

# **UNdoing Reproductive Freedom**

*Christian Right NGOs Target the United Nations*

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A REPORT FROM POLITICAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATES

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POLITICAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATES

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### **Executive Summary**

**T**he Christian Right increasingly seeks to restrict women's reproductive rights internationally through its growing number of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) with consultative status at the United Nations. Believing their power to be enhanced by the election of an anti-choice president in 2000, these anti-choice NGOs have increased their presence at the UN. They oppose UN programs and platforms promoting access to abortion and contraception, and they promote an abstinence-only family planning curriculum worldwide. Using the access to a few official delegations and activities offered by their consultative status, the NGOs pursue their goals by attempting to stonewall the deliberative process of committees, organizing and funding an international caucus composed of other conservative religious entities and governments to mobilize opposition more broadly within the UN.

Working through the UN constitutes a shift in the history of conservative Christian evangelical organizations that historically limited themselves abroad to missionary work. Influenced by other sectors of the Right that oppose the existence of the United Nations as a threatening "One World Government," they have executed a Trojan Horse strategy of infiltrating the UN under the guise of reforming the institution, resulting in prolonged negotiations that signal to their supporters influence far greater than is actually the case.

# **UNdoing Reproductive Freedom**

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*Christian Right NGOs Target the United Nations*



## Introduction

In June 2004, U.S. officials brought along a special guest to a regional United Nations (UN) conference on population issues held in Puerto Rico. It was Congressman Chris Smith (R-NJ). Smith, one-time head of the New Jersey Right to Life Committee, promotes himself as a champion for international human rights and a strong opponent of abortion. “Anti-life strategies which rely on deception and hyperbole... are now being deployed with a vengeance in the developing world,” he once proclaimed.<sup>1</sup>

A member of Congress for over twenty years, Smith took advantage of his presence at the regional UN conference—the biannual Economic Council for Latin America and the Caribbean—to directly lobby delegates against language that he felt hinted at abortion rights. His target was UN support for “reproductive health,” a phrase that was first adopted during the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo a decade earlier and that has since become UN boilerplate. The Congressman wanted to revert to the pre-Cairo language of “family planning.”

Although Smith was a guest and not a diplomat at the conference, that didn’t stop him from bypassing usual protocol and contacting the presidents of Uruguay and Guatemala, asking them to support the language reversion. His message, faxed on Congressional stationery, urged these heads of state to instruct their delegations to vote against “direct attacks on the right to life, family rights, and national sovereignty” at the conference.<sup>2</sup>

Smith’s direct lobbying of foreign leaders was a godsend for anti-choice NGOs—an elected official who was willing to take their agenda abroad. Indeed, Smith has been a friend and ally to groups such as National Right to Life Committee and Concerned Women for America.

Efforts by Christian Right groups and individu-

als like Smith to influence UN policies have increased substantially in the last ten years with eleven U.S. anti-choice groups becoming NGOs since 2000. Many within the Christian Right see the abortion struggle as a cosmic battle between the forces of good and evil. To this sector abortion is not only a sin, but women’s control of their reproductive lives is seen as threatening the preservation of family and society.<sup>3</sup> This worldview raises the stakes of issues like abortion to a very high level in believers’ eyes, and contributes its share to the dualistic or “black/white” thinking that dominates the reproductive rights debate today.

The reach of this evangelical/political movement stretches beyond the issue of abortion to take on what its leaders imply to be a major threat to our culture: the political and sexual empowerment of women and girls. While some on the Christian Right insist that their sincere intent is to reduce human suffering by suppressing sinful sexual behavior, it is important to assess the *consequences* of their global campaigns. Demanding everyone’s abstinence before the marriage and faithfulness after it is proving disastrous, both at home and abroad. The Center for Reproductive Rights reports that globally,

78,000 women die every year from unsafe abortion, a statistic that could be virtually eliminated by the provision of appropriate health information and services and law reform efforts.<sup>4</sup>

The U.S. Christian Right is interfering with vital public health projects in the United States and at the UN—harming the very people they seek to save.

A small group of U.S. Christian Right organizations has inserted itself in the international arena in four major ways. They have created a vocal anti-abortion, anti-reproductive health presence at the UN, both by gaining consultative status as NGOs and through Bush administration appointments to

<sup>1</sup> “An Urgent Appeal to get Involved in Politics: Public Service a Ministry to Protect the ‘Least of our Brethren And Strengthen the Family’, ” a speech at the Vatican Conference on Globalization, Economy and Family, Vatican City, November 2000. <http://priestsforlife.org/government/chris-smithspeech.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> See <http://www.planetwire.org/details/4879> for a copy of Smith’s fax.

<sup>3</sup> “Kitchen Table Backlash: The Antifeminist Women’s Movement,” in Jean Hardisty, *Mobilizing Resentment* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1999) 69-96 and Pam Chamberlain and Jean Hardisty, “Reproducing Patriarchy: Reproductive Rights Under Siege,” in *Defending Reproductive Rights* (Somerville, Mass.: PRA, 2000), 1-24.

<sup>4</sup> “The Bush Global Gag Rule: Endangering Women’s Health, Free Speech and Democracy,” Fact sheet from the Center for Reproductive Rights, June 2003, at [http://www.crlp.org/pub\\_fac\\_ggrbush.html](http://www.crlp.org/pub_fac_ggrbush.html).

official US delegations, special UN meetings, and special sessions. They have succeeded in publicizing their frame that the right to life is a basic human right and that advocates for abortion access and reproductive health are calling for illegitimate, special rights. They have cultivated hostility to the UN among the U.S. “pro-life” community. And they have pressured Bush to overturn Congressional decisions by refusing to fund some international health programs.

## Going Global with Anti-Choice Politics

Many conservative Christian-based organizations find going global with an anti-choice message to be a comfortable fit. A series of factors have influenced this move. First, many faith communities have a long history and ongoing practice of missionary work, both at home and abroad. Much of this activity is direct service delivery. They interpret performing “good works” as a type of Christian ministry. The opportunity to bring the message of Christ to non-Christians, or to evangelize, provides motivation for acting globally. In the case of the Christian Right, this message carries their staunchly conservative values abroad.

As early as the mid-1980s, Beverly LaHaye’s Concerned Women for America (CWA), a group heavily involved in the U.S. “culture wars,” protested the persecution of a Christian poet in the Soviet Union and called attention to the needs of Nicaraguans who lived in refugee camps in Costa Rica.<sup>5</sup> Choosing these projects was politically savvy, since they appealed to a still thriving anti-communist impulse as well as a deep concern within the Christian Right around issues of religious freedom. By 1999, CWA realized the potential of generating a framework for its international work.

