

“The World of Politics is the World of Possibilities”: Bill C-43 and Canadian Evangelical Political Engagement

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In 1969, Pierre Elliot Trudeau’s Liberal government redefined abortion within the context of the *Criminal Code of Canada*. In so doing, the federal government lifted legal limitations on abortion without rendering it universally accessible. Prior to this, abortions could only be performed in hospital, and only if a committee of professionals determined that continuation of the pregnancy would endanger the expectant mother’s health.¹ On 17 April 1982, the British Parliament’s *Canada Act* patriated the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (better known as the *Charter*). The *Charter*’s purpose was, and remains, to limit the encroachment of the Canadian government upon the rights of citizens.² In January 1988, the Supreme Court of Canada (Supreme Court) handed down the well-know abortion decision involving pro-choice physician Dr. Henry Morgentaler. The Supreme Court interpreted Section 251 of the *Criminal Code of Canada (Criminal Code)* – the section that pertained to abortion – through Section 7 of the Charter. Section 7 of the *Charter* declares the Canadian citizen’s rights to “life, liberty and security of person”; the Supreme Court considered access to abortion to fall within these rights. Chief Justice Brian Dickson wrote:

Forcing a woman, by threat of criminal sanction, to carry a fetus to term unless she meets certain criteria unrelated to her own priorities and aspirations, is a profound interference with a woman’s body and thus a violation of her security of the person.³

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The Supreme Court's decision rendered Canada as one of only a few countries lacking any regulation on abortion.⁴

In response to this vacuum, on 3 November 1989, Brian Mulroney's Progressive Conservative government introduced Bill C-43 to reassert the regulation of abortion by reintroducing it into the *Criminal Code*. Canadian conservative Christian ethicists and lobby groups prominently discussed and debated Bill C-43. In particular, the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (the EFC) encouraged Parliament to reintroduce legislation in order to regulate abortion.⁵

The EFC named Brian Stiller its full-time Executive Director in 1983. In this role, Stiller involved the organization more directly and consistently in Canadian public life.⁶ During Stiller's tenure as Executive Director, the EFC maintained an estimated 2.5 million constituents, representing over 100 organizations, and twenty-eight denominations.⁷ Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the EFC submitted ethical and moral position papers to federal and provincial governments. "Abortion . . . [was] predictably at the top of the list of concerns."⁸ Still, consensus among conservative Christians on these issues proved difficult to attain. Some wished for a gradual limitation on abortion, others for the legal prevention of abortion, and still others for the criminalization of abortion. In spite of these internal differences of opinion, most were outwardly outspoken regarding Bill C-43. After the House of Commons passed Bill C-43, the Senate rendered a tie vote, striking down the Bill, and leaving Canada without any laws to regulate abortion.⁹

This article examines two conservative Christian groups: the EFC and one of its prominent member denominations, the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (the PAOC),¹⁰ comparing and contrasting the responses to abortion of both groups. Established in Ontario in 1919, the PAOC grew to a nationwide denomination, claiming 222,000 adherents in 1991.¹¹ In 1976, the PAOC General Executive perceived a "critical point of moral deterioration in the nation" and responded by establishing the Office of Social Concerns. The PAOC General Executive appointed a Toronto pastor, Hudson Hilsden, as Coordinator from 1982 to 1991.¹² Hilsden allocated a significant amount of time and resources to responding to the abortion issue. It is helpful to compare and contrast the EFC and the PAOC. These organizations, at times, disagreed on their positions and strategies surrounding abortion, and this tension played out when they approached Parliament independently of one another. This fact alone poses

some degree of irony, because, as was mentioned, the PAOC was a member organization of the EFC. As such, the PAOC's positions should have been reflected in the EFC's Parliamentary submissions, without requiring the PAOC to make submissions independently. By examining the newsletters and publications of the PAOC and the EFC (collectively "the evangelicals"), this article outlines their positions and submissions, and argues that they failed to convey a cohesive position on Bill C-43.

The 1988 Supreme Court of Canada Decision

The Supreme Court's decision on abortion proved controversial, provoking an unprecedented volume of pro-life protest. *Faith Today*, the EFC's main publication, commented on the scale of protests.¹³ It recognized the unrest as "one of the first instances when criminal convictions have resulted" from pro-life protest. *Faith Today* quoted a protestor: "give me a law that I can obey – a law that extends justice, mercy and the rule of love and care to our unborn children as well as to others – and I assure you that I will obey it with all my heart."¹⁴ Stiller pleaded with protestors to curb their assertiveness, claiming that, "though I stand behind their right to practise civil disobedience, I plead with them to be tolerant of the long-term strategy."¹⁵ Stiller cited Gallup poll findings showing 13 percent of Canadians opposing abortion altogether, and an additional 27 percent opposing abortion on demand. Stiller's "long-term strategy" was to persuade a portion of the remaining 60 percent to support a law that resembled a pro-life position.¹⁶ More than wishing to quell protests, Stiller's comments indicated his desire to act.

The Supreme Court's decision did not provoke only the pro-life groups; many within the general public were concerned by the removal of abortion from the Criminal Code. Only days after the Supreme Court decision, a *London Free Press* editorial urged Parliament to legislate new restrictions on abortion.¹⁷ Further, Robert Nadeau, legal consultant to the EFC, stated in a *Faith Today* article that he believed the Progressive Conservative Government wished to introduce legislation to regulate abortion.¹⁸

The Evangelicals' Response to the Supreme Court's 1988 Decision

As it was a relatively young movement, neo-evangelicalism in Canada had not addressed social issues in the public setting *en masse*

before this time, unlike the broader spectrum of churches.¹⁹ Catholics, for example, were outspoken, arguing for the legal protection of the unborn.²⁰ Pollster Kurt Bowen noted that, “the . . . (PAOC), paid little or no attention to social involvement and public affairs until at least the middle of the 1970s.”²¹ Church historian John Stackhouse credited Trudeau with motivating Canadian neo-evangelicals, as his government

accepted a variety of moral behaviours that evangelicals wished they would not accept. The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada . . . since the mid-1980s . . . made clear that evangelicals have been unhappy with many aspects of Canadian life, . . . [not least of which the] increasing rates of abortion.²²

