
EXPOSED: THE WORLD CONGRESS OF FAMILIES

AN AMERICAN ORGANIZATION EXPORTING HATE
— JUNE 2015 UPDATE* —



* This publication is an updated version of the original report released in July 2014. This update seeks to focus attention on the extreme agenda of those organizing and participating in the upcoming World Congress of Families IX in October in Salt Lake City, Utah. It is our hope that the information in this updated report will inform lawmakers, activists and others about WCF's agenda, and the damaging impact of its work on LGBT communities around the world.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The World Congress of Families (WCF) is one of the most influential American organizations involved in the export of hate. Since 1997, WCF has held conferences and events around the world that foster homophobia and transphobia under the guise of protecting the “natural family.” It is connected to some mainstream conservative organizations and to the very highest levels of government in the countries where it operates.

Thanks to WCF’s connections, its rhetoric and its willingness to associate with and encourage radically homophobic and transphobic activists, the group has had an outsized influence on anti-LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) sentiment and legislation in many places. This report explores WCF’s influence in more depth, focusing on Russia — where the organization had its genesis — as well as Eastern Europe, Australia and Africa.

WCF is an organization with strong ties to American Christian and conservative groups — including Focus on the Family, Alliance Defending Freedom, American Family Association and Family Research Council — and religious groups, such as The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the Knights of Columbus. High-level elected officials, including former President George W. Bush and members of his administration, have supported and praised WCF’s efforts.

WCF’s stated mission is to spread American “pro-family” views — specifically opposition to LGBT and women’s rights — to other countries. Its staff members and representatives have established close links with Russian President Vladimir Putin and anti-LGBT extremists in Africa.

WCF has been most active in Russia, where the group is supported by billionaire oligarchs and extremist members of the Russian Orthodox Church. It works closely with members of the Russian Duma and the Putin regime, and has encouraged the passage of anti-LGBT laws in Russia, most notably the 2013 ban on “gay propaganda.” WCF’s backers include Russian officials who were sanctioned by the United States government following Russia’s annexation of Crimea. Indeed, WCF staff members continued to praise Putin’s action in Ukraine. WCF’s close relationship with the Russian ruling elite was to be celebrated with an elaborate international conference at the Kremlin in September 2014. After the instability in Ukraine forced the cancellation of this event, WCF representatives nevertheless attended an almost identical conference, “Large Families: The Future of Humanity,” that went ahead despite the political upheaval.¹ WCF also announced plans to hold a conference in Salt Lake City, Utah, in October 2015, the first time a major WCF event will be held in the United States.

1 “On September 10-11, the ‘Large Families – The Future of Humanity’ International Forum will be held in Moscow,” 8/7/2014. <http://istoki-foundation.org/en/news/post/80>

Meanwhile in Eastern Europe, the group has consistently fought against equality and fomented anti-LGBT sentiment. WCF has held large conferences in Poland and Ukraine to connect “pro-family” activists and encourage the passage of anti-LGBT legislation. In Ukraine, WCF inflamed concerns that joining the European Union would force the country to accept marriage equality. The group supported legislation, which did not pass, that would have banned discussion of homosexuality in Polish public schools and lobbied against marriage equality legislation in Albania and Romania. (Neither country recognizes same-sex marriage.)

WCF has also been working alongside legislators to block marriage equality for the past decade in Australia. WCF representatives have made several trips to the country to lecture and meet with activists, and the 2013 World Congress of Families in Sydney drew hundreds of “pro-family” activists from around the world. Its influence in Australia continues to grow — longtime WCF representative Kevin Andrews was appointed Australia’s Minister of Social Services in September 2013 when a conservative government led by the Liberal Party came into power. WCF organized the “Life, Family and Freedom” regional conference in Melbourne in August 2014, coinciding with “National Marriage Day” that recognized the 10th anniversary of the law defining marriage as between one man and one woman.²

Most disturbingly, WCF has cheered the passage of strict “anti-homosexuality” legislation in Africa, where members of the LGBT community have been persecuted, arrested and murdered. The organization’s work in Africa began in 2005 when a WCF representative spoke at an anti-LGBT “Family Congress” in Nairobi, Kenya. Attendees included anti-LGBT activists from Kenya, Nigeria and Ethiopia as well as the United States. It held its first official event in 2009, where its communications director, Don Feder, urged activists to do the opposite of whatever the West suggested. WCF’s influence in Africa has largely mirrored the rise of anti-LGBT sentiment. The first ladies of Nigeria and Uganda attended WCF events shortly before their respective nations clamped down on LGBT equality. Despite the severity of Africa’s new anti-LGBT laws, WCF has not backed down. In May 2014, WCF gave a “Woman of the Year” award to a Nigerian activist who claimed that LGBT rights advocates were conspiring with the terrorist group Boko Haram.

WCF events have included some of the world’s most notorious anti-LGBT extremists. Scott Lively has been a featured speaker at major WCF summits, and he traveled to Russia as part of a core WCF team to plan their last large international gathering. Lively is infamous for his efforts abroad to promote dangerous anti-LGBT legislation and spread false and deceptive lies about LGBT people. Throughout his travels, he has proclaimed that LGBT people are responsible for the Holocaust, the Rwandan genocide and the spread of HIV/AIDS. Lively’s work supporting anti-LGBT efforts in Uganda resulted in a first-of-its-kind lawsuit against him in U.S. District Court, brought by Sexual Minorities Uganda and the U.S.-based Center for Constitutional Rights, alleging “that Lively’s involvement in anti-gay efforts in Uganda, including his active participation in the conspiracy to strip away fundamental rights from LGBTI persons, constitutes persecution.”³ The case is ongoing.⁴

WCF’s presence can be felt throughout the globe where anti-LGBT sentiment is growing. The group has had a dangerous influence, not only making it harder to be openly LGBT in many countries, but encouraging policies that have led to the harassment, legal punishment and even killing of LGBT people worldwide. Its role in the export of hate cannot be overstated.

HRC provided information from the original version of this report when it called on the U.S. Treasury Department to investigate WCF leadership for potential violations of the U.S. sanctions placed on several Russian officials after the conflict in Ukraine.⁵ Additionally, a member of the New South Wales Legislative Assembly in Australia, Alex Greenwich, cited the report in calling for federal Social Services Minister Kevin Andrews to cancel his plans to attend a WCF regional conference in Melbourne in August 2014.⁶ The hard work of supportive legislators in collaboration with LGBT and women’s rights groups ultimately proved successful. The Australian Senate passed a resolution condemning the event and urging government officials to boycott it. Andrews, who is now Minister of Defense, and many others ultimately cancelled their appearances.⁷

2 “World Congress of Families Regional Event in Melbourne, Australia” July-Aug 2014 newsletter. http://worldcongress.org/files/7214/0753/5360/WCF_News_July_August_2014_Final.pdf

3 “LGBTI Uganda Fights Back,” August 2013. <http://ccrjustice.org/ourcases/current-cases/sexual-minorities-uganda-v-lively>

4 “Anti-gay activist Scott Lively’s crimes-against-humanities case to proceed after federal court denies his petition to dismiss lawsuit,” Mass Live, 12/5/2014. http://www.masslive.com/news/index.ssf/2014/12/scott_lively.html

5 “HRC to Treasury: Investigate Potential Russian Sanctions Violations by World Congress of Families,” HRC press release, 9/8/2014. <http://www.hrc.org/press-releases/entry/hrc-to-treasury-investigate-potential-russian-sanctions-violations-by-world>

6 “World Congress of Families: Kevin Andrews urged to cancel,” News.com, 8/26/2014. <http://mobile.news.com.au/national/world-congress-of-families-kevin-andrews-urged-to-cancel/story-incyjr2-1227037411307>

7 “Australian Activists Successful Fight Back Against World Congress of Families,” HRC blog post, 8/29/2014. <http://www.hrc.org/blog/entry/australian-activists-successful-fight-back-against-world-congress-of-famil>

ORIGINS OF THE WORLD CONGRESS OF FAMILIES

In 1995, Allan Carlson, president of the Illinois-based Howard Center for Family, Religion and Society, was invited to Moscow by Anatoly Antonov and Victor Medkov, both professors of sociology at Lomonosov Moscow State University. Antonov and Medkov were eager to discuss Carlson's work on demographic changes in the United States — work that claims feminism and homosexuality have led to population decline, precipitating a crisis of the American family. Antonov and Medkov saw the same thing happening in post-communist Russia and felt they had much to learn. Together, Antonov, Medkov and Carlson conceived of a conference for “pro-family” activists in Europe and Russia to connect and share ideas with American evangelical and social conservative thinkers — and the World Congress of Families was born.