*The global women’s health movement has made substantial gains...igniting a small but vigorous backlash movement at the UN.*

A second factor has been the resurgence of conservative evangelical involvement in the political sphere. While eschewing politics through most of the 20th century, evangelicals are now recognized as one of the major contributors to the rise of the political Right<sup>6</sup> over the last 40 years. Early leaders of this shift into politics, like James Dobson of Focus on the Family and Tim and Beverly LaHaye, are among those at the forefront of Christian Right international work.

Another reason to work at the UN is the opportunity to increase an organization’s political power. The UN is a meeting place for powerful people from around the world. This convergence motivates conservative organizations to spend considerable resources to travel extensively to gatherings hosted

in New York and around the world. Because of their official status as nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) at the UN, groups can work directly with State Department officials in the U.S. delegation, particularly now that anti-choice UN critic John Bolton is ambassador. This has allowed for greater incorporation of once marginal political groups from the

Right. At the same time, the Bush administration has implemented conservative elements into policies like the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, or PEPFAR. These moves signal sympathy with socially conservative positions and provide reinforcement for the work of conservative U.S.-based groups that seek to do international work.

Finally, an extensive network of health and feminist organizations across the globe has successfully advocated for women’s sexual and reproductive autonomy for decades, in both local and global arenas. The global women’s health movement has made substantial gains in guaranteeing access to health services for women and girls, including reproductive services, and the UN has increased its commitment to women and children. These impressive gains have attracted organizations that oppose abortion and comprehensive sexuality education, igniting a small but vigorous backlash movement at the UN.

<sup>5</sup> Concerned Women for America timeline, <http://www.cwfa.org/history.asp>.

<sup>6</sup> PRA defines the U.S. political Right as a wide range of institutions, individuals, and social movements that defend unfair power and privilege for some and oppose full social and economic justice for all.

## Home-Grown Groups, Global Missions

To set the context for the growth of conservative groups at the UN, it is helpful to observe that the U.S. Christian Right has long maintained global activity in other arenas. Missionary work in foreign lands has been a staple of many U.S. churches. In line with their missionary orientation, Christian Right groups directly support grassroots efforts in other countries that promote a “culture of life,” a philosophy with opposition to abortion at its hub. These groups include: American Life League, Concerned Women for America and its LaHaye Institute, Focus on the Family, Heartbeat International, Human Life International, The Justice Foundation, National Right to Life Committee, and United Families International.

Such organizations have maintained their presence abroad by opening overseas chapters or offices, affiliating with local organizations, or by disseminating their materials. Beyond these attempts at making inroads, they have supported foreign organizations and have helped develop local electoral strategies. For instance, National Right to Life Committee’s Olivia Gans claimed that her group, with support from American Life League, helped launch 200 local groups and elect 12 anti-choice members of parliament in Sweden in only six years.<sup>7</sup> As she put it:

Early in the 1990s a young man named Michal Oscarson sought out NRLC’s support for a study project that allowed a few volunteers to come from Sweden and spend time here in America with NRLC staff and affiliates with a view to building a strong and effective prolife movement in that country. In the six years that have followed that venture *Ja til Livet* has grown to 200 chapters throughout Sweden. Recently they

helped to elect 12 new pro-life parliamentarians, including Michal Oscarson himself.<sup>8</sup>

For those wanting to take special anti-abortion missionary trips, Human Life International (HLI), the organization of hard-line conservative Roman Catholic priests with worldwide reach, offers the chance to proselytize abroad. HLI has established satellite offices in more than 50 countries including Kenya, South Korea, Chile, and Russia. The missionaries export anti-choice strategies already in use in the United States: forming crisis pregnancy and post-abortion healing centers, fighting sexuality education and establishing “chastity programs” in schools, and training priests how to organize against abortion.

The U.S.-based “Silver Ring Thing,” targeted to adolescents, is a Christian abstinence sexuality education program, and its home base, John Guest

Evangelical Team, is attempting to spread overseas. It encourages students to take virginity pledges and wear a silver ring as a symbol of their commitment to abstinence until marriage. A recipient of more than \$1 million in federal faith-based funding since 2002, the Silver Ring Thing lost its government funding in August 2005 after an ACLU lawsuit. Based in the United States, the Silver Ring Thing has a presence in South Africa and aims to reach the majority of teenagers there by 2010.<sup>9</sup>

Another well-known group with extensive international programming, Focus on the Family, has produced a controversial abstinence-only curriculum, “No Apologies, The Truth about Life, Love and Sex.” “No Apologies” can be found in many of the 150 countries where Focus has a presence. In South Africa, for example, both the government and independent school administrators have invited Focus to train educators in how to teach the curriculum. In Ethiopia, the Patriarch of the Orthodox Church offered his extensive network of churches to

*The U.S. Christian Right is interfering with vital public health projects ... harming the very people they seek to save.*

<sup>7</sup> Olivia Gans, “NRLC Helps Build Pro-Life Bridges Abroad,” <http://www.nrlc.org/news/1998/NRL10.98/olivia.html>.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> “Silver Ring Thing Launched in South Africa in February 2005,” <http://www.silverringthing.co.za/articlesdetails.php?ArticleID=2>.

help promote the abstinence-only curriculum. Focus claims to have reached 1 million teens worldwide with “No Apologies.”<sup>10</sup> Collectively, conservative anti-abortion groups bring such international experience to their work at the UN.

## **Christian Right, Old Right and the UN**

Some of the anti-choice NGOs that are gravitating to the UN have been influenced in their views on that international body by the Old Right, which looks on the UN as a dangerous “One World Government.”<sup>11</sup> According to these critics, the UN is a global government that threatens America’s freedoms and its very sovereignty, requiring the United States to participate in, and pay for, programs that they see its people do not support.

Despite the fact that the United States wields great power at the UN through a variety of mechanisms, critics such as Jesse Helms, Phyllis Schlafly, and John Ashcroft continue to claim the UN weakens American power abroad. For instance, in 1997 Schlafly’s Eagle Forum produced a video, “Global Governance, the Quiet War Against American Independence,” which takes aim at UN treaties, conferences and resolutions. Using the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child as an example, Schlafly claims, “[T]hese treaties involve setting up a new global bureaucracy that would have some kind of obnoxious control over American citizens.”