The socio-political events that came to the fore during the 1980s moved the evangelicals to social action. In doing so, they came to share common ground with the Catholic Church, and, in their social and political engagement, drew closer to the Catholics of that era than they did to mainline Protestantism.²³ Generally, the evangelicals drew their positions from the interpretation of Scripture. Hudson Hilsden cited Psalm 139 as a core passage prompting his pro-life position.²⁴ The evangelicals occasionally argued a pro-life position on the bases of ethics, constitutionality, and, in rare instances, science. Yet, in referencing Scripture, the evangelicals, for the most part, did not communicate in the vocabulary of present day political parlance.²⁵ Given the impact of the Supreme Court and the *Charter* on these issues, the evangelicals were remiss in not addressing more thoroughly the constitutional definitions of the rights of both mother and child, choosing instead to emphasize primarily Scriptural arguments. Although an argument derived solely from Scriptural interpretation is appropriate in ecclesial settings, it is likely to be less persuasive elsewhere. A successful position before decision makers during such a constitutional debate must be cogently argued in language that is universal and relevant. The evangelical side also lacked – or was silent – regarding the hard scientific data necessary to argue for constitutional and legal protection of the unborn.²⁶

Nevertheless, Stiller, more than Hilsden, attempted to articulate a position that could be understood by the general public. On behalf of the EFC, Stiller pleaded that the Canadian public would “consider the possibility of life existing in the fetus.”²⁷ The EFC believed that all human life must be protected, including the life of the unborn. However, the EFC did not go so far as to argue that the unborn possesses personhood. With

respect to its dealings with government, the EFC was willing to negotiate the constitutional status of the unborn for the express purpose of influencing legislation that would offer some degree of regulation on abortion.²⁸ To this extent, the EFC was prepared to accept a compromise position. The PAOC, on the other hand, argued for the personhood of the unborn, and it was on this issue that the two organizations differed most significantly. Although the EFC did not argue for the personhood of the unborn, it is still considered a pro-life organization, as it supports constitutional protection for the unborn.

The evangelicals wished to uphold the rights of the unborn without detracting from women's rights. Yet if an expectant mother exercises choice, her decision necessarily holds implications for the rights of the unborn and sets up a conflict between the rights of the mother and the unborn. The evangelicals did not offer a convincing solution to this conflict; instead, the groups maintained that the unborn's right to life superseded the expectant mother's right to choose. Expounding the rights of the unborn without detracting from a woman's right of person proved to be a difficult task.²⁹ The EFC was concerned that the Supreme Court had decided in favour of a woman's right, "without giving consideration to the question of life itself." The EFC sought restrictions on abortion "that attempt[ed] to balance the rights of the mother and fetus by protecting the fetus unless great[er] damage would be done to the mother."³⁰

Some within the EFC offered a moderate response to the *Morgentaler* decision. Denyse O'Leary, a prominent evangelical pro-life writer, believed that reintroducing abortion into the *Criminal Code* would be ineffective. Preceding *Morgentaler*, abortions were prevalent;³¹ in fact, in 1982, nearly 70,000 abortions were performed, or almost eighteen abortions for every 100 live births.³² Comparing these to 2005 figures, 96,815 or 14.1 abortions were performed for every 1,000 women aged 15 to 44.³³ While the increase in the number of abortions between 1982 and 2005 is noteworthy, the increase is not extraordinary. O'Leary concluded that the abortion rate was high already in 1982, and, as such, she and other evangelicals predicted that regulation alone was not sufficient to reduce the number of abortions.³⁴ O'Leary was optimistic that Parliament would enact sufficient *modern* legislation in order to replace the out-dated, and now unconstitutional, section 251 of the *Criminal Code*.³⁵ O'Leary frequently contributed to the EFC's flagship periodical, *Faith Today*, as well as other EFC publications. Her contributions and opinions provided a female voice to the EFC's arguments and positions. The female voice

was all but absent from the PAOC's arguments. Perhaps it was the EFC's inclusion of opinions such as those of Denyse O'Leary that contributed to more balanced and moderate arguments than those of the PAOC.

In April 1989, the EFC held its annual General Council and moved to appoint official and designated spokespeople to promote new abortion laws and lobby for public policies reflecting the "EFC's position on the sanctity of human life . . . [and taking] significant steps toward legally protecting the human right to life of the unborn and meeting the socioeconomic needs of the parents."³⁶ In stating this, the EFC displayed a willingness to be flexible in its approach to supporting legislation regulating abortion, including supporting proposals as steps. The PAOC was particularly inflexible in its opposition to Parliamentary proposals.

Like the EFC, the PAOC advocated the sanctity of the unborn, and maintained that the unborn comprises human life; however, the PAOC was more stringent than the EFC, viewing the unborn as possessing personhood from the moment of conception. Also, like the EFC, the PAOC was unwilling to compromise its respective moral position. Yet, unlike the EFC, the PAOC did not position itself to negotiate a practical outcome with government; rather, it insisted upon Parliament's recognition of the unborn as a person. Hilsden believed that if government defined the unborn as a person, then logically the *Charter* would be required to protect the right to life of the unborn. The PAOC desired absolute restriction on abortion, resisting any proposal that was not purely pro-life in its orientation.³⁷

The PAOC's initial response was to decry the *Morgentaler* decision, criticizing it for neither protecting nor defining personhood for the unborn. The court focussed its decision on determining when the unborn is viable, and therefore entitled to protection under the *Charter*. Immediately following the decision, the PAOC appealed to its constituency to pressure Parliament to implement legislation that would protect the unborn, respect the expectant mother, and not offend the *Charter*.³⁸ In its May 1988 *News Release*, the PAOC warned its constituency that, "once legislation is tabled in the House of Commons, we must count on you . . . either to support the legislation if it is good or oppose it if it is bad."³⁹

On this point, the EFC, too, was optimistic that legislation would be enacted that would not offend the *Charter*. The EFC relied on Madam Justice Wilson's wording in *Morgentaler*, underscoring the validity of a state interest in the unborn and resolving that

the state's compelling interest in the protection of the foetus . . . I leave to the informed judgement of the legislature which is in a position to receive guidance on the subject from all relevant disciplines. It seems to me, however, that it might fall somewhere in the second trimester.⁴⁰

Stiller commented: "this decision . . . has affirmed that the responsibility for defining life belongs to Parliament and not the courts."⁴¹ The EFC could only speculate on whether or not the *Charter* would allow proposed legislation regulating abortion, but was ready and willing to lobby for such legislation.