Describing itself as “an international network of pro-family organizations, scholars, leaders and people of goodwill from more than 80 countries that seek to restore the natural family as the fundamental social unit and the ‘seedbed’ of civil society,” WCF is the largest and most influential organization involved in anti-LGBT policies worldwide. In 1997, it began holding massive conferences, called World Congresses, which attracted thousands of delegates from around the world. Since then, WCF has held seven World Congresses in Prague, Geneva, Mexico City, Warsaw, Amsterdam, Madrid and Sydney.⁸

WCF has also hosted dozens of regional meetings in the United States, Canada, Europe, Latin America, Asia, Australia and Africa, and has exerted a profound influence on anti-LGBT and anti-choice sentiment and legislation worldwide. No other organization has had such a visible and negative impact on LGBT rights internationally.

The group takes credit for Russia's laws against “gay propaganda.” It helped inspire harsh anti-LGBT laws in Nigeria and Uganda, and has worked for years to block marriage equality in Australia. Despite its small staff and budget, the influence of WCF can be felt nearly everywhere hate is being exported.

Despite its extremist positions, WCF is not a fringe group. Many mainstream American conservative organizations are dues-paying members and help fund its conferences. Its staffers brief congressional staff. Then-President George W. Bush sent a welcome letter to the 2001 WCF regional conference in Washington, D.C.; U.S. Representatives Jo Ann Davis, R-Va., and John Doolittle, R-Calif., attended that conference; and a session was held on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives.

Assistant Secretary of Health and Human Services Wade Horn and U.S. Representative to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women Ellen Sauerbrey attended the 2004 World Congress in Mexico City and the 2007 World Congress in Warsaw, Poland, despite the urging of 19 members of the European Parliament not to do so. In Mexico City, Sauerbrey brought an official message from President Bush, which read: "As one of the pillars of civilization, families must remain strong and we must defend them during a time of great change...My administration has taken important steps to promote strong families, preserve the sanctity of marriage and protect the well-being of children."⁹

WCF also has ties to the highest levels of governments in Russia — including President Vladimir Putin and Member of Parliament Yelena Mizulina who is the Chairman of the Duma Committee on Family, Women and Children and Affairs — as well as in Eastern Europe, Mexico and Australia.

9 "A Family Affair," Ms. Magazine, Fall 2004. <http://www.msmagazine.com/fall2004/worldcongressoffamilies.asp>

THE PEOPLE BEHIND WCF

STAFF

The World Congress of Families is housed at the Howard Center for Family, Religion and Society, a “pro-family” think tank in Rockford, Illinois.

It has three principal staff members: Founder and International Secretary Allan Carlson, Managing Director Larry Jacobs and Communications Director Don Feder.

Carlson also serves as president of the Howard Center, which houses WCF. He is the author of ten books, most notably *Family Questions: Reflections on the American Social Crisis*. He is well-known for studying population decline and his argument that the post-World War II baby boom was a “Catholic phenomenon.” He has given numerous speeches and talks in Russia and throughout the world. Carlson is a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Jacobs serves as vice president of the Howard Center and is the CEO of Jabez Consulting, a medical consulting firm that works with pregnancy centers.

Despite its international focus, the WCF board of directors is 100-percent American and consists of:

- William Andrews, Chicago, IL
- Wayne Tew, Las Vegas, NV (Vice Chair)
- David Peterson, Rockford, IL (Treasurer)
- Allan Carlson, Rockford, IL (Secretary)
- Stanford Swim, Pleasant Grove, UT (Executive Committee)
- Byron Calhoun, Charleston, WV
- Caryl Crahan, Santa Barbara, CA
- Janice Shaw Crouse, Laurel, MD
- Perry Randall, Caledonia, IL
- Milton Rosenberg, Chicago, IL
- Elder Dallin Oaks, Salt Lake City, UT (Honorary Member)
- Ellen Hill, Rockford, IL (Honorary Member)
- Norman McLelland, Phoenix, AZ (Honorary Member)¹⁰

100% AMERICAN

Despite its international focus, the WCF staff and board of directors are all from the United States.

FUNDING

The Howard Center, which houses WCF, has an annual budget of around \$500,000. Less than \$200,000 of that is earmarked for WCF. This means that WCF relies on outside funders to help organize and pay for its conferences.¹¹ These funders include American conservative and Christian organizations and Russian oligarchs. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was a major sponsor of the 1999 World Congress and maintains close ties to the organization, including the presence of high-ranking Church Elder Dallin Oaks as an honorary member of the Howard Center's board.¹² The Knights of Columbus contributed at least \$75,000 to WCF and was a major funder of the 2007 World Congress.¹³ In Russia, WCF events have been sponsored by major companies, including some of the country's largest financial service companies, private equity firms, manufacturers and restaurant chains.¹⁴

¹⁰ www.worldcongress.org/people/board-directors, accessed 5/31/2014

¹¹ “How U.S. Evangelicals Helped Create Russia's Anti-Gay Movement,” Mother Jones, 2/21/2014. <http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2014/02/world-congress-families-russia-gay-rights>

¹² Associated Press, 11/23/98

¹³ Knights of Columbus Charitable Contributions 2007, <http://www.cca4.org/Contributions.pdf>

¹⁴ “How U.S. Evangelicals Helped Create Russia's Anti-Gay Movement,” Mother Jones, 2/21/2014. <http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2014/02/world-congress-families-russia-gay-rights>

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

WCF describes itself as “an alliance of orthodox believers, based on their commitment to Judeo-Christian values and the natural family.” It has ties to several religious organizations, including the Knights of Columbus, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the Russian Orthodox Church. Speakers at WCF meetings have included representatives from the Southern Baptist Convention, the Catholic Family and Human Rights Institute, and the Center for Family Ministries.

WCF partners are some of the largest and most influential conservative groups in America and in the West — including Focus on the Family, Alliance Defending Freedom, American Family Association, Family Research Council, Concerned Women for America and National Right to Life Committee. A 2001 conference in Washington, D.C., was sponsored by, among others, the Family Research Council, the Heritage Foundation, the Beverly LaHaye Institute, the Catholic Family, Human Rights Institute, Concerned Women for America, the Brigham Young University Management Society and Southern Virginia University.

The group listed 29 “partner organizations,” with a combined total annual budget of approximately \$216 million, in a planning brochure for the canceled 2014 Moscow World Congress. Of those 29 sponsors, more than 60 percent were American groups.

**\$216
MILLION
ANNUAL
BUDGET**

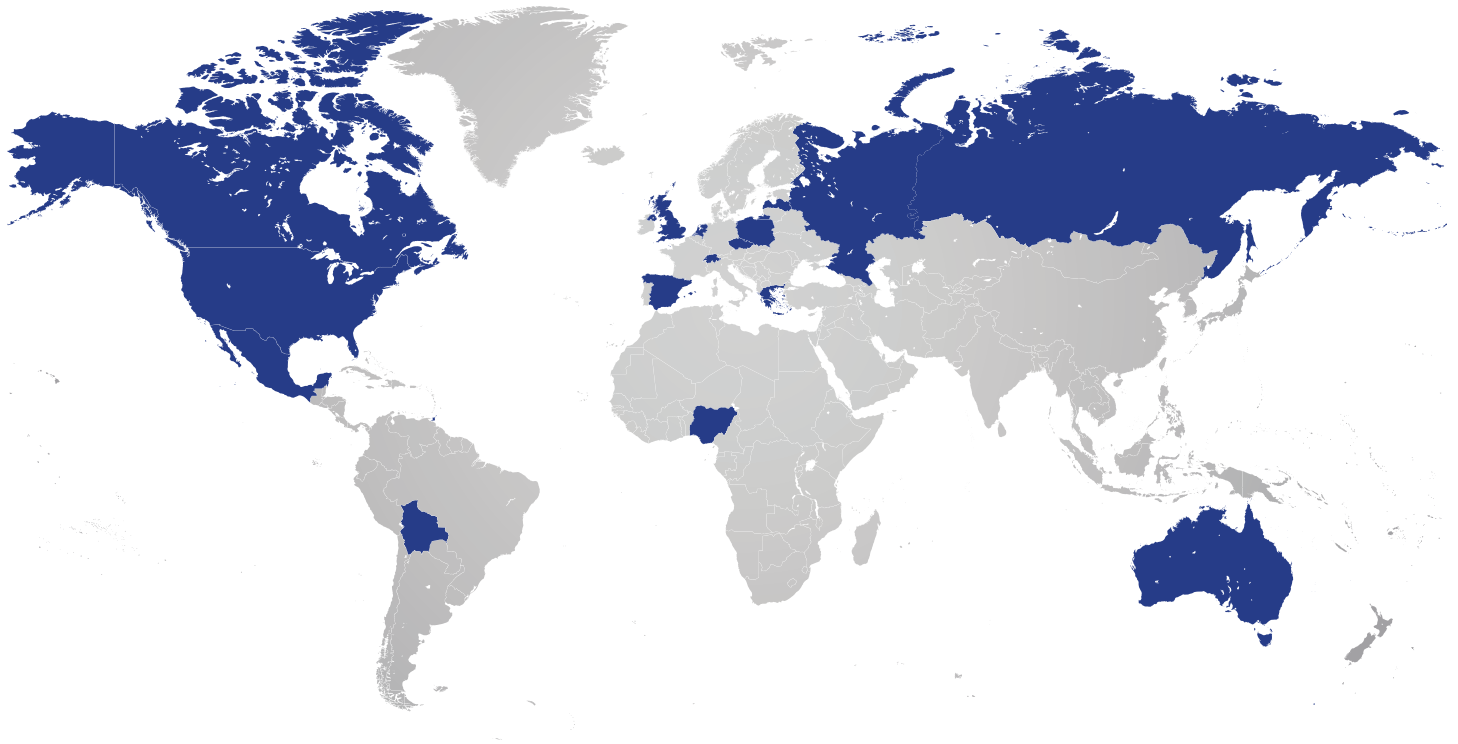
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MEETINGS

There have been seven major WCF events — which are referred to as World Congresses of Families — with as many as 3,500 attendees from over 60 countries, as well as many summits, regional meetings and planning meetings. The eighth World Congress of Families, planned for Moscow in 2014 was canceled after the Russian annexation of Crimea. The ninth World Congress of Families has been scheduled for Salt Lake City, Utah, in October 2015, the first time that a major congress will be held in the United States.