Christian Right popular culture can sometimes mirror anti-UN sentiment. For example, the Anti-Christ in Christian conservative Tim LaHaye’s best-selling *Left Behind* series of novels is a former Secretary General of the UN.

Despite their skepticism about the UN as an institution, over the past five years socially conservative groups at the UN have grown in number. This flocking to the UN appears to be, in part, a response to the influence and achievements of progressive women’s groups with official NGO status.

Conservative NGOs are increasingly engaging in more aggressive and disruptive diplomacy by securing spots on official delegations or as “special guests,” with delegations from the United States and some Latin American countries. These guests even conduct their own wildcard diplomacy, as Rep. Smith has demonstrated. Their engagement with the United Nations does not signal a newfound respect for that body among Christian Right groups. Rather, conservative NGOs have made the pragmatic decision to take the fight against reproductive freedom into the den of their perceived enemy.

## **A Trojan Horse in the Global Battle against Reproductive Freedom**

By signing on as NGOs, U.S. anti-abortion groups purport to offer up their expertise to the UN. However, many of the conservative NGOs identified in this report hold critical, even disdainful, opinions of UN programs and of the institution itself.

Steven Mosher, president of the HLI-supported Population Research Institute, has called the UN-initiated Global Fund for AIDS “the global fund for abortion, prostitution and the homosexual agenda.”<sup>12</sup> Susan Roylance, a founder of United Families International, explains that it is the dangerous threat of the UN, and not its legitimacy as an international body, that compels the Christian Right’s engagement:

I do not believe family policies should be formulated in the international arena.... We must become involved to protect our families from those who would “re-engineer” the social structures of the world.<sup>13</sup>

Although her organization works at the UN, a spokesperson for the Beverly LaHaye Institute at Concerned Women for America rides the wave of recent criticism of the UN’s inefficiencies when she says:

Sincere women of faith within the mainline churches are being duped into thinking that by endorsing the UN they are helping the

<sup>10</sup> James Dobson, “Good News Regarding Families Around the World,” <http://www.family.org/docstudy/newsletters/a0037280.cfm>.

<sup>11</sup> The last heyday of the Old Right peaked during the Cold War, with the growth of isolationist organizations like the anti-Communist John Birch Society.

<sup>12</sup> Steven Mosher, “Weekly Briefing,” February 21, 2003, <http://www.pop.org/main.cfm?EID=444>.

<sup>13</sup> Susan Roylance, *Pro-Family Negotiating Guide*, (Gilbert, Ariz: United Families International, 2001) v.

Great Commission of Christ to go into all the world, spreading the good news and healing the sick. Instead, their resources and influence are going to an institution that is often ineffective in providing relief to the suffering and oppressed. Even worse, scandal and unethical practices riddle the United Nations.<sup>14</sup>

Janice Crouse, also from the LaHaye Institute, is another example of a Christian Right international activist who is similarly disdainful of the UN. Former speechwriter for George H.W. Bush, author and public speaker Crouse has been a vocal representative of CWA at the UN and an official U.S. delegate at UN conferences. Yet she has said,

The U.N. is actively anti-American; both the Security Council and the General Assembly work to thwart American interests.... Literally *billions* of dollars have been squandered in misguided utopian efforts that failed to accomplish the stated goals or were misdirected into the hands of corrupt officials through the U.N.'s poor management, cronyism or support for harsh dictators and ruthless regimes.<sup>15</sup>

Participating in UN activities as a hostile NGO is a "Trojan Horse" strategy, according to Jennifer Butler, former UN liaison for the NGO Presbyterian Church USA and author of *Born Again: The Christian Right Globalized*. About these conservative NGOs she notes, "By infiltrating the system of an organization they oppose, they hope to stall, influence, and even undermine its work from within."<sup>16</sup>

The conservative leaders' unfavorable com-

ments are reminiscent of Sen. Jesse Helms' fear that the UN is indeed a "One World" government. In 2000 Helms appeared before the UN Security Council where he claimed to speak for "many Americans" when he said,

They see the UN aspiring to establish itself as the central authority of a new international order of global laws and global governance. This is an international order the American people will not countenance, I guarantee you.<sup>17</sup>

Helms, who authored the 1973 Helms Amendment that prohibits spending federal money on abortions abroad, is now retired but is remembered as someone who combined a nationalist resistance to multilateral agreements with a fierce advocacy for traditional gender roles.

For their work at the UN, conservative NGOs receive substantial media attention

from the Christian media, and they can reach large audiences. These TV, radio, Internet and print media comprise a communications network generally ignored by liberals and progressives. They criticize the UN from an anti-One World Government perspective while transmitting a "culture of life" philosophy at the same time.

## Showdown at the UN

Not-for-profit groups have participated in UN activities since its founding in 1946 when 40 organizations signed on to be NGOs. Such groups are playing an increasing role at the United Nations, with over 2700 groups now holding consultative sta-

***12 NGOs opposed to abortion or comprehensive sexuality education have gained consultative status since the Cairo and Beijing UN conferences in 1994. All of them are associated with the U.S. Christian Right.***

<sup>14</sup> Katy Kiser, "The United Nations: an Untold Story," at: <http://www.beverlylahayeinstitute.org/articledisplay.asp?id=6623&&department=BLI&categoryid=reports>.

<sup>15</sup> Janice Crouse, "Misguided Attempts to Eradicate Global Poverty," <http://www.cwfa.org/articledisplay.asp?id=11307&department=BLI&categoryid=reports>.

<sup>16</sup> Jennifer Butler, "New Sheriff in Town: The Christian Right Shapes U.S. Agenda at the United Nations," *The Public Eye*, XVI, 2, Summer 2002, 15.

<sup>17</sup> Address by Sen. Jesse Helms, Chairman U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, before the UN Security Council January 20, 2000, <http://www.jessehelmscenter/jessehelms/documents/AddressbySenatorJesseHelmstoUNSecurityCouncil.pdf>.

<sup>18</sup> "NGOs with Consultative Status with ECOSOC," [http://www.un.org/esa/coordination/ngo/pdf/INF\\_List.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/coordination/ngo/pdf/INF_List.pdf).

tus on economic and social issues.<sup>18</sup> Although the largest social and economic NGO presence is liberal, socially conservative forces, often originating in the United States, continue to increase their presence. A review of the U.S.-based NGOs that gained UN consultative status over the past 35 years reveals that in the early years nearly all the registered NGOs interested in women's health issues were liberal or centrist. Among the hundreds of liberal and progressive women's NGOs at the UN, a few dozen are U.S.-based advocacy groups. By contrast, 12 NGOs opposed to abortion or comprehensive sexuality education have gained consultative status since the Cairo and Beijing UN conferences in 1994. All of them are associated with the U.S. Christian Right.