The Introduction of Bill C-43

The Progressive Conservative government – and even more so the pro-life groups – believed the Supreme Court decision allowed Parliament to respond with new legislation. Notwithstanding the Supreme Court's interpretation of Section 7 of the *Charter*, pro-life groups believed new and "more pro-life" legislation was possible.⁴² Paul Marshall, chair of the EFC's Social Action Commission, summarized the decision, stating that "the Court did not say that restrictions on abortion are unconstitutional; it said that Section 251's way of restricting them is unconstitutional."

The Government tabled Bill C-43 on 3 November 1989, intending to reintroduce abortion regulations to the Criminal Code. The Bill permitted an abortion when a physician deemed it necessary. Specifically, the Bill stated:

[e]very woman is prohibited from having an abortion unless a doctor consents to the abortion by deciding that a woman's life or health is threatened without it. With the added power to define health according to their professional standards, doctors will remain one of the gatekeepers of women's autonomy.⁴³

Effectively, Bill C-43 would make abortion punishable by up to two years in prison unless a doctor determined continuing a pregnancy threatened a woman's physical, mental or psychological health.⁴⁴

It is noteworthy that the early language of Bill C-43 proposed twenty-two weeks as an appropriate cut-off point, after which time restrictions on abortion would become much more stringent.⁴⁵ Accordingly, Bill C-43, in its initial stage, advocated what is called "the

gestational approach.” The gestational approach places higher priority and value on the unborn’s status the further along in gestation. Again, reflecting on the wording of Madam Justice Wilson’s decision, the government believed regulation based upon the gestational approach would be less likely to conflict with *Morgentaler*. The PAOC particularly opposed the gestational approach, likely fueled by the denomination’s position on the personhood of the unborn.⁴⁶ The PAOC, in its monthly *News Release*, criticized the effectiveness of the gestational approach, stating that over 90 percent of abortions were performed within the first week of gestation. The EFC was willing to concede the gestational approach stating that, “it was a compromise on *position*, but not on *principle*,” and believing that some regulation was better than none.⁴⁷ Interestingly, the government responded and made changes to some of the Bill’s wording, following which dialogue about the Bill shifted from the unborn’s developmental status to the health of the expectant mother. The new wording implied that an expectant mother seeking to exercise choice needed only to find a sympathetic physician. The physician could then diagnose the expectant mother’s health to be at risk on the basis of any number of criteria.⁴⁸ As a result, the evangelicals feared the Bill would effectively allow abortion on demand.

The Progressive Conservative government proved very reluctant to permit any further rewording, believing it would jeopardize the Bill’s ability to pass. The government wished very strongly to legislate on abortion without offending the *Charter*, but, in order to do so, the government needed to articulate the proposed legislation in very broad terms.⁴⁹ Ultimately, Justice Minister Kim Campbell announced that the government would not entertain further amendments.⁵⁰ The Speaker of the House of Commons refused fourteen proposed amendments from the pro-life side,⁵¹ while those few amendments made by Parliament were insufficient to garner the evangelicals’ consensus.

The constitutional rights and freedoms of individuals may compete with each other and are therefore subject to balancing. This is reflected in section 1 of the *Charter* that considers the basic principle that individual rights and freedoms cannot be absolute and that, in some circumstances, they must be limited by the state in order to protect competing rights. The evangelicals argued that while indeed the expectant mother is entitled to certain rights, in the instances where she wishes to exercise choice, her rights conflict with what the evangelicals believed to be the unborn’s right to life. Essentially, the evangelicals wished to sway the balance in favour

of the unborn, thereby encouraging constitutional protection for the unborn. The PAOC maintained that, as a person, the unborn is entitled to complete rights and protections, and would not surrender any ground to this ideal. The EFC, on the other hand, was more flexible on this point, and willing to negotiate with the government, provided the outcome included some form of protection for the unborn. The evangelicals' different philosophies, and lack of cohesion, contributed to the ineffectiveness of their respective arguments.

The Evangelicals' Inconsistency Regarding Bill C-43

By late 1989, the EFC had joined "a ground-breaking interfaith coalition" that lobbied the government with respect to Bill C-43.⁵² In an action indicative of the pro-life groups' inability to achieve consensus, certain individual member organizations independently drafted separate submissions to Parliament. The organizations vehemently stressed their respective opinions through these separate submissions.⁵³ Of course, the PAOC was one of those organizations to act independently from the EFC. One can only imagine that the groups' competing methods did not rest well with the Parliamentary process. Still, Hilsden attempted to offer moral support to the EFC. In the April 1990 *News Release*, Hilsden stated that, "Brian Stiller, Executive Director of *The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada*, has appeared at the hearings and has represented well the concerns of EFC and its member groups, including the PAOC."⁵⁴

As already noted, the EFC did not entirely agree with Bill C-43, but it was willing to negotiate with the government. The EFC extended moral support for Bill C-43 by way of subtle arguments put forward through *Faith Today* articles. One writer argued that, "the pro-life faction . . . recognized that the longer we went without a law, the harder it would be to enact one."⁵⁵ The EFC understood that although Bill C-43 was not perfect in wording, it was better than the absence of any law and was the best solution given the circumstances. Jake Epp, then Minister of Health, and a self-professing evangelical, described his own government's Bill C-43 as a "compromise" because it did not encompass the sanctions for the unborn he believed necessary. Still, it was a compromise Epp was willing to make.⁵⁶ Conversely, the PAOC's approach was much more unilateral, lobbying the government to change its position or abandon Bill C-43 altogether.

As early as January 1990, only two months after the government

introduced Bill C-43, the PAOC made clear to its constituents its desire to oppose the Bill. The PAOC declared that “Bill C-43 is a prescription for abortion on demand” and that it needed to be “scrapped.” The PAOC further stated, “we therefore urge each and every MP to vote against Bill C-43 when it comes up for third and final reading.”⁵⁷ In a later *News Release*, the PAOC drafted a

strongly-worded brief to the legislative committee...on the government’s proposed . . . Bill C-43 . . . point[ing] out that the bill would not reduce the number of abortions in Canada and provides no protection whatsoever for the unborn child. . . . It would give official approval to the indiscriminate, unrestricted and unlimited killing of innocent, unborn children.⁵⁸

The PAOC believed that if Bill C-43 was overturned, another, more pro-life, bill would follow.