LIST OF WORLD CONGRESSES:

- March 1997: World Congress of Families I, Prague, Czech Republic
- November 1999: World Congress of Families II, Geneva, Switzerland
- March 2004: World Congress of Families III, Mexico City, Mexico
- May 2007: World Congress of Families IV, Warsaw, Poland
- August 2009: World Congress of Families V, Amsterdam, Netherlands
- May 2012: World Congress of Families VI, Madrid, Spain
- May 2013: World Congress of Families VII, Sydney, Australia
- September 2014: (Canceled) World Congress of Families VIII, Moscow, Russia
- October 2015: (Planned) World Congress of Families IX, Salt Lake City, Utah, United States



PARTIAL LIST OF OTHER WCF EVENTS:

- August 1999: Regional Meeting, Melbourne, Australia
- October 2001: Regional Meeting, Washington, D.C., United States
- May 2002: Pre-General Assembly Special Session On Children, New York City, United States
- March 2005: Regional Meeting, Utah, United States
- May 2006: Planning Committee Meeting, Warsaw, Poland
- February 2009: Planning Committee Meeting, Amsterdam, Netherlands
- May 2009: Regional Meeting, Riga, Latvia
- June 2009: Regional Meeting, Abuja, Nigeria
- June 2010: Regional Meeting, London, United Kingdom
- May 2011: Regional Meeting, Riga, Latvia
- May 2011: Regional Meeting, Sydney, Australia
- June 2011: Regional Meeting, Vancouver, Canada
- June 2011: Regional Meeting, London, United Kingdom
- June 2011: Demographic Summit, Moscow, Russia
- July 2011: Regional Meeting, Lagos, Nigeria
- October 2011: Planning Committee Meeting, Madrid, Spain
- April 2012: Regional Meeting, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago
- August 2012: Planning Committee Meeting, Sydney, Australia
- September 2012: Demographic Summit, Ulyanovsk, Russia
- October 2012: Regional Meeting, Rhodes, Greece
- October 2012: Regional Meeting, Lagos, Nigeria
- February 2013: Regional Meeting, Moscow, Russia
- June 2013: Regional Meeting, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago
- August 2013: Regional Meeting, St. Charles, United States
- October 2013: Planning Committee Meeting, Moscow, Russia
- April 2014: Regional Meeting, Santa Cruz, Bolivia
- August 2014: Regional Meeting, Melbourne, Australia
- October 2014: Planning Committee Meeting, Salt Lake City, United States

WCF IN RUSSIA

WCF has had more influence in Russia than anywhere else. The group was conceived of there and has deep ties to the Russian Orthodox Church and the Putin regime. It counts several members of the Russian government as allies, some of whom were sanctioned by the United States following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. WCF does not back away from its association with the country. The group takes full credit for Russia's anti-LGBT and anti-choice laws, and holds up Russia — and President Putin specifically — as a model for the United States to follow.

Indeed, WCF has nothing but praise for the Putin regime. In 2012, WCF Managing Director Larry Jacobs wrote that Putin “is the one defending laws and morality consistent with the freedom in the U.S. Constitution.”¹⁵ And after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, WCF spokesman Don Feder continued to defend Putin, calling him “a power player who cares more about Russia's national interests, and Russian minorities in his near abroad (smaller countries around Russia that were formerly part of the Soviet Union), than in that mythical force known as world opinion.”¹⁶

WCF's first major event in Russia was a “Demographic Summit” in Moscow in June 2011. Since then, it has held several more events in the country, including a September 2012 Demographic Summit in Ulyanovsk, a February 2013 regional meeting in Moscow and a number of planning committee meetings. The eighth World Congress was planned to be held at no less of a venue than the Kremlin, where the executive branch of the Russian government is headquartered, in September 2014, but was canceled after pressure from WCF's own partners following Russia's actions in Ukraine.

“The Kremlin used to be a no-no for conservatives,” Jacobs told the Associated Press. “We're going to redeem that building.”¹⁷

In 2010, WCF Managing Director Larry Jacobs made his first trip to Russia, to address the first meeting of the new “Sanctity of Motherhood” organization — the only American to do so. The theme of the conference was addressing “the crisis of traditional family values” in Russia. At the meeting, Jacobs told audience members that American evangelicals could be “true allies” to Russian social conservatives.¹⁸

While in Moscow, Jacobs held dozens of meetings with Russian policymakers and leaders, and prepared for the 2011 Moscow Demographic Summit. He gave interviews, lectured at Lomonosov Moscow State University and met with clergy of the Russian Orthodox Church. Jacobs takes credit for the anti-LGBT laws that have been passed in Russia since he first began visiting the country. When a *Mother Jones* reporter asked Jacobs if WCF had contributed to the Russian crackdown on its LGBT citizens, Jacobs said, “Yes, I think that is accurate.”¹⁹

After years of deep ties with the WCF, Russian activists pushed to hold a major World Congress in Moscow. The effort was led by Alexey Komov, a former night club owner and yogi turned Russian Orthodox monk, who established FamilyPolicy.ru to organize “pro-family” activists in Russia. To test the waters, WCF asked Komov to organize the Moscow Demographic Summit, which was attended by over 1,000 people, including Carlson, Jacobs and members of the American religious right, as well as high-ranking Russian officials, such as a prominent member of the Russian Parliament (Duma), Yelena Mizulina.

Mizulina would prove to be a staunch ally of WCF and a key supporter of anti-choice and anti-LGBT legislation in Russia. As chairman of the Duma Committee on Family, Women and Children, Mizulina is known as Putin's “morality crusader.” The day after the Moscow

15 “American Activist Stands for Punishing Pussy Riot and Supports Putin as He Protects Morality,” Interfax, 8/17/2012. <http://www.interfax-religion.com/?act=news&div=9713>

16 “Putin Doesn't Threaten Our National Security, Obama Does,” American Thinker, 3/5/2014. http://www.americanthinker.com/2014/03/putin_doesnt_threaten_our_national_security_obama_does.html

17 “Russia Anti-Gay Bill Admired By Some U.S. Conservatives,” Associated Press, 7/1/2013. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/07/01/russia-anti-gay-bill_n_3530050.html

18 “How U.S. Evangelicals Helped Create Russia's Anti-Gay Movement,” Mother Jones, 2/21/2014. <http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2014/02/world-congress-families-russia-gay-rights>

19 Ibid.

Demographic Summit, she introduced a package of anti-abortion laws — the first new anti-choice laws in Russia since the fall of the Soviet Union. She is responsible for the legislation outlawing LGBT “propaganda,” and has also pushed for bills to punish cursing on the Internet, and to institute a tax on divorces. Mizulina has met with Jacobs at least three times as well as with the WCF planning committee, and she was slated to organize a forum²⁰ for legislators at the 2014 World Congress in Moscow.

In 2014, President Barack Obama issued an executive order authorizing officials to freeze the U.S. assets of a number of Russian officials, including Mizulina, for their roles in Russia’s annexation of Crimea.^{21,22}

Carlson and Jacobs have embraced their influence in Russia. “Russia could be a great ally for conservatives, on issues like defending the family, abortions, even strengthening marriage and promoting more children,” Jacobs told RIA Novosti in 2013.²³ The two built strong relationships with Komov, Mizulina, oligarchs such as Vladimir Yakunin — the head of the state-owned Russian Railways and a close confidant of Putin — and Konstantin Malofeev — a billionaire philanthropist and a partner in one of Russia’s largest private equity firms — as well as leaders in the Russian Orthodox Church.

