

YOUTH WITH A MISSION



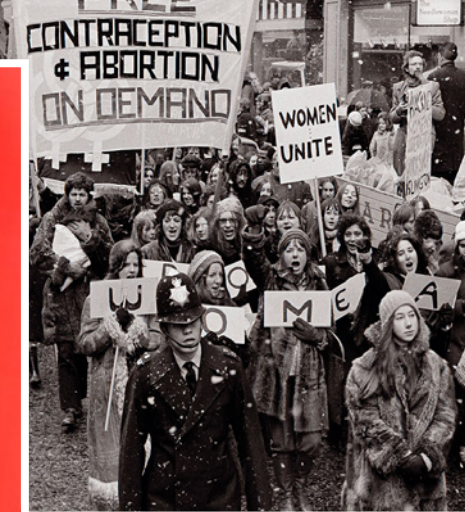
CIJR

CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE AND RECONCILIATION



“And wherever the river goes, every living creature that swarms will live, and there will be very many fish. For this water goes there, that the waters of the sea may become fresh; so everything will live where the river goes.”

VOLUME 2



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Speak up

FOR THOSE WHO CANNOT
SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES AND
FOR
THE RIGHTS OF ALL
WHO ARE DESTITUTE.

SPEAK UP AND JUDGE FAIRLY;
DEFEND
THE RIGHTS OF THE
POOR AND NEEDY."

MIDDLE-EASTERN PROVERB

CONTENT

- 1: **Speak Up**
- 2: **Introduction**
Editorial Team
- 3: **Restored Hope**
Fleur Myhill
Anna-Lisa Reitering
- 4: **Points of Justice and Compassion**
Gender Identity Politics
Lynn Green
- 7: **Are we witnessing the end of civilization?**
Rosana Escobar Liste
- 10: **Gender Ideology**
Kim Rathod
- 12: **Freedom of Belief**
The Silencing of the Lambs
Hannah Willerding
- 15: **Threatened in Sweden**
Anders Carlsson
Martin Nordling
- 17: **Reflections**
Jose Maria Liste

Dear Reader

Thank you for picking up Volume 2! For this issue, the passage in Ezekiel 47:9 stood out to our team as a message of hope that we want to convey.

"And wherever the river goes, every living creature that swarms will live, And wherever the river goes, every living creature that swarms will live, and there will be very many fish. For this water goes there, that the waters of the sea may become fresh; so everything will live where the river goes."

The CIJR Editorial Team is standing together in our belief that the water that comes from the throne of God inside His temple brings restoration and life to everything it comes into contact with. We believe that this river is Jesus. From this water, comes God's love and mercy which we truly need in this present time of flux and changes.

We pray that you, as well, will discover this river of life.

Editorial Team

New Initiative

BY FLEUR MYHILL AND ANNA-LISA REITINGER

Vision of Restored Hope

Restored Hope is a new Counselling ministry that YVAM England is starting for Women— especially women who are seeking help in difficult times of unwanted pregnancies, working through an abortion, PAS or miscarriages. The vision is to bring hope and life to the women and their babies, hence the name “Restored Hope.” We believe God can free us all from ANY despair and grief and bring “Beauty out of Ashes” Isaiah 61:3.

Our God is a God of miracles, who is desperate to show His burning love for us, and to restore the areas in our lives that bring us shame and guilt. He wants us to understand our Identity and value in Him. We are not made to live in regret, self-hatred or shame, God wants us out of these and invites us into what

Hays Conference Centre where they attended the SPUC (Society for the Protection of Unborn Children) National Conference



He promised throughout the whole Bible. He is faithful and will restore us back to wholeness when we place our lives in His hands trusting that He has the best plans for us. There's nothing too shameful for God, this is why we are doing this ministry.

In September, our team went to a SPUC (Society for the Protection of the Unborn) Conference in Derbyshire to connect with people who are already doing a lot in this field. It was encouraging to meet people who were advocating for both lives and counselling women in these situations. We could receive advice for our new ministry and understand more how to help women. We would like to say thank you to them for being a blessing in these first steps of starting our ministry.

Why did you start this?

Fleur's Story

My name is Fleur Myhill, I am 22 years old and I have been a missionary with Youth With a Mission (YVAM) in London for almost 4 years.

Growing up, my confidence would fluctuate and there were times in which I felt hopeless. But when I really came to God in my greatest times of need, He always responded giving me grace and promises of restoration. As I have seen God continue to work in my life, I know that He can do the same for other women. Earlier this year, I had two significant dreams from God. One was of a woman in despair, kneeling on the ground. I knew that it was a word that I would help women in their times of desperation. The other dream represented

something new coming; that I would be giving birth to. God also gave me the passage in Isaiah 61. Still I had no idea of what was yet to come.

Why did you start this?

Anna-Lisa's Story

My name is Anna-Lisa, I am from Germany and I am 30 years old. After encountering God in a life changing way and leaving my normal job in the medical sphere behind, I found my place in YVAM and have been working with it for over 4 years.

I work mainly with Counselling because I believe that Jesus can bring hope, healing and restoration to people in the most terrible and hopeless situations. I have been experiencing this first hand and have been witnessing the same with people around me. Today, I feel the call to be God's instrument of healing for the broken hearted and the destitute.