When it came time to vote, the House of Commons passed Bill C-43 by a wide margin. The Bill progressed to the Senate in January 1991 where it was subjected to committee hearings and debates, and a final vote conducted on 31 January. The Progressive Conservative government tried to persuade Tory Senators to support the Bill. Liberal Senator Stanley Haidasz told reporters that the Prime Minister’s Office placed “unbearable” pressure upon the Senators, adding that he suspected more Tory Senators would have voted against the Bill had it not been for such tactics. Of the Liberal Senators, only two supported the Bill with seven voting against. Liberal Senators reported no pressure from their party either to oppose or support the Bill.⁵⁹ The result of the Senate vote was a 43-43 tie, which meant the Bill’s defeat.⁶⁰

It is difficult to assess how the evangelicals responded to Bill C-43’s defeat. In fact, *Faith Today* offered only one column in response to Bill C-43’s demise.⁶¹ Perhaps the evangelicals’ silence reflects the sombre insight of retrospection. The PAOC issued statements hinting at remorse for opposing the Bill.⁶² While Hilsden believed Bill C-43 was only a “small step toward protecting innocent preborn children,”⁶³ he also felt that “it was better than no Bill and, if amendments were not allowed, should be passed, with the hope of making amendments later. The Bill would have returned abortion to the Criminal Code.”⁶⁴

This conclusion was a moot point given that it came after the Bill’s defeat. However, this statement indicated a completely different position than that which Hilsden and the PAOC had articulated all along. Only after

the Bill's failure did Hilsden suggest that evangelicals should have supported the Bill. These retrospective remarks were likely prompted by the government's announcements that it would not table another abortion bill. Additionally, for his part, Stiller personally endorsed Bill C-43, considering it the best possible compromise given the circumstances.⁶⁵

It is somewhat sobering to examine the history of Bill C-43 and its failure to achieve passage. Both pro-life and pro-choice groups opposed the Bill, yet the House of Commons passed it. Bill C-43 weathered this storm only to have the Senate strike it down, and by a tie-vote at that. The historian is left to wonder whether or not the attempted legislation would have withstood subsequent examination by the Supreme Court and the *Charter*. Even in the face of opposition from evangelical pro-lifers, the government remained adamant in its desire to pass Bill C-43. As Hilsden noted, "many pro-life MPs are . . . prepared to vote in favor [sic] of the legislation because they believe this bill is better than no bill at all."⁶⁶

Perhaps Stiller, Hilsden, and each of their respective organizations were correct in their suspicions that Bill C-43 would have done little to limit the number of abortions in Canada. Still, a December 1990 *News Release* provided compelling indicators to the contrary. As a result of the proposed bill, fifty doctors reported stopping abortion procedures. Another 275 doctors claimed they would stop doing abortions altogether should Parliament enact legislation.⁶⁷ Perhaps future legislation regulating abortion could produce results to this effect.

Conclusion: The Future of the Evangelical Pro-Life Movement

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the evangelicals were ineffective in articulating a cohesive and persuasive pro-life position. The PAOC, in particular, believed accepting Bill C-43 to be tantamount to supporting abortion on demand. As has been indicated throughout this article, this degree of conviction was admirable. Yet, it was also ineffective.⁶⁸ "The world of politics is the world of possibilities."⁶⁹ Were the evangelicals – the PAOC in particular – to have more robustly, and more uniformly, supported Bill C-43, the regulation of abortion, albeit a loose regulation, may have resulted. Denyse O'Leary advocated a kind of evangelical response to ethical and moral issues which was willing to strike a compromise: "We think of positions on political issues as statements of faith, with the result that discussion turns into warfare . . . for certain Canada . . . [has] had heavy losses because of this problem."⁷⁰ The

evangelicals fell victim to the kind of thinking O'Leary described.

To have stayed open to Bill C-43's possibilities would have contributed to a forum where dialogue on the subject of the status and rights of the unborn might have continued. Instead, twenty-seven years later, a vacuum remains. The public does not seem opposed to reopening discussions on this topic. Yet, in order to be heard, proponents of abortion reform must craft their arguments tactfully, but they have thus far had little, if any, success.

It is impossible to say whether Bill C-43 would have succeeded had the evangelicals more fully cooperated with one another and remained open to the Bill's potential. Yet it may be possible to say that future legislation is more likely to be influenced, if these groups cooperate and encourage common engagement on Parliamentary proposals. Following the *Morgentaler* decision, Stiller stated, "what does concern me is not the Court ruling so much as the seeming lack of moral leadership within the church community."⁷¹ Stiller went on to decry the silence and fragmentation of the conservative Protestant voice on ethical and moral issues. If faith-based groups are ever to influence Parliament toward abortion reform, the groups must increase their effectiveness by voicing a common position. Stiller indicated the desire to cooperate, "We need a willingness to work together on areas of agreement while recognizing that the existence of disagreements between people who work together does not mean that we have compromised."⁷² During initial readings of Bill C-43, the Anglican Church of Canada tactfully informed the EFC that, "governments usually listen to churches which are acting together more than to those that are acting apart, on their own behalf."⁷³

Perhaps faith groups today will achieve greater consensus and cooperation. Consider the position of the United Church of Canada (UCC) during initial readings of Bill C-43. The UCC urged Parliament not to recriminalize abortion while not allowing abortion on demand.⁷⁴ The UCC considered abortion to be "acceptable only in certain medical, social and economic situations."⁷⁵ Finally, the UCC urged Parliament to enact measures allowing for counselling for expectant mothers considering the right to choose.⁷⁶ The UCC's position did not correspond to the evangelicals' ideals. Yet Parliament – and particularly the Senate – likely would have been more accommodating of a moderate, uniform position rather a fragmented one.

