

Greetings. The EFC is the national association of Evangelicals in Canada bringing together denominations, ministry organizations, higher education institutions, and congregations. We value your participation in the EFC. Pray for us as we seek to unite evangelicals to bless Canada in the name of Jesus.

PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION

- 1) *Our Common Calling: Following Jesus into the World* are forums that the EFC co-hosts with Lausanne Canada. The Canadian Council of Christian Charities and Future Fit are also partners. Christian leaders meet to consider the Church's calling in Canada considering the shared challenges of changing demographics, societal pressures, and declining church membership.
- 2) The EFC, along with all the Christian ministries partnering in the Refugee Resettlement Initiative, has recently published *Welcoming the Stranger: A Canadian Church Guide to Welcoming Refugees* (October 2020), a free booklet that highlights relevant biblical teachings and provides practical tips and information to help churches welcome and settle individuals and families into a new life in Canada.
- 3) At the 2020 Symposium of NAIITS-An Indigenous Learning Community, the EFC Indigenous-Settler Relations Working Group presented a paper, entitled *Stewarding Sacred Seeds*, that identified seven commitments. We have formed a Seven Commitments Working Group to developing strategies to prompt conversation and action among the EFC's affiliates in relation to these commitments.

CENTRE FOR FAITH AND PUBLIC LIFE

Euthanasia & Doctor-Assisted Suicide

- 1) The EFC continues to advocate before governments for the strongest possible safeguards and to work to limit eligibility to euthanasia or doctor-assisted suicide. We must minimize harm and risk to vulnerable peoples.
- 2) The EFC is also pushing for laws that would protect medical practitioners, nurse practitioners, pharmacists or other healthcare professionals from being forced into participating in euthanasia or doctor-assisted suicide against their religious or conscientiously-held beliefs.

Pornography & Prostitution

- 1) The EFC is committed to protecting our children and youth from the serious harms of online pornography, both in front of and behind the screen. We have joined other groups to push for laws that would make it a criminal offence to make sexually explicit material available to young persons on the Internet.
- 2) Prostitution violates human dignity. As sex industry groups push to decriminalize prostitution in Canada, the EFC is working to ensure that current laws are upheld and enforced.

Religious Freedom

- 1) While the federal government works to amend the *Criminal Code* to ban the practice of conversion therapy Canada, we must ensure that conversion therapy is defined in a way that does not infringe on expression of religious belief, religious instruction or the provision of pastoral care. Faith communities must be allowed to offer spiritual care that is voluntarily sought out and to offer biblical truths on matters of sexuality.
- 2) The EFC is preparing to intervene in several court cases that might have significant impact on the freedoms of religion and expression in this country.

CENTRE FOR RESEARCH

- 1) The EFC is conducting a research project on small evangelical churches in Canada. The study will investigate the ministry and mission opportunities that small churches engage in, as well as the challenges that hinder vitality in congregational life and ministry.
- 2) The EFC is also investigating how Canadian evangelical parents and guardians understand their roles as disciple-makers of their children. We will look at what helps or hinders parents or guardians in these roles and how best churches and ministries can support them.



Global Christian Forum

Report and Prayer Requests to CRCNA June 2021

As you gather for the CRCNA annual synod, we pause to give thanks to God for life even as we all still struggle with the effects of COVID in various ways. We are grateful for the technology that allows us to connect in a time of social distance protocols. Needless to say, all our lives and programs have been impacted by COVID-19 and we have had to pivot, like most churches and organizations, to online services.

The GCF secretariat continues to function relying on the voluntary services of many, including all the members of our committees and boards, and with a small but dedicated staff.

We have taken advantage of technology to connect at various levels, including a virtual celebration of the release and launch of the Bogota 2018 Global Gathering Report.

We are planning for an April 2024 Global Gathering (more information will be forthcoming), and praying that the world would be in a position to hold in-person gatherings.

Please join us in prayer for church leaders all over the world, who have to make decisions that impact the lives and livelihoods of many people, and most times without adequate background information or resources. Please join us in prayer so that the global pandemic does not evolve into an endemic epidemic in the developing world, continuing to erode gains made in poverty reduction and access to basic services.

May our faith in the unchanging God be strengthened during this time of tremendous change.

GCF cherishes walking together with our brothers and sisters in the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

Casely B. Essamuah, Secretary

Dear Ecumenical friends,

Greetings in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Several months ago, we announced a decision to plan for an in-person session of the General Synod in October 2021, with a final decision to be made late in May whether or not to move forward with these plans, based on the continuing evolution of pandemic conditions in North America.

We've spent a lot of time in prayer over the past few months, seeking God's wisdom and discernment in how to move forward. In the past week, we've consulted with medical professionals, classis presidents, the General Synod Council, and RCA staff, seeking input on this decision. The input we have received has been broadly in favor of holding General Synod in October 2021, though there are understandably still concerns about safety measures and travel, and pandemic conditions in the U.S. and Canada differ.

Based on the input we have received, we have discerned to move forward with an in person General Synod this fall. General Synod 2021 will meet October 14–19 at the Westin La Paloma in Tucson, Arizona.

At the end of August, safety protocols will be determined for the event, based on guidance from the CDC and other medical professionals, and in deference to protocols in place at our venue. We will be guided both by science and by hospitality in determining safety guidelines. The space does allow for social distancing in the plenary and breakout rooms, but mask-wearing, physical distancing, and other protocols will be decided in late August.

As planning for General Synod moves forward, we will place a high value on safety and an environment of hospitality for all delegates, including those who may be in very different places regarding personal safety. It will be critical that we show respect and care for one another and our varying experiences over the past year-plus since the COVID-19 pandemic began, so that together we can engage the difficult and weighty work of discernment that is facing General Synod 2021.

This General Synod will look different from years past, in timing, location, and pandemic safety measures, but we are glad we will be able to meet this year. Please pray for us.

Thank you for all of your prayers for us and for the denomination throughout the process of coming to this decision. Please continue to be in prayer for the delegates who will be attending General Synod in less than five months, for those planning the details of General Synod, and especially for the RCA as we continue to seek the Lord's will for our future.

In Christ,

Rev. Eddy Alemán, general secretary
Reformed Church in America