



We Can and Must Do *Much* Better

Religious Leaders in Canada oppose Bill C-7
“An Act to amend the Criminal Code”
(medical assistance in dying)



We are convinced that a robust palliative care system available to all Canadians is a much more effective response to suffering and to protecting the sacred dignity of the human person.

Open Letter to All Canadians

We are obliged to express our strong concern and opposition to Bill C-7 which, among other things, expands access to euthanasia and assisted suicide to those who are not dying. It perplexes our collective minds that we have come so far as a society yet, at the same time, have so seriously regressed in the manner that we treat the weak, the ill, and the marginalized. We the undersigned remain inalterably opposed to

It perplexes our collective minds that we have come so far as a society yet, at the same time, have so seriously regressed in the manner that we treat the weak, the ill, and the marginalized.

euthanasia and assisted suicide, the intentional killing of human beings, euphemistically being called “Medical Assistance in Dying,” (MAiD) but which is more accurately, and tragically, nothing less than murder, as was recognized by the Criminal Code of Canada prior to the passing of Bill C-14 in June 2016.¹

We, of course, have no desire to impose pain on the sick, nor do we wish that anyone suffer unduly. This is not our approach to illness and dying. We are convinced that a robust palliative care system available to all Canadians is a much more effective

response to suffering and to protecting the sacred dignity of the human person. Palliative care addresses pain in a loving and caring environment, wherein people go out of their way to offer comfort and solace. It makes everyone into a better person. Palliative care is a viable and life affirming alternative, which does not discriminate against any group and which gives expression to the ethics of caring and inclusion, hallmarks of Canadian values.

It is clear that the offerings of Bill C-7 will have harmful effects on persons with disabilities, as their representatives and organizations have made abundantly clear, and as [the United Nations Special Rapporteur concluded on her visit to Canada](#). Offering euthanasia or assisted suicide to those living with a disability or chronic illness, but who are not dying, suggests that living with a disability or illness is a fate worse than death. This will create certain pressures to accept such lethal procedures, putting the lives of these Canadians at greater risk in what is now a new regime that sees certain lives can be ended.

We the undersigned remain inalterably opposed to euthanasia and assisted suicide, the intentional killing of human beings, euphemistically being called “Medical Assistance in Dying,” but which is more accurately, and tragically, nothing less than murder, as was recognized by the Criminal Code of Canada prior to the passing of Bill C-14 in June 2016.¹

¹ Prior to the exemptions of Bill C-14, medical practitioners and nurse practitioners in Canada, would have been charged criminally with “culpable homicide” if they “intentionally cause the death of another person, even if they consent to die (section 14 of the Criminal Code).” Likewise, prior to Bill C-14, it was a criminal offence for anyone to “assist a person to die by suicide, whether or not suicide ensues (paragraph 241(b) of the Criminal Code).” Cf. <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/other-autre/ad-am/p2.html>

With our world-renowned health care system now endorsing euthanasia as a “solution” to human suffering, we will be undermining the creativity and resolve that is needed to confront some of the most complex cases of care.



Soon, the Federal Government will be contemplating the expansion of euthanasia to “mature minors” and to those whose sole medical condition is mental illness. With our world-renowned health care system now endorsing euthanasia as a “solution” to human suffering, we will be undermining the creativity and resolve that is needed to confront some of the most complex cases of care. We are, in effect, imposing the intentional taking of human life as a solution to human suffering. This is not just deeply troubling; it is unacceptable for a civilized society. The course on which we have embarked has resulted in the perverse reality that doctors and other health-care professionals who, on basic religious or ethical principle, refuse to administer a lethal injection could be subject to sanctions, even to the point of losing their license. How precipitous a fall we have made into a moral abyss. This is not what we, as Canadians, have in mind when thinking of ourselves as a caring, compassionate and inclusive society.

Instead, we must embrace those who suffer, and offer exceptional care to those who are confronting illness

and death; to deploy our expertise and resources in confronting complex cases of care, rather than choosing lethal procedures that are incompatible with the dignity of both the patient and the health-care professional. Palliative care administered with unwavering compassion, generosity and skill expresses the best of who we are. Rather than withdrawing from those who are not far from leaving us, we must embrace them even more tightly, helping them to find meaning up to the last moments of life. This is how we build compassionate communities.