Any legislation regulating abortion is better than the absence of legislation altogether. Should future legislation be implemented which

allows for a certain amount of regulation, even if minimal, it would lessen the number of abortions being performed at present. Moreover, as legislation is implemented, and as it cooperates with the *Charter*, it may move toward a more pure pro-life position over time. Faith-based groups wishing to achieve abortion reform must be content to work within the system that now exists. Parliament did not pass Bill C-43; nevertheless, having learned from past experience, there is no reason to abandon hope for future opportunities.

Endnotes

1. CBC News, "Abortion rights: significant moments in Canadian history," CBC News, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/story/2009/01/13/f-abortion-timeline.html> (accessed February 26, 2012).
2. Mark A. Noll, *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1992), 453.
3. CBC News.
4. CBC News.
5. British historian of Christianity David Bebbington classifies evangelicalism by the following characteristics: prioritization of a conversion experience (conversionism); activism within an ecclesial setting; belief in the authority of Scripture (biblicentricism); and the soteriological implications of Christ's crucifixion (crucicentricism). David Bebbington, "Evangelicalism in Its Settings: The British and American Movements since 1940," in *Evangelicalism: Comparative Studies of Popular Protestantism in North America, the British Isles, and Beyond, 1700-1990*, ed. Mark A. Noll, David W. Bebbington, and George A. Rawlyk (New York: Oxford, 1994), 365. The EFC exists as a *neo-evangelical* organization. The EFC is the Canadian equivalent of the United-States-based National Association of Evangelicals (NAE). Similar founding principles guided both organizations. Further, figures such as the American Carl Henry and Canadian Oswald J. Smith among others, contributed to the fledgling organizations. Garth M. Rosell, *The Surprising Work of God: Harold John Ockenga, Billy Graham, and the Rebirth of Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 29. In order to understand the neo-evangelical tenets that characterize the EFC, it is useful to examine a timeline of the NAE. A selection of conservative Protestants in the United States moved away from fundamentalism and contributed to the founding of the NAE in 1942. William Inboden, *Religion and American Foreign Policy, 1945-1960: The Soul of Containment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 56-57 and Bebbington, 365. Harold John Ockenga

and evangelists Charles Fuller and Billy Graham all served to advance the NAE's agenda. Rosell, 73. As the NAE's founding president, Ockenga undertook nationwide tours, networking, and raising support for the grassroots organization. Beyond his national commitments, Ockenga also endeavoured to forge ties internationally. In 1946 Ockenga visited London and preached in Martyn Lloyd-Jones' Westminster Chapel. While in London, Ockenga also undertook negotiations toward developing international evangelical cooperation. Bebbington, 368. In this sense, Ockenga served as an international ambassador of neo-evangelicalism. Undoubtedly Ockenga's diplomatic efforts influenced Canadian Protestants. The EFC does not exist as a directly affiliated chapter of the NAE. While the two organizations are similar, they exist as separate entities. Unlike the NAE, the EFC does not require constituents to disassociate from mainstream Protestant ecumenical groups. Some EFC constituents also maintained membership in the Canadian Council of Churches. By the 1990s, the EFC had an annual income of two million dollars. John G. Stackhouse, *Canadian Evangelicalism in the Twentieth Century: An Introduction to Its Character* (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 1999), 171-2.

Evangelical Fellowship of Canada Beginnings. During the early 1960s, a Toronto pastor, J. Harry Faught, established a network of conservative Protestant pastors that grew and ultimately culminated in the founding of the EFC in 1964. Ronald A.N. Kydd, "Canadian Pentecostalism and the Evangelical Impulse," in *Aspects of the Canadian Evangelical Experience*, ed. George A. Rawlyk, (Montréal: McGill Queens University Press, 1997), 297-99. Harry Faught earned a ThD from Dallas Theological Seminary. In Dallas, Faught worshipped at an Assemblies of God (AG USA) congregation. In Toronto, Faught pastored the PAOC's Danforth Gospel Temple. Faught enjoyed interdenominational, evangelical dialogue in Dallas, and sought to implement something similar through his pastoral network in Toronto. This loose network grew into the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. The EFC was characterized by neo-evangelical tenets and initially existed only as a loosely organized network of denominations and member congregations. Noll, *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada*, 448. Noll describes the founding of the EFC as having been motivated by denominations such as the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada and the Christian Missionary Alliance wishing to collaborate so as to project a public voice equivalent to those of the Catholics and mainstream Protestants.

6. Stackhouse, *Canadian Evangelicalism in the Twentieth Century*, 165.
7. Don Page, "From a Private to a Public Religion: The History of the Public Service Christian Fellowship," in *Religion and Public Life in Canada: Historical and Comparative Perspectives*, ed. Marguerite Van Die, (Toronto:

University of Toronto Press, 2001), 305. In addition to his role as Executive Director of the EFC, Stiller hosted a weekly television programme known as the *Stiller Report*. Further, Stiller was a presenter on a television segment entitled *Understand Our Times*. Page, "From a Private to a Public Religion," 305. Stiller communicated the EFC's stance on abortion on both of his television segments. In 1997, Stiller was named President of Tyndale University College and Seminary. Stackhouse, *Canadian Evangelicalism in the Twentieth Century*, 170.

8. Kurt Bowen, *Christians in a Secular World: The Canadian Experience*, (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004), 189. Although the EFC is the Canadian counterpart to the NAE, the EFC should not be suspected of falling prey to undue American influence. Brian Stiller responded to criticism that associated Canadian evangelical political involvement with the American religious right. Stiller argued that anyone suspecting Canadian evangelicals of operating under an American religious right agenda need not worry as Canadian "Conservative Protestants are such a small minority." Further, the Canadian Protestant vote historically has been spread across the spectrum of Canadian political parties. Bowen, *Christians in a Secular World*, 201. John Stackhouse describes the EFC's 1980s social momentum as having been of paramount significance. Stackhouse believes these burgeoning forces were indicative of "the growing consolidation of evangelicals across denominational lines." John Stackhouse, "The Protestant Experience in Canada Since 1945," in *The Canadian Protestant Experience 1760-1990*, ed. George Rawlyk (Burlington, ON: Welch Publishing: 1990), 232.
9. CBC News.
10. Whenever referring to Pentecostals it is necessary to define exactly what is meant. Generally, classical Pentecostalism traces its roots to Charles Parham's holiness Bible College experience of speaking in tongues in Topeka, Kansas, in 1900, and thereafter the Azusa Street Revival as coordinated by William Seymour in Los Angeles in 1906. Pentecostals in Canada trace their origins to the revival at the Hebden East End Mission in Toronto, also occurring in 1906. Classical Pentecostalism is evangelical Protestant in its theology, but with a unique position on the "Baptism in the Holy Spirit." Classical Pentecostals interpret the Acts of the Apostles to imply that the Baptism in the Holy Spirit occurs subsequent to salvation; it is experiential; it is evidenced by speaking in tongues; and it is for the purpose of empowering the disciple so as to witness boldly. Depending on the source one consults, there are between thirteen and fifteen different classical Pentecostal denominations in Canada. Of these, the PAOC is the largest. Among others, AG USA itinerant ministers contributed to the formation of the nascent PAOC. Michael

