

**WORLD CONGRESS OF FAMILIES IV
INTERNATIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT
WARSAW, POLAND
May 5 - 7, 2006**

by Peggy Birchfield, Executive Director

The Religious Freedom Coalition was invited to be part of the international planning committee for the World Congress of Families IV to be held in Warsaw, Poland in May of 2007. The planning committee met in Warsaw also, so I traveled there to represent the RFC at the three days of meetings which included staff members from the European Parliament as well as



Peggy Birchfield seated with leaders from several nations during the introductions at WCF IV Planning session.

representatives of pro-life and pro-family organizations from many countries such as the United States, Spain, Russia, France, Germany, Poland, Mexico, Qatar, Kenya and others. A major goal of the World Congress of Families is to promote government policies which will encourage rather than discourage stable marriages and traditional families. There have been three World Congresses to date – in Prague, Geneva and Mexico City. Warsaw, Poland was selected because unlike most other European countries, Poland is still conservative and religious, with a government that supports traditional marriage and strong families.

As the representatives arrived on Friday from different parts of the world the planning sessions started by meeting with Cabinet members of the Polish Government. As the discussions began, each of the group leaders shared their experiences from past World Congresses. The group of leaders were taken on a tour of the Palace of Culture & Science in which the 2007 event will be held. The Palace of Culture & Science is the tallest building in Warsaw and was built by the well known Architect Lew Rudniew. The Polish Government fully supports the World Congress of Families and mentioned that this event will have easy access for those pro-family groups in the European area to attend.



Archbishop praying with participants during prayer meeting



Peggy Birchfield (center) with head phones listening to the translations of the discussions.

The afternoon session took place at the Institute for Studies on the Family and the Institute of the Holy Family located in Limianki. The session began with introductions of the groups that were participating. After several hours of discussions the group concluded the evening with Mass and a prayer meeting with the His Eminence Kazimierz Majdanski, Archbishop Emeritus of Stettino-Kamien

We began Saturday's session early at the Family Advisors Office in Warsaw, focusing on plans for the fourth World Congress of Families. Discussions of the themes, review of speakers, the program and invitees were part of the day's agenda. The meeting was conducted in four languages.

The final day convened with Representatives visiting the local churches for worship and fellowship. Our final visit to the Family Advisor's Office in Warsaw concluded the planning discussions. The committee wrapping up the meeting with a draft program for WCF IV with proposed speakers and a review of the developing plan that will be put in to effect over the next year.

Past World Congresses have included more than 3,300 pro-family leaders, scholars and activists from 75 nations. Representatives feel the World Congress in 2007 will draw a much larger crowd than previous Congresses. A letter signed by participants of the planning group was sent to the Archbishop asking for patronage of the event. The evening ended with several of the leaders touring the downtown part of historic Warsaw.



Peggy Birchfield with Lucyue Wiswiewska, Member of Polish Parliament

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