

CanadaWatch

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At work helping to protect children from pornography

Pictures and videos of youth are being posted on pornography sites without their knowledge or permission. This is an issue on which the EFC is raising awareness and seeking legislative changes on the national level. The Canadian Centre for Child Protection describes a "tsunami" of victims coming to organizations like theirs, asking for help to have images of abuse or exploitation taken down.

The EFC recently sent a brief to a parliamentary committee that is studying the role of online platforms such as Pornhub in hosting these non-consensual uploads and images of child sexual abuse. We asked the committee to take concrete actions to hold pornography platforms accountable for hosting and monetizing these images and videos.

Children and youth face lifelong consequences when images of their abuse or exploitation are shared online and widely viewed. Our brief recommended the government require pornography sites to verify the age and consent of each person who appears in videos *before* they are uploaded.

We watched the committee meetings and heard a young woman named Serena Fleites, 19, tell her story. She told the committee how she had moved to a new town in junior high and a boy she liked pressured her to send him a video of herself.

Eventually, she gave in to his demands. When she was 13, Serena sent the boy a video, less than a minute long. In heart breaking detail, Serena told the committee how her life was destroyed



as that video was circulated throughout her school, her town and was ultimately posted on Pornhub, the most popular free pornography site online.

When she found out the video had been uploaded to Pornhub, Serena asked the site repeatedly to take it down. Pornhub ignored her multiple requests to have the video removed, until she pretended to be her mother. They required her to prove her identity and her age, even though the video was clearly of a minor. She faced delay after delay. After the video was eventually taken down, it was posted again by another user. To this day, Serena can't be sure the video of herself as a young teen is not posted on Pornhub or some other pornography site.

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What you can do:

- Send in a postcard to your MP, request the postcard by calling 1-866-302-3362 x 229 or email us at EFC@theEFC.ca
- The EFC's website has more resources and information, such as a sample letter to MPs asking them to protect children and youth in front of and behind the screen. Write your own letter using our template at www.TheEFC.ca/Pornography.
- Continue to support our work in prayer and by donations. Issues like these are the exact places a strong Christian voice should be heard.



RELIGIOUS FREEDOM



SANCTITY OF LIFE



CHURCH & MISSION



FAMILY & COMMUNITY



CARE FOR THE VULNERABLE

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Serena's life fell apart as a result of that boy's actions and Pornhub's negligence. She's begun to talk about what happened to her in the hopes of helping others who've been similarly victimized – and of holding Pornhub to account.

Serena is not the only one, not by far. The RCMP say they've also seen a dramatic increase in reports of online child sexual exploitation. "In 2019 the centre received 102,927 requests for assistance, an increase of 68% since 2018 and an overall increase of 1,106% since 2014," they reported.

The EFC asked the committee to hold pornography platforms accountable to Canadian laws on child pornography and on distributing intimate images without consent. MindGeek, which owns Pornhub and more than 100 other hardcore pornography sites, has offices in Montreal with 1,800 staff. Any company operating in Canada, or seeking access to a Canadian market, must abide by and be held accountable to Canadians laws.

A letter to the ethics committee signed by 104 survivors of sexual exploitation and 525 stakeholder organizations from 65 countries, including the EFC's Centre for Faith and Public Life, urged a full criminal investigation into MindGeek.

It is your support that enables us to add a Christian voice to this important conversation. You can add your voice as in individual as well and ask MPs to protect children and youth in front of and behind the screen. Ask your MP to support laws that require pornography sites to verify the age and consent of those whose images are uploaded. And ask your MP to require pornography sites to put meaningful age verification in place to ensure only adults can access their content.



At work for conscience protection

PROTECTING MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS



The EFC is one of 20 organizations and denominations who have asked the Ontario premier to put in place clear, specific conscience protection so that health professionals are not forced to participate in Medical Assistance in Dying against their deeply held beliefs.

In partnership with the Christian Medical and Dental Association, the EFC held two webinars – one specifically designed for church and denominational leaders – to help educate and equip people to respond effectively to this moment in history. Three guests on our panel were doctors who spoke clearly and movingly on the need for conscience protection. You can watch the recorded webinars at www.TheEFC.ca/Webinars.