Wilkinson, *The Spirit Said Go: Pentecostal Immigrants in Canada* (New York: Peter Lang, 2006), 17. Pentecostals and broader evangelicals in Canada have often experienced tension. This tension is partially a result of theological differences. However, sociological differences also differentiate Canadian Pentecostals from other evangelicals. At the founding of the EFC in 1964, Pentecostals were on the fringe of Canadian evangelicalism. Pentecostals qualified as evangelicals, yet Pentecostals stood distinct from wider evangelicalism. John Stackhouse describes the upstart EFC as “includ[ing] groups previously isolated in their respective enclave, especially Pentecostals.” Stackhouse, *Canadian Evangelicalism in the Twentieth Century*, 165. Canadian historian of Christianity Ronald Kydd describes the two groups’ differences as an aspect of their “mutual exclusion.” Kydd theorizes that the PAOC and EFC held each other at arms’ length and often pursued different courses because of an all but muted distrust for one another. Kydd, “Canadian Pentecostalism and the Evangelical Impulse,” 299. The PAOC has been a prominent member denomination of the EFC and has even contributed key personnel to positions of EFC leadership. In fact, the 1980s were an era marked by an increase of Pentecostals in evangelical public life. Stackhouse, “The Protestant Experience in Canada,” 226-27. Although the EFC drew from the PAOC’s pool of leadership, the Fellowship viewed this as the exception rather than the rule. Many within the ranks of the EFC suspected the PAOC of maintaining certain distinctions inconsistent with wider evangelicalism. While the EFC relies and even depends upon the PAOC, the Fellowship has also remained wary of Pentecostals, believing “the cultured few do not necessarily represent the many.” Stiller observed that during this period, in general, few Pentecostals served on boards or staffs of evangelical organizations. Kydd, “Canadian Pentecostals and the Evangelical Impulse,” 299. Kydd’s theory of the PAOC’s and EFC’s “mutual exclusion” certainly applies to the different positions articulated by these two organizations pertaining to abortion, as well as the perception of the need for separate organizations to lobby Parliament.

11. Thomas William Miller, *Canadian Pentecostals: A History of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada* (Mississauga, ON: Full Gospel Publishing House, 1994), 58-59. Wilkinson, 17. Additionally, the PAOC frequently refers to itself as Canada’s largest evangelical denomination.
12. Miller, *Canadian Pentecostals*, 319.
13. Don Page describes *Faith Today* as “the largest subscriber-driven religious magazine.” Page, “From a Private to a Public Religion,” 305. John Stackhouse describes *Faith Today* as having “clearly sought to play the role in Canadian evangelicalism that *Christianity Today* played in the United States. The journal offered timely comment on contemporary issues” (Stackhouse, “The

Protestant Experience in Canada,” 232). Eighteen thousand people subscribed to *Faith Today* by the mid-1980s (Stackhouse, *Canadian Evangelicalism in the Twentieth Century*, 169).

14. The Supreme Court found Section 251 of the CCC to be unconstitutional, but suggested that Parliament could introduce legislation that would be constitutional. Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, “Canada Update Social Issues: Pro-life advocates go to jail for beliefs,” *Faith Today*, May/June 1989, 56. In 1988, over 14,000 people across North America participated in a major protest organization called Operation Rescue. Hudson Hilsden, *News Release*, October 1989, 2.
15. Brian C. Stiller, “Understanding Our Times: Civil disobedience,” *Faith Today*, May/June, 1989, 78.
16. Stiller, “Understanding our Times,” 78. It was around this time that the PAOC increased pressure upon the government to implement limitations on abortion. The PAOC employed the *News Release* of the Office of Social Concerns and Public Relations to rally the support of the PAOC’s constituents. Hudson Hilsden, *News Release*, July 1989, 1.
17. Berend Hovius, “Abortion: The fight goes on,” *Faith Today*, May/June 1988, 18-20. Berend Hovius was a professor of law at the University of Western Ontario. Hovius contributed a similar article to London’s daily newspaper, *The London Free Press*.
18. Robert Nadeau, “Guest Column: Fetal rights undecided,” *Faith Today*, May/June 1989, 19. Robert Nadeau was a regular guest columnist for *Faith Today*. Nadeau’s legal practice was based in Ottawa. Further, Nadeau, at the time, directed the Christian Legal Fellowship (a network of Christian legal professionals across Canada) on a part-time basis. Finally, Nadeau maintained ties with Hudson Hilsden of the PAOC’s Office of Social Concerns.
19. See endnote 5.
20. Hovius, “Abortion,” 18. While the Catholic Church was actively involved in this issue, lobbying Parliament about Bill C-43, this article focuses instead on the actions of the EFC and the PAOC.
21. Bowen, *Christians in a Secular World*, 189.
22. John G. Stackhouse, “‘Who Whom?’: Evangelicalism and Canadian Society,” in *Aspects of the Canadian Evangelical Experience*, 59.
23. Bowen, *Christians in a Secular World*, 189.

