FAMILY VALUES URGED BY RUSSIAN & OTHER SPEAKERS

AT THE INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS FOR THE FAMILY IN MOSCOW, SEPTEMBER 1999*

"We must improve the moral values of society," the Rector of the Moscow Islamic Institute told an overflow crowd in Moscow gathered to talk about the family. Representing the 20 million Russian Muslims, Rector Murtazin emphasized that children need to be raised in spirituality instead of the vulgarity of the day as depicted on television and in the press.

Zinovij Lvovich Kogan, Chairman of the Congress of the Jewish Religious Organizations and Institutions in Russia, pointed out that participation in the family and marriage is one's major duty in life, that parents have the main responsibility for their children, and the main problem of the day is morality—not the economy.

Terese Wieland of the German Akademie Dioeseze Rottenburg-Stuttgart, cited research that shows love, mutual trust, and fidelity are the most important things in a family today.

His Eminence Kyrill, a Metropolitan in the Russian Orthodox Church, pointed out that the phony wizards who promote ideas that disintegrate the family have no answers.

"Constant values can never be changed. They were made by the creator," Roman Catholic Archbishop Tadeusz Kondrusiewicz told the assembly, after explaining that God's design for a man and woman was to make them inseparable. The archbishop warned about breaking up the family and called on people everywhere to stop the evils of abortion and euthanasia, noting that God created man and woman and told them to go forth and multiply.

Bishop Andreas Laun of Austria decried theories about gender that are ridiculous and confuse the roles of men and women, explaining that we were created in God's likeness, male and female.

Russian Orthodox Archpriest Alexander Ranne explained that God made man in his own image and that since it was not good for man to be alone, Eve was created as Adam's partner. She was, he said, "the mother of everyone and more than an assistant for Adam."

A professor of international law from the Netherlands, Franz Alting von Geusau, called on fathers, along with mothers, to take primary responsibility for making the family a school of humanity. He urged fathers and mothers to pray together as they lead their families in a broken and imperfect world. "Many problems of modern society are born in empty, loveless homes and the solution of the these problems must begin at home."

Henri Joyeaux, a professor at the medical school of Montpellier University France's reported that French law now says that boys may have homosexual relationships, which decision was reached after surveying children. "And even though children are being taught that homosexual love and heterosexual love are equally good," Joyeaux strongly disagreed, adding that humankind will never survive without marriage and the joining of husband and wife.

The theme that the institution of the family is essential for the economy was discussed by Professor Jean-Didier Lecaillon, a professor of economics at the University of Paris XII and Director of the Institute of Labor in France. Professor Lecaillon is regarded internationally as an expert on family-centered economics, defending large families and refuting population control.

From the United States, Dr. Glen Griffin talked about the important role parents have to correct the abundant misinformation children are receiving today—citing the example of the message that it's okay to play around with sex as long as a condom is used. He pointed out that this message is not only spiritually wrong, but is also seriously flawed medically. Dr. Griffin explained that condoms offer little or no protection against many difficult-to-treat or incurable sexually transmitted diseases. Instead of providing strategies, like condoms, that enable self-destructive behaviors, Dr. Griffin urged parents, teachers, and professionals to teach young people to save sex for marriage—and never to give their children permission to do things that are wrong.

Professor and sociologist Antoly Ivanovich Antonov of Moscow State University pointed out that in the anti-family culture, fewer and fewer children are being born and that this drop in the birth rate is one of the great disasters of modern society.

This meeting in Moscow of religious leaders, educators, heads of family organizations, and other professionals from many nations was notable for many reasons—but especially because of the recurrent theme expressing the urgent need for action in a culture gone astray, action by parents and society to return to time-tested values to strengthen families. MF

* The World Congress on Families II will be held in Geneva, 14-17 November 1999.