
EXPOSED: THE WORLD CONGRESS OF FAMILIES

AN AMERICAN ORGANIZATION EXPORTING HATE



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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 religious 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. However, WCF's 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 made associations that few Americans would embrace, such as 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 its 2013 ban on “LGBT propaganda.” WCF's backers include Russian officials, who were sanctioned by the U.S. 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, plans were announced to hold a conference in Salt Lake City, Utah, in October 2015 instead, the first time a major WCF event will be held in the United States.

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 that would have banned discussion of homosexuality in Polish public schools, and lobbied against marriage equality legislation in Albania and Romania.

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, Australia, drew hundreds of “pro-family” activists from around the world. Their influence in Australia continues to grow — longtime WCF representative Kevin Andrews was recently appointed Australia’s Minister of Social Services.

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. Their 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. They held their first official event in 2009, where their 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. Just this year, 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.

WCF’s presence can be felt throughout the globe where anti-LGBT sentiment is growing. It has had a dangerous influence, not only making it harder to be 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.

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 claimed feminism and homosexuality have led to population decline and precipitated 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.

More than 700 people attended the first World Congress of Families in Prague, Czech Republic, in 1997. Since then, WCF has held meetings in the United States, Europe, 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.

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. It holds massive conferences, called World Congresses, which attract thousands of delegates from around the world. WCF officials and representatives have hosted gatherings in Russia, Eastern Europe, Mexico, Australia and Africa.¹

The group takes credit for Russia's laws against LGBT “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.

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

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. President George W. Bush sent a welcome letter to the 2001 WCF regional conference in Washington, D.C. U.S. Reps. 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."²

At the same time, WCF has ties to the highest levels of governments in Russia — including Russian President Vladimir Putin — as well as in Eastern Europe, Mexico and Australia.

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

WHO IS THE WORLD CONGRESS OF FAMILIES?

STAFF

WCF 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)
- Alan 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)³

100% AMERICAN

Despite its international focus, the WCF staff and board of directors is 100 percent American.

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.⁴ These funders include American conservative and religious 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.⁵ The Knights of Columbus contributed at least \$75,000 to WCF and was a major funder of the 2007 World Congress.⁶ 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.

³ www.worldcongress.org/people/board-directors, accessed 5/31/2014

⁴ "How US 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>

⁵ Associated Press, 11/23/98

⁶ Knights of Columbus Charitable Contributions 2007, <http://www.cca4.org/Contributions.pdf>

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 throughout the world — 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 and Human Rights Institute, Concerned Women for America, the Brigham Young University Management Society and Southern Virginia University.