As Jennifer Butler has documented, battles over reproductive justice at the UN are being fought over key phrases in UN resolutions and policy recommendations.<sup>19</sup> For instance, when progressive women's groups successfully replaced "population control" with "reproductive rights" at the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, it signaled a shift in policy emphasis from family planning to women's rights. This prompted a backlash from conservative forces that viewed the language as a slippery slope towards increased access to abortion worldwide. Conservative NGOs are also fighting against any recognition of gay rights—including blocking LGBT organizations' access to the UN—and disputing the value of comprehensive sexuality education.

United Families International has published a *Pro-Family Negotiating Guide* intended to challenge pro-choice and standard human rights language at every level of UN activity. With great specificity, author Susan Roylance suggests specific wording to support, oppose, or modify existing UN document language as a tactic for inserting anti-abortion and

"pro-family" concepts. For instance, she includes the following phrases as those "which could be interpreted to include abortion:" "reproductive health services," "primary health care," "safe motherhood," and "emergency obstetric care" and suggests aggressive lobbying for their removal.<sup>20</sup>

Evangelical Protestant groups such as Concerned Women for America and the Family Research Council take their cues from their better-established Roman Catholic relative at the UN, the Vatican/Holy See. The Vatican has been, at least until recently, the single most influential abortion opponent at the UN. This level of influence may be attributed, at least in part, to its special "permanent observer" status—held by no other NGO—which gives it more access and influence, as well as to its longer history of participating in NGO activities. The Vatican was able to mobilize opposition to the gains of the 1994 Cairo population conference in time for the UN's

women's conference in Beijing the very next year. U.S.-based Catholics for a Free Choice, which monitors the Vatican's influence in opposing reproductive rights, has been leading a campaign since 1999 to challenge the Vatican's special status, calling for a "See Change."<sup>21</sup>

Gaining consultative status as an NGO at the UN is an involved process which, when successful, gives an organization access privileges to official delegations and activities. When Human Life International (HLI), was denied official recognition at the UN (due to its attacks on Islam and hostility towards UN goals), it created the Catholic Family and Human Rights Institute, or C-Fam. Headed by Austin Ruse, C-Fam has become one of the most prominent American anti-abortion organizations working at the United Nations, despite its non-consultative status. HLI also circumvents its UN exclusion by means of its anti-abortion think tank,

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<sup>19</sup> "New Sheriff in Town," 17.

<sup>20</sup> *Pro-Family Negotiating Guide*, 9.

<sup>21</sup> Catholics for a Free Choice, "It's Time for a Change," <http://www.seechange.org>.

Population Research Institute, led by Steven Mosher. C-Fam issues a UN-related fax message to its constituents every Friday. Ruse has used the faxes to expose the “dirty laundry” of the UN and brag about C-Fam’s ability to disrupt UN activity.

Such groups work both alone and in “Family Rights” coalitions, sometimes forming seemingly unlikely interfaith alliances. Shared beliefs connect people with similar views on traditional families and the role of women, whether Christian or not. C-Fam and similar organizations with ties to the Vatican/Holy See, Ruse says, consider countries such as Sudan, Libya, Iraq, Iran, and other moderate and hard-line governments as “allies” in the battle against abortion and homosexuality. Ruse explains the effectiveness of stonewalling in an institution where committee work runs on consensus:

We don’t need them all; we need only a few [member states]... We establish a permanent UN pro-family bloc of twelve states. And upon these [conservative delegates] we lavish all of our attention.<sup>22</sup>

Ruse has learned how to work within the system at the UN, sometimes playing by the rules for NGOs and other advocates and from time to time flouting them. He has boasted about what he sees as his notoriety among progressive groups:

We attended all of the women’s meetings and essentially took them over. Memos were going back from the conference in New York to governments in the European Union that radical fundamentalists had taken over the meeting, and that was us.<sup>23</sup>

In 2006 Ruse became president of The Culture of Life Foundation and Institute in Washington, signaling his interest in directly lobbying Congress and federal agencies on behalf of conservative Catholics. Ruse remains president of C-FAM, which still issues “Friday faxes” and continues to watchdog the UN, but his move to Washington has

given Ruse the chance to flex his muscles in the D.C. ring.<sup>24</sup>

Beginning after the Cairo conference in 1994 but intensifying since 2000, groups like Concerned Women for America, National Right to Life Committee, United Families International, and the Mormon-supported World Family Policy Center intensively monitor the planning schedule of international gatherings sponsored by the UN, prepare lobbying strategies for each event, and participate—sometimes with large contingents. As a backlash effort, such anti-choice NGOs principally target events on women’s issues, but they also try to influence policies related to children, families, population, the environment, and human rights.

Parallel to NGO work at the UN, a “pro-family” movement led by members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons) has emerged. The World Family Policy Center at Brigham Young University builds influence through its annual forums for UN delegates, ambassadors, and religious leaders from around the world on how WFPC sees UN policies affecting the family.<sup>25</sup>

The Howard Center for Family, Religion, and Society, a “pro-family” organization in Rockford, IL headed by Alan Carlson, was closely involved in the planning of what the center predicted would be a major international conference, the Doha International Conference for the Family. This event may have looked like a UN-sponsored event, but it was organized separately and designed specifically to promote a “pro-family” agenda. Held in November of 2004, Doha had as its mission to protect the “natural family” as the fundamental unit of society. Billed as an international conference like Beijing or Cairo, Doha was independent of the UN. Its explicit anti-choice focus attracted over one thousand participants, but this was much smaller than UN conferences, despite several preliminary regional events.

<sup>22</sup> Austin Ruse as quoted in Jennifer Butler, “For Faith and Family: Christian Right Advocacy at the United Nations,” *The Public Eye*, IX, 2/3, Summer/Fall 2000, 10.

<sup>23</sup> Austin Ruse, from his Cardinal Mindszenty Foundation speech, March 2000. <http://www.catholicsforchoice.org/topics/other/documents/2001badfaithattheun.pdf>. For a more detailed account of C-Fam (also called CAFHRI), see *Bad Faith at the UN, Drawing Back the Curtain on the Catholic Family and Human Rights Institute*, (Washington, D.C.: Catholics for a Free Choice, 2001).