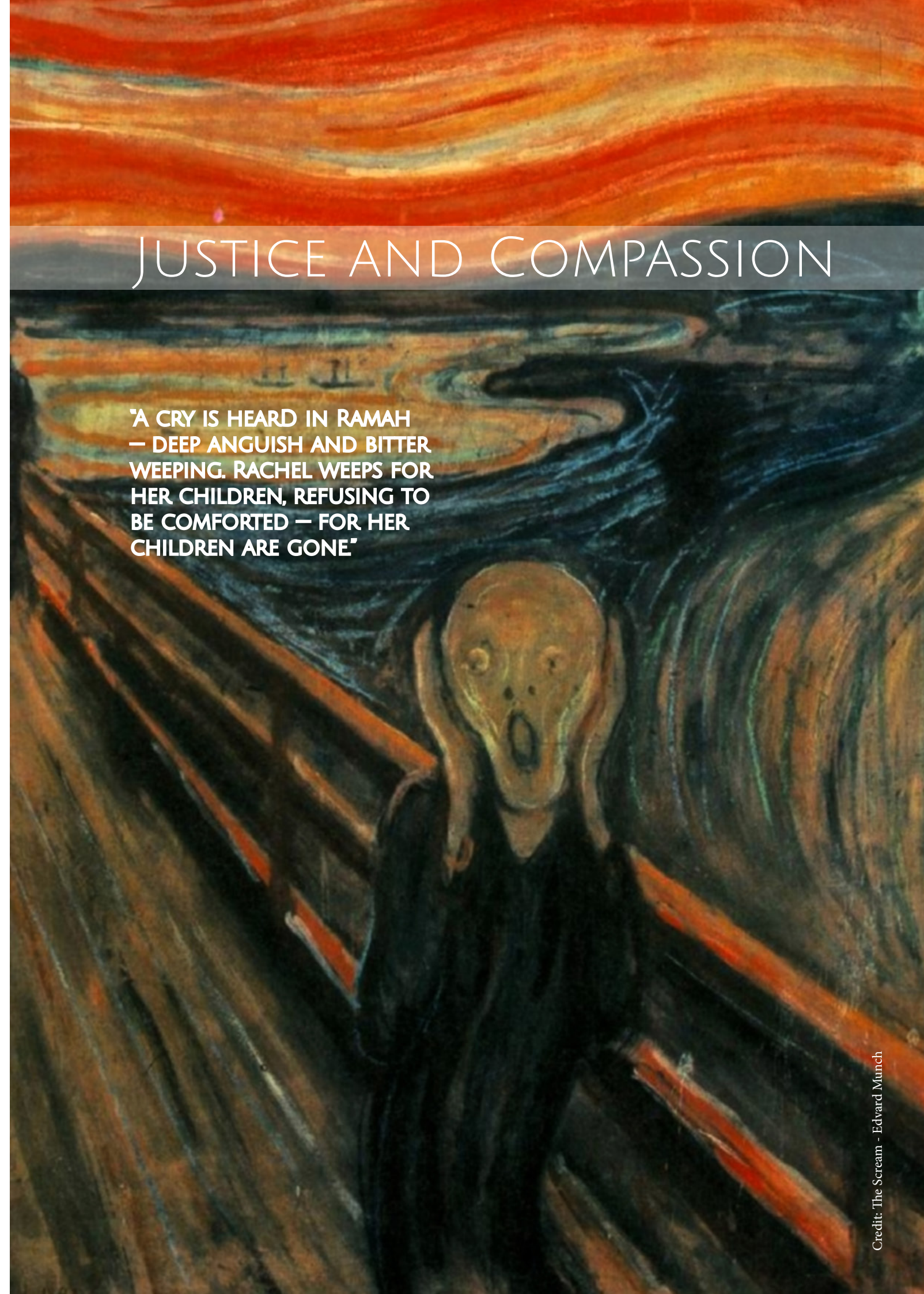
Same as Fleur was quoting earlier in Isaiah 61.

I have this desire for a while in my heart to start a ministry focused on women. Earlier this year, things started to fall into place and God opened so many doors. He has been leading us step by step towards working with women who are having difficulties in their pregnancy, who went through a termination, or who are facing trauma or abuse - all related to this topic. Knowing that Jesus is the defender of life, the one who gained victory over death and who we can put our identity in, I declare that there is hope for everyone.



JUSTICE AND COMPASSION

'A CRY IS HEARD IN RAMAH
— DEEP ANGUISH AND BITTER
WEEPING. RACHEL WEEPS FOR
HER CHILDREN, REFUSING TO
BE COMFORTED — FOR HER
CHILDREN ARE GONE'



**“I did not see this coming!
Just a few years ago I had never
heard the term “gender dysphoria”
and I would never have guessed that it
would be politically weaponised.”**

Gender Identity Politics

BY LYNN GREEN

(I want to be very clear: this article does not aim to provide any guidance for the pastoral care of someone experiencing uncertainty, or dissatisfaction with their sexual identity.)

But now, Sky News reports: The Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust (UK) offers gender identity services for children under 18, with some patients as young as three or four years old. They now have a record number of referrals and see 3,200% more patients than they did 10 years ago - with the increase for girls up by 5,337%.

The numbers of children and young adults requesting sex change procedures is still relatively small, but the extraordinary growth patterns point to an epidemic. What impact is it likely to make? Some people who transitioned years ago have begun to speak up:

Ruby is now 21 but first began identifying as male at 13. After taking testosterone her voice got a lot deeper, she grew facial hair and her body changed. She had been planning to have surgery to remove her breasts this summer.

However, in May, Ruby voiced the growing doubts she had been harbouring and made the decision to come off testosterone and detransition to identify as female. “I didn’t think any change was going to be enough in the end and I thought it was better to work on changing how I felt about myself, than changing my body,” says Ruby.

Charlie Evans, 28, was born female but identified as male for nearly 10 years before detransitioning.

The number of young people seeking gender transition is at an all-time high, but we hear very little, if anything, about those who may come to regret their decision. There is currently no data to reflect the number who may be unhappy in their new gender or who may opt to detransition to their biological sex.