We must embrace those who suffer, and offer exceptional care to those who are confronting illness and death... Palliative care administered with unwavering compassion, generosity and skill expresses the best of who we are.

Rather than withdrawing from those who are not far from leaving us, we must embrace them even more tightly, helping them to find meaning up to the last moments of life. This is how we build compassionate communities.



In the presence of human pain, suffering and loneliness, we need to respond as a society with profound solidarity and extraordinary care. It is via the deep acknowledgement of the beauty and dignity of human life, lived and experienced as a gift, filled with meaning and love, that we can come to the aid of the most vulnerable among us.

As Canadians, we can and must do better. It is our firm belief that to avoid moving too quickly toward a reality that has serious and long-lasting repercussions, we need to press hard on the pause button, and take serious stock of the impact of MAiD. As religious leaders in Canada, we provide this moral vision through the

We urge a more complete consultation with all Canadians on this grave matter.

living memories of our respective traditions which stem from thousands of years across continents and cultures. We do not claim to have the technical solutions to all these complex problems; however, our duty is to witness to the lessons about the human spirit, the



inestimable value and meaning of life, and the equal dignity of all learned through the crucible of history and through our extensive experiences of being at the bedside of the sick and dying. A society suffering from moral amnesia is perilously vulnerable to repeating the painful mistakes of the past. Let us not forget what is most becoming and appropriate to human dignity.

We urge a more complete consultation with all Canadians on this grave matter. In the presence of human pain, suffering and loneliness, we need to respond as a society with profound solidarity and extraordinary care. It is via the deep acknowledgement of the beauty and dignity of human life, lived and experienced as a gift, filled with meaning and

love, that we can come to the aid of the most vulnerable among us. This is a defining moment for Canada. Let us take this moment with careful and complete deliberation, so we can become/be a society of care, compassion and inclusion for all. ☸



Signatories

Rev. Bill Allan

Rev. Bill Allan

President

Associated Gospel Churches of Canada

Dr. Stephen Elliott

Dr. Stephen Elliott

National Superintendent

The Wesleyan Church of Canada

Dr. Rob Blackaby

Dr. Rob Blackaby

President

Canadian Southern Baptist Seminary & College

Steve Falkiner

Steve Falkiner

President

Foursquare Gospel Church of Canada

Rabbi Dr. Reuven P. Bulka, CM, PhD

Rabbi Dr. Reuven P. Bulka, CM, Ph.D

Rabbi Emeritus and spiritual leader

Congregation Machzikei Hadas, Ottawa

Rev. Dr. Ian Fitzpatrick

Rev. Dr. Ian Fitzpatrick

National Director

Church of the Nazarene Canada

Kim Cairns

Kim Cairns

President

Peace River Bible Institute

Brenda Frost

Brenda Frost

Administrative Coordinator

Eston College

Elder Michel J. Carter

Elder Michel J. Carter

Area Seventy, National Public Affairs

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl

Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl

Rabbi Emeritus

Beth Tzedec Congregation

Vice Chair

Canadian Rabbinic Caucus

Bruce J. Clemenger

Bruce J. Clemenger

President

The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada

The Most Rev. Richard Gagnon

The Most Rev. Richard Gagnon

Archbishop of Winnipeg

President

Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops

David Di Staulo

David Di Staulo

General Superintendent

Canadian Assemblies of God

Dr. Jeff P. Greenman

Dr. Jeff P. Greenman

President

Regent College

Tim Dyck

Tim Dyck

Executive Director

Evangelical Mennonite Conference

Signatories (continued)