<sup>24</sup> Catholics for a Free Choice, “*Bad Faith Makes Bad Politics: The Culture of Life Foundation on Capitol Hill*,” (Washington, D.C.: Catholics for a Free Choice, 2004), 24.

<sup>25</sup> Larsen, Kent. “BYU’s Annual World Family Policy Forum Addresses UN Policies,” *Mormon News*, July 27, 2001. <http://www.mormonstoday.com/010727/T3WFPForum01.shtml>.

### The Global Gag Rule

In reinstating the global gag rule, Bush declared, “It is my conviction that taxpayer funds should not be used to pay for abortions or advocate or actively promote abortion, either here or abroad.”

In addition to losing funding, organizations that do not comply with the gag rule also lose technical assistance and U.S.-donated contraceptives, including condoms.

Its global impact has been profound, even with the European Union picking up some of the slack. The gag rule has disrupted not only abortion access but family planning services, prenatal care, and HIV/AIDS prevention in multiple countries worldwide, especially in the Global South.

Women, who both require family planning resources and account for almost half of the global population living with HIV/AIDS, suffer the most. The rule has resulted in the halting of progressive pro-choice lobbying in countries such as Uganda, Ethiopia, and Kenya, which have severely restrictive abortion laws. In Uganda, once the site of successful prevention efforts, HIV infections have nearly doubled in the past two years, due to a U.S.-influenced shift to abstinence strategies. And in Ethiopia, where abortion is completely illegal, most family planning agencies have refused to abide by the gag rule. As a result, the contraceptive supply has been restricted there, leading to a high rate of illegal abortion, which is currently the second highest killer of women in that country.

*For more information about the Global Gag Rule, see the International Women’s Health Coalition’s “Bush’s Other War.”*  
<http://www/iwhc.org/resources/bushsotherwar/index.cfm>.

The Doha conference drew on the common values of conservative Christians, Roman Catholics, and Muslims, and was held in the capital of the wealthy Emirate of Qatar. It involved a year of planning that included regional conferences in Europe, Asia, and Latin America hosted by the Howard Center.

After the conference, the government of Qatar

put forth a conservative resolution on the family to the UN General Assembly that was accepted without a vote—a little like reading a document into the Congressional Record to give it recognition. What is notable is the attempt to associate an explicitly “pro-family” event with the United Nations. A number of delegates subsequently disassociated themselves from the resolution, generally citing the omission of language, previously accepted at international levels, recognizing that family structure can take various forms.<sup>26</sup>

The government of Qatar founded the Doha International Institute for Family Studies and Development in 2006, led by the previous director of the World Family Policy Center, Richard Wilkins.

Doha was privately organized and funded, but only about 1,000 people attended, a small turnout considering the efforts to organize through regional conferences and the level of international backing. The Doha conference nonetheless reflects an important development: a conservative international interfaith coalition using the UN as a vehicle for its own agenda, but its lasting influence on the international scene remains to be seen.<sup>27</sup>

When other nations hold conservative views, U.S. Christian Right groups laud an international coalition that reflects their own values. When it is in their interests, however, anti-choice NGOs accuse Western states of imposing their values on developing nations. In 2005 a coalition of liberal NGOs brought suit against Colombia for its prohibition on abortion, and Austin Ruse called the move “sexual imperialism.”<sup>28</sup>

## Impact of the Bush Administration

Having failed to dismantle *Roe v. Wade* completely, the Bush Administration has sought other means to consolidate support among its socially conservative base. Providing access to the international arena may distract these anti-choice activists from—or soften their disappointment with—

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2004/ga10311.doc.htm>.

<sup>27</sup> “For Faith and Family,” 3.

<sup>28</sup> “Pro-Abortion Groups Try to Change Colombia’s Law Through Courts,” C-Fam Friday Fax, December 2, 2005, [http://www.c-fam.org/FAX/Volume\\_8/faxv8n50.html](http://www.c-fam.org/FAX/Volume_8/faxv8n50.html).

the Administration's domestic track record.

The Bush administration has been actively engaged in leaving its stamp on international reproductive health. Although multiple campaigns for women's health have made great strides around the world, under Bush, U.S. intervention has worsened global women's health disparities. In 2001, he reinstated the "global gag rule" that had reigned during the administrations of Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush, which requires any organization applying for U.S. funds to agree neither to counsel about nor provide women with abortions (see box this page).<sup>29</sup> But that was only the starting point. Showing the same disdain for collaboration with other countries that informs his foreign policy as a whole, Bush enlisted the help of evangelical Protestant and conservative Roman Catholic organizations to disrupt the diplomacy needed to craft solutions to international crises in population growth, AIDS/HIV, and the needless deaths and debility resulting from inadequate reproductive health care.

If reinstating the global gag rule was Bush's early offering to the anti-choice cause on the international level, refusing to ratify the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was a major gift. Because this international convention opposing discrimination against women includes human rights language like "access to health care services, including those related to family planning," U.S. anti-choice groups used the opportunity to claim it would lead to the right to an abortion.<sup>30</sup> Their success in preventing the United States from signing on to CEDAW—created by the UN in 1979—reflects the ability of these groups to maintain a long-term focus on curtailing women's rights. The treaty, "is like the Equal Rights

Amendment on steroids," quipped Wendy Wright of Concerned Women for America in 2002, describing her opposition.<sup>31</sup> CEDAW remains unratified by the United States.

While its primary focus has been on restricting abortion, the religious Right has broadened its international reach to include not only moral attacks on contraception, sexuality education, and homosexuality but has also joined with some feminist groups to battle sex trafficking.<sup>32</sup>

Like conservative NGOs, challenging language that in any way is suggestive of reproductive health or choice has become a major preoccupation of the Bush Administration at the United Nations. Bush representatives repeatedly tried to weaken a unanimous resolution on the fundamental right to health by pressuring for the word "services" to be deleted from the phrase "health care services," claiming that it was a code word for abortion.<sup>33</sup>

In promoting sexual abstinence for adolescents, the Bush administration and its allies attack conventional language referring to reproductive health care. They fought one such battle at the UN Special Session on Children in 2002 and succeeded in removing a description of comprehensive sexuality education. The phrase "comprehensive sexuality education" is a lightning rod for the Christian Right in the United States. To them the phrase signals morally abhorrent alternatives to abstinence-only sex education. In their eyes comprehensive sexuality education can only lead to many social problems, including increased sexual activity among adolescents and the spread of sexually transmitted infections.