Charlie detransitioned and went public with her story last year - and said she was stunned by the number of people she discovered in a similar position. “I’m in communication with 19 and 20-year-olds who have had full gender re-assignment surgery who wish they hadn’t, and their dysphoria hasn’t been relieved, they don’t feel better for it,” she says.

Considering the growing number of people wanting to detransition, or at least wishing they hadn’t started the process, it is surprising that some of the proponents of gender transition have not suggested caution, or that more research should be done. They claim that even talking about detransition is transphobic. To me, that suggests that this is not primarily about helping people, but it must be part of some strange, possessing ideology. Gender identity has been made a political weapon.



What I have aimed to do is to convey an important message:

**BE ALERT!
DON'T EXPERIMENT
WITH
CHILDREN'S LIVES!**

Credit : Hannah Willerding



Lynn Green

Lynn and his wife, Marti, have been in the senior leadership in YWAM and other public ministry. Lynn has been to more than 110 nations. Some of his adventures include being part of the founding team of March For Jesus and he initiated and led the Reconciliation Walk, giving the opportunity to more than 2,500 people to walk portions of the route of the First Crusade apologizing for atrocities done in the name of Jesus.

His article is important and revealing, so I am quoting it at length: When the American Historical Association surveyed the trends among major fields of specialization in 2007, and then again in 2015, the single largest field was women’s and gender history. This was right up there with social history, cultural history, and the history of race and sexuality. Each of these fields shared the same worldview as I did—that just about every **identity was a social construction. And, that identity was all about power.** (My added emphasis.)

Back then, quite a few people disagreed with me. Almost nobody who hadn’t been exposed to such theories at a university could bring themselves to believe that sex was wholly a social construct, because such beliefs went against common sense. That’s what makes it so amazing that the cultural turnaround on this issue has happened so quickly. Reasonable people might readily admit that some—and maybe a lot—of gender identity is socially constructed, but did this really mean that sex doesn’t matter at all? Was gender solely based on culture? Yes, I would insist. And then I would insist some more. There’s nothing so certain as a graduate student armed with precious little life experience and a big idea.

And now my big idea is everywhere. It shows up especially in the talking points about trans rights, and policy regarding trans athletes in sports. It is being written into laws that essentially threaten repercussions for anyone who suggests that sex might be a biological reality. Such a statement, for many activists, is tantamount to hate speech. If you take the position that many of my ’90s-era debating opponents took—that gender is at least partly based on sex, and that there really are two sexes (male and female), as biologists have known since the dawn of their science—uber-progressives will claim you are denying a trans person’s identity, which is to say, wishing ontological harm upon another human being.

But what I can offer is a mea culpa for my own role in all of this, and a detailed critique about why I was wrong then, and why the

radical social constructionists are wrong now. I once made the same arguments that they now make, and so I know how they are mistaken.

A friend and I did a long, high-altitude hike this past summer in my home state of Colorado and we finished our week in a beautiful resort town. As we trudged the final mile up the main street, which was busy with tourists, I saw a young boy wearing lipstick and eye-shadow; then I saw another a bit farther on, and the another. I was full of questions I couldn’t ask the boys or their parents:

Why? When did it start? Was there a triggering event? Does he wear make-up every day? Is he receiving therapy and puberty blockers? What was your response initially? Before he started trying to look more like a girl, did he have a friend of friends who had led the way? Was he bullied by peers, or rejected by an adult?

As the book and lectures I have cited explain, this ideology is a re-packaging of Marxism and an all-out attack on the nations that have produced the greatest individual freedom, opportunities and prosperity in human history.

As we resist this toxic ideology, we must also treat each person with empathy and respect. So, let me be very clear: this article does not aim to provide any guidance for the pastoral care of someone experiencing uncertainty, or dissatisfaction with their sexual identity.

We are allowing an ideology that destroyed millions of lives in the 20th century to resurrect itself and don new clothing. Now we are experimenting with the lives of millions of children. If the influence of the ideology continues to grow, the chances of this turning out well are nil.

If you would like to read the rest of that confession, it is available online: <https://quillette.com/2019/09/17/i-basically-just-made-it-up-confessions-of-a-social-constructionist/>

(A book by Stephen Hicks, *Explaining Postmodernism*, helped me understand the ideology/philosophy behind this thinking. Another very good source of context is a 43-minute video by Jordan Peterson <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wLoG9zBwLQ>.)

If you would like to read more, quotes from the Sky News article are taken from: <https://www.google.co.uk/amp/s/news.sky.com/story/amp/hundreds-of-young-trans-people-seeking-help-to-return-to-original-sex-11827740>

Are we witnessing the end of our civilization

BY ROSANA ESCOBAR LISTE

None of the following is intended to be a personal attack on any person of any gender preference or sexual orientation. I see all such persons with the love and respect in accord with human dignity.

Society in general and the West in particular has been going through a shift of worldviews. Concepts and parameters are no longer seen as universals, rather they are personal and subjective. On one side, this could be desirable to include and protect groups that were once ignored and/or oppressed. Still, we consider that it's important to analyze the roots and implications of different rising views before normalizing them. We should be intentional in assessing the beliefs that are shaping us and that will be foundational for the generations to come.

For instance: "Same-sex marriage or civil partnerships"; "No-fault divorce", which does not require a showing of wrongdoing by either party to allow the dissolution of a marriage; "Abortion" being considered a human right, even when it's up to term and without a cause; "Assisted" suicide; etc.

What is Gender Ideology?

Under the protest of those who criticize the categorization of new gender ideas as an ideology and see them just as a perspective, we want to clarify that our classification is based on our understanding of the nature and source of the movement.

Gender Ideology is a set of antiscientific ideas which, under political goals, detach human sexuality from nature and explain it only by culture. Its activists declare that sexuality and sexual identity are aligned to "self-perception" and cultural constructs, not rooted in objective reality and scientific knowledge.