24. “For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.” Psalm 139:13-16, *The Holy Bible: New International Version* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1984).
25. Hudson Hilsden, “Society’s Central Issue: When Human Life Begins,” in *The Issue is Life: A Christian Response to Abortion*, ed. Denyse O’Leary (Burlington, ON; Welch Publishing, 1988), 68.
26. The EFC did not argue from scientific data, at least in those volumes consulted for the purposes of this article. The EFC may have argued on the basis of a scientific position before Parliament. That said, if the EFC did argue from this position, it was not evident in either of its publications: *Faith Today* and *National Alert*. Neither did the PAOC argue on the basis of scientific data. This article consults primarily the internal publications of the EFC and the PAOC. As “in house” publications, these documents presumably did not assign priority to convincing readers of the pro-life position. Instead, these documents sought to rally supporters to make appeals to Ottawa. To this extent, these documents were “preaching to the choir.” The one notable exception is Hilsden’s inclusion of a medical opinion in a section entitled “Scientific View” in his chapter “Society’s Central Issue.” Hilsden cites a 1948 World Health Organization declaration and Dr. Heather Morris of Women’s College Hospital, Toronto. Hilsden, “Society’s Central Issue,” 68-69. Not to have argued more thoroughly from a scientific perspective – aside from anecdotal accounts – was an oversight on the part of the evangelicals.
27. Brian Stiller, “This Is Our Father’s World,” in *The Issue is Life*, 150-51. Although the EFC never spoke of the unborn as possessing personhood, Paul Marshall, chair of the EFC’s Social Action Committee, appealed to the SCC “to determine if and when the fetus is a person.” Marshall believed that, “if the Court did something like this, limits on abortion could have a much firmer status: they would themselves be constitutional and hence we could have a constitutional prohibition of abortion on demand.” Marshall, “Some Political Implications of the Abortion Decision,” in *The Issue is Life*, 20.
28. Stiller, “This Is Our Father’s World,” 146-48.
29. Suzanne Scosone, director of the Office of Family Life of the Archdiocese of Toronto, contributed a chapter to Denyse O’Leary’s *The Issue is Life*. Scosone sought to articulate a pro-life position interested in balancing the rights of the expectant mother with those of the unborn. Scosone stated that, “both [pro-

choice and pro-life] sides believe deeply in the freedom of the individual. The problem is, *which* individual, a mother or her child? Who is to be free, and at what cost to the other? . . . Thoughtful people on both sides will, for the same reason, acknowledge the difficulties seen by the other side. Pro-life people see clearly the dilemma of the woman and the need for real support for her so that abortion will not seem like a ‘solution.’ . . . Pro-choicers now often talk about the importance of the ‘potential human life’ and its value, but at the same time they insist on the ‘overriding value’ of the ‘choice’ and the ‘well-being’ of the mother. Both are defending freedom and seeing its complexity; ultimately, however, nobody can have it both ways. Where the freedoms of two people conflict, one must be given precedence. . . . If we believe that all human beings are equal in value, the choice is not of the more valuable over the less valuable, but the choice of the smaller loss of freedom. There seems no question which is the smaller loss of freedom, and therefore which loss is to be chosen . . . the quick fix to which our advertising-trained minds have been accustomed. . . . We support also the freedom of the woman . . . when she chooses . . . not [to] deny the freedom and rights of another person, the child.” Suzanne Scorsone, “Freedom: Choice or Life?” in *The Issue is Life*, 44-9. Scorsone suggests adoption in place of abortion. An important step in attempting to articulate a pro-life position that is also pro-woman, is to familiarize oneself with the opposing argument. In this chapter, Scorsone wishes to engage the pro-choice side in meaningful dialogue. Scorsone’s ultimate goal is to arrive at a compromise that is as agreeable to both sides as is possible.

30. Paul Marshall, “Some Political Implications of the Abortion Decision,” 20. Pro-choice groups might consider this position effectively to deny women’s rights. Based on all of the sources consulted for this article, there is no evidence that the evangelicals actively sought to deny women’s rights. It might have been beneficial for the evangelicals together to have discussed the legitimacy of ‘rights’ language in the first place and coming to a position of consensus, instead of setting the rights of the unborn against the rights of the expecting mother.
31. Denyse O’Leary, “Where pro-life went wrong,” *Faith Today*, May/June 1988, 21.
32. Hovius, “Abortion,” 20.
33. Statistics Canada, “Induced Abortion Statistics, 2004,” Statistics Canada, <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/82-223-x/2008000/5202129-eng.htm> (accessed 30 March 2013).

34. Paul Marshall echoed O'Leary's sentiment. Marshall believed that even with Section 251 of the Criminal Code in place "abortion committees . . . took such a wide view of protecting the health of the mother that they, in effect, provided something close to abortion on demand before the decision. . . . Section 251[']s . . . elimination . . . won't make too much difference to the number of abortions done over the next few months." Marshall, "Some Political Implications of the Abortion Decision," 17.
35. Again, Marshall shared O'Leary's optimism, believing the SCC decision "not calamitous. It acknowledges the state's interest in protecting the fetus. . . . It explicitly leaves room for, and even indicates a desire for, legal protection of the unborn." Marshall, "Some Political Implications of the Abortion Decision," 16.
36. Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, "EFC Update," *Faith Today*, July/August 1989, 50. Carl Henry was present at the 1989 EFC General Council meetings. Addressing the main assembly, Henry commented on the responsibility of Evangelicalism to challenge "'radical secular humanism' prevalent today." Henry continued, "the church can least afford to ignore evangelism . . . but if you ignore social justice you may lose the opportunity for evangelism."
37. Hudson Hilsden, "Society's Central Issue," 67-8; Hudson Hilsden, *News Release*, May 1988, 1. Hilsden found his Scriptural bases in Exodus 21, Job 10, Psalm 139, Jeremiah 1, and Luke 1.
38. Hudson Hilsden, *News Release*, March 1988, 2-3.
39. Hudson Hilsden, *News Release*, May 1988, 1.
40. Sheila M. Noonan, "What the Court Giveth: Abortion and Bill C-43," *Queen's Law Journal* 16 (1991): 334. Stiller, "This Is Our Father's World," 147.
41. Stiller, "This Is Our Father's World," 147. Paul Marshall believed that the SCC wished to protect the unborn to some degree. Marshall wrote that, "the Court itself suggested that the development of the fetus was important." Marshall, "Some Political Implications of the Abortion Decision," 23.
42. Stiller, "This Is Our Father's World," 147.
43. Noonan, "What the Court Giveth," citing Bill C-43, 325.
44. David Vienneau, "Amending abortion bill won't be easy, MP says," *Toronto Star*, 30 November 1989. The PAOC supported a proposed amendment to Bill C-43 put forward by Liberal Member of Parliament Don Boudria. Boudria's amendment "would allow abortions to be performed only by a doctor and only when a woman's life was threatened. It would also increase the penalty for performing an illegal abortion to a maximum of 20 years." Hudson Hilsden,

News Release, April 1990, 2. Shortly following the announcement of Bill C-43, the NDP Premier of Ontario, Bob Rae, vowed to oppose the Bill, labeling it “a bad law . . . which will create more problems for access. It’s already raising questions in the minds of many doctors about whether they’re going to be prepared to perform abortions and abortion services.” Hudson Hilsden, *News Release*, December 1990, 2. Hilsden quoting Rae.