At the UN high level meeting on HIV/AIDS in June 2006 in New York City, George W. Bush packed the U.S. delegation headed by his wife with senior advisors from the Christian Right.<sup>34</sup> Bush's delegation succeeded in weakening UN support for

<sup>29</sup> Memorandum from the White House, United States Agency for International Development, <http://www.usaid.gov/whmemo.html>.

<sup>30</sup> United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, "CEDAW," <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/text/econvention.htm#article12>.

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,54524,00.html>.

<sup>32</sup> See Jennifer Block, "Sex Trafficking: Why the Faith Trade is Interested in the Sex Trade," *Conscience*, Spring 2004, [http://www.catholicsforchoice.org/conscience/archives/c2004sum\\_sextrafficking.asp](http://www.catholicsforchoice.org/conscience/archives/c2004sum_sextrafficking.asp).

<sup>33</sup> "Bush's Other War: The Assault on Women's Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights," International Women's Health Coalition, [www.iwhc.org](http://www.iwhc.org).

<sup>34</sup> Esther Kaplan, "A Disaster for Abstinence Ideology," <http://www.talk2action.org/story/2006/5/25/101656/916>. Also see "U.S. Blocking Deal on Fighting AIDS," *Mail and Guardian*, a Southern African newspaper, June 2, 2006, [http://www.mg.co.za/articlePage.aspx?articleid=273524&area=/breaking\\_news/breaking\\_news\\_\\_international\\_news/](http://www.mg.co.za/articlePage.aspx?articleid=273524&area=/breaking_news/breaking_news__international_news/).

proven HIV harm reduction strategies like needle exchange and in avoiding specific reference to target populations like commercial sex workers. But according to an NGO observer, few conservative groups attended, and both PEPFAR and the Bush administration's emphasis on abstinence-until-marriage perspective were criticized by other nations at the gathering.

The strength of the final declaration was diminished, not so much by challenges to language, but by the assembly's unwillingness to be more ambitious in its commitments to fighting HIV/AIDS.

Even when the Bush Administration fails to change the content of international declarations, the power of the purse gives the United States considerable influence over many international programs. In 2003 and again in 2005, the U.S. House of Representatives blocked \$500 million in international family planning funds destined for the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), falsely claiming that the funds would go to Chinese women aborting pregnancies to comply with China's one family, one child population policy.<sup>35</sup> In 2002, the United States also froze \$3 million in aid to the World Health Organization, because the UN agency conducts research on safe abortion techniques.

## A Bumpy Road

Efforts to insert an anti-choice platform at the UN have been uneven. In 2001, when Bush overruled then Secretary of State Colin Powell by attempting to appoint John Klink to be the Assistant Secretary of State for Population, Refugees, and Migration, the plan collapsed in the face of widespread criticism. Klink had been the Vatican's representative at the

UN for six years and was an opponent of condom use for HIV prevention and reproductive health services for refugee women. At a February 2005 conference marking the 10th anniversary of the Beijing Conference on the Status of Women, official U.S. delegates failed in their effort to remove references to the right to reproductive health on the grounds it referred to abortion rights but still reaffirmed support for the declarations made in Beijing.<sup>36</sup>

But all was not lost for anti-choice supporters. During the January 2006 Congressional holiday recess, Bush appointed the chief of the U.S. delegation, Ellen Sauerbrey, a former Bush campaign worker and anti-choice representative at the UN, to the State Department position he tried to fill with John Klink. Like other recess appointments, this one occurred without the conventional approval of Congress. Women's health and human rights advocates worldwide expressed outrage, but the deed was done. Since her appointment, Sauerbrey has been immersed in refugee issues and has not been visible at UN events dealing with reproductive rights.

In November of 2005 the UN Human Rights Committee (UNHRC), an 18-member group that monitors the implementation of the UN's human rights covenants, decided in its first abortion case, *KL v. Peru*, that abortion is a human right. This decision affirmed the work of international women's health advocates who have been describing the discrimination and deprivation many women experience across the globe as the result solely of their being women.

The UNHRC decision sent anti-choice NGOs into tailspins. Austin Ruse stubbornly declared in his Friday Fax that the committee's decision was not only an example of flawed reasoning but was also non-binding.<sup>37</sup>

*Even when the Bush Administration fails to change the content of international declarations, the power of the purse gives the United States considerable influence over many international programs.*

<sup>35</sup> U.S. Department of State, "Report of the China UN Population Fund (UNPFA) Independent Assessment Team," May 29, 2002, <http://www.state.gov/g/prm/rls/rpt/2002/12122.htm>.

<sup>36</sup> Goldenberg, Suzanne, "American Urges UN to Renounce Abortion Rights." *Guardian*, March 1, 2005. <http://www.globalpolicy.org/empire/un/2005/0301abortion.htm>.

<sup>37</sup> C-Fam Friday Fax, December 9, 2005, at [http://www.c-fam.org/FAX/Volume\\_8/faxv8n51.html](http://www.c-fam.org/FAX/Volume_8/faxv8n51.html).

Not so, says Luisa Cabal, Director of the International Legal Program at the Center for Reproductive Rights, one of the groups that brought the case before the Committee.

We are thrilled that the UNHRC has ruled in favor of protecting women's most essential human rights. Every woman who lives in any of the 154 countries that are party to this treaty—including the U.S.—now has a legal tool to use in defense of her rights. This ruling establishes that it is not enough to just grant a right on paper. Where abortion is legal it is governments' duty to ensure that women have access to it.<sup>38</sup>

Progressive advocacy groups such as Sexual Information and Education Council of the United States, Human Rights Watch, Catholics for a Free Choice, and International Planned Parenthood Federation conscientiously monitor conservative trends.<sup>39</sup> Several U.S.-based women's groups participate in international networks like the International Women's Health Coalition, founded in 1984, which calls for a broad platform of reproductive justice for all women.<sup>40</sup> These networks have become skilled in anticipating and confronting conservative tactics.

An appeal to basic human rights for women exposes some fundamental differences between the international human rights community and the U.S. Christian Right. Increasingly, women's health and human rights groups are recognizing their commonalities and now frame women's access to health services as a human right. In contrast, conservative NGOs, representing U.S.-based Christian Right groups, seek to reinforce traditional gender roles, restrict women's access to abortion services, and deny whole populations accurate sexuality education. These restrictions could be seen as problematic in a human rights framework.