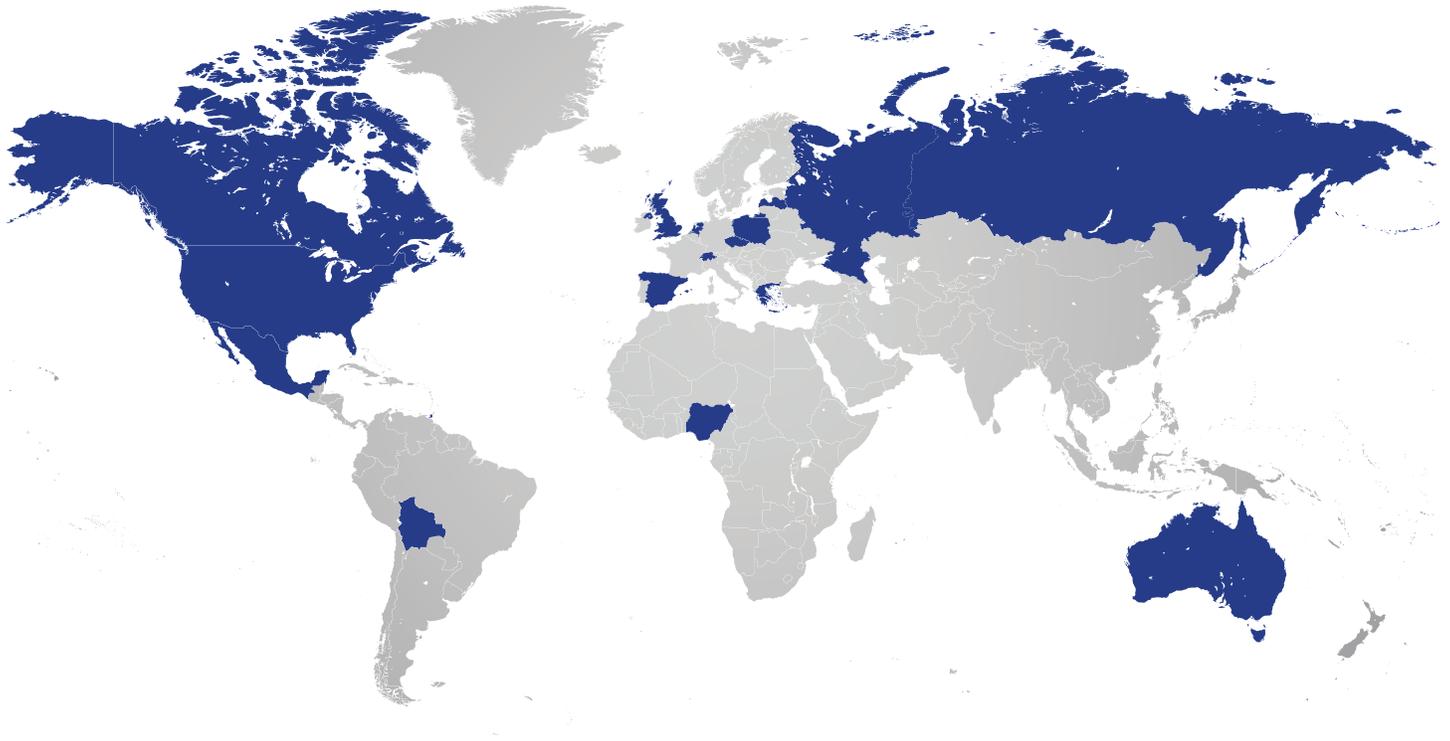
The group listed 29 “partner organizations,” with a combined total annual budget of approximately \$216 million, in a planning brochure for the now-canceled 2014 Moscow congress. Of those 29 sponsors, more than 60 percent were American groups.

**\$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 countless summits, regional meetings and planning meetings. An eighth World Congress was planned for Moscow in 2014, but was canceled after the Russian annexation of Crimea. The ninth World Congress 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.



PARTIAL LIST OF WCF EVENTS:

- March 1997: World Congress of Families I, Prague, Czech Republic
- August 1999: Regional Meeting, Melbourne, Australia
- November 1999: World Congress of Families II, Geneva, Switzerland
- October 2001: Regional Meeting, Washington, D.C.
- May 2002: Pre-General Assembly Special Session On Children Meeting, New York, N.Y.
- March 2004: World Congress of Families III, Mexico City, Mexico
- March 2005: Regional Meeting, Utah
- May 2006: Planning Committee Meeting, Warsaw, Poland
- May 2007: World Congress of Families IV, Warsaw, Poland
- February 2009: Planning Committee Meeting, Amsterdam, Netherlands
- May 2009: Regional Meeting, Riga, Latvia
- June 2009: Regional Meeting, Abuja, Nigeria
- August 2009: World Congress of Families V, Amsterdam, Netherlands
- 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, England
- 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
- May 2012: World Congress of Families VI, Madrid, Spain
- 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
- May 2013: World Congress of Families VII, Sydney, Australia
- June 2013: Regional Meeting, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago
- August 2013: Regional Meeting, St. Charles, Illinois
- October 2013: Planning Committee Meeting, Moscow, Russia
- April 2014: Regional Meeting, Santa Cruz, Bolivia
- October 2014: Scheduled Planning Committee Meeting, Salt Lake City, Utah
- October 2015: Scheduled World Congress of Families IX, Salt Lake City, Utah

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 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.”⁷ And after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, WCF spokesman Don Feder continued to defend Putin, writing that “Putin is a power player who cares more about Russia's national interests, and Russian minorities in his near abroad, than in that mythical force known as world opinion.”⁸

WCF's first event in Russia was a “Demographic Summit” in Moscow in June 2011. Since then, they have 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 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.”⁹

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.¹⁰

While in Moscow, Jacobs held dozens of meetings with Russian policymakers and leaders, and prepared for the upcoming 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.”¹¹

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 Duma member Yelena Mizulina.

