



William J. Murray

The Chairman's Action Report

Religious
Freedom
Coalition

December 16, 2004

A VERY STRONG YEAR FOR RFC

This will be the last Chairman's Report for 2004, a year in which the Religious Freedom Coalition had both tremendous growth and success. During 2004 as our membership grew our influence on Congress grew as well. One Senator called me at home at night to ask my opinion of an issue regarding religious freedom in a north African nation. Virtually every week our office receives calls from other conservative organizations seeking our assistance on issues ranging from abstinence education to sexual trafficking. Below I have highlighted a few of the major issues and events the RFC has been involved in during 2004

INTERNATIONAL

Morocco

In March of this year I traveled to Morocco on a fact finding mission to determine if that Islamic nation was indeed moving toward a secular and democratic society. The fact finding team was made up of both conservative and liberal Christian leaders, as well as congressional staff members who went as monitors. Our team met with the leaders of both the Upper and Lower Houses of government as well as with representatives of the King. This was a milestone trip, with Christian leaders invited to this Islamic nation which is moderating and drawing closer to the West. As a result of this trip, a large Christian concert will be held in Morocco next May. A White Paper I wrote on Morocco as a result of the mission has been widely published.

Israel

I flew directly from Casa Blanca, Morocco to Tel Aviv, Israel to work with evangelists and others supported by the Religious Freedom Coalition. My first stop was Ruth's House, a center of Christian evangelism in Tel Aviv. We support a Messianic Jewish outreach ministry which operates out of Ruth's House. I also visited the evangelist we support in the Israeli West Bank settlement of Ariel. I spent several days working from Ariel to take the Gospel message to Palestinians. In the West Bank village of Beit Jala the RFC supports a boarding school for Christian students as well as a kindergarten. Because the RFC sends many thousands of dollars a year to Christian schools in Muslim areas it is our responsibility to visit them and to examine how the dollars you contribute are spent there. The school had used funds sent by us to modernize the dilapidated kitchen and install new stoves and freezers.

European Union

In August I represented the Religious Freedom Coalition at the Interparliamentary Conference on Human Rights and Religious Freedom in Brussels, Belgium. While NGO leaders such as myself served on the panels, the actual attendees were members of parliaments from all over the world. At the conference I was the moderator of the panel on anti-Semitism. In addition, I spent the three days of the conference speaking with various members of parliaments from around the world on the issue of religious freedom for Christians in Islamic areas of the world.

Serbia and Kosovo

At the close of the Interparliamentary Conference in Brussels I traveled to Belgrade, the capital of Serbia. There I met with the President of Serbia and Montenegro, Boris Tadic, and other high ranking officials in that government and in the Orthodox Church. Over a period of two days we assembled a fact finding team to travel under heavy guard to the Islamic area of Kosovo which is now controlled by NATO and the United Nations. Kosovo was a province of Serbia until President Bill Clinton ordered Serbia bombed until it surrendered Kosovo to Islamic insurgents.

The fact finding team included both conservative and liberal Christian leaders who examined the churches, schools and homes of Orthodox Christians which were destroyed in March during an “ethnic cleansing” incident. Mobs of Muslims had burned and destroyed more than thirty-five churches and seminaries in the attacks. While in Kosovo the RFC, separately from the other groups represented, delivered thousands of dollars worth of medical supplies to a rural clinic.

Upon returning from Kosovo I wrote a White Paper on the situation there that has been published in various international journals and in several different languages. I also appeared on numerous radio and TV shows as well as on Voice of America broadcasts discussing issues I had brought forth in the White Paper on Kosovo.

Sweden

In October the Religious Freedom Coalition brought a Swedish lawmaker and the head of Sweden’s pro-life organization to Washington, DC to talk to congressmen and Senators about the arrest and conviction of a pastor in that nation for criticizing homosexual behavior. This was done as part of our campaign to stop “hate-crimes” legislation from being passed as part of the Defense Authorization Bill. When congressmen and Senators heard the story of Pastor Ake Green’s arrest and conviction for the “hate-crime” of saying homosexuality was a sin, the tide turned against having that language in the Defense Authorization Bill.

United Nations

At the United Nations the RFC continues to lobby for the pro-life movement and to be a voice opposing the many liberal NGOs which function there. We look forward to official recognition of the RFC as a registered NGO in 2005.

ON CAPITOL HILL

Partial Birth Abortion

Members of our staff attended the signing by President George W. Bush of the Partial Birth Abortion Ban culminating an effort that had spanned many years. Congress had passed the legislation in the past, but it was vetoed by President Bill Clinton.

Unborn Victims of Violence

Also passed and signed into law this year was the Unborn Victims of Violence Act which made the murder of a pregnant woman two crimes, not one. The perpetrator can now be convicted of the murder of two victims, thus recognizing the unborn baby as a person in the eyes of the law. This was a major victory.

Federal Marriage Amendment

Although we failed to obtain the required two-thirds vote in the House and Senate the massive media campaign of which we were a part served to educate the public and resulted in the passage of many constitutional amendments at the state level. Eleven states passed traditional marriage amendments to their constitutions on election day.

Marriage Protection Act

In the House, we worked on and helped to pass Congressman Hostettler's Marriage Protection Act. This act, if passed by the Senate, would remove the authority of federal Courts to redefine marriage. The bill was also known as the Super DOMA.

Human Cloning Ban

Staff members of the RFC were among a small select group in the East Room of the White House to watch President Bush sign the ban against cloning of humans. We were there in recognition of all the work we had done in support of this legislation.

Decency Enforcement Act

Among the bills we worked on that did not have a high profile was the Decency Enforcement Act which raised the fines against broadcasters for putting profanity and sexual filth on the public airways. This bill

increased the fines to such a level that Clear Channel Radio dropped radio shock jock Howard Stern from the air.

Freedom of Speech From the Pulpit

During the year we continued to work with Walter Jones to pass some version of his bill that would remove the IRS rules restricting the free speech of pastors.

Other Legislation

The Religious Freedom Coalition also worked on the following legislation:

- First Amendment Restoration Act
- Protecting Children from Peer-to-Peer Pornography Act
- Adoption Information Act
- North Korea Human Rights Act
- Unborn Child Pain Awareness Act
- Child Custody Protection Act

The Religious Freedom Coalition also signed numerous letters with other conservative groups asking the President or others for action on certain issues:

- Letter to FCC on indecency at Super Bowl half time show
- Letter to President encouraging his position on stem cell research
- Letter thanking President for his attention to human trafficking
- Letter to Speaker Hastert on conscience protection language
- Letter to Majority Leader Frist on Sudan relief situation.

Judicial Nominees

The Religious Freedom Coalition very actively supported confirmation of President Bush's conservative judicial nominees who were blocked by obstructionist liberal Democrats in the Senate.

And that is not all ...

During the year I have reported on the numerous times we have assisted other, sometimes smaller organizations with work in Washington, DC. We also arranged for a Christian evangelist from the Holy Land to speak to a group in the Capitol complex and on another occasion arranged for the Orthodox Bishop of Kosovo to meet with various Senators and congressmen about religious persecution of Christians in his country.

This report is a a brief outline of just some of the activities of the Religious Freedom Coalition in Washington, DC and around the world. With your help we will continue to defend the rights of families in America and bring religious freedom to Christians in repressive areas of the world such as Kosovo.



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