

Theme: Mother's Day

THE POWER OF MOTHERS

I want to read to you something that I came across in the Associated Baptist Press. It tells us something about the world we live in.

WARSAW (ABP, 5/11/07) -- When Ellen Sauerbrey, the United States' assistant secretary of state for population, addressed a European conference on families May 11, she felt the need to defend her appearance there.

In her May 11 opening speech at the World Congress of Families IV in Poland, Sauerbrey told the audience, "the family is entitled to protection by the state."

"The family predates the state," she said. "The state did not create the family. The family created the state."

A group of European parliamentarians had earlier denounced her appearance as putting "an official U.S. government stamp of approval" on the congress, which many European observers have dismissed as xenophobic, homophobic and retrograde.

A letter from the parliament members said Sauerbrey's attendance was an endorsement of the "extremist and intolerant views held by some participants and attendees" at the meeting. It accused event organizers of "prejudiced attitudes toward foreigners, people from other religions, homosexuals, and the inclusive vision of what represents a family unit that has been developed by the United Nations and the European Union."

The congress, held in Warsaw, was billed by organizers as a chance to discuss ways of confronting the decline of the "traditional" family unit in Europe. With marriage rates dropping precipitously across much of the continent and birth rates stagnating in countries like Russia, France and Germany, the congress leaders have urged bolstering such families as a remedy for social and economic ills.

It featured speakers from Europe, Africa, North and South America and Australia. They plan to highlight what they call a "global epidemic of individualism" -- and look to instill newfound pride in heterosexual marriages and intact family units.

It is not conspiracy theory, it is real. There is an all-out-war against families. I am afraid that our children will never live in a world where morality is clearly illustrated in culture. They will never grow up in a world with families are stable. Or where the political interests are for the people's well being and not some strange philosophy such as homosexual rights or the idea that you are free to practice your faith as long as it is not in public. They will never grow up in a world where they will feel safe. How can our children possibly learn to live in such a dangerous world without great parents?

I realize that there is immense pressure to compromise and let our children grow up like the rest of the world. But, if we don't pass on the faith to our kids and live it before them, what a terrible tragedy it would be! Why should our kids believe that life is meaningful and

that it has a divinely appointed end if they do not see us live our lives according to the precepts of our faith? Is church attendance an option for you? Is moral living an option? Is doing what is right, even when others don't care, your way of life? Are you firmly rooted in the Word of God or do you live your life by whatever idea that happens to be current? You are the root stock of your children. You are the most powerful force in their lives.

Paul was as proud of Timothy as if he was his own son. Paul had been his teacher in the ministry. So, Paul constantly remembered Timothy in prayer. He remembered that the last time he saw him, Timothy was in tears as they parted. Who knows, perhaps he felt it was the last time they would see each other. Paul had been living on the legal edge. His life had been threatened several times. His health wasn't too good.

I was also wondering if Timothy was crying because Paul had left him as pastor of the church at Ephesus. It was a major job. That church had become a major center for the faith in Asia. And there had been much opposition to the church there. I suspect that the church consisted of several smaller house churches, each with a pastor and Timothy was the Senior Pastor over all of them. What a chore it must have been. So, Paul prayed for his son in the faith and longed to see him. Timothy brought so much joy into his life.

He was mindful of the faith that was in Timothy. Paul was always encouraging him, cheering him on in his work. How did Timothy become such a person in the eyes of Paul? Paul says that Timothy owes it all to his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice!

We know from other verses that Timothy's mother was Jewish and his father was Greek. We don't read anything else about his father. But his mother and his grandmother are both praised because they are the ones who passed on the faith to Timothy. Timothy is a second generation Christian. He was not a convert of Jesus or perhaps even of Paul. He was raised in the faith by his mother and grandmother. These two women changed the world by simply passing on their faith to their son and grandson.

When we think of mothers, we think of nurture, and love. She fed us and clothed us and changed our diapers. She is the one we went to when we scraped our knee. She is the one we sought out during a thunder storm. She is the one to whom we poured out our bitter soul

after our first girlfriend or boyfriend broke our heart. She is the one who seemed to understand our tears.

But, one of the most important acts of a mother is the sharing of her faith. Most of us were taught to sing and pray and love Jesus by our mother. Our fathers may have taken an active role, but it was our mothers who would sing to us about Jesus and treat us the way Jesus might treat one of his lambs. Fathers taught us about Jesus by their strength and their faithfulness to God.

Timothy was a man of faith and Paul was proud to work with him and to honor him as a man of faith. Paul knew that part of the reason for Timothy's greatness was the faith of his mother and grandmother. They passed on their faith to him. Mothers, what an awesome job you have!

Sometimes it is not easy for parents, knowing that by raising your Children in the faith you open them to the ridicule and criticism from a lost world. While that hurts us all, what would hurt us more is if our children fall away from God and live sinful lives. How many mothers have spent sleepless nights crying and worrying over a child who has gone astray?

With the world as it is, we raise our children in Christ knowing that the world may bring about terrible trials. I am thinking of the teenagers of Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado or the college kids at Virginia Tech. How those parents must hurt! I know it is a terrible thought, but if your child had to face such circumstances, how would you want them to face it? I would want them to be faithful to Christ to the very end.

How can our children become great in the faith? By being parents of faith, by being mothers who instill faith in Christ into their children. To be a part of a family means to have a family tree, to have deep roots. You are the root stock of your children. You lay the foundation for their adult lives. To be rooted and grounded in the Gospel of Jesus Christ is to have roots that last for all eternity. You pass on your roots in words and in deeds. Thank God for mothers who pass on their faith to their children.