A joint interfaith letter to the Ontario premier pointed to the example of other provinces like Manitoba which

have more robust protection for doctors and other professionals.

A federal bill to protect health care workers from being coerced to participate in euthanasia or assisted suicide is scheduled to have its first hour of debate in the House of Commons this spring. Bill C-268, sponsored by MP Kelly Block, will have a second hour of debate at a later date before MPs vote on it.

The EFC's letter of support to the sponsoring MP and a sample letter of support are posted at www.TheEFC.ca/C-268.



SEND A POSTCARD TO YOUR MP

To request a postcard to send to your local MP call us at 1-866-302-3362 x 229 or email us EFC@theEFC.ca



Message from the President, Bruce J. Clemenger

Recently I was interviewed by a national media outlet about how Canadian churches are responding to the pandemic. I shared that thousands of evangelical churches are adhering to pandemic public health restrictions and guidelines. While sometimes churches have not been treated fairly compared to other gathering places, our forbearance is a clear testimony of our love for our neighbours. It was important to be able to affirm in the interview that we take the pandemic public health issues seriously – which is a critical part of our public witness. I also used this as an educational opportunity, reaffirming our concern that governments do not fully understand what churches do; how we contribute to the public welfare of our communities. I offered numerous examples. It is important that we tell our story. *Canada Watch* reports back to you about how we serve and contribute to a free, just and compassionate country as an expression of our faith. Thank you for making this work possible.

Peace and Reconciliation work continues

The work of the WEA's Peace and Reconciliation Network continues

across the EFC community, as this year of pandemic disrupts us all. This disruption is elevating the need for evangelical believers to let the light of Jesus shine as the reconciled and reconciling people of God.

Our responses in the first part of 2021 included:

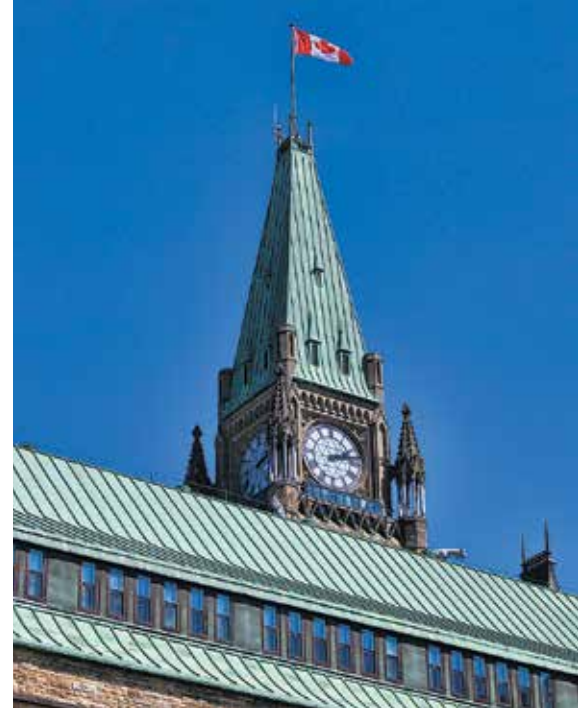
- Recording a 45-minute workshop using the story of a past pandemic to awaken churches to engage their communities as a people of God's shalom (PRN is available to lead your church through this): <https://vimeo.com/497551266/f8e98006c9>
- Recording "Lessons for the Church from a Year of Pandemic," a 30-minute video at <https://vimeo.com/522406576>
- Bringing the perspective of the global PRN team into EFC discernment on global matters
- Telling more stories and deepening the theology of peace and reconciliation through our blog at www.FaithToday.ca/Reconciling.

Thank you for your prayers and ongoing financial partnership (some donors give directly through the EFC using code WEAPRN) to extend PRN's capacity to inspire and equip the Church as a reconciling community of Christ's ambassadors.



An initiative of the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA)

To learn more or donate, visit www.TheEFC.ca/Peace.