7 “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>

8 “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

9 “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

10 “How US 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>

11 *Ibid.*

Mizulina would prove to be a staunch ally of WCF and a key supporter of anti-choice and anti-LGBT legislation in Russia. Head of the Russian parliament's Committee on Family, Women and Children, Mizulina is known as Putin's "morality crusader." The day after the Moscow Demographic Summit, she introduced a package of anti-abortion laws — the first new anti-choice laws in Russia since the fall of the USSR. She is responsible for the legislation outlawing LGBT "propaganda," and has also pushed for bills to punish cursing on the Internet and 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 forum¹² for legislators at the 2014 World Congress in Moscow.

Currently, Mizulina is facing U.S. sanctions for her role in Russia's annexation of Crimea.

Carlson and Jacobs 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 2013.¹³ 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 them 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. Russian Orthodox 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."¹⁴

In the years since WCF became active in Russia, the country has become an increasingly harsh place for the LGBT community. Thirteen anti-LGBT laws have been passed since Jacobs' first visit to Russia.¹⁵ 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 for publicly advocating for LGBT rights.¹⁶ 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.

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

— WCF Managing Director Larry Jacobs, 2013

12 "Russian Lawmaker Is Putin's Conservative Champion," AP, 8/9/2013. <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/russian-lawmaker-putins-conservative-champion>

13 "Russia Gay Laws Cheered by US Conservatives," RIA, 3/8/2013. <http://en.ria.ru/analysis/20130803/182557638/Russia-Gay-Homosexuality-Laws-Cheered-by-US-Conservatives.html>

14 "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>

15 "How US 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>

16 "Russia passes law banning gay 'propaganda,'" The Guardian, 6/11/2013. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jun/11/russia-law-banning-gay-propaganda>

In July 2013, Putin signed a law banning adoption by same-sex couples and singles 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.”¹⁷ As a result, a large number of Russian orphans are unable to find families. Parliament member Alexei Zhuravlyov even went so far as to introduce legislation to revoke gay Russians’ parental rights — but this bill was eventually withdrawn.¹⁸

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 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,”¹⁹ and a 2014 Pew study revealed that 72 percent of Russians feel that homosexuality is “morally unacceptable.”²⁰

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. In the past year alone, a LGBT bar was attacked with 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. Perpetrators of anti-LGBT violence often escape prosecution. When they are charged, they often receive light sentences.

78%

According 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.”

17 “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/>

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

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

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

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.²¹

The culmination of WCF's activity in Russia was to be the September 2014 World Congress 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.

Difficulty 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 Mizulnina.

WCF initially stood by Russia and planned to go ahead with the conference. WCF Communications Director Don Feder wrote a column entitled "Putin Doesn't Threaten Our National Security, Obama Does."²²

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.

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."²³ 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."²⁴

21 "How US 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>

22 "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

23 "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>

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

EASTERN EUROPE

Although WCF has been most active in Russia, their 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.”²⁵

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.²⁶ And earlier in 2013, WCF sent a representative to the Ukrainian parliament in support of a Russian-style ban on “gay propaganda.”²⁷

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.²⁸ A spring 2014 regional conference was planned for Serbia, but has apparently been postponed.

WCF held the fourth World Congress in Warsaw, Poland, in 2007, with over 3,500 attendees, including several Polish government officials. Polish Minister of Education and Vice Prime Minister Roman Giertych called the 2007 World Congress “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.”²⁹ (The bill was withdrawn following outrage from the European community.)

A little more than a year after their major event in Sydney, World Congress of Families organizers are planning a smaller regional event to take place in Melbourne on Aug. 30, 2014. Kevin Andrews is again set to participate alongside Victoria State Attorney-General Robert Clark and at least two American speakers, including Larry Jacobs. Also scheduled to appear is 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.

