



WORLD CONGRESS OF FAMILIES II

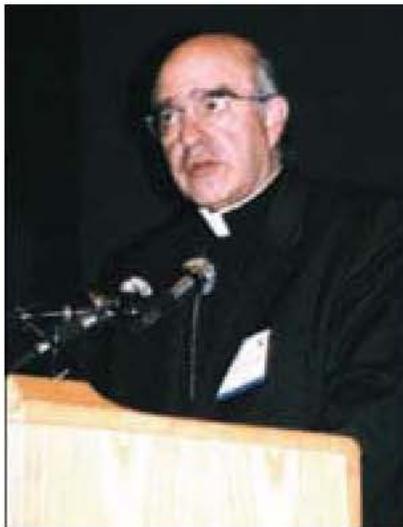
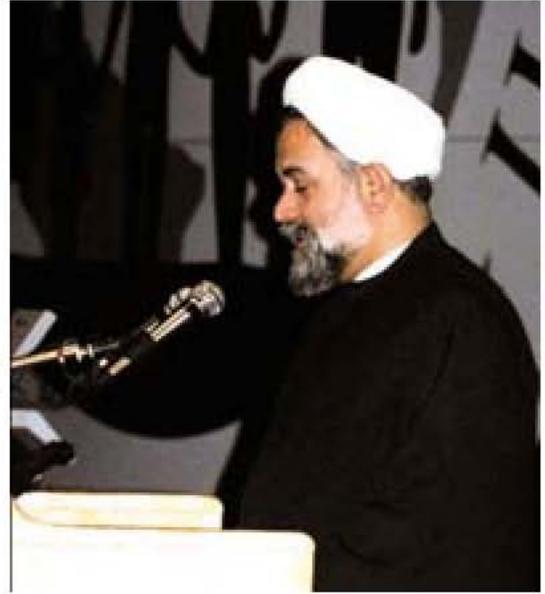
A CALL TO ALL PEOPLE OF GOOD WILL...

Geneva, November 14-17, 1999

"A family, then, needs mother and father, both unconditionally committed to each other and to the child or children. The requirement of unconditionality in the commitment is another subject, but one which is indicated by a growing body of impressive research.

Wholeness, family, wholeness of families, peace, peace in the family, whichever way you combine them, come back to that troublesome concept: commitment. In our age dominated by emotion, sensation, and new ideologies crying out for emotional and sensational liberty, commitment has become the Cinderella of the virtues. Not only unappreciated, unpopular and misunderstood, commitment is now discouraged and even discriminated against in many ways."

—*Madame Christine de Vollmer, President of the Latin American Alliance for the Family*



"Policy makers and public officials in many parts of the world are beginning to recognize again the social, cultural and economic importance of lifelong marriages and healthy families. . . . More however needs to be done to spread these policy ideas throughout the world.

Our choice is clear. We can throw up our hands in despair, unwilling or unable to propose a solution to family breakdown and falling fertility rates, with all the social consequences that follow; or we can take a positive step forward, committed to the aspiration so many people share, in the hope that with practical support and encouragement, we can continue to build strong nations based on a healthy society with its foundation of stable family life."

—*Honorable Kevin Andrews, Barrister, Member of the Australian Federal Parliament*

"The attachment of a husband and a wife is in such a way that each of them wishes the well-being and comfort of the other, and is happy in forbearance and self-denial for the sake of the other. As a matter of fact, the . . . basis of unity of the husband and the wife is greater than passion. It is the same thing which the holy Qur'an mentions with the name of mawaddah (love) and rahmah (mercy)"

–*Mohammad Javad Sahlani, Ph.D.*

The Wirthlin survey further confirms that the anti-family movement, which has so much momentum in some parts of the United Nations system, represents the view of only a small minority of people, and is favored only by a minority of governments. Of this minority of governments and I am including my own government in this group most do not reflect the views of the majority of their own people, but of certain elites who have maneuvered themselves into positions of power.

–*Kathryn Balmforth, J.D., Director, World Family Policy Center*



Greetings from Focus on the Family. We were privileged to take a team of twelve people to Europe to discuss the differences between the European and American approaches to sex education. What we found is that while students are pushed to use contraceptives, the cry of their hearts is to have adults and society believe in them and to have a lasting marriage relationship without divorce. Different cultures—similar hearts.

–*Amy Stephens, Focus on the Family*



There is a bright side however: social order, once disrupted, tends to get remade once again, and there are many indications that this is happening today. Families and governments are reevaluating the role that family plays in the economy and in society. Working women and men are searching for alternative working arrangements to make family and work obligations compatible. There is an overall search for moral principles that could establish some common denominator in an ever-diverse multicultural society. One may ask why one could have expected this to happen. The answer can be found in human nature. Men by nature are social creatures and the family is its basic unit and most important manifestation.

–*Jean Bethke Elshtain, Ph.D., Laura Spelman Rockefeller Professor of Social and Political Ethics, University of Chicago*

A Note to Our Readers – This special issue of MARRIAGE & FAMILIES consists of ABRIDGEMENTS of five talks presented at the World Congress of Families II. Most of the talks are available in their complete form at www.worldcongress.org. Elder Bruce C. Hafen's talk also will be published in an enhanced form in March 2000 by Deseret Book of Salt Lake City, Utah. In addition to work by the regular editors, three student interns worked hard to make the abridged talks reflect the complete talks in a manner that would be acceptable to the original speakers. Our excellent BYU student interns are Tamara Colt, Dallas Jensen, and Michael Melanson. Many thanks to these interns and especially to the distinguished speakers who gave permission to include their talks in MARRIAGE & FAMILIES.