Updating you on Canada's most immediate issues

■ **Conscience protection in Ontario:** The EFC signed a letter to Ontario's premier and is working with other faith groups to request clearer and stronger conscience protection for medical professionals. www.TheEFC.ca/Conscience

■ **Special committee to study expanding euthanasia:** Selected MPs and Senators will soon study the Medical Assistance in Dying regime, including issues related to mature minors, advance requests, mental illness, the state of palliative care and the protection of Canadians with disabilities. The committee will have a year to develop a report and set of recommendations. www.TheEFC.ca/MAID

■ **Protection of children from online pornography:** A Senate committee studying Bill S-203, the Protecting Young Persons from Exposure to Pornography Act, sponsored by Senator Miville-Dechéne, is hearing from witnesses about the impact of violent and degrading pornography on children. The EFC has written a letter of support for the bill and will submit a written brief. www.TheEFC.ca/Pornography

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■ **Sex-selective abortion bill:** MP Cathay Wagantall's private member's bill to ban sex-selective abortion had its first hour of debate in the House of Commons in April. Bill C-233 would prevent doctors from performing an abortion if the abortion is solely because of the child's genetic sex. See the EFC's letter of support and blog post at www.TheEFC.ca/C-233.

■ **Conversion therapy ban:** At time of publication, a government bill to ban conversion therapy was in its final stages in the House of Commons. The EFC has expressed serious concern that the bill is so vague and broadly worded that it will limit religious teaching and practice, conversations within families and medical practice. The EFC will next engage in the Senate, where Bill C-6 will be studied once the House of Commons passes it. www.TheEFC.ca/C-6

Heart and hands

Lindsay Callaway lives in Ottawa and works as a Researcher at the EFC.



work as a researcher studying church and faith trends in Canada with Rick Hiemstra. We currently have two major research studies underway, one on small churches and the other on faith formation efforts in the home. Whether it's giving voice to a rural church pastor's experiences or analyzing findings that will affect the future of family ministry in Canada, I consider it a profound privilege that donors like you have prioritized these research efforts in your giving.

"Mark Noll wrote that the scandal of the evangelical mind is a pervasive anti-intellectualism that neglects 'sober analysis of nature, human society, and the arts' (*The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*). Your generosity is changing this narrative by supporting rigorous research by Evangelicals, for Evangelicals, to bless Canada. Thank you for supporting this vision."

New EFC board chair

David Hearn, president of the The Alliance Canada (The Christian and Missionary Alliance denomination), has been appointed the new chair of the board of the EFC. In an upcoming issue of *Canada Watch*, we will interview David as he settles into this position.

David will be leading a dynamic, hardworking board from across Canada, across denominations and across traditions, who meet regularly to direct the ministry of the EFC. Here is a full list of the members of the board, for your interest and for your prayers.

- **Clarence Buckle:** former general secretary-treasurer, Pentecostal Assemblies of Newfoundland and Labrador
- **Kristin Debs:** lawyer, Debs Law
- **Sam Chaise:** executive director, Christie Refugee Welcome Centre
- **Adam Driscoll:** director of spiritual development, Cornerstone Christian School
- **Bill Fietje:** former EFC board chair, former president of the Associated Gospel Churches
- **Wendy Lowe:** lead pastor, Next Christian Community
- **Lynda MacGibbon:** vice-president, InterVarsity Canada
- **Gary Nelson:** former president, Tyndale University College and Seminary
- **Joel Sherbino:** pastor, Paris Presbyterian Church

PRAYING WITH AND FOR THE EFC

THANK YOU FOR JOINING US IN PRAYER. For June and July our staff is requesting prayer for the EFC's engagement in the courts, "That we could nurture a deeper understanding of freedom of religion and conscience. Pray for wisdom as legal arguments are developed in court cases and for the courts to give room for faithful witness."

www.TheEFC.ca/PrayerCard2021.

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 [TheEFC.ca/Podcasts](https://www.TheEFC.ca/Podcasts)

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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.