Prominent archpriest Dmitri Smirnov has praised WCF, calling the group the church’s “main connection” to the international community. Smirnov heads the Patriarch’s Commission on the Family, Protection of Motherhood and Childhood, a committee of the church that develops policy for the Putin administration. Church Patriarch Kirill praised WCF, sending an official greeting to attendees of the Moscow Demographic Summit and thanking organizers for “stand[ing] up for inviolability of human life,” and “speak[ing] out against abortions, so-called same-sex ‘marriages,’ euthanasia, drug addiction and alcoholism.”²⁴

In the years since WCF became active in Russia, the country has become an increasingly harsh place for the LGBT community. At least 13 anti-LGBT laws have been passed since Jacobs’ first visit to Russia.²⁵ In June 2013, the Duma unanimously passed Mizulina’s ban on “propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations” to minors. The far-reaching law imposes fines as high as 100,000 rubles (more than \$2,000) for publicly advocating for LGBT rights.²⁶ A growing number of people have been investigated and/or fined for violating the ban, including activists, media outlets, a toy store chain and a ninth-grade girl. In one bizarre case, in November 2014, a company in St. Petersburg, Russia, removed a memorial to Apple founder Steve Jobs, after the current Apple CEO came out as gay, citing the need to comply with the law.²⁷

In July 2013, Putin signed a law banning adoption by same-sex couples, single people and unmarried couples from countries that recognize marriage equality. The Kremlin said the law would “guarantee children a harmonious upbringing and protect them from complexes, emotional suffering and stress.”²⁸ As a result, a large number of Russian orphans are unable to find families. Duma member Alexei Zhuravlyov even went so far as to introduce legislation to revoke LGBT Russians’ parental rights — but this bill was eventually withdrawn.²⁹

“RUSSIA COULD BE A GREAT ALLY FOR CONSERVATIVES...”

— WCF Managing Director Larry Jacobs, 2013

20 “Russian Lawmaker Is Putin’s Conservative Champion,” Associated Press, 8/9/2013. <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/russian-lawmaker-putins-conservative-champion>

21 “Anti-Gay Russian Lawmaker Sanctioned Over Ukraine,” The Blade, 3/17/2014. <http://www.washingtonblade.com/2014/03/17/anti-gay-russian-lawmaker-sanctioned-ukraine/>

22 White House Fact Sheet: Ukraine-related Sanctions, 3/17/2014. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/03/17/fact-sheet-ukraine-related-sanctions>

23 “Russia Gay Laws Cheered by U.S. Conservatives,” RIA, 3/8/2013. <http://en.ria.ru/analysis/20130803/182557638/Russia-Gay-Homosexuality-Laws-Cheered-by-US-Conservatives.html>

24 “Russian Patriarch Kirill Recognizes Importance of the Moscow Demographic Summit, June 29-30,” WCF press release, 6/7/2011. <http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/russian-patriarch-kirill-recognizes-importance-of-the-moscow-demographic-summit-june-29-30-123316238.html>

25 “How U.S. Evangelicals Helped Create Russia’s Anti-Gay Movement,” Mother Jones, 2/21/2014. <http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2014/02/world-congress-families-russia-gay-rights>

26 “Russia passes law banning gay ‘propaganda,’” The Guardian, 6/11/2013. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jun/11/russia-law-banning-gay-propaganda>

27 “Steve Jobs memorial torn down in Russia after current Apple CEO Tim Cook comes out as gay,” The Independent, 11/3/2014. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/steve-jobs-memorial-torn-down-in-russia-after-current-apple-ceo-tim-cook-comes-out-as-gay-9836630.html>

28 “Russia’s Putin signs law limiting adoption by gays,” Associated Press, 7/3/2013. <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2013/07/03/russia-putin-gay-adoption/2486913/>

29 “Russian MP Withdraws Bill Taking Children Away from Gay Parents,” RIA, 10/19/2013. <http://en.ria.ru/russia/20131019/184246033.html>

All of this anti-LGBT legislation has been passed under the guise of protecting “traditional values” and the “natural family” — language that has been used by American anti-LGBT and anti-choice activists, including WCF, for decades.

Anti-LGBT sentiment has risen sharply in Russia in recent years. According to the Associated Press, “the number of people who consider homosexuality either ‘licentiousness’ or ‘a sickness or result of some psychological trauma’ rose from 68 percent in 1998 to 78 percent in 2013,”³⁰ and a 2014 Pew study revealed that 72 percent of Russians feel that homosexuality is “morally unacceptable.”³¹

As a result of the rising tide of homophobia and transphobia, immigration and asylum requests from Russian LGBT citizens seeking to leave the country have skyrocketed. LGBT Russians are increasingly being targeted and threatened with violence. Since 2013 alone, a gay bar was attacked by people wielding poison gas, an LGBT film festival was disrupted by multiple bomb threats, LGBT activists in St. Petersburg were attacked with air rifles, and dozens of participants in pride parades were arrested. Men and transgender women have been beaten and murdered. In May 2013, a young man in Volgograd was tortured and killed after revealing to his drinking companions that he was gay. In 2014, from the Arctic, where the LGBT community reports that “the danger is everywhere, and it’s everyday,”³² to Crimea, where a senior official said the police force would “react immediately” to any demonstrations,³³ LGBT people have reported an increase in homophobic attacks.³⁴ Perpetrators of anti-LGBT violence often escape prosecution. If and when they are charged, they often receive light sentences.

WCF has done much to fan the flames of this frightening increase in homophobia and transphobia. According to *Mother Jones*, “the rise of anti-gay laws in Russia has mirrored, almost perfectly, the rise of WCF’s work in the country.” Indeed, WCF takes full credit for the rise of anti-choice and anti-LGBT sentiment and legislation in Russia.³⁵

The culmination of WCF’s activity in Russia was to be the September 2014 World Congress of Families VIII at the Kremlin. Several meetings were held with Russian leaders between 2011 and 2013 to plan for the event. Sponsors were lined up, including Russian oligarch Konstantin Malofeev, who offered to fund two thirds of the Congress. Another primary funder was Vladimir Yakunin, a close advisor and possible successor to Putin as president.

Difficulties arose after Russia annexed the Ukrainian territory of Crimea. As a result of this annexation, the U.S. government imposed economic sanctions against many Russian leaders, including two major backers of WCF — Yakunin and Mizulina.

WCF initially stood by Russia and planned to go ahead with the conference. WCF Communications Director Don Feder wrote a column, “Putin Doesn’t Threaten Our National Security, Obama Does.” “Putin is a strong man. Obama is a weak man (except when it comes to bullying our allies). Obama venerates multilateralism. Putin is willing to go it alone. Obama is committed to the entire LGBT agenda (including gay ‘marriage’). He’s also the only sitting president to address Planned Parenthood, such is his commitment to abortion without borders. Putin believes the foregoing is the road to national annihilation,” Feder wrote.³⁶

78%

According to the Associated Press, “the number of **people in Russia who consider homosexuality either ‘licentiousness’ or ‘a sickness or result of some psychological trauma’** rose from 68 percent in 1998 to 78 percent in 2013.”

30 “Russian Lawmaker Is Putin’s Conservative Champion,” Associated Press, 8/9/2013. <http://bigstoryap.org/article/russian-lawmaker-putins-conservative-champion>

31 Pew Research Global Attitudes Project, 2014, <http://www.pewglobal.org/2014/04/15/global-morality/table/homosexuality/>

32 “Arctic Russia’s LGBT community speaks: the danger is everywhere and it’s everyday,” Barents Observer, 11/14/2014. <http://barentsobserver.com/en/society/2014/11/arctic-russias-lgbt-community-speaks-danger-everywhere-and-its-everyday-14-11>

33 “Russian LGBT activist worried after Crimea ‘leader’ lashes out,” 9/2014. <http://queerussia.info/2014/09/03/6232/#sthash.caaJ0A0H8AkGdkZA.dpbs>

34 “Russia’s gay community in fear as homophobic attacks increase,” BBC News, 12/15/2014. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-30488171>

35 “How U.S. Evangelicals Helped Create Russia’s Anti-Gay Movement,” *Mother Jones*, 2/21/2014. <http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2014/02/world-congress-families-russia-gay-rights>

36 “Putin Doesn’t Threaten Our National Security, Obama Does,” *American Thinker*, 3/5/2014. http://www.americanthinker.com/2014/03/putin_doesnt_threaten_our_national_security_obama_does.html

However, WCF's partners in the United States started to worry. Concerned Women for America pulled out of the conference because they didn't want to "appear to be giving aid and comfort to Vladimir Putin."³⁷ The Family Research Council and the Alliance Defending Freedom also withdrew support.