They have an ambitious plan to transcend the traditional binary system of gender (male and female), affirming that there is no essence in being a man or being a woman, since those would only be cultural constructs.

Ironically, under the banner of diversity, inclusion and tolerance, gender ideology imposes the dictatorship of relativism by creating laws which penalise any action that contradicts its principles. With the backing of the State and under a global agenda of social engineering and cultural deconstruction, the ideology pushes and labels its dissidents as intolerant and homophobic.

The roots of Gender Ideology:

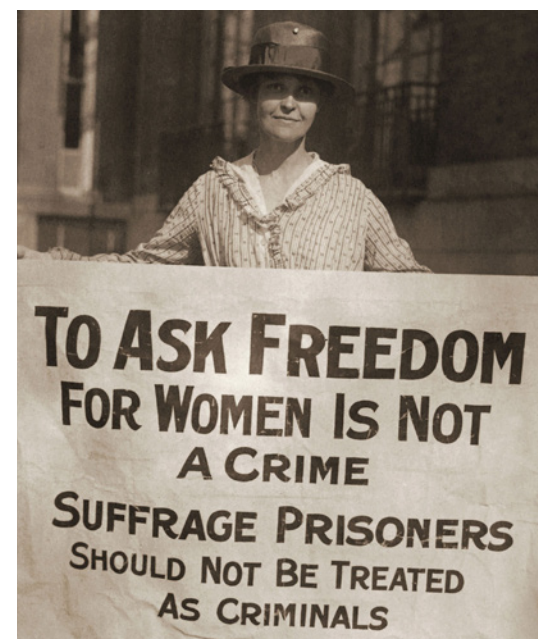
We see Gender Ideology as being connected to the New Lefts; the Third-wave Feminism; the LGBT lobby; the abortion and euthanasia lobby; some philosophical ideas and also to some "scientific" experiments of "sexual reassignment", among others.

I- The New Left is a development on the premises of Marx and Engels, which located the origin of Women's Oppression in the rise of Class Society. When Marx wrote *The Communist Manifesto* in 1848, ideas of women's liberation were already a central part of the revolutionary socialist theory, what we can see in the publication: *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1884).

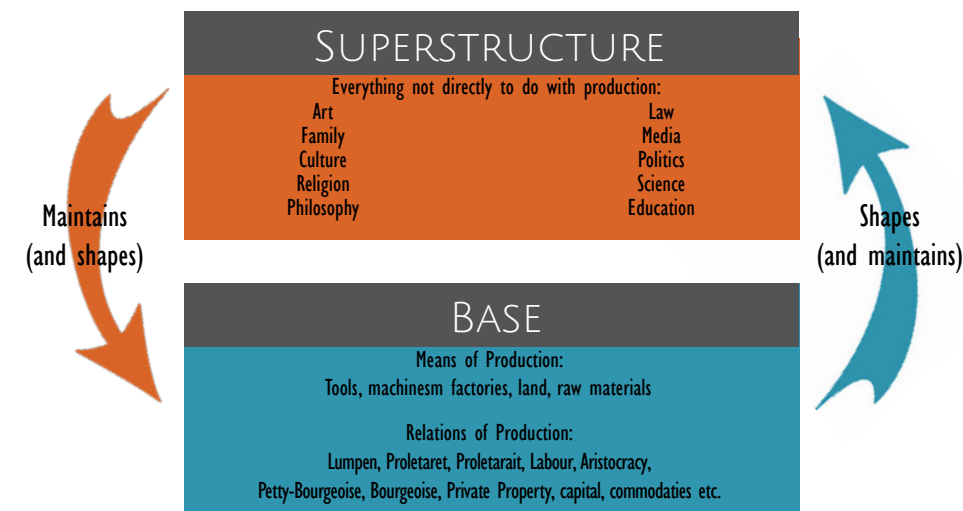
Engels' theory of women's oppression rested in the relationship between the sexual division of labor and the mode of production. For instance, they ar-

gued that women in pre-Class society were able to combine motherhood and productive labor. But after those times, women would have been subdued by men through the monogamous nuclear family, no longer having economic autonomy.

During that period, they didn't attack the family directly because they believed the way to change society was through a revolution that would attack the Base of the Social System, which was the Economic level, not the Cultural one (as shown in the picture above).



After the II World War, there was a big shift. The proletariat was financially comfortable and convinced to keep the *status quo* without any interest in Revolution. In this scenario, the Left went through a Strategic and Political Conversion.



The School of Frankfurt with authors like Marcuse, Gramsci, Althusser among others developed a new analysis of society, in which the transformation would come by a cultural revolution. With this change, the workers would no longer have the protagonist role, the bourgeois students of Universities would take the frontlines and liberate society.

Marcuse published "Eros and Civilization" (1955), in which he said that the project of the New Left was the destruction of the Actual. He proposed Arts and not Science, the Imagination and not a clear thought. One of his famous phrases was: "Let's be realistic and ask for the impossible".

Years later, with the development of these thoughts, the world witnessed a two-month period of civil unrest through France punctuated by demonstrations, major general strikes, and the occupation of university factories.

In this so called "French Cultural Revolution" of May 1968, they no longer fought for the Macro-Economic Change, but vindicated for liberties in the private spheres, denounced all discrimination and imperialism; and rebelled against authorities.

They defended a new moral and sexual freedom, feminism, egalitarian education, ecologism, anti-nuclearism, and anti-militarism among other things. Some of their banners were: "Imagination at Power"; "Make Love, Not War", "Forbidden to Forbid", "They decree the state of permanent happiness",

"Accumulate anger"; "The Sacred, there is my enemy"; "Take your desires as realities", etc.

Today, all these ideas are more ingrained in our society and support all sorts of "liberations" from the "oppressive tradition society".

