



Most of the nations of Western civilization include in their constitutions some provision for freedom of religion. But what do they mean by freedom, and what do they mean by religion? Is religion just a set of beliefs about God that you embrace with your mind, and is freedom merely the opportunity to give voice to such beliefs in church, or synagogue, or mosque for an hour or two each week? Or does religion have to do with how you live your life, and does the state grant you the freedom to live according to your religious convictions?

The word religion comes from the Latin *religio*, meaning literally to reconnect, just as ligaments connect the parts of the body together. Therefore, a person's religion ought to be his vital and continuous connection to his Creator, enabling him to know and to do the will of God. As a wise man once said:

*If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue, but deceives his own heart, this person's religion is worthless. Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world. (James 1:26-27)*

Obviously, according to the Scriptures, your religion is only as real as the life of righteousness and justice that it compels and empowers you to live.

### **Free Exercise and Undisturbed Practice?**

The constitutions of some nations seem to hold out the promise of protecting the right of their citizens to live according to their religious convictions. For example, the first amendment to the United States Constitution states that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." And Article 4 of the Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany states that "The undisturbed practice of religion shall be guaranteed."

Yet in spite of its constitution, Germany has passed a law prohibiting the practice of one of the most foundational tenets of the faith of Abraham,

upon which Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are all supposedly based. So why is there not an uproar? Several of the American states have also attempted to pass such a law, and it is only a matter of time before they succeed, for the people are quickly becoming dull to the voice of their conscience. They are losing the ability to discern between good and evil, or to believe that their voice matters.

What then is this foundational tenet which is being made unattainable by German law? It is found in an obscure passage in the book of Genesis:

*Yahweh<sup>1</sup> said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I have chosen him, that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of Yahweh by doing righteousness and justice, so that Yahweh may bring to Abraham what he has promised him." (Genesis 18:17-19)*

What God was about to do was destroy the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, which had become full of lawlessness, sexual immorality, and injustice, in stark contrast to the kind of nation He wanted to make out of Abraham and his descendants. Therefore He charged Abraham to command his children to adhere to his religious convictions — "the way of Yahweh" — by doing righteousness and justice. God did not want Abraham's offspring to end up in the same condition as the people of Sodom and Gomorrah.<sup>2</sup> He wanted to be able to give Abraham's descendants the promised land, but He would not give it to a bunch of spoiled brats who would only destroy it and bring shame to him.

Therefore, along with the authority to command his children came the responsibility to enforce their obedience to his commands, for their own good.

The wisdom gained from the child-training successes and failures of Abraham and all the fathers after him for fifteen generations is collected in the Proverbs of Solomon, the son of King David. Any parent who claims to believe in the God of Abraham

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<sup>0</sup> "Yahweh" is a transliteration of the Hebrew name for God.

<sup>0</sup> In addition to their more well-known behavior, Ezekiel, the prophet of Israel, identified the guilt of Sodom in these moving words: "Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had arrogance, abundant food, and careless ease, but she did not help the poor and needy." (Ezekiel 16:49)

must treasure and obey the wisdom of these proverbs, but if he does, and if he lives in Germany he will thereby make himself a criminal:

*He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him diligently and promptly. (Proverbs 13:24)*

*Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline drives it far from him. (Proverbs 22:15)*

*Discipline your son while there is hope; do not set your heart on his destruction. (Proverbs 19:18)*

*Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you strike him with a rod, he will not die. If you strike him with the rod, you will save his soul from destruction. (Proverbs 23:13-14)*

*The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother. (Proverbs 29:15)*

## **A Law Against Love**

A law that prohibits parents from spanking their children is a law against love, for the Word of God clearly states that it is hatred, not love, to withhold discipline from a child who needs it (Proverbs 13:24, quoted above). It is hatred to allow a child to go on in his disobedience and disrespect, which only strengthens his selfishness and rebellion, and ultimately leads to his ruin and the hurt of others.

The rod,<sup>4</sup> administered to the child's bottom in love, not frustration, actually ministers to the soul of the child, cleansing him from his guilt.<sup>5</sup> It is a spiritual thing. Then, when he genuinely repents and hears the words, "I forgive you," from his parent, a wonderful bonding takes place. He knows that his parent loves him, and a deep love and respect for his parent grows in his soul.

Any attempt to get a child to obey by reasoning, arguing, threatening, brow-beating, bribing, or withholding pleasures or privileges merely embitters the child, reduces his respect for his parents, and guarantees future and more furious battles. Only the simple command and prompt discipline when it is

not obeyed accomplishes the goal of child training: a healthy, happy, obedient, and pleasant child who will grow into a responsible adult with good moral character.