Finally, in late March of 2014, WCF suspended plans for the Moscow World Congress, writing in a press release that "planning on World Congress of Families VIII — the Moscow Congress (scheduled for September 10 –12, 2014) — has been suspended for the time being. The situation in the Ukraine and Crimea (and the resulting U.S. and European sanctions) has raised questions about the travel, logistics, and other matters necessary to plan WCF VIII. The foregoing is not meant to reflect negatively on the Russian people, churches or individuals who have taken a leadership role in the fight to preserve life, marriage, and the natural family at home and as part of the international pro-family movement."³⁸

In lieu of the Congress, many of the same organizers held an almost identical conference called "Large Families – The Future of Humanity" International Forum on September 10-11, 2014 in Moscow. The conference was hosted by the Center of National Glory, the St. Andrew the First-Called Foundation, Saint Basil the Great Charitable Foundation, the Patriarchal Commission for Family, Motherhood and Childhood Protection,³⁹ three of which are associated with Yakunin.⁴⁰ Attendees included many of the same people and organizations involved in the suspended World Congress. Notable attendees (several of whom were also speakers) included leaders from the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children (U.K.), John-Henry Westen of LifeSiteNews (Canada), Obianuju Ekeocha of Culture of Life Africa (Nigeria), Sharon Slater of Family Watch International (U.S.), Janice Shaw Crouse of Concerned Women for America (U.S.), Don Feder and Lawrence Jacobs of World Congress of Families (U.S.), and Vladimir Yakunin, Yelena Mizulina and Konstantin Malofeev (Russia), among many others.^{41,42}

Speakers focused on opposing LGBT and abortion rights, and holding up Russia as the "final hope" against "Western debauchery."⁴³

It should be noted that American groups participated despite questions of legality over attending an event that was hosted by two leaders who had been sanctioned by the United States.⁴⁴ Once someone has been sanctioned by the U.S. Treasury Department, U.S. citizens and businesses "are generally prohibited from dealing with them," with "dealing" being the key, undefined word. In a statement to *Mother Jones*, WCF said that while Feder and Jacobs would attend and speak, they were not supporting the conference financially or lending WCF's name to it.⁴⁵

In December 2014, an organization called Shaltai Boltai published a collection of leaked emails between Western groups, including WCF, and senior, conservative Russian officials such as Malofeev and Komov (WCF's Russian representative), some of whom are tied to the Ukraine separatists. The emails show WCF and the Russians working together "to promote Russia's geopolitical agenda," and providing names, including contact and passport and visa information, for the participants of the September 2014 Forum, including government officials and others from 50 countries.⁴⁶

37 "Leading Conservative Group Withdraws From 'Pro-Life Olympics' In Moscow Over Russian Invasion Of Ukraine," BuzzFeed, 3/11/2014. <http://www.buzzfeed.com/lesterfeder/leading-conservative-group-withdraws-from-pro-life-olympics>

38 "Planning for World Congress of Families VIII Suspended," WCF press release, 3/25/2014. <http://www.christiannewswire.com/news/372773850.html>

39 "On September 10-11, the "Large Families – the Future of Humanity" International Forum will be held in Moscow," Istoki Foundation News, 8/7/2014. <http://istoki-foundation.org/en/news/post/80>

40 "Did Anti-Gay Evangelicals Skirt U.S. Sanctions on Russia?" *Mother Jones*, 9/8/2014. <http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2014/09/world-congress-families-russia-conference-sanctions>

41 "Major international pro-family conference in Moscow - SPUC represented," 9/11/2014. <http://spuc-director.blogspot.co.uk/2014/09/major-international-pro-family.html>

42 "World Congress of Families Spokesman: Russia is the Hope for the World Right Now," *Right Wing Watch*, 1/13/2015. <http://www.rightwingwatch.org/content/world-congress-families-spokesman-russia-hope-world-right-now>

43 "Russia Offered as a Conservative Bulwark against Repugnant West," *Moscow Times*, 9/10/2014. <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/russia-offered-as-a-conservative-bulwark-against-repugnant-west-/506801.html>

44 "HRC to Treasury: Investigate Potential Russian Sanctions Violations by World Congress of Families," *Human Rights Watch*, 9/8/2014. <http://www.hrc.org/press-releases/entry/hrc-to-treasury-investigate-potential-russian-sanctions-violations-by-world>

45 "Did Anti-Gay Evangelicals Skirt U.S. Sanctions on Russia?" *Mother Jones*, 9/8/2014. <http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2014/09/world-congress-families-russia-conference-sanctions>

46 "Emails Show Pro-Family Activists Feeding Contacts to Russian Nationalists," *BuzzFeed*, 12/8/2014. <http://www.buzzfeed.com/lesterfeder/emails-show-pro-family-activists-feeding-contacts-to-russian#.qtwqN26wl>

WCF IN EASTERN EUROPE

Although WCF has been most active in Russia, its influence has been felt far beyond that country. WCF has held conferences on five continents and fostered anti-LGBT sentiment in dozens of countries — notably Eastern Europe.

WCF planned a summer 2014 regional conference in Kiev, Ukraine, with leaders from Eastern Europe and Russia. According to a WCF press release, the Kiev conference would serve to “promote the natural family as the fundamental unit of a free and stable society that transcends all political differences and the interests of nations and armies.”⁴⁷

Previously, WCF Communications Director Don Feder and other WCF representatives, including Alexey Komov, met with “pro-family” leaders in Kiev — inflaming concerns that joining the EU would require that Ukraine accept marriage equality, and warning of the dangers of pornography and prostitution. WCF’s influence does not extend merely to activists. The delegation met with at least one member of the Ukrainian parliament, Vlad Lukyanov, who held a “well-attended” press conference with WCF representatives.⁴⁸ And earlier in 2013, WCF sent a representative to the Ukrainian parliament in support of a Russian-style ban on “gay propaganda.”⁴⁹

Meanwhile, on Sept. 28, 2013, WCF leaders attended an anti-LGBT rally in Serbia, which led to the cancelation of the Belgrade Pride parade. According to a WCF press release, Feder told the Serbians: “Your fight is our fight.” While in Serbia, Feder gave interviews, and held press conferences and a roundtable discussion. He praised Dveri, a Serbian “pro-family” organization, saying the group was “truly an inspiration” and welcomed it as WCF’s newest partner.⁵⁰ Dveri was also on hand in September 2014 when, “bowing to pressure from the European Union and Western governments,” a gay pride march was successfully completed.⁵¹ In advance of the march, Dveri hosted an event protesting it and screened the Russian anti-LGBT movie *Sodom*, which features anti-LGBT activist and minister Scott Lively.⁵² A spring 2015 regional conference was planned for Serbia according to WCF’s December 2014/January 2015 newsletter.⁵³

WCF held World Congress of Families IV in Warsaw, Poland, in 2007, with over 3,500 attendees, including several Polish government officials. Polish Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Education Roman Giertych called it “a great honor for Poland” and Polish President Lech Kaczynski served as an “honorary patron.” At the conference, WCF leaders lobbied for legislation — supported by Poland’s president and prime minister — that would have banned discussion of homosexuality in Polish public schools. In a press release, Jacobs said that the legislation would prevent “the left” from using “public schools to indoctrinate in favor of the gay lifestyle.”⁵⁴ (The bill was withdrawn following outrage from the European public and policy makers.)

Indeed, WCF’s influence can be felt throughout Eastern Europe. In late 2014, WCF partner Alliance Defending Freedom submitted an amicus brief to the Constitutional Court of Slovakia supporting the proposed referendum on a constitutional amendment defining marriage as between one man and one woman.⁵⁵ In 2009, the group led an international petition drive against marriage equality legislation in Albania. In 2008, WCF organized in support of the Romanian defense of marriage amendment. The legislation, which failed to pass, would have defined marriage as solely between a man and a woman. In Lithuania, WCF supported 2008 legislation that limited “homosexual proselytizing.” In Latvia, WCF vigorously condemned U.S. Ambassador Judith Garber’s decision to march in the 2012 Riga Pride parade, calling it “outrageous.”⁵⁶ Lastly, in the Czech Republic, WCF organized a letter of protest after the U.S. ambassador attended a pride parade there, calling it proof that the Obama Administration was “aggressively promoting the ‘gay’ agenda internationally.” The letter was signed by 120 prominent American conservatives, including Bill Donohue, president of the Catholic League for Civil and Religious Rights, former U.S. House Majority Leader Tom DeLay, and former Arkansas governor and then- and current presidential candidate Mike Huckabee.⁵⁷

47 “World Congress of Families Calls On Pro-Family Groups Around the World to Pray for Ukraine; WCF Meeting in Kiev Planned for Summer 2014,” WCF press release, 3/13/2014. <http://us2.campaign-archive2.com/?u=71b5ff0a93830214b96a42bf6&id=4142bf0c00&e=0a263af3a6>

48 “World Congress of Families Leadership Team Travels to Kiev, Ukraine,” WCF press release, 10/22/2013. <http://www.christiannewswire.com/index.php?module=releases&task=view&releaseID=73035>

49 World Congress of Families newsletter, June/July 2013 issue. <http://worldcongress.org/wcfnl/pdf/2013/wcfnl.0613.pdf>

50 “Victory In Belgrade! International Pro-Family Leaders Help Dveri Persuade Government Not to Allow ‘Gay Pride’ Parade,” WCF press release, 10/1/2013. <http://profam.org/news-press/press-releases/victory-belgrade-international-pro-family-leaders-help-dveri-persuade-government-not-allow-gay-pride-parade>