2- The third wave of Feminism

In the first wave of Feminism (1848-1920), the claim was to give women political equality and actually achieve recognition for their value as women. Those were mainly known as the suffragettes.

On the second wave (1963-1980's), the claim was social equality, which would be achieved, in their views, with financial and legal autonomy from men. Believing that the "The personal is political" (Kate Millet 1934-2017)

Left Page: Credit - Harris & Ewing, 1917
Right Page: Credit - Malhar Mali



The third wave (1991 – now), has gone deeper and deeper in their claims and actually, the *Feminism of the 3rd wave* is also known as a *Feminism without the Woman* or even *Post Feminism*. They intend to “liberate” society from the oppression of the traditional patriarchy and imposed social constructs of sex and gender.

Simone de Beauvoir wrote: “One is **not born**, but rather becomes, **a woman**” (The Second Sex, 1949). Monique Wittig said: “Women don’t exist”; “[...] The category of sex is the product of a heterosexual society in which men appropriate for themselves the reproduction and production of women, and also their physical persons be means of a contract called the marriage contract” (The ‘Straight Mind’ and other essays, 1992). “...by its very existence, lesbian society destroys the artificial (social) fact constituting women as a ‘natural group’.” (One is not born a woman, 1980)

Judith Butler said: “If the immutable character of sex is contested, perhaps this construct called ‘sex’ is as culturally constructed as gender; indeed, perhaps it was always gender, with the consequence that the distinction between sex and gender turns out to be no distinction at all.” (Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity, 1990). She even declared “that the transvestite ‘effectively mocks both the expressive model of gender and the notion of a true gender identity’”

Leonor Silvestri combats the hetero-capitalism and one of her sayings is “Proliferate up till the absurd the psycho-sexual anomalies” (free translation from “proliferar hasta el absurdo las anomalías psico-sexuales” from Foucault para ancapuchadas, 2012). She stated that motherhood presented an obstacle for the equality of women with respect to man and the modern development of society. The problem that constitutes this “biological burden” had to be solved by means of contraception and abortion and, in time, lesbianism”.

3- LGBT lobby. This activist movement has been increasing in power and visibility over the past 50 years. It began with the riots at the Stonewall Inn in New York in 1969. A year later, homosexuals and self-identified transgender men and women held “Gay Pride” marches in New York, Los Angeles and Chicago.

Since the Stonewall riots, many activist groups have been established and have been working to change sexual paradigms in many countries through their power of influence in popular culture, education, business, politics, religion, etc.

They have been lobbying for a change of language that transcends the traditional binary system of sexual identity and embrace a spectrum of gender categories. In 1996, their initialism was extended to LGBTI or LGBTIQ to include the “Q” standing for queer (questioning their sexual identity) and the “I” for intersex, but the gender categories keep on being created. At the moment, the United Nations recognizes 112 genders and Facebook in the UK gives 71 genders options, including asexual, polygender and two-spirit person.

Who is financially supporting Gender Ideology?

The Rockefeller Foundation, the Ford Foundation and the Foundation of Bill and Melinda Gates, the Open Society of George Soros, Planned Parenthood, among others. It receives also the political support of international organizations like the United Nations, UNESCO, UNICEF, the World Health Organization, the Convention of the Rights of the Child, World Bank, LGBT lobby, etc.

Some personal conclusions...

“when the foundations are being destroyed, what can the righteous do?” (Psalm 11.3)

I believe in respect and love for all human beings beyond their sexual inclinations, preferences and ideologies. However, I see our foundations are being shaken as the giants of confusion, immorality and injustice rise up against us.

I cannot just witness the destruction of the pillars of personal identity and the substructure of our civilization, which is constituted by Family, Education, Science, Religion, etc. I must speak up against the dictatorship of relativism and defend the Freedom of Speech, Belief and Conscience from its attackers.

I must denounce the financial pressure that international organizations are using to pressure vulnerable countries into abiding by their ideological agendas and how Countries in the West are extending their power and control to the private sphere and enforcing Gender Ideology.

Päivi Räsänen, a Christian Democrat MP is a high profile example of the pressure Christians are suffering into renouncing their principles. After the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland participated in the Helsinki LGBT Pride in June, she posted on Facebook a photograph of Romans 1:24-26 and wrote “How does the foundation of the church’s teaching, the Bible, fit with elevating sin and shame as reasons for pride?”. This was enough to motivate an investigation for Hate Crime (Helsinki Times) (1)

Another case was of James Caspian, an English Psychotherapist, who specializes in working with transgender people. He submitted a proposal to Bath Spa University to conduct a research about “detransitioning” (regarding people that had transitioned to their preferred gender but regretted it and had decided to “detransition” to their birth gen-



Credit : Hannah Willerding

der). The university ended up turning down the proposal stating that: “attack on social media may not be confined to the researcher but may involve the university.” (The Telegraph) (2)

There is a growing pressure to compromise with the Status Quo and remain silent. The price for going against the trend is to be labeled homophobic, fascist or retrograde or even worse, to be sent to prison. But not everything is lost. We need to stand firm in this battle for our children and the generations ahead. We must put our faith in the one Who is calling us to persevere and Who is faithful to restore everything.



Rosana Escobar has had a pastoral role in the UK Parliament since 2008. She has worked across party lines, inspiring Christians in the government to see the missions within the halls of Westminster. Rosana is one of the co-coordinators of the Centre for International Justice and Reconciliation. The CIJR is the bridge of various YWAM grassroots initiatives and the larger international body of the United Nations.

