary justice committee in support of Canada's current prostitution laws. Some groups are advocating for the laws to be repealed. The EFC's brief explains why the laws are an essential tool in the fight against sexual exploitation and must be upheld. The laws target sex buyers and pimps, and give immunity to those who are prostituted. A court case challenging the prostitution laws has been launched in Ontario. The EFC has asked for intervenor status in support of maintaining the laws. www.TheEFC.ca/Prostitution

■ **Canada Summer Jobs:** The EFC has applied for intervenor status in a case about the 2018 Canada Summer Jobs attestation and its impact on the ability of religious organizations to receive employment grants for summer students. The case is before the Federal Court of Appeal and involves the Right to Life Association of Toronto. www.TheEFC.ca/SummerJobs

■ **Charitable status of pro-life groups:** The EFC continues to express strong concern to cabinet ministers about

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possible changes to charitable status. The prime minister's mandate letter instructed the finance minister to take steps to remove the charitable status of pro-life groups that provide dishonest counseling to pregnant women about their rights. This proposal may unfairly single out organizations on the basis of their beliefs on a certain social issue.

www.TheEFC.ca/CharitableProLife

■ **Conscience protection:** The EFC has written a letter of support for MP Kelly Block's Bill C-230 that would protect health care professionals from being compelled to participate, directly or indirectly, in medical assistance in dying. There is also a sample letter of support to send to local MPs at www.TheEFC.ca/C-230.

The EFC administrative office is settling into its new space

Our move went well, and the EFC's new Toronto-area administrative offices are well on their way to being fully set up at our new address: **10 Huntingdale Blvd, Scarborough, ON M1W 2S5**. You can continue to reach us **toll-free at 1-866-302-3362**. We are thankful that this move will increase our efficiencies and decrease our costs. Thank you for your support!

Heart and hands

Jacob Birch is the major gifts officer for the EFC, for Eastern Canada.



I became a Christian in an evangelical Presbyterian church that let me belong before I believed. I married my high school sweetheart Heather who introduced me to The Alliance Canada where I served in various ministry positions for the last 29 years. I enjoy meeting with, praying for and helping the EFC's major donors achieve their goals through their support of our mission.

Reconciliation Through Relationships

Reconciliation Through Relationships (RTR) is a new initiative that connects Indigenous and non-Indigenous people together to build friendships and strengthen cross-cultural understanding.

RTR was launched in 2021 by Indigenous leaders Jimmy Thunder and Diane Campeau in partnership with Joel Gordon, a non-Indigenous convenor from the EFC.

Many of us don't know where to begin on the reconciliation journey. Through RTR, participants receive training from an Indigenous coach on good ways to communicate. They are then paired with a participant from the other cultural background, to learn and grow together.

Following the success of a pilot program that ran in 2021, RTR will facilitate two cohorts to participate in the six-month program this year.

After an orientation, the pairs will meet once or twice a month for a discussion centred on learning material on Indigenous history in Canada. The journey is celebrated with a culminating gathering of the entire cohort to share learnings, express challenges and reflect on growing friendships. Many who participated last year still remain in contact.

To learn more or ask questions, contact Joel Gordon at 905-479-5885 ext. 254 or see www.TheEFC.ca/RTR.

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The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (*Alliance évangélique du Canada*) is the national association "uniting Evangelicals to bless Canada in the name of Jesus." Since 1964 the EFC has provided a national forum for Evangelicals, fostered ministry partnerships, conducted research on religious and social trends and provided a constructive voice for biblical principles in life and society.



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