51 “Serbs Protest March by Sexual Radicals,” WCF newsletter, 11/2014. http://worldcongress.org/files/9414/1582/4595/WCF_News_November_2014.pdf

52 “Movement ‘Dveri’ Held Protest Against Pride Parade In Belgrade,” In News, 9/27/2014. <http://insertbia.info/today/2014/09/movement-dveri-holds-protest-against-the-pride-parade-in-belgrade-live/>

53 WCF Dec 2014-Jan 2015 newsletter. http://worldcongress.org/files/9114/2239/2810/WCF_News_December_2014.pdf

54 WCF press release, 4/13/07

55 Slovak Court Approves Marriage Referendum, WCF newsletter, 11/2014. http://worldcongress.org/files/9414/1582/4595/WCF_News_November_2014.pdf

56 “World Congress of Families Condemns Participation by the United States Ambassador to Latvia in the Baltic Gay Pride Parade,” Christian News Wire, 6/8/2012. <http://www.christiannewswire.com/news/464919919.html>

57 “Embassy Row: Gay Pride in Prague,” Washington Times, 8/15/12. <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2012/aug/14/embassy-row-gay-pride-in-prague/?page=all>

WCF IN AUSTRALIA

The World Congress of Families has been working for years to block marriage equality in Australia. Legislative efforts against equality coincide with WCF's presence in the country. WCF officials have been traveling to Australia since 2008, and World Congress of Families VII was held in Sydney in May 2013.

As early as 2006, WCF Founder and International Secretary Allan Carlson praised the Australian national government for blocking civil-union legislation in the Capital Territory. Carlson went on a tour of Australia in 2008, giving speeches and meeting with activists in Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne and Perth. In Perth, he addressed more than 200 people at the national convention of the Australian Family Association, according to a WCF newsletter. Carlson returned to Australia in 2010 to give the keynote address at "National Marriage Day," which commemorates the passage of Australia's Marriage Amendment Act of 2004, defining marriage as "a union between a man and a woman, to the exclusion of all others, voluntarily entered into for life."⁵⁸

Marriage equality legislation was defeated in the Australian parliament in 2010, and again in 2012. In 2013, the national government successfully challenged a marriage equality law passed in the Australian Capital Territory, invalidating the legal marriages of 27 same-sex couples in the process. However, in November 2014, New South Wales joined Queensland and Tasmania in recognizing same-sex marriages from other countries.⁵⁹

WCF Managing Director Larry Jacobs traveled to Australia in 2012, where he met with conservative leaders to begin planning the 2013 World Congress. Jacobs participated in a National Marriage Day rally in Canberra, the Australian capital. With help from WCF partner organizations, including the National Marriage Coalition, the Australian Family Association, the Endeavour Forum and the Dads-4-Kids Foundation, marriage equality legislation was defeated in the Australian parliament in 2012.⁶⁰

2013's World Congress of Families VII in Sydney was attended by 600 activists and leaders. One attendee and longtime WCF leader was conservative activist Kevin Andrews who went on to become the Minister of Social Services in Prime Minister Tony Abbott's cabinet and is now the Minister of Defense. Abbott has staunchly opposed marriage equality, calling it the "fashion of the moment."⁶¹

A little more than a year after its major event in Sydney, WCF organized a smaller regional event in Melbourne in August 2014.⁶² Kevin Andrews was again set to participate alongside Victoria State Attorney General Robert Clark, several parliamentarians and at least two American speakers, including Larry Jacobs. Also participating was Dr. Angela Lanfranchi, a New Jersey physician and anti-choice activist who believes that birth control is a "Molotov cocktail" of toxins and carcinogens for a woman's body. Women's and LGBT-rights groups quickly organized to oppose the meeting and called for government officials not to attend. They succeeded in publicizing WCF's extremist views. The Senate passed a resolution asking ministers to boycott the event and ultimately Andrews and almost all of the others pulled out.^{63,64} Several venues backed out of hosting the event,⁶⁵ but the conference ultimately opened amid major protests.⁶⁶

58 WCF press release, 8/10/10.

59 Same-sex marriages are not protected in NSW law," same same, 11/12/2014. <http://www.samesame.com.au/news/11595/Same-sex-marriages-are-now-protected-in-NSW-law>

60 WCF newsletter, November 2008. <https://web.archive.org/web/201111211004411/http://www.worldcongress.org/wcf/wcf.nl/wcf.nl.0811.0211.pdf>

61 "Tony Abbott describes gay marriage as the 'fashion of the moment,'" The Guardian, 8/14/13. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/aug/14/tony-abbott-gay-marriage-fashion>

62 "The World Congress of Families Down Under," 7/25/2014. <http://www.hrc.org/blog/entry/the-world-congress-of-families-down-under>

63 "Federal ministers urged to boycott 'bigoted' World Congress of Families conference," ABC, 8/28/2014. <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-08-28/federal-ministers-urged-to-boycott-controversial-conference/5703242>

64 "Kevin Andrews cancels appearance at controversial World Congress of Families conference in Melbourne," ABC, 8/29/2014. <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-08-29/kevin-andrews-cancels-appearance-at-families-conference/5705364>

65 "World Congress of Families conference in chaos as venues decline to host," The Guardian, 8/26/2014. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/aug/26/world-congress-families-venues-cancel-over-protests>

66 "Protesters block entry as World Congress of Families starts in chaos," The Guardian, 8/29/2014. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/aug/30/protesters-block-entry-world-congress-families-starts-chaos>

WCF IN AFRICA

WCF has had perhaps the most disturbing influence in Africa, where anti-LGBT laws, passed with the urging of WCF officials and allies, are the harshest.

In August 2005, Fernando Milanés, WCF's representative in Africa, spoke at an anti-LGBT "Family Congress" in Nairobi, Kenya. Attendees included anti-LGBT activists from Kenya, Nigeria and Ethiopia as well as the United States.

WCF hosted its own "pro-family" conference — a regional meeting billed as the World Congress of Families: Dialogue of Civilizations — in Abuja, Nigeria, in 2009. At the conference, Feder lectured on "Attempts By International Agencies And Western Donors To Force Abortion, Contraception, Smaller Families And Homosexual Rights On Africa." He warned against the threat to African families posed by homosexuality and contraception. *The African Seer* reported that Feder urged attendees, "everything the West asks you to do, please do the opposite."⁶⁷ The then first lady of Nigeria, Hajija Hajia Turai Umar Yar'adua, and the wife of outgoing President Goodluck Jonathan were both listed as attendees of the conference, along with the first lady of Uganda, Janet Museveni. This was not Museveni's first encounter with the group. She attended a WCF meeting in New York in 2002, where she spoke out against the U.N.'s distribution of condoms to sexually active youth.

“EVERYTHING THE WEST ASKS YOU TO DO, PLEASE DO THE OPPOSITE.”

— WCF Communications Director Don Feder, World Congress of Families: Dialogue of Civilizations, Nigeria, 2009

In 2011, longtime WCF partner Sharon Slater, president of Family Watch International (FWI), gave an address at a WCF-sponsored event in Nigeria attended by high-level government officials and policymakers. Slater urged these leaders to resist calls to decriminalize homosexuality.⁶⁸ The following year, Larry Jacobs spoke at a WCF event in Lagos, Nigeria, with the theme "The School, The Family, The Student." Jacobs delivered two addresses, titled, "Children's Rights vs. Children's Needs" and "Alive To The World: A Complete K-12 Curriculum for Values, Democracy and Healthy Sexuality."⁶⁹

WCF's presence in Africa has corresponded with a disturbing rise of harsh penalties for LGBT Africans in countries like Kenya, Uganda and Nigeria, where about 90 percent of citizens believe homosexuality is morally unacceptable.⁷⁰ In Kenya, homosexuality is punishable by up to 14 years in prison, and LGBT Kenyans are subject to harassment and blackmail.⁷¹ Homosexuality has been illegal in Nigeria since

67 "The family, pornography and demographic suicide," *African Seer*, 7/8/2009. <https://web.archive.org/web/20110824202851/http://news1.africanseer.com/templates/?a=5719>

68 "American Anti-Gay Campaign in Africa Opposes 'Fictitious Sexual Rights'," *Religion Dispatches*, 8/21/11. http://www.religiondispatches.org/archive/sexandgender/4996/american_anti-gay_campaign_in_africa_opposes_%E2%80%9Cfictitious_sexual_rights%E2%80%9D/

69 "WCF Managing Director Larry Jacobs to Speak at International African Education Conference in Nigeria at Pan African University," WCF press release, 10/22/2012. <http://www.christiannewswire.com/news/7201470684.html>

70 Pew Research Global Attitudes Project, 2014, <http://www.pewglobal.org/2014/04/15/global-morality/table/homosexuality/>

71 "Kenya making progress, but anti-gay violence continues," *Erasing 76 Crimes*, 7/18/2013. <http://76crimes.com/2013/07/18/kenya-making-progress-but-anti-gay-violence-continues/>

ABOUT 90% OF CITIZENS

WCF's presence in Africa has corresponded with a disturbing rise of harsh penalties for LGBT Africans in countries like Kenya, Uganda and Nigeria, where **about 90 percent of citizens believe homosexuality is morally unacceptable.**

colonial rule, but a harsher ban was signed into law by President Goodluck Jonathan in January 2014. The new law makes it illegal “not only to engage in an intimate relationship with a member of the same sex, but to attend or organize a meeting of gays, or patronize or operate any type of gay organization, including private clubs.”⁷² Several Nigerian states have imposed the death penalty for same-sex relationships.⁷³ In Uganda, President Museveni signed a law imposing life sentences for same-sex relations and punishing simply being homosexual with 14 years in prison. The Constitutional Court struck down the bill on a technicality involving the parliamentary procedure used to pass it, but the bill's original sponsor, David Bahati said he planned to re-introduce it. (As of press time, this publication the bill has not been re-introduced.) President Museveni will be under strong international pressure not to support it.