Indeed, WCF’s influence can be felt throughout Eastern Europe. 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.”³⁰ 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 House Majority Leader Tom DeLay, and former Arkansas governor and presidential candidate Mike Huckabee.³¹

25 “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>

26 “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>

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

28 “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>

29 WCF press release, 4/13/07

30 “World Congress of Families Condemns Participation by the United States Ambassador to Latvia in the Baltic Gay”

31 “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>

AUSTRALIA

WCF has also 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 the seventh World Congress was held in Sydney, Australia, 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."³²

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.

WCF Managing Director Larry Jacobs traveled to Australia in 2012, where he met with conservative leaders to begin planning the 2013 World Congress. While in the country, Jacobs participated in a National Marriage Day rally in the city of Canberra. 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 2012.³³

2013's World Congress in Sydney was attended by 600 activists and leaders. One attendee and longtime WCF leader was conservative activist Kevin Andrews. Andrews was later appointed Minister of Social Services by Prime Minister Tony Abbott. Abbott has staunchly opposed marriage equality, calling it the "fashion of the moment."³⁴

Once again, WCF's influence can be seen throughout the world. It counts as allies and leaders some of the highest members of government in countries from Russia to Ukraine to Australia.

32 WCF press release, 8/10/10.

33 WCF newsletter, November 2008. <https://web.archive.org/web/20111211004411/http://www.worldcongress.org/wcf/wcf.nl/wcf.nl.0811.0211.pdf>

34 "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>

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 Milanes, 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."³⁵ The first lady of Nigeria, Hajiya Hajia Turai Umar Yar'adua, and the wife of now 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 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.³⁶ 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."³⁷

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 nearly 90 percent of citizens believe homosexuality is morally unacceptable. In Kenya, homosexuality is punishable by up to 14 years in prison, and LGBT Kenyans are subject to harassment and blackmail.³⁸ Homosexuality has been illegal in Nigeria since colonial rule, but a stricter ban was recently signed into law by President Goodluck Jonathan. 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."³⁹ Several Nigerian states have imposed the death penalty for same-sex relationships.⁴⁰ In Uganda, President Museveni signed a law imposing life sentences for same-sex relations and punishing simply being homosexual with 14 years in prison.

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

36 "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/

37 "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>

38 "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/>

39 "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>

40 "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

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 **nearly 90 percent of citizens believe homosexuality is morally unacceptable.**

WCF has not backed away from these laws — indeed it has encouraged them. 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.⁴¹ The fact is, time after time, WCF has cheered as their rhetoric is used to legitimize the terrorizing and murder of LGBT Africans.

WCF AT HOME

WCF has not shied away from its connections to extremists abroad. Its staffers continue to praise Putin even as his regime has been sanctioned by the U.S. government for continuing to threaten the security of Ukraine and the stability of Eastern Europe. Similarly, WCF has heaped praise on African activists, despite the growing extremity and brutality of homophobia and transphobia on the continent. Surprisingly, WCF has been embraced and encouraged by many mainstream politicians and activists.

In November of last year, WCF announced plans to hold a Capitol Hill symposium on what America can learn from family policy in Russia and other nations.⁴² 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.”⁴³ Ultimately, WCF was able to hold the event because, at the last minute, House Speaker John Boehner offered the group a space.⁴⁴ At the briefing, panelists compared Kirk to Italian and German fascists in the 1920s and 30s, praised the Russian propaganda law, and while acknowledging recent anti-LGBT violence, said that the United States should cut Russia “a lot of slack.”⁴⁵

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, the WCF unveiled plans to hold its next major World Congress in Salt Lake City, Utah, in October 2015. This will mark the first time the event will be held in the United States, and it is being convened by the conservative Utah-based think tank, the Sutherland Institute. According to WCF spokesman Don Feder, the group chose Salt Lake City because it has many good partner organizations in Utah.⁴⁶ Organizers project the event will draw as many as 3,000 attendees, and the theme is to be “religious liberty.” In their usual practice when unveiling a major World Congress, the WCF also announced plans to hold a smaller planning meeting in Salt Lake City in October 2014.

41 “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>

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

43 “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>

44 “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>

45 “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>

46 “Conservative Group That Opposes Same-Sex Marriage Plans Worldwide Conference in Salt Lake City,” Associated Press, 7/1/14.

**EXPOSED: THE WORLD
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AUGUST 2014