End Notes

(1) <https://www.helsinkitimes.fi/finland/finland-news/domestic/16687-police-open-investigations-into-social-media-posts-of-al-taee-raesaenen.html>

(2) <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2019/02/19/proposal-research-trans-regret-rejected-university-fear-backlash/>

Gender Ideology

EXAMINATIONS FROM A SCIENTIFIC PERSPECTIVE

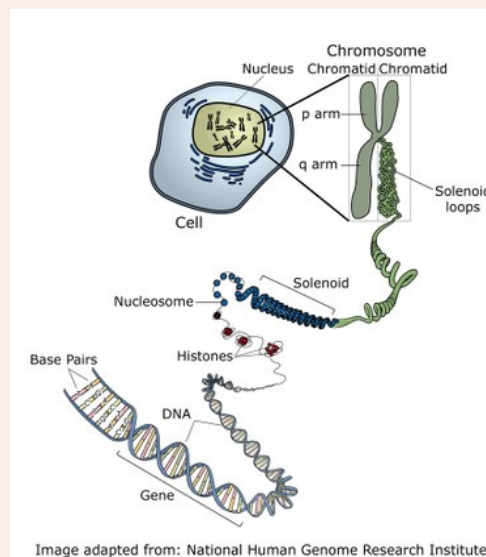
BY KIM RATHOD

Like many political and social issues currently dominating our headlines, gender ideology has seemingly taken centre stage overnight. In an age where personal freedoms, equality and individual rights are rigorously promoted and supported, social and political agendas with subjective claims will have wide scale impacts on foundational societal norms. Thus, it is imperative to understand and examine those beliefs which have the potential to shape our future, as well as those of generations to come.

Since the 1950s and 60s, the changing landscape of gender and sex has morphed from a mainly biological framework to a social, psychological and political construct. Dr John Money coined the term 'gender identity' by borrowing the term 'gender' from linguistics to differentiate between sex (biological determinant of being male or female) and gender (psychological and social construct of internal sex identity concerning what one thinks, feels and believes about being male or female). (ref.1,2) This distinction between sex and gender effectively separated what had always been considered a longstanding and foundational principle of belief in a unified body, soul and spirit.

Science has long supported the binary classification of human sexuality as demonstrated in the physical reality of life around us. Every human cell contains a set of genetic instructions in the form of DNA, which is organised into chromosomes. Of the 23 pairs of chromosomes contained within each human cell, one pair determines sex – males contain an X and Y and females contain two X's. Every chromosome contains a set of genes that code for specific proteins, which ultimately determine the traits that are expressed

within that individual. The expression of traits and development of the body are regulated by innumerable pathways generally involving a series of complex gene and protein interactions. An overview of the genetic organisation is shown in Figure 1. (3)



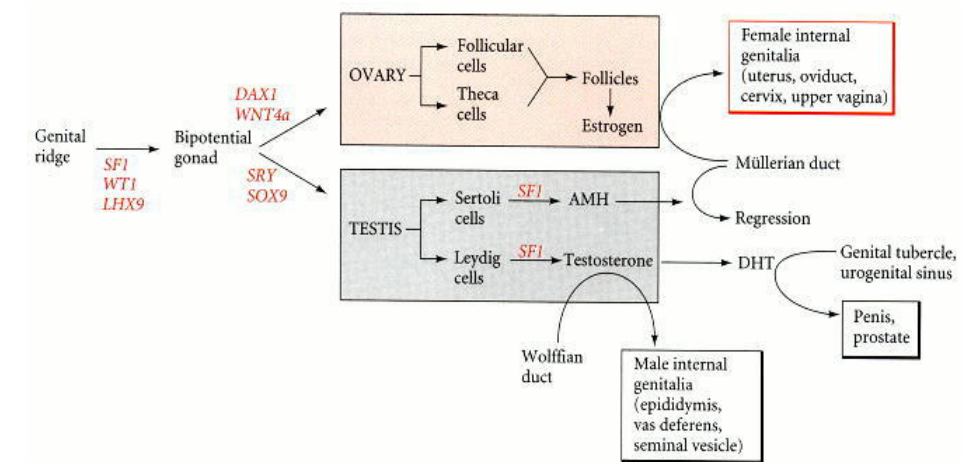
Genetic information, in the form of DNA, is arranged into chromosomes, which are located within the nucleus of the cell. Each chromosome contains a set of genes comprised of sections of DNA that code for specific proteins.

It was discovered in the early 1990s that one specific gene located on the Y chromosome, the SRY gene (sex-determining region of the Y chromosome), is the primary gene responsible for sex determination. (4,5) During week four of gestation, the embryo develops gonadal rudiments, which have the potential to become either testes or ovaries. (6) The presence and expression of SRY initiate the development of the male-specific testes from the bipotential stage while simultaneously suppressing the ovarian-determining pathway, and the absence of SRY leads to development of the female-specific ovaries. (7,8,9)

The expression of SRY triggers a cascade of events: the SRY protein upregulates the expression of SOX9, which in turn induces Sertoli cell (specialized testis cells) differentiation, which then, in conjunction with another protein SF1, signals the production of AMH, the hormone which causes regression of the Müllerian duct (which would otherwise form the female genitalia). (10,11,12) Alongside these events, differentiation of the Leydig cells, another specialized testis cell, occur and they begin secreting testosterone, which stimulates the formation of the male genitalia. (13) Figure 2 shows the general mammalian sex determination pathway. (14)

There are a host of other genes and proteins involved in the process of testis and ovary differentiation, which are the hallmarks of male and female determination, respectively. What has been observed and studied in humans, as well as some mammalian models, predominantly mice, is that if there is any deviation in any of the genes, proteins or cells involved in the sex determination pathway, then the resulting phenotype will generally be some form of intermediate or ambiguous genitalia. Any congenital condition associated with atypical development of chromosomal, gonadal or anatomical sex is termed a disorder of sex development (DSD), of which the overall incidence is 1 in 5,500 (0.018%). (15)

It is important to distinguish that individuals who are born with a DSD exhibit a rare biological deviation from the human binary sexual norm, which differs from individuals with a normal genotype and genitalia who identify as transgender. (16) Individuals who identify as transgender are those whose feelings and perceptions of their gender do not align with their biological sex. (17)



An overview of the mammalian sex determination pathway. Note the presence of SRY initiates the formation of testes from the bipotential gonad, whereas the absence of SRY leads to development of ovaries. The remaining sex characteristics develop as a result of the interactions of various genes and proteins.