45. David Vienneau, “New bill would allow access to abortions with doctor’s okay,” *Toronto Star*, 2 November 1989.
46. Hilsden, “Society’s Central Issue,” 70.
47. Paul Racine and Al Hiebert, “Bill C-43: Compromise or capitulation?” *Faith Today*, July/August 1990, 34. Emphasis original.
48. Racine and Hiebert, “Bill C-43,” 35.
49. Marianne Meed, “EFC Update,” *Faith Today*, May/June 1990, 54.
50. Hudson Hilsden, *News Release*, March 1991, 1.
51. Hudson Hilsden, *News Release*, July 1990, 1. One of the amendments that the government refused proposed prohibition on abortions intended to prevent the birth of disabled unborn. Another refused amendment argued for a conscience clause for medical professionals unwilling to perform abortions.
52. Marianne Meed, “EFC Update,” *Faith Today*, January/February 1990, 52. While it was the EFC that reported this interfaith coalition, the contributors comprised the breadth of the Canadian Christian spectrum. It is uncertain, however, if any non-Christian members were present within this supposed interfaith coalition. *FT* describes the group as having comprised “the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Presbyterian Church in Canada, the Anglican Church of Canada, the Salvation Army, as well as the EFC, which includes 27 member denominations.” In a *News Release* dated May 1988, the PAOC stated it too was involved in this interfaith coalition. Presumably the PAOC became involved as an individual organization before the EFC became involved. Hudson Hilsden, *News Release*, (Toronto, ON), May 1988, 1. To be sure, the complication of having an EFC member organization also participate independently must have contributed to confusing communications to Parliament. Reference to the coalition appears in the minutes of the Legislative Committee on Bill-C43. Progressive Conservative MP Gabrielle Bertrand described the Alliance for Life’s president – Marilyn Bergeron – as “une certaine célébrité.” CANADA. *BRIEF SUBMITTED TO THE LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE ON BILL C-43 [ABORTION]*. 1990, 18:5. The Parliamentary Committee entertained arguments from the representative groups of this coalition.

53. Marianne Meed, "EFC Update," *Faith Today*, January/February 1990, 52; EFC, *National Alert*, August 1989, 1.
54. Hudson Hilsden, *News Release*, April 1990, 2. Emphasis original.
55. Racine and Hiebert, "Bill C-43," 34.
56. Racine and Hiebert, "Bill C-43," 37. The PAOC announced that Jake Epp had received "over 15,000 letters, 90 percent of them pro-life." Hudson Hilsden, *News Release*, June 1988, 2.
57. Hudson Hilsden, *News Release*, January 1990, 2.
58. Hudson Hilsden, *News Release*, March 1990, 1.
59. Geoffrey York, "Senators kill abortion bill with tied vote," *Globe and Mail*, 1 February 1991.
60. Hudson Hilsden, *News Release*, March 1991, 1. In the case of the 31 January 1991 vote, the Senate Speaker, Senator Rhéal Belisle, was ineligible to vote after the results had been announced. Even before the House voted, Senator Belisle abstained. York, "Senators kill abortion bill with tied vote."
61. Faith Today Staff, "Social Issues," *Faith Today*, May/June 1991, 63.
62. Hudson Hilsden retired from his position as Coordinator of the PAOC's Office of Social Concerns and Public Relations only months after the Senate's action on Bill C-43. Faith Today Staff, "Churches: PAOC Shifts Approach to Social Issues," *Faith Today*, July/August 1991, 46.
63. Hudson Hilsden, *News Release*, December 1989, 1.
64. Hudson Hilsden, *News Release*, March 1991, 1.
65. Jonathan Malloy, "Bush/Harper? Canadian and American Evangelical Politics Compared," *American Review of Canadian Studies* 39, no. 4 (2009): 356.
66. Hudson Hilsden, *News Release*, June 1990, 2.
67. Hudson Hilsden, *News Release*, December, 1990, 2.
68. John Stackhouse cites pollsters Reginald Bibby and the Angus Reid Group as having shown "that evangelicalism is a vital movement . . . But it is still the faith of a relatively small minority and has made very little impact on the religion of most Canadians." Stackhouse, "'Who Whom?'" 61.
69. O'Leary, "Where pro-life went wrong," 22.
70. O'Leary, "Where pro-life went wrong," 22.

71. Stiller, "This Is Our Father's World," 148.
72. Stiller, "This Is Our Father's World," 151. Stiller remained true to his word to cooperate with other groups. Until Stiller withdrew from EFC leadership in 1997 to become President of Tyndale University College and Seminary, he continued to contribute to interdenominational committees discussing the status of the unborn. These committees not only informed the EFC's publications, but they also contributed to the increasingly prominent work of the EFC. Stackhouse, *Canadian Evangelicalism*, 169.
73. Marianne Meed, "EFC Update," *Faith Today*, January/February 1990, 52.
74. United Church of Canada, "Brief to the Parliamentary Committee on Bill C-43, An Act respecting Abortion," in CANADA. *BRIEF SUBMITTED TO THE LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE ON BILL C-43 [ABORTION]*, 1990, 11A: 42.
75. United Church of Canada, "Brief to the Parliamentary Committee on Bill C-43, An Act respecting Abortion," 11A: 44.
76. United Church of Canada, "Brief to the Parliamentary Committee on Bill C-43, An Act respecting Abortion," 11A: 45.