The current UN agenda, articulated in its Millennium Development Goals, focuses on the pressing social needs of our time, such as the eradication of childhood poverty and the control of deadly

infectious disease. Anti-choice NGOs have a much more narrow and controversial set of issues that may be incompatible with the UN goals. Their positions reflect a desire for control over women and children's lives and the belief that their set of values is applicable everywhere in the world. These issues move their leaders to call for the defunding of such well-respected programs as UNICEF or to insist that the United States not ratify CEDAW, the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women.

Despite criticism from the United States, the United Nations remains an institution for global cooperation that reflects the views of its member states. The United Nations continues to maintain programs improving women and children's health and welfare across the globe.

## Conclusion

In recent years conservative, anti-choice NGOs from the United States have been targeting the United Nations with increased vigor. Such groups have entered the UN system with big goals, seeking to alter the direction and outcomes of decisions affecting reproductive justice and human rights. They have tried to impose a narrow moral frame for sexuality on the world at large and have made substantial progress towards the goal of making "pro-family" and "pro-life" household words across the globe. They are challenging the UN's commitment to necessary comprehensive health education for girls and access to vital reproductive services for women the world over.

What have conservative NGOs accomplished? Although these groups continue to claim victory in a number of areas, their major scuffles have mostly taken place over the wording of documents. There has been some success in limiting U.S. funds for UN-related programs, especially around issues of sexuality, but the real clout for these changes likely came from the Bush Administration itself.

<sup>38</sup> "UN Human Rights Committee Makes Landmark Decision Establishing Women's Right to Access legal Abortion," Press release, November 17, 2005, Center for Reproductive Rights. [http://www.crlp.org/pr\\_05\\_1117KarenPeru](http://www.crlp.org/pr_05_1117KarenPeru).

<sup>39</sup> "For Faith and Family," 1-17 and "New Sheriff in Town," 14-22. Butler observed the emergence of an interfaith coalition of conservative nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) involving Roman Catholics, Protestants, and Mormons and including outreach to Jews and Muslims.

<sup>40</sup> For a definition of reproductive justice, see "A New Vision for Advancing our Movement for Reproductive Health, Reproductive Rights and Reproductive Justice," at [http://www.apirh.org/download/ACRJ\\_A\\_New\\_Vision.pdf](http://www.apirh.org/download/ACRJ_A_New_Vision.pdf).

Many direct interventions by the Bush Administration take place through its influence on Congress and oversight of the State Department, the agency responsible for sending the U.S. delegation to the UN. Examples of such policies are: the global gag rule, limiting U.S. contributions to international funds to Fight AIDS, refusing to support the UN's HIV prevention strategies if they target "undesirables" like sex workers, and insisting on abstinence-only education for everyone.

By comparison, actual influence on the work of the huge bureaucracy that is the UN by groups like C-Fam, United Families International and the National Right to Life Committee may seem relatively minor. To close observers at the UN, however, conservative NGOs interfere with the already-prolonged process of consensus building and decision making that is the bulk of the work at UN gatherings worldwide. They are learning to mobilize conservatives from the official delegations of other UN member nations. These groups tout their behavior as successes through the media outlets of the Christian Right, providing some fuel for the anti-abortion and "pro-family" passions at home. And they use the forum of the UN to train volunteers whose sometimes large numbers give the impression of powerful organizations. But the work of conservative NGOs at the UN has been primarily to reinforce Bush's anti-abortion and abstinence-only messages in an international arena.

Having both NGO and state actors clamoring against reproductive freedoms at the UN might well threaten the future of UN programs. However, it is clear that nearly all the initiative behind these activities comes from the U.S. Christian Right. Although its opinions may be similar to these NGOs, the increasingly anti-choice position of the U.S. delegation has only served to isolate it at times from other member states.

We should not forget that, loud as they may be at the UN, the views of these NGOs do not represent the majority opinion on women's issues in the

United States.

Because mainstream media in this country do not cover developments at the UN in the detailed way Christian media do, many U.S. residents remain unaware of these developments and their potential impact. As Jennifer Butler has suggested, not just progressives but also liberals and moderates should be concerned to learn that the attempts to insert "pro-family" policies at the UN have interfered with realizing laudable goals such as the protection of universal human rights or the public health and welfare of humankind. In 2002 she predicted:

If the United States continues to provide a platform for the Christian Right at international meetings, then in the next three to eight years we may see the advances made by human rights activists over the past two decades undermined, or at least stalled.<sup>41</sup>

Conservative forces active at the UN recognize the value of supporting multiple strategies simultaneously. They cultivate personal relationships with potential allies at United Nations gatherings that were designed with very different goals from their own. They imagine themselves capable of influencing global institutions and are trying to make their mark on this one. The United Nations could reach its laudable goals sooner with less interference from a small but vocal group of dissenting NGOs, including a core of groups from the United States.

Increased attention to the NGO Trojan Horse at the UN could help forestall a more consequential assault on reproductive freedoms both at home and abroad.

*Pam Chamberlain is a senior researcher with Political Research Associates. Thanks to Diana Dukhanova for research assistance. An earlier version of this report appeared in the Spring 2006 issue of Political Research Associates' magazine, The Public Eye. Thanks to Jennifer Butler who authored two previous articles on conservative NGOs in The Public Eye in the Summer issues of 2000 and 2002.*

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<sup>41</sup> "New Sheriff in Town," 20.

## **Some Resources for Tracking International Reproductive Justice Issues**

### **Bush's Other War: The Assault on Women's Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights**

The International Women's Health Coalition publishes a regularly updated online compendium of U.S. foreign policy attacks on women and families. Offers useful email alerts. Home to the International Sexual and Reproductive Rights Coalition.  
<http://www.iwhc.org/resources/bushsotherwar/index.cfm>

### **Bad Faith at the UN : Drawing Back the Curtain on the Catholic Family and Human Rights Institute**

### **Bad Faith Makes Bad Politics: The Culture of Life Foundation on Capitol Hill**

### **The Catholic Church at the United Nations: Church or State?**

### **The United Nations Population Fund in China: A Catalyst for Change**

These reports are samples of the offerings from Catholics for a Free Choice, the national advocacy organization of a Catholic voice in the reproductive justice movement, is an NGO at the UN and a watchdog of groups like C-Fam and Human Life International. Home of the campaign to change the status of the Vatican at the UN.  
<http://www.catholicsforchoice.org>  
<http://www.seechange.org>

### **Death and Denial: Unsafe Abortion and Poverty**

This January 2006 report is just one of a variety of publications from The International Planned Parenthood Federation on global reproductive health.  
<http://www.ippf.org/ContentController.aspx?ID=454>