Kim Rathod holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology and a Master of Arts in Teaching degree with a secondary biology and general science certification from Winthrop University. She was a licensed educator teaching biology at Nation Ford High School in South Carolina from 2012-2015 prior to entering full-time Christian missions work first with Adventures in Missions and then with Youth With A Mission (YWAM). She currently resides in London, England where she serves with YWAM Urban Key London in the areas of training, evangelism, mercy ministries and church partnership.

FREEDOM OF BELIEF

NOTRE DAME,
A FAMOUS CHRISTIAN
LANDMARK BURNED
DOWN IN PARIS

The Silencing of the Lambs

THE LOSS OF CHRISTIAN VOICES IN THE UK

BY HANNAH WILLERDING

Around the end of July 2019, the hashtag #Christianprivilege was trending on Twitter bringing to the forefront anti-Christian sentiments in the West, particularly in Europe and the United States. (1) For some groups in the United States, Christianity represents the dominant, white, traditional, racist patriarchy that has repressed and taken away the rights of People of Color, women, and LGBTQ+ individuals. Today in American institutions of higher education and urban areas, to be aligned with Biblical values means that the person is backwards and intolerant.

Within Europe, the pressures of secularism(2), religious radicalization, and hyper-liberalism(3) are mounting. According to the 2018 Report of The Observatory(4), Christians face "Intolerance" and "Discrimination" as markers of hostile attitudes and systematic marginalization to eliminate the Christian presence in the public sphere. Intolerances are intimidations from society and culture that range from indifferent attitudes, verbal and physical attacks during periods of assembly (Church) and public demonstrations of faith (which include evangelism or just wearing a cross). The worst of the kind are hate crimes against Christians. Discrimination, on the other hand, refers to laws that interfere with freedoms of expression, belief, conscience, and assembly; parental rights; the right to work; and the systemic inequality that prevent Christians from accessing their full rights within the law. From Irish bakers taken to court because they refused to bake a cake featuring two Sesame Street characters in support of Gay Marriage to religiously motivated murders by Islamic extremists, Christians living in

Europe are no longer guaranteed the full freedom from heinous acts and societal pressures as believers.

In the UK, Freedom of Expression is protected under Article 10 of the Human Rights Acts 1998(5). Section 1 covers the "freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference of public authorities." In Section 2, the responsibilities underlying this freedom protects only national security, public safety, and prevention of disclosure of private information. These two sections guarantee anyone the liberty to educate and inform the public, as long as they observe the duties expressed in Article 10, Section 2. But, discrimination and intolerance against Christian values are rising in the UK; especially when Christians are speaking up against abortion and their Biblical beliefs about the LGBTQ+. Christians are monitored very severely for having their beliefs represented in the public space.

#StopStella Campaign

On 3 October 2019, the campaign #StopStella, started by the Centre for Bio-Ethical Research UK (CBRUK), confronting MP Stella Creasy of Walthamstow received backlash from the local council of Waltham Forest, which included intimidation and destruction of private property. The campaign involved graphic photos of aborted babies displayed on the walking pavement in Walthamstow and a billboard. Both parts of the campaign, the billboard and the educational displays have been shut down with pressure from the MP and the local council.

According to the Waltham Forest Council, the CBRUK was in breach Sections 43 of the Anti-Social and Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 201 in regards to their educational display:

"Displaying large images of unborn fetuses and/or aborted fetuses which have caused or are likely to cause distress and/or alarm to members of the public"

"Your MP is working hard to take away my human rights"



9-week living fetus

Stella Creasy
MP for Walthamstow

StopStella.com

The document further described the behaviour of the CBRUK representative, Christian Hacking, as, “detrimental and unreasonable.” In response to the 3 October Council intervention, Hacking writes:

“Today we sought to educate the Walthamstow on the reality of the abortion. Only to be told by Walthamstow council that our behaviour was ‘unreasonable’ and ‘detrimental’ and that we needed a permit. You tell me what’s unreasonable or detrimental? Educating Walthamstow constituents on the reality of what Stella supports or supporting an MP who calls ‘abortion a human right upto [sic] 28 weeks’, and is quite willing to forcefully shuts down anyone who suggests otherwise.”

The events and response following the Waltham Forest Council intervention ignited a huge movement against all expressions that favour life. The BBC also derided the campaign of CBRUK in a mock sketch because pro-life sentiments seem to no longer have a place in this society.

Talented Christian Actress Out of A Job

Another incident of discrimination happened earlier this year to rising West End actress, Seyi Omooba. Upon her casting as Celie in the Leicester production of the musical, The Color Purple, on 14 March 2019, she was immediately dismissed from her role because of a tweet that mentioned her Facebook post 4 years ago where she expressed her agreement with the Biblical View of Marriage and sexuality (6). The actor, Aaron Lee Lambert wrote: “@Seyiomooba Do you still stand by this post? Or are you happy to remain a hypocrite? Seeing as you’ve now been announced to be playing an LGBTQ character, I think you owe your LGBTQ peers an explanation. Immediately.”

On 15 October, Omooba’s agency, Global Artists, encouraged her to recant her statements or else she would no longer be allowed in the show. Because Omooba did not, the agency later informed her that they would no longer be representing her.

