



William J. Murray

The Chairman's Action Report

Religious
Freedom
Coalition

June 10, 2005

RFC ACTIVITIES

The Religious Freedom Coalition champions the social conservative cause where it matters the most and that is on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC. I make that point over and over not only in these reports, but on the radio and TV interviews I do as well. I can speak authoritatively to the news media because the Religious Freedom Coalition is involved directly in the process.

Many Christian organizations reported on the release of the Human Trafficking Report by the State Department the first week of June. Our executive Director, Peggy Birchfield, was actually in the State Department with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice when the report was released. Peggy was invited there to represent RFC because the Religious Freedom Coalition had contributed suggestions for the report at several meetings prior to its release. We do not merely report on the State Department's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, we work with them. The RFC's Peggy Birchfield is a regular at State Department events concerning issues of human trafficking, or modern day slavery. Millions of young women and girls and boys, some even pre-teens, are forced into sexual slavery each year. As Christians we must work to combat modern day slavery.

While some organizations "monitor" or "report" on Capitol Hill activities, often the Religious Freedom Coalition actively participates in those activities. Because we work directly with many congressmen and Senators they are more willing to assist us with our own projects.

RFC CAPITOL HILL RECEPTION

On June 21st, Senator Sam Brownback (R-KS) along with Congresswoman Jo Ann Davis (R-VA) and Congressman Trent Franks (R-AZ) have agreed to host a reception on Capitol Hill for the Religious Freedom Coalition's Bethlehem Project. The object of the Bethlehem Project is to help the remnant of Christians who continue to live in the birthplace of Christ. Because of a lack of jobs and continued Muslim oppression, so many Christians have fled the "West Bank" - which includes Bethlehem - that they now represent only 20% of the population. At the current rate Bethlehem will become a Christian theme park operated by Muslim businessmen sooner rather than later. If you are in the Washington, DC area on June 21st, please call our office at 202-543-0300 for information on attending the reception.

ATTACK ON CHRISTIAN LEADER

The stronger the faith of a born-again Christian, the more likely it is that he or she will become a target of the Democrat Party. Majority Leader Tom DeLay (R-TX) and his wife have taken dozens of foster children into their home and raised them as their own. We are not talking about newborn babies, but children of all ages including troubled teens.



Tom DeLay and
William J. Murray

During the Cold War he helped Jewish "Refuseniks" escape ethnic and religious persecution in the Soviet Union. Knowing this you can imagine my

surprise when I had to push my way through loony left protesters one evening in late May to attend a dinner honoring Tom DeLay. The biggest banner read, "Give to the needy, not the greedy."

Tom DeLay greedy? This is the man who helped engineer the plan to take millions of people off of welfare and put them back into the workforce. This is the man who has stood up to defend the human rights of people, including the unborn. This is a man who has spent his own time and money helping to build centers for foster care and to furnish clean water to poor neighborhoods. This is the man who leads the House Bible study and gives of himself constantly to the body of Christ.

My conclusion: the only thing the left understands is hate. They don't care to look at anyone who disagrees with them as even being a human being. The catcalls full of lies and the banners full of hate reflected the current state of the once proud Democrat party, a party that was once about ideas and now is devoid of even human feeling.

MY MEETING WITH ARIEL SHARON

On the morning of May 24th, I was among 20 evangelical Christian leaders who met with Prime Minister Ariel Sharon in Washington, DC. Among those in attendance were Dr. Richard Land of the Southern Baptist Convention, Dr. Pat Robertson, Dr. John Hagee and former presidential candidate Gary Bauer. In his opening remarks Prime Minister Sharon made it very clear that he sees the evangelicals as friends of Israel and welcomed the political influence we have as a group both on Capitol Hill and within the White House. The Prime Minister had more of an agenda in meeting with us than praising our support of Israel; he wanted our support of his disengagement plan.

The Prime Minister assured us that he was not surrendering Israel and recounted all of the wars he had fought in for the security of Israel, reminding us that he was seriously wounded twice. He then made the clear statement that he was "not going to negotiate the security of Israel" and that he would "defend our people."

The Prime Minister made several references to the Bible while stating he was sure those present had a better knowledge of it than he did. Then, he told the group about his first meeting with Pope John Paul II in which he recounted the Pope telling him that Israel is holy to Jews, Christians and Muslims, but that God had promised the land only to the Jews." He made it clear when asked by Gary Bauer that he would never negotiate over Jerusalem's future and that the entire city would remain a part of Israel. On the other hand he stated that the fence being built was "not a border."

The Prime Minister also discussed his relationship with President Bush, recounting their first meeting when the President was still Governor of Texas. He joked that the Jordan River is about the same size as the river on the President's Texas ranch. However, he was very serious in stating that the President agreed with him that there would be no "right of return" to Israel of Palestinians and that major Jewish population blocks established over the years will be a part of Israel while not referring to cities in Samaria such as Ariel directly. This is important to the RFC as we support a full time evangelist whose head quartered in Ariel. We support a ministry apartment for Christian visitors to Ariel as well.