FWI and its president, Sharon Slater, also have ties to the harsh Ugandan legislation. Slater has been closely associated with anti-gay Ugandan minister Martin Ssempe, who is known for his extreme anti-LGBT rhetoric and support of the original Ugandan bill that included the death penalty.⁷⁴ He is listed on FWI's website as the African volunteer coordinator despite a disclaimer that FWI has since disassociated with him because of his support for the death penalty.⁷⁵

In 2015, the Center for Constitutional Rights discovered that Ssempe is an American citizen and the group subpoenaed him to testify in their case against fellow extremist Scott Lively, who is being sued for his anti-LGBT work and “his efforts to strip away fundamental rights from LGBTI persons in Uganda.” CCR believes Ssempe has knowledge relevant to the case.⁷⁶ It is ironic that Ssempe has obtained U.S. citizenship but is promoting hatred of LGBT people using the spurious claim that LGBT human rights are a Western imposition.

In May 2014, WCF gave its “2014 Natural Family Woman of the Year Award” to Nigeria's Theresa Okafor, who backed Nigeria's ban on homosexuality and claimed that LGBT rights advocates were conspiring with the terrorist group Boko Haram.⁷⁷ Repeatedly, WCF has cheered as its rhetoric is used to legitimize the terrorizing and murder of LGBT Africans.

72 “Nigerian President Signs Ban on Same-Sex Relationships,” New York Times, 1/13/2014. <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/01/14/world/africa/nigerian-president-signs-ban-on-same-sex-relationships.html>

73 “State-Sponsored Homophobia: A world survey of laws: Criminalisation, protection and recognition of same-sex love,” ILGA, May 2013. http://old.ilga.org/Statehomophobia/ILGA_State_Sponsored_Homophobia_2013.pdf

74 “American anti-gay Campaign in Africa opposes ‘fictitious sexual rights,’” Religious Dispatches, 4/17, 2012. <http://religiondispatches.org/american-anti-gay-campaign-in-africa-opposes-fictitious-sexual-rights/>

75 “Who We Are,” FWI, accessed 4/22/2015. http://www.familywatchinternational.org/fwi/who_we_are.cfm

76 “Anti-Gay Ugandan Extremist Martin Ssempe is U.S. Citizen; Testimony Sought in U.S. Court Case,” CRR, 4/9/2015. <http://ccrjustice.org/newsroom/press-releases/anti-gay-ugandan-extremist-martin-ssempe-u.s.-citizen%3B-testimony-sought-u.s.-court-case>

77 “World Congress Of Families To Honor Nigerian Activist Who Claims Gay Rights Advocates In ‘Conspiracy’ With Boko Haram,” Right Wing Watch, 5/13/2014. <http://www.rightwingwatch.org/content/world-congress-families-honor-nigerian-activist-who-claims-gay-rights-advocates-conspiracy-b>

WCF AT HOME

In the United States, WCF continues its work, too. In November 2013, WCF announced plans to hold a Capitol Hill symposium on what America can learn from family policy in Russia and other nations.⁷⁸ Republican Sen. Mark Kirk of Illinois initially reserved space for the group in a Senate office building. After the Human Rights Campaign informed Kirk of WCF's background and beliefs, he withdrew his support, saying that he "doesn't affiliate with groups that discriminate." A WCF representative responded to the snub by calling the senator "shameful" and a "coward."⁷⁹ Ultimately, WCF was able to hold the event because, at the last minute, House Speaker John Boehner offered the group a space.⁸⁰ At the briefing, panelists compared Kirk to Italian and German fascists in the 1920s and 1930s, praised the Russian propaganda law, and while acknowledging recent anti-LGBT violence, said that the United States should cut Russia "a lot of slack."⁸¹

Given the official animosity between the United States and Russia, it is hard to believe that activists would praise the country at an official event on Capitol Hill. Certainly, one wonders if Boehner was aware of the group's close ties to dictators and extremists when he sponsored their event.

In July 2014, WCF unveiled plans to hold its ninth World Congress of Families (WCF IX) in Salt Lake City, Utah, in October 2015. Convened by the conservative Utah-based think tank, the Sutherland Institute, this will be the first time the event will be held in the United States. According to WCF spokesman Don Feder, the group chose Salt Lake City because it has many good partner organizations in Utah.⁸² Partner groups helping to organize the event include, as expected, the Alliance Defending Freedom, Focus on the Family, and the National Organization for Marriage.⁸³ Organizers project the event will draw as many as 3,000 attendees, and the theme is to be "religious liberty," a timely and popular topic in U.S. right-wing politics.

In March 2015, in an interesting development, Utah's Republican-controlled legislature introduced and passed a bill that would prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity in housing and employment. Leaders in both houses of the legislature and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (the Mormon church) supported the bill, and the Republican governor said he would sign it,^{84,85} which he ultimately did.⁸⁶ The Family Research Council immediately released a statement calling on the Mormon Church to rethink its support of the measure and asserting that religious liberty cannot co-exist with "unrestrained sexual liberty."⁸⁷ This could set up an interesting internal dynamic between WCF, its Utah hosts and the Mormon Church. Additionally, one of WCF's main supporters, Family Watch International's Sharon Slater, is Mormon.

78 "Family in America To Hold Capitol Hill Symposium," WCF Press Release. <http://worldcongress.org/press-releases/family-america-hold-capitol-hill-symposium>

79 "Senator Kirk Pulls Senate Meeting Room For Group Supportive Of Russia's Anti-LGBT Law," Buzzfeed, 11/14/2013. <http://www.buzzfeed.com/lesterfeder/senator-kirk-pulls-senate-meeting-room-for-group-supportive>

80 "Speaker Boehner Welcomes Homophobic Group To Capitol Hill," ThinkProgress, 11/15/2013. <http://thinkprogress.org/lgbt/2013/11/15/2951031/speaker-boehner-welcomes-homophobic-group-capitol-hill/>; "Anti-Gay Groups Shunned By Mark Kirk Get Last-Minute Help From Speaker Boehner," Right Wing Watch, 11/15/2013. <http://www.rightwingwatch.org/content/anti-gay-groups-shunned-mark-kirk-get-last-minute-help-speaker-boehner>

81 "Religious Right Leaders Defend Russia's Anti-Gay Law," Right Wing Watch, 11/15/2013. <http://www.rightwingwatch.org/content/religious-right-leaders-defend-russia-s-anti-gay-law>

82 "Conservative Group That Opposes Same-Sex Marriage Plans Worldwide Conference in Salt Lake City," Associated Press, 7/1/14. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/07/01/gay-marriage-utah_n_5549265.html

83 "Coming soon to Salt Lake City: And international festival of bigotry," 3/15/2015. <http://www.lgbtqnation.com/2015/03/international-festival-of-bigotry/>

84 "About 55,000 LGBT People in Utah Would be Protected from Discrimination Under New Bill," Williams Institute, 3/4/2015. <http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/press/press-releases/about-55000-lgbt-people-in-utah-would-be-protected-from-discrimination-under-new-bill/>

85 "Utah House Passed Church-Backed Anti-Discrimination Bill," ABC, 3/12/2015. <http://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/utah-house-passes-church-backed-anti-discrimination-bill-29572577>

86 "Gov. Herbert signs Utah's LGBT non-discrimination bill into law as supporters cheer," Fox News, 3/12/2015. <http://fox13now.com/2015/03/12/gov-herbert-signs-utahs-lgbt-non-discrimination-bill-into-law-as-supporters-cheer/>

In preparation for the upcoming World Congress of Families IX, the WCF held a planning meeting in Salt Lake City in October 2014 that was attended by 75 representatives from 16 countries and 43 organizations around the world.⁸⁸ The purpose of the meeting was to gain consensus on the direction and vision for WCF moving forward. At the same time, WCF surveyed its 42 member organizations to select the five most important issues for the international “pro-family” movement. “Marriage” came in at number one, followed by “life (abortion, euthanasia,)” “the gay rights movement,” “fertility/demographic winter” and “parent’s rights.”⁸⁹