Since then, the actress sought for other representation, to which other agencies responded negatively towards her saying, “Homophobia is illegal. It is not a matter of faith.” She had two choices, either renounce her faith, or no longer work as an actor in the U.K. In response to the discrimination against her, Omooba filed a case to expose this injustice and for other Christian artists not to have to face the same discriminatory practices. The actress said:

“When I received the email that I was going to be dropped from the cast, I was heartbroken. The agency told me that I would receive financial compensation, but I am not in this for the money. For me it’s not about the money or my face – it was about telling and expressing Celie’s story, as I interpret it as a performer, because that is what I love to do.

“Yet the theatre and the agency gave me the choice of either losing my career or renouncing my faith. I could not do this, not even to save the career that I love.”

#ChristianPrivilege?

With these 2019 cases of violation of Freedom of Belief and Conscience in the U.K. and Freedom of Expression, it is arguable that #ChristianPrivilege is either diminishing or non-existent. The views of the Social Media majority and Traditional Media platforms dictate that Biblical Christian values are “trigger (8)” points that are tied with hate speech and intolerance towards women, minority groups, and the LGBTQ+. Our values are constantly monitored and our beliefs need to fall in line with the “politically correct” norm lest we injure, or even question the foundation of currently accepted social mores, in the case of abortion.

Perhaps, the idea that Christians held a privileged position in society is no longer valid one, considering the systematic silencing of Christian voices in the public sphere. If what we write on social media and the values that we fight for — such as the value of an unborn, living child — are under intense scrutiny, then, we’d need to be prepared for further encroachments to our Human Rights.



Hannah Willerding has been serving with Youth With A Mission (YWAM) since 2013, where she met her husband. She is a member of the Centre for International Justice and Reconciliation, working in different areas of advocacy and awareness campaigns. Hannah obtained a BA/BA in Philosophy- Ethics and Moral Value Theory and History - Race and Gender from the University of Southern California. Prior to joining the mission field, Hannah worked as a freelance writer and translator.

Freedom of Belief and Conscience

IS THREATENED IN SWEDEN

BY ANDERS CARLSSON AND MARTIN NORDLING

In Sweden, after a long effort to restrain religion and faith to the private sphere, we see as an unfortunate consequence that a majority of Swedes don’t understand faith and its expressions. A secular ideal is twisting Freedom of Religion into being understood as freedom from religion. With a great emphasis on “tolerance”, intolerance has grown in a broad spectra of issues.

In 2019, Sweden was under the Universal Periodic Review, an inspection on the status of Human Rights of member states of the U.N. Youth With A Mission, with its Special Consultative Status with the UN Economic and Social Council, serve as a stakeholders, and in June, presented a report written by our local YWAM team in Linköping, Sweden. In this report we summarized the main points of the Official Report to the UN:

Confessional Schools

In Sweden, privately run schools are allowed to have confessional elements as long as those elements are optional and the schools follow the government’s curriculum. The voluntary nature of the confessional elements makes the teachings virtually the same as the ones from government-run schools.

However, a few reported problems in some Muslim confessional schools[1] have made the current administration promise to stop any new confessional schools from being established. This contradicts the rights of the parents, as stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, article 26, to “have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children”. The current system is not protecting their right as the availability of confessional schools is stymied.

Freedom of Conscience for Medical Practitioners

In the medical field, there lies a problem with the lack of Freedom of Conscience. Based on principles, some midwives object to participate in abortions, and exemptions were considered a natural right since the legalisation of abortion in Sweden. But in 2006, there was a change in the work description. Since then, new exemptions no longer were granted[2]. Of those affected were two prospective midwives who had their exemptions denied.

They both went to court, and lost. Now, they are appealing to the European Court of Human Rights, while working as midwives in Norway.

Legal Security of Muslim Converts to Christianity

Muslims who convert to Christianity are at severe risk of persecution and death in their home countries. Swedish authorities recognise these issues, and they have declared they would not deport any convert. Some people falsely claimed to convert in order to receive asylum, which creates a problem. As a consequence, the Swedish authorities try to discern the genuineness of people’s faith.

Unfortunately, according to a 2019 report that examined 619 cases of Afghan converts[3], the Swedish Migration Board has a weak understanding of religion and conversion: their practices are not based on reliable methodology, they exhibit unreasonable differences between comparable entities, and they do not comply sufficiently with international law and Human Rights conventions. This creates a lack of legal security.

Photo : Midwife Linda Steen
Credit : YWAM linköping



Anders Carlsson is the National Leader of YWAM Sweden as well as team leader of the YWAM Linköping campus. He has a Bachelor of Social Science from Linköping University. He is married to Sara, together they have four children.



Martin Nordling is a long term staff and team member at the YWAM Linköping campus.





Reflections

BY JOSE MARIA LISTE

Our society and especially the church is going through an unprecedented time, in which we are facing very difficult and complex decisions to make, in regard with topics about Gender, Freedom of Belief and Conscience, and Freedom of Expression.

From a Biblical standpoint, “Love and mercy” are the only things that are non-negotiable at all. In Romans 8:35 it says, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?” The strategy of the world is to separate us; that is why it is extremely important to fight for “unity in love,” which is Jesus’ model.

The question is: how are we going to do that?

There is no right or wrong answer. We’d need a “supernatural” interven-

tion that goes beyond human knowledge or wisdom. Human wisdom and love both failed to achieved their purpose to bring solutions in this world. Therefore, we need to long for God’s intervention during these times. Perhaps, we have to do things that we’ve never done before or even doing them in a different way. We also need a higher level of “supernatural peace” that helps us to bring solutions to the problems that have rapidly come to all of our nations.

Let’s try to open our eyes to see the “unseen,” and realise Ephesians 6, “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”

I hope that by reading this magazine your eyes may be opened into the “unseen.”

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