Rabbi Jarrod Grover

Rabbi Jarrod Grover

Beth Tikvah Synagogue in Toronto
& President of the Ontario Rabbinical Assembly

*Rabbi Dr. Geoffrey Haber, BA, BA, MA,
DMin, DD (Hon.)*

**Rabbi Dr. Geoffrey Haber, BA, BA, MA,
DMin, DD (Hon.)**

Baycrest Health Sciences

Rev. Dr. Eric R. Hallett

Rev. Dr. Eric R. Hallett

District Superintendent
Central Canada District of the Wesleyan Church

Rev. David Hearn

Rev. David Hearn

President
The Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada

Farhan Iqbal

Farhan Iqbal

Missionary
Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at Canada

The Most Rev. Shane B. Janzen

The Most Rev. Shane B. Janzen

Archbishop
The Anglican Catholic Church of Canada

Rev. Steven Jones

Rev. Steven Jones

President
The Fellowship of Evangelical
Baptist Churches in Canada

Dr. David P. Lavigne

Dr. David P. Lavigne

Bishop
The Evangelical Christian Church in Canada

The Right Rev. Brian K. Magnus

The Right Rev. Brian K. Magnus

Bishop
The United Brethren Church in Canada

Rev. Tim McCoy

Rev. Tim McCoy

Executive Minister
Canadian Baptists of Ontario and Quebec

Rev. David McGrew

Rev. David McGrew

President
Canadian Fellowship of Churches and Ministers

Rev. Paul McPhail

Rev. Paul McPhail

General Secretary
Independent Assemblies of God International Canada

Rev. Wesley E. Mills

Rev. Wesley E. Mills

President and National Director
Apostolic Church of Pentecost of Canada, Inc.

Rev. Rob Ogilvie

Rev. Rob Ogilvie

Executive Minister
Canadian Baptists of Western Canada

Rev. Frank Patrick

Rev. Frank Patrick

Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada

Signatories (continued)

Michael B. Pawelke

Michael B. Pawelke
President
Briercrest College and Seminary

Rev. John Pellowe, MBA, DMin

Rev. John Pellowe, MBA, DMin
Chief Executive Officer
Canadian Centre for Christian Charities

Mark Penninga, B.A., M.A.

Mark Penninga, B.A., M.A.
Executive Director
ARPA Canada

Rabbi Reuben Poupko

Rabbi Reuben Poupko
Congregation Beth Israel Beth Aharon, Montreal
Executive Member
Canadian Rabbinic Caucus

Dr. Rick Reed

Dr. Rick Reed
President
Heritage College and Seminary

Imam Refaat Mohamed

Imam Refaat Mohamed
President
Canadian Council of Imams

Ingrid Reichard

Ingrid Reichard
National Faith & Life Director
Canadian Conference of
Mennonite Brethren Churches

Rev. Dr. Peter Reid

Rev. Dr. Peter Reid
Executive Minister
Canadian Baptists of Atlantic Canada

Dr. Rob Reimer

Dr. Rob Reimer
President
Steinbach Bible College

Rev. David Rowley

Rev. David Rowley
General Secretary
The Union of French Baptist Churches in Canada

Pastor David Ruis

Pastor David Ruis
National Director
Vineyard Canada

Rev. David Schrader

Rev. David Schrader
National Pastor
Congregational Christian Churches in Canada

Kevin Schular

Kevin Schular
Executive Director
Baptist General Conference of Canada

André Schutten, HonB.A., LL.B., LL.M.

André Schutten, HonB.A., LL.B., LL.M.
General Legal Counsel & Director
of Law and Public Policy

Pastor Terry W. Snow

Pastor Terry W. Snow
General Superintendent
Pentecostal Assemblies of Newfoundland & Labrador

Signatories (continued)

His Eminence Metropolitan Archbishop Sotirios

His Eminence Metropolitan Archbishop Sotirios

Primate

Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Toronto

& All of Canada

Rabbi Chaim Strauchler

Rabbi Chaim Strauchler

Shaarei Shomayim Congregation, Toronto

Dr. Bill Taylor

Dr. Bill Taylor

Executive Director

Evangelical Free Church of Canada

Archbishop Papken Tcharian

Archbishop Papken Tcharian

The Primate of the Armenian Prelacy of Canada

Rev. Timothy Teuscher

Rev. Timothy Teuscher

President

Lutheran Church-Canada

Dr. David Williams

Dr. David Williams

President

Taylor Seminary and College

Rev. Dr. David R. Wells, MA, DD

Rev. Dr. David R. Wells, MA, DD

General Superintendent

The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada



Code: 185-152 978-0-88997-895-9

Legal Deposit: Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa

Creative Commons License:

Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0)