



William J. Murray

The Chairman's Action Report

Religious
Freedom
Coalition

May 10, 2006

WORLD CONGRESS OF FAMILIES IV

This past week the Religious Freedom Coalition's Executive Director, Peggy Birchfield, has been in Warsaw, Poland at a planning session for the World Congress of Families. The actual Congress will be convened in Warsaw on May 11-13, 2007. The Religious Freedom Coalition is proud to co-sponsor the World Congress of Families at a time when the nuclear family is under attack worldwide and particularly in Europe. At a previous planning session the reasons for holding the Congress in Warsaw, Poland were clearly laid out:

Europe is almost lost -- to a demographic winter and to the secularists. If Europe goes, much of the world will go with it. Almost alone, Poland has maintained strong faith and strong families, though even Poland comes under severe pressure to change. Poland has saved Europe before. It is likely she will save Europe again. On family and population questions, Europe is the battleground in the early years of the 21st Century, and Poland is the pivot point. It makes abundant sense that The World Congress of Families IV meet among the brave people of Poland. Poland's central location will give pro-family groups across the Continent easy access to this Congress." ~ from the WCF IV Planning Meeting, October 23-25, 2005, Rockford, Illinois

While in Warsaw representing the Religious Freedom Coalition at the planning session, Peggy Birchfield met with numerous Polish government officials. The Polish government fully supports the World Congress of Families, and that nation has become the spiritual refuge and the spiritual light of Europe. If European families are going to be saved from secularist destruction, the flame for their renewal will come from Poland. Peggy just returned from Poland a few days ago and is in the process of preparing a full report on her planning trip to Warsaw that will soon be available at our Internet site at www.rfcnet.org. As the date draws closer for the Congress we will make more information available, including how you can participate.

THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE RELIGIOUS FREEDOM COALITION

This issue of the Chairman's Report is being mailed on May 10, 2006. Just one day later on May 11th I will face a United Nations panel to be questioned about the application of the Religious Freedom Coalition to become an officially recognized NGO or Non-Governmental Agency. Our application before the United Nations has languished for over two years. On several occasions it has been "lost" and we have had to resubmit it. That was all before President Bush bypassed Congress and did a recess appointment of John Bolton as Ambassador to the United Nations. Unlike his predecessor, he is a true conservative who actually does believe the United Nations can be reformed and lifted from its state of corruption. He also still maintains ties with the conservative community.

[Ambassador Bolton](#) spoke at a conservative coalitions meeting about two months ago in Washington, DC which was attended by myself and our executive director Peggy Birchfield. At the meeting I talked to the ambassador at length about the inability of the United Nations to give us a hearing on our application. Within a month Ambassador Bolton's staff had jarred the office handling our application and a hearing date was scheduled within two months. (See page 2)

Immediately after our hearing date was set, members of the committee to hear our “case” began to ask “official” questions of us. Those questioning our motives, operations and missions were from nations not exactly known for tolerance of religious freedom. Some nations on the review committee were concerned about our definition of religion. Some nations on the review committee such as Cuba and Russia do not allow any NGO to operate in their nations without strict control and they want to make sure we will comply. Actually we have requested NGO status to allow us to attend various conferences on the family and the status of women to work against forced sexual trafficking.

I expect the questioning of me by the committee to be harsh, and to be honest I do not know if the Religious Freedom Coalition will win official recognition as an NGO by the United Nations. If not we will appeal and once again seek the help of Ambassador Bolton’s office. This status is important because of the work of the Religious Freedom Coalition in the Middle East. Members of our staff, including myself, travel to Bethlehem and parts of Samaria which are under the control of the Palestinian Authority. Operating in that area as an officially recognized NGO of the United Nations would give us greater liberties and protections. The status would also allow us to participate in important official “councils” held, for example, on the status of women or of the family. We would add a pro-family conservative voice to these official “councils” that are now 90% far-left NGO’s.

BETHLEHEM

There are many new supporters of the Religious Freedom Coalition who are not aware of our international operations or our scholarship programs for Christian children in Islamic areas of the “West Bank.” Most Americans, and many of our new supporters, are not aware that the birthplace of Jesus Christ is totally in the hands of the terrorist organization Hamas. Bethlehem is not under the protection of Israel. Under a deal arranged by President Bill Clinton, the town of Bethlehem and the surrounding Christian areas were handed over to the Palestinian Authority. The Palestinian Authority is now controlled by Hamas, an officially recognized worldwide terrorist organization.

There are still about 30,000 Christians remaining in Bethlehem although their numbers have declined from 85% of the population to about 15%. There are no longer enough Christians to sustain a viable economic community and about 65% of them are unemployed. There are a few Christian schools remaining for their children, but these are private schools that must charge a tuition to pay teachers. Each year the Religious Freedom Coalition directly funds some schools such as Hope School in Beit Jala. Indeed the RFC paid to have security bars placed on all the windows to stop thieves and vandalism. The RFC also gives scholarships directly to the children of the poorest families.



Some of the children of the Talitha Kumi School who received aid in 2005 with William Murray

Normally I personally fly to the Holy Land each summer to deliver payments to schools and students. This is required because the Palestinian Authority has been so corrupt in the past that bank transfers have just vanished and the mail is hopelessly unsafe. Contributions are urgently needed for this year’s scholarship and aid program to Christian children in the Bethlehem area. Please pray that the Religious Freedom Coalition will have the funding to continue the program and that by July we will be able to distribute funds to students

You can learn more about our work in Samaria (what the media refers to as the “West Bank”) by visiting a special Internet site we have set up at www.thebethlehemproject.org. Contributions to assist Christian kids with their tuition to Christian schools in the Bethlehem area can be mailed to: [The Bethlehem Project](mailto:TheBethlehemProject@77511.com), PO Box 77511, Washington, DC 20013.