## **A Tree is Known by its Fruit**

Advocates of bans on "corporal punishment" typically argue that spanking teaches children to solve their problems with violence, increasing aggression rather than teaching responsibility. If that were the case, one would expect to find in countries where spanking has been banned the emergence of a more peaceful society. However, the statistics consistently indicate otherwise. Take Sweden, for example, where spanking has been banned since 1979. In a well-documented paper published in the Akron Law Review, Jason Fuller wrote:

*For instance, after Sweden outlawed spanking, violent behavior did not decrease. Instead, there has been substantially more violence in Sweden than ever before — violence by children, violence by parents, and violence by society in general.*

*Swedish youths now display a "growing propensity for violence." Toddlers and young children have begun hitting their parents often. And minor-on-minor assaults have increased by twenty-five times. All this despite the fact that Sweden has restricted violent media, implemented anti-bullying programs, and banned "war toys" (like toy guns).*

So, the ban has not made youth behavior any better. And now, it seems that many Swedish parents feel they can "neither control the child's behavior nor tolerate its effect upon themselves." Some even appear unable to resist "explosive attacks of rage" against their own kids. Within ten years of the ban, physical child abuse had risen to three times the U.S. rate. And in the thirty years since the ban, child abuse has increased by over 1400%, even though the Swedish population has only increased by about 11.5%. Thus, Sweden's experience since outlawing spanking has been largely inconsistent with its nonviolent goals.<sup>6</sup>

What Mr. Fuller fails to mention is Sweden's

<sup>0</sup> Or any of the 30 countries that have made spanking a criminal offense.

<sup>0</sup> A thin, flexible reed or twig that delivers a sting but does no harm to the body.

<sup>0</sup> Proverbs 20:30

<sup>0</sup> Fuller, Jason, "Corporal Punishment and Child Development" (2010), Akron Law Review, Vol. 44, No. 1, 2010, available at

soaring suicide rate, which is among the highest in the world, and is the leading cause of death between the ages of 15 and 24. Sweden is also leading the pack in the percentage of babies born to unwed mothers, as well as in its divorce rate. So much for the peaceful and wholesome goals of the world's longest-standing ban on spanking!

It makes one wonder what should be expected from a society where spanking is allowed and commonly practiced, such as Singapore. Mr. Fuller continues:

*At the other end of the spectrum is Singapore. It is common to hear spanking opponents claim that, "although physical punishment may produce conformity in the immediate situation, in the longer run, it tends to increase the probability of deviance, including delinquency in adolescence and violent crime inside and outside the family as an adult." Some even say that "corporal punishment disadvantages children cognitively."*

*If true, we would expect to see these problems where spanking is prevalent, like in Singapore. There, schoolteachers corporally punish unruly students, parents cane their children, and the government whips adults as criminal punishment. If the anti-spanking position were valid, Singapore would be one of the most violent and academically deficient societies on the planet.*

Instead, it is the opposite. Despite the fact that Singapore's population has risen by 27% in the past ten years, their crime rates have dropped — both per capita and in total. "Several independent assessments indicate that Singapore has a crime rate far lower than those in most Western nations ... lower than the average crime rate in rural America." "Singapore has 12 times the population of Vancouver but just half the crime rate." At the same time, Singaporean schoolchildren have done very well on international academic tests — taking second and third place in math, and first place in science.<sup>7</sup>

Oddly, the news of these stunning statistics, which flatly contradict today's conventional wisdom, falls on deaf ears as far as the governments of Western civilization are concerned. In spite of the tragic consequences of their unwise and unfounded

child-rearing policies, and in spite of their promised "freedom of religion," the governments of Germany and other "progressive" countries continue to prosecute the few parents brave enough to continue raising their children according to their religious convictions. This law against love is the basis for tearing children away from their conscientious parents who love them enough to discipline them and teach them at home. Then they are forced to go to the public schools, which are full of violence and sexual immorality, so that they can be corrupted along with the rest of this perverse society.

### **If the Foundations Are Destroyed**

*In Yahweh I take refuge;  
how can you say to my soul,  
"Flee like a bird to your mountain,  
for behold, the wicked bend the bow;  
They have fitted their arrow to the string  
to shoot in the dark at the upright in heart;  
If the foundations are destroyed,  
what can the righteous do?"  
Yahweh is in His holy temple;  
Yahweh's throne is in heaven;  
His eyes see, His eyelids test, the children of men.  
Yahweh tests the righteous,  
but His soul hates the wicked  
And the one who loves violence.  
(Psalm 11:1-5)*

We believe that there are many righteous people who do not agree with the perverse policies that are sweeping over the world in these fearful days, but whose voices are suppressed by the intimidating banner of political correctness. Our hope is that by speaking the simple and objective truth we can strengthen those who are "upright in heart" to listen to the voice of their conscience and not be swept away by the flood of evil.

Even more, we pray that many will see where the world is going and realize that their only real hope is to forsake their life in this world and come to be with us, in the Communities of the Twelve Tribes, where there is no law against love.

<sup>7</sup> Fuller, p. 18.







