

What We Stand For

“You have enemies? Good,” wrote Winston Churchill. “That means you’ve stood up for something.” The World Congress of Families (dba of the Howard Center) continues to be assailed for unapologetically standing up for something—something important, something indispensable, something under increasing attack by those who mislabel our work.

But all the misleading labels in the world cannot change the reality of who we are. “Facts are stubborn things,” observed John Adams, “and whatever may be our wishes, our inclinations, or the dictates of our passion, they cannot alter the state of facts and evidence.” Here are the stubborn facts about the World Congress of Families.

Our work is anchored in truths enshrined in the United Nations’ [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#), whose opening article declares that “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.” We uphold the rule of law, condemn violence, and respect the dignity and rights of all regardless of age, race, religion, or sexual orientation.

The [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) also provides the specific touchstone for our work: “Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion” (article 18), and “The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State” (article 16(3)). We focus on providing that protection to which the natural family is entitled, while also protecting the right to freedom of conscience and religion.

To describe our work as *anti*-anything misses the point entirely. We are, in fact, emphatically *pro*—profoundly and proactively pro-family, pro-children, and pro-freedom of conscience and religion. We have even been awarded the *Pax Urbis Prize* for promoting world peace. Our core principles, which we believe form the foundation of civilization, are no secret. We uphold:

- *The natural family*, based on marriage between a man and a woman, established by the Creator as the “fundamental unit of society,” the foundation of civilization, and the best refuge and school for children.
- *Children’s need* for a mother and a father in a functional, loving family, and their right “to develop physically, mentally, morally, spiritually and socially in a healthy and normal manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity.”
- *The sanctity and dignity of human life* from conception to natural death.
- *Religious freedom* as essential to the flourishing of family and society.

Last year in response to various unfounded and misleading claims (which continue to be irresponsibly recycled), we issued [A Call for Civil Dialogue and Constructive Engagement](#) along with a letter inviting the groups making those claims to engage in constructive dialogue in an atmosphere of civility. There was no response.

But the door remains open, and we still offer to engage in meaningful and respectful dialogue of the kind mentioned in a recent *Christian Science Monitor* [article](#):

Civility is a virtue of civilization, to use a term that relies on the same root. It allows a politician to call out a lie without naming someone a liar: It treats opponents as worthy of heavenly thoughts rather than destined for “a special place in hell.” It opens a door for dialogue rather than shutting it with shouts and slurs.

Meanwhile, we continue to defend the right of everyone—including those who proclaim themselves to be our enemies—to speak freely, even as we ourselves exercise that right in standing up for the very thing that historian Will Durant called “the ultimate foundation of every civilization known to history”—the family.

Sincerely,

E. Douglas Clark