NICARAGUA AND RENEWED COMMUNIST THREAT

The last week of April I spent some time with Adolpho Calero who was the political leader of the Contras during the Civil War in Nicaragua in the mid 1980's. At the time the Reagan Administration supported the Contra forces that were attempting to return freedom to Nicaragua and dislodge the Sandinista communists. Mr. Calero was in Washington, DC to plead with State Department officials not to back the formation of a third party in Nicaragua which would result in the Sandinistas coming back to power, this time by the ballot box instead of the gun. It is a bizarre situation in which the United States does not want the ruling Liberal Party to remain in power and does not care who replaces it.

The Sandinistas are being supported in this election financially by "President" Chavez of Venezuela who has furnished them three new helicopters in which to campaign during the election throughout the country. Chavez is an anti-American communist who is attempting to emulate dictator Fidel Castro of Cuba. Unfortunately, unlike Castro, Chavez has a lot of oil money with which to foment revolution and discord in Central and South America.

During their short rule in Nicaragua, the Sandinistas tried to destroy the church and even eliminate Christmas. In 1987 I wrote a book - Nicaragua: Portrait of a Tragedy - about the struggle to bring democracy to Nicaragua. At the time I was the president of Freedom's Friends, an organization giving aid to the victims of communism worldwide. Freedom's Friends supplied aid to those displaced by the Communist government the Sandinistas had established at the point of a gun. It would be grim if the anti-American, anti-Christian Sandinistas would return to power by the ballot box because of ineptitude in our State Department.

SENATE PLEDGE PROTECTION PETITIONS CIRCULATED

The first wave of petitions asking the nation's 100 Senators to bring to the floor and vote on the Pledge Protection Act, have been mailed by the Religious Freedom Coalition. By now most of those who signed a petition to members of the House have received one of the new Senate petitions. The petitions we are mailing actually have two petitions, one for each of the two Senators in each state. Already thousands of these have been returned to our office for delivery to the Senate. We will begin delivery of the petitions to Senators within the next two weeks.

Senator Jon Kyl of Arizona has taken on the task of protecting "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance in the Senate. To encourage him and other Senators, the Religious Freedom Coalition assisted in organizing a letter supporting the Pledge Protection Act that was signed by more than twenty Christian leaders including Judge Roy Moore, Rev. D. James Kennedy, Tony Perkins, Phyllis Schlafly, Gary Bauer, Rev. Lou Sheldon and many others. The letter told Senators that it was, "Critically important that the Pledge Protection Act is passed and signed into law this year." As a result of the letter Senator Kyl has been able to obtain several more co-sponsors to the bill including Senator Conrad Burns of Montana.

On Tuesday, May 2, 2006 at a meeting convened by Senator Sam Brownback of Kansas a presentation was made to the staff of some key Senators as well as several "outside" groups or NGO's promoting Senator Kyl's version of the Pledge Protection Act. Many of those at the meeting were receptive and expressed a willingness to contact Senators to obtain their support for a vote on the Pledge Protection Act this year.

LAST HOUSE PLEDGE PETITIONS MAILED TO KEY DISTRICTS

We are very close to victory in the House and a vote could be scheduled as early as June 14th which is Flag Day, the day that President Eisenhower signed the bill that placed “under God” in the Pledge of Allegiance. To get the vote before July 4th we have mailed one final set of House petitions to some congressional districts where we need help. This was an added cost at a time we had already begun mailing Senate petitions, but was necessary to secure votes in the House. We are now at the stage where calls are important. Please call the local office of your congressman and remind his staff that you support the Pledge Protection Act. This last minute effort will help us secure a vote before the July 4th congressional recess, and hopefully on Flag Day, June the 14th.

THE SUPREME COURT

America may be beginning to see the results of the appointment by President George W. Bush of Chief Justice John Roberts and Associate Justice Samuel Alito to the high court. These two men may well be changing the way the Supreme Court thinks and acts. On Monday, April 24th the Court let stand a ruling by a lower court that declared that public schools cannot censor the religious viewpoints of students in class assignments.



William J. Murray chats with Supreme Court Associate Justice Samuel Alito in the Red Room of the White House

The case was appealed to the Supreme Court by the Syracuse, New York schools because that school system thought it had the right to cut a child's art poster in half to remove a picture of Jesus on one knee pointing to the sky. The poster was displayed with the posters of other children which were not defaced, embarrassing the child and his beliefs. Thank you Chief Justice Roberts for protecting the right of free speech in our schools.

Prayerfully President George W. Bush will be able to appoint more good men such as Alito and Roberts to the Supreme Court before the end of his term. The Religious Freedom Action Coalition, of which I am also an officer, worked with numerous other conservative groups to win the confirmation of Chief Justice Roberts and Associate Justice Alito.

LEGISLATIVE VICTORY

The Child Interstate Abortion Notification Act (CIANA, H.R. 748), which the Religious Freedom Coalition has long supported, passed in the House in late April. The bill, which was sponsored by Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL), was passed with an overwhelming vote of 270-157. The legislation would protect minor girls from adults who take them across state lines for abortions in order to circumvent a state's parental notification law. The Child Custody Protection Act (S. 8), sponsored by Senator John Ensign (R-NV) is the Senate companion bill that must now be concentrated on. If you believe an unrelated adult should not be allowed to take a minor girl across state lines for an abortion please call your Senator about Senator Ensign's bill.

A

William J. Murray, Chairman

Religious Freedom Coalition, PO Box 77511, Washington, DC 20013 *(202) 543-0300 * www.rfcnet.org