WCF IX Executive Director Janice Shaw Crouse also said the goal was to figure out how to frame the “traditional marriage” message to appeal to millennials.⁹⁰ Crouse is a board member of WCF, an author and columnist, and was formerly with the Concerned Women for America CWA.⁹¹ In December 2012, she attended and spoke at the launch of the National Parents Association of Russia at a forum entitled “Perspectives on The Inclusion of Parents and Pro-Family NGOs In Family and Demographic Policy in Russia.” In her remarks, she warned of the negative societal impact of the “breakdown of family structure” and praised Russia for taking a leading role in strengthening the “traditional” family.⁹² Crouse also wrote a 2014 article, “Learning from Russia’s Return to its Historical Roots” that condemned U.S. gay-rights groups for trying to stop the regional WCF event in Australia and for calling for an investigation of the Americans who attended the September 2014 Moscow conference, that Crouse described as a “non-controversial international pro-family celebration.” She praised Russia for remaining steadfast in its rejection of the ideals of “western LGBTIQ fascists.”⁹³ Crouse’s loyalty to WCF may have caused a rift with CWA.⁹⁴ Crouse attended the Moscow conference despite CWA pulling out of the original WCF event. In September 2014, she tweeted that she was unemployed and on March 12, 2015⁹⁵ she announced her first day as the executive director of WCF IX on Facebook.

According to C-Fam’s Austin Ruse, a smaller planning committee met in March 2015 to continue organizing the October 2015 WCF IX, but no further details are available.⁹⁶ At the time of this publication, an agenda for the Congress had not yet been released. The Congress website is <http://wcf9.org/>.

87 “Family Research Council Urges Mormon Church to Rethink Utah SOGI Measure,” PR Newswire, 3/4/2015. <http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/family-research-council-urges-mormon-church-to-rethink-utah-sogi-measure-300045901.html>

88 “Strategic Planning Meeting for WCF IX in Salt Lake City,” WCF Newsletter, 11/2014. http://worldcongress.org/files/9414/1582/4595/WCF_News_November_2014.pdf

89 Partner Issues Survey,” WCF Newsletter, 11/2014. http://worldcongress.org/files/9414/1582/4595/WCF_News_November_2014.pdf

90 “Group Meeting in Salt Lake City to Plan 2015 World Congress of Families,” Deseret News, 10/14/2014. <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/865613670/Group-meeting-in-Salt-Lake-to-plan-controversial-2015-World-Congress-of-Families.html?pg=all>

91 Concerned Women for America website. Accessed 4/21/2015. <http://www.cwfa.org/resources/beverly-lahaye-institute/about-the-beverly-lahaye-institute/>

92 “WCF Representative In Russia And CIS Instrumental In Organizing National Parents Association of Russia,” WCF Newsletter, Dec 2012/Jan 2013. <http://worldcongress.org/wcfnl/pdf/2013/wcfnl0113.pdf>

93 “Learning from Russia’s Return to its Historical Roots,” BarbWire, 9/24/2015. <http://barbwire.com/2014/09/24/learning-russias-return-historical-roots/>

94 “Russian ‘Pro-Family’ Conference Exposing Internal Dissension Among American Religious Right Leaders?,” TwoCare, 9/10/2014. <http://www.twocare.org/russian-pro-family-conference-exposing-internal-dissension-among-american-religious-right-leaders/>

95 Janice Shaw Crouse Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/janice.crouse?fref=ts>

96 “World Congress of Families – Salt Lake City,” C-Fam, 3/19/2015. <https://c-fam.org/world-congress-families/>

WCF AT THE UNITED NATIONS

The World Congress of Families and its partners have actively fought efforts in United Nations mechanisms to extend human rights protections for LGBT people and to recognize LGBT families. They understand the value of the U.N. as a global policy forum and strategically abuse U.N. mechanisms to impede moves towards equality for sexual and gender minorities.

WCF works with U.N. delegates of different countries to insert restrictive language on the “natural family” and “traditional values” in U.N. documents and resolutions. At the conclusion of the first World Congress in Prague in 1997, WCF published a declaration in support of the “natural family.”⁹⁷ These definitions of the family are narrow and maliciously seek to exclude LGBT couples and families. Such exclusions have adverse real life impact as they lead to the denial of legitimate family-based benefits for LGBT spouses and families in the U.N. system and in countries.

WCF works in tandem with certain countries to impede advancements in LGBT rights. It does so by encouraging conservative coalition voting blocs that include some African, Eastern European, and Middle Eastern countries, as well as Russia and the Vatican. The participation of Russia is especially significant given its status as a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council with veto power. In fact, WCF’s Russia representative, Alexey Komov has been called WCF’s “Ambassador to the U.N.”⁹⁸

WCF and its intolerant allies frequently misinterpret the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which states that “The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State,”⁹⁹ when arguing against efforts to broaden language on family in U.N. documents to be inclusive. For example, in February 2014, WCF partner Center for Family and Human Rights (C-Fam) condemned the Obama Administration’s unsuccessful attempt to change the definition of family in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to acknowledge that there are diverse forms of the family.¹⁰⁰

97 “Prague 1997: Declaration,” World Congress of Families, http://worldcongress.org/WCF1/wcf1_declaration.htm

98 “FamilyPolicy.ru Leaders Participated in the World Public Forum ‘Dialogue of Civilizations,’” Family Policy, 10/15/2012. <http://en.familypolicy.ru/read/190>

99 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml#a16>

100 WCF Newsletter, 3-4/2014, http://worldcongress.org/files/8913/9715/2397/WCF_March_2014.pdf

WCF partner Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) received U.N. special consultative status in 2010. After receiving consultative status, Benjamin Bull, ADF's Director of Global Activities and Strategic Alliances, declared that "ADF can now have a say when U.N. treaties and conventions are drafted that directly impact religious liberty and important matters related to the sanctity of life, marriage, and the family."¹⁰¹

Another WCF partner Family Watch International (FWI) has hosted training sessions for country delegates in advance of U.N. meetings to arm them with strategies to oppose equality.¹⁰² FWI President Sharon Slater described its first Global Family Policy Forum in 2011 which trained delegates from 23 countries as "probably the single most important thing that Family Watch has ever done!"¹⁰³ In June 2014, Slater worked with Russia and a conservative bloc at the U.N. Human Rights Council to pass a "Protection of the Family" resolution that blocked the addition of language acknowledging that "various forms of the family exist."¹⁰⁴ She also moderated a Vatican panel seeking a stand-alone goal intended to exclude LGBT families in the U.N.'s post-2015 development agenda.¹⁰⁵

WCF and its allies are particularly active during the annual meetings of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and the Commission on Population and Development (CPD) at the U.N.. At the 2014 CPD for example, C-Fam and FWI focused on the issue of "sexual rights," with C-Fam claiming that Western countries "ambushed" Africa by proposing a document "that re-opens the troublesome issues of abortion and homosexuality in U.N. negotiations."¹⁰⁶ C-Fam later touted the defeat of "the sexual left"¹⁰⁷ and said that countries had succeeded in reaffirming "the right to decide their laws, and respect for religious beliefs and culture."¹⁰⁸ FWI similarly reported on the "rejection" of "sexual rights" based on sexual orientation and gender identity.¹⁰⁹

101 ADF Press Release, 7/28/2010 <http://www.adfmedia.org/News/PRDetail/4201>

102 Equality Matters blog, 5/24/2011 <http://equalitymatters.org/blog/201105240010>

103 FWI Newsletter, 2/3/2011, <http://www.familywatchinternational.org/fwi/newsletter/0502.cfm>

104 FWI Newsletter, 7/2/2014, <http://www.familywatchinternational.org/fwi/newsletter/0701.cfm>

105 "Mainstreaming the Family in the Post 2015 U.N. Development Goals," FWI, You Tube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y5qJOD8fp14&feature=youtu.be>

106 "U.S. and EU Push Africans Once More on Abortion and Homosexuality," C-Fam, 4/10/2014, https://c-fam.org/friday_fax/us-and-eu-push-africans-once-more-on-abortion-and-homosexuality/

107 "No Progress for Sexual Progressives at the U.N., Cause for Concern Remains," C-Fam, 4/10/2014, https://c-fam.org/friday_fax/analysis-no-progress-for-sexual-progressives-at-the-un-cause-for-concern-remains/

108 "U.N. Rejects 'Sexual Rights' in Lead Up to Cairo Anniversary," C-Fam, 4/17/2014, https://c-fam.org/friday_fax/un-rejects-sexual-rights-in-lead-up-to-cairo-anniversary/

109 FWI Newsletter, 4/25/2014, <http://www.familywatchinternational.org/fwi/newsletter/0687.cfm>

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