### **The PUSH Journal**

A free, customized news service for journalists and others, sending daily email updates on reproductive and sexual health issues around the world. Cosponsored by UNFPA, The Communications Consortium Media Center, and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.  
<http://www.pushjournal.org>

### **Guttmacher Policy Review**

### **International Family Planning Perspectives**

### **Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health**

Two well respected, peer-reviewed journals published by the Guttmacher Institute on developing countries and the industrialized world, respectively. Also, free purpose-made presentations in pdf and PowerPoint on a variety of sexual and reproductive health issues.  
<http://www.guttmacher.org>

### **Reviving Reproductive Safety**

### **Different Takes**

The Population and Development Program at Hampshire College publishes a series of papers that offer a critical analysis of the intersection of reproductive rights and population concerns, both nationally and internationally. <http://popdev.hampshire.edu/>  
<http://populationinperspective.org/>

### **Understanding the Political and Religious Opposition to Reproductive Health and Rights**

### **Evidence vs. Ideology in HIV/AIDS Prevention: The President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief**

### **Making the Connection—News and Views on Sexuality**

### **SIECUS International Right-Wing Watch**

The Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States has an international office that houses multiple publications—a quarterly newsletter, and a list-serve about international attacks on reproductive justice. It has published on international issues in collaboration with Planned Parenthood Federation of America and the International Planned Parenthood Federation.  
<http://www.siecus.org/inter>

## Resource List of Groups Mentioned in the Report

### **American Life League**

1179 Courthouse Road  
PO Box 1350  
Stafford, VA 22554  
(888) 546-2580  
<http://www.all.org>

Catholic NGO at the UN with a campaign to stop Planned Parenthood internationally. An early spinoff of the National Right to Life Committee.

### **Catholic Family and Human Rights Institute**

866 United Nations Plaza, Suite 495  
New York, New York 10017  
(212) 754-5948  
<http://www.c-fam.org>

Headed by Austin Ruse, this organization works among NGOs at the UN without actually being one. Publishes a weekly Friday Fax usually about the UN available on its website.

### **Concerned Women for America**

1015 Fifteenth St. N.W., Suite 1100  
Washington, D.C. 20005  
(202) 488-7000  
<http://www.cwfa.org>

The largest conservative women's political organization in the United States maintains an anti-feminist agenda based "on Biblical principles." Founder Beverly LaHaye has now gone broadband with her radio shows and videos which support the sanctity of the family, oppose abortion, and attack groups like SIECUS. NGO at the UN.

### **Family Research Council**

801 G Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20001  
(202) 393-2100  
<http://www.frc.org>

The Washington public policy arm of Focus on the Family, this group is a registered NGO with the UN. Run by former conservative Louisiana legislator Tony Perkins, the FRC maintains a primary interest in human sexuality and bioethics alongside weighing in on many other issues. Publishes voter scorecards and action guides.

### **Focus on the Family**

8605 Explorer Drive  
Colorado Springs, CO 80920  
(800) A-FAMILY  
<http://www.family.org>

The largest and most visible of all Christian Right organizations in the United States, Focus became an NGO at the UN in 2003. No Apologies, its abstinence-only curriculum, is marketed globally.

### **Heartbeat International**

665 E. Dublin-Granville Road, Suite 440  
Columbus, OH 43229 USA  
(888) 550-7577  
<http://www.heartbeatinternational.org>

Claims to maintain the largest network of anti-abortion, "crisis pregnancy" centers in the world. With affiliates in nine countries and a directory of almost 5000 centers worldwide.

### **Human Life International**

4 Family Life Lane  
Front Royal, VA 22630  
Phone: 800/549-LIFE  
<http://www.hli.org>

A hard-line conservative Roman Catholic resource and training ground for anti-abortion activists with offices in 59 countries. Founder Rev. Paul Marx has claimed that Jews run the abortion movement. When aggressive tactics prevented HLI from gaining NGO status, they created C-FAM to maintain a UN watchdog presence and the Population Research Institute to frame their messages.

### **Silver Ring Thing**

530 Moon Clinton Road  
Moon Twp., PA 15108  
(412) 424-2400  
<http://www.silverringthing.com>

Revivalist-based evangelical chastity renewal program for adolescents. Faith-based initiative federal funding was curtailed in the United States after an ACLU intervention. Offices in the UK and South Africa.

**National Right to Life Committee**

512 10th St. NW  
Washington, DC 20004  
(202) 626-8800  
<http://www.nrlc.org>

While the NRLC's mission has always been to advocate for the end to legalized abortion in the United States, its publishing and advertising arm, the National Right to Life Educational Trust Fund, has been involved internationally as an NGO at the UN since 1999.

**Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations**

25 East 39th Street  
New York, NY 10016-0903  
(212) 370-7885  
<http://www.holyseemission.org>

As a recognized sovereign state, the Vatican has maintained its permanent observer status at the UN since 1964, advocating for a range of social justice issues such as the eradication of poverty and world peace. At the same time it also represents the Roman Catholic Church's conservative positions on matters of human sexuality and end-of-life issues like euthanasia and suicide.

**Population Research Institute**

1190 Progress Drive, Suite 2D  
P.O. Box 1559  
Front Royal, VA 22630  
(540) 622-5240  
<http://www.pop.org>

Founded by HLI's Rev. Paul Marx, this "think tank" has largely been a voice box for its president Steven Mosher who in a fundraising letter has said he hopes to "drive the final nail into the coffin of UN population fund abortionists." A central campaign has been to defund UNFPA itself by lobbying Congress to withhold U.S. contributions.

**United Families International**

PO Box 2630  
Gilbert, AZ 85299-2630  
(480) 632-5450  
<http://www.unitedfamilies.org>

Despite being housed in offices far from New York, UFI maintains an active presence at UN conferences and vigorously advises other anti-abortion, "pro-family" NGOs. They have distributed their "The Pro-Family U.N. Negotiating Guide" to all UN delegates.

**World Family Policy Center**

515 JRCB  
J Reuben Clark Law School  
Brigham Young University  
Provo, UT 84602  
(801) 422-5192  
<http://www.law2.byu.edu/wfpc/>

Designed to support "pro-family" NGOs and UN delegates from its location at Brigham Young University, the WFPC has provided a megaphone to its managing director on leave, Richard Wilkins and a chance for Mormons to become involved with international family policy. Wilkins headed the planning team that organized the Doha International Conference for the Family.