Ariel Sharon

(After the public portion of the meeting I pressed the Prime Minister privately to be more specific about the future of Ariel which is the base of the Religious Freedom Coalition's operations

in Israel. I specifically asked him if the city would be inside the fence and be a future part of Israel. He smiled and responded, "They don't have to worry." I asked him directly if I could tell that to leaders of the city and he responded by saying "Tell them." I believe this is the most direct answer the Prime Minister has given about the fate of Ariel which is the very heart of Samaria.)

The Prime Minister also touched on terror and the situation in Iran saying that the goal of the current Iranian government was to "destroy the Jewish people." He went on to state that Iran is developing missiles that are a threat to more of the world than just Israel. He did not say what action, if any, Israel intended to take against Iran to stop the developing nuclear threat there. In all, the meeting lasted more than one hour and was very cordial. I believe most of those present came away believing that it is Prime Minister Sharon's intent to establish dependable borders for Israel. At the same time evangelical leaders have Biblical concerns about the surrender of any part of Samaria.

The Prime Minister was asked about the persecution of Christians in Bethlehem and he responded by asking those present to do something. He said, "You must expose what is going on. This is something Israel cannot do anything ... it is up to you to tell the world." He was well aware of the persecution of Christians and the fact that they are being pushed from Bethlehem and seemed frustrated that Christians in the West have done nothing. I understand his frustration. I cannot even get on a Christian radio or TV show to discuss the persecution of Christians in Bethlehem. American Christians have just about totally abandoned their brothers in Christ in Bethlehem.

CAPITOL EVACUATION INCLUDES RFC STAFF

RFC's staff was participating in a briefing on Capitol Hill last month when the emergency alarms went off and officers stormed down the hallways yelling at staff, members and anyone inside the U.S. Capitol to leave immediately. Sounds of screaming policemen armed with rifles, "MOVE, MOVE, MOVE!! Do not walk - RUN. Get out of the building FAST!!" Dozens of people hurried out and down the streets. Not ever experiencing this type of emergency evacuation gave the staff an uneasy feeling.

The emergency evacuation of the Supreme Court, U.S. Capitol and the White House took place after a small plane entered the restricted air space of Washington DC. The staff could see two F16 planes surrounding a small plane on either side as if they were escorting the small engine plane away, later finding out that indeed this was the case. Helicopters continued to fly very low to the area giving an eerie feeling for the next few hours.

OUR MEETING WITH ATTORNEY GENERAL GONZALES

RFC staff attended a private meeting with the new Attorney General, Albert Gonzales, shortly after the evacuation of the Capitol. At the meeting he referred to the evacuations by saying: "These types of measures are important; terrorism is our number one priority. All threats and any threat should be taken with precaution."

The Attorney General spoke of his concerns and priorities: gun crimes, obscenity issues and human trafficking, all issues important to the conservative administration of President Bush. With both the Justice Department and the State Department focus on human trafficking we believe there will be real progress in these areas this coming year.

Virtually every week an RFC staff member, normally either myself or Peggy Birchfield meet with high ranking members of the Bush Administration. These meetings are not special hand shaking events for us but normal everyday business of the Religious Freedom Coalition.

RFC FUND RAISING CONCERT

Three big name Christian music groups have agreed to perform at a fund raising event for the Religious Freedom Coalition's Bethlehem Project. This is in addition to the fund raising reception being held with Senator Sam Brownback and other Senators and congressmen in Washington later this month.

The concert is scheduled for October 22nd in Pennsylvania. All the proceeds from the concert will be used to send children from Christian families in and around Bethlehem to Christian schools, so that they will not have to attend the public Palestinian Authority schools where they must put up with abuse and insults to their faith. The music groups who have volunteered their services include Young Harmony, The Hoskins Family, and The Bowlings. All three are contemporary Christian music groups. The exact location and time will be announced as we get closer to the concert.

BETHLEHEM

Some may think that it just does not matter if not a single Christian actually lives in Bethlehem. Muslims, on the other hand, know how powerful the worldwide symbolism is if they have total control over the birthplace of Christ. It is their "proof" that Christ has no power, and their mullahs will use the diminishing Christian presence in the birthplace of Christ to disparage Christianity in Africa and other third world areas. For every missionary we send to Africa, the Islamists send two jihadists.

The Bethlehem Project is in my heart and when I can explain in person what it is we do there, many come forward to help. As mentioned above Senator Brownback has offered to help us raise funds at a reception on Capitol Hill for the Bethlehem Project. Other Christian congressmen and Senators have offered their help as well. Several Christian music groups are also volunteering their talents to help the Christians of Bethlehem.

In August I will return to Bethlehem to help put in place the infrastructure to deliver the aid that is needed to keep Christian families in Bethlehem. In October I plan to accompany a church group to Bethlehem in hopes they will help with Christian education there. We as Christians should not, we cannot, abandon the birthplace of Christ. We cannot turn over the birthplace of Christ to those who despise His gospel message.

All of our projects and efforts in Washington, DC continue. We must have our presence in Washington or our projects overseas, particularly in Bethlehem cannot move forward. Please pray for our success both in Washington, DC and in Bethlehem.

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William J. Murray, Chairman

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