

THE HERITAGE – father's and mother's

The Swedish Free Church
1865 – 31 female, 31 male

Våmhus Baptist Congregation
1868 – 51 female, 51 male

Freedom of religion, the Congregation,
Democracy, and the Right of women

My notes to picture 1:

Let me take the same point of departure as our entire consultation – the heritage. It was good to be remembered of some of the Baptist father's and how they have been in the fore-front of issues related to freedom of religion or belief. Over the years, in country after country it has been an issue for individuals as well as denominations struggling all from the right to exist, to register, to be an equal part in society. I will add the Swedish struggle as an example of the Baptist fathers and mothers. Until the year 1860 it was by law required that every citizen of Sweden were obliged to be a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. The first Baptist, a Swede returning from America and establishing a church 1848 was expelled from the country. 18 years later – a lot of struggle and opinion-building - it for the first time was allowed to establish congregations and also recognized denominations beside the Swedish church. In a small village in a rather remote part of Sweden the Baptists got an early stronghold – Våmhus. When the farmers in Våmhus as the only Baptist congregation in the entire Sweden applied for establishing a church and they asked for “The Swedish Freechurch” in 1865. 1 The interesting thing is that the petition was signed by 31 male and 31 female members. This maybe was done by accident but when the Swedish state refused registration they came back and asked for registration of Våmhus Baptist congregation which was granted. This time with 51 male and 51 female signers. Not by accident. It was not a petition by a leader but in a democratic way and by purpose equally male and female. Even if some of you may see democracy with questions we see it as a blessing and the free churches in fore-front in the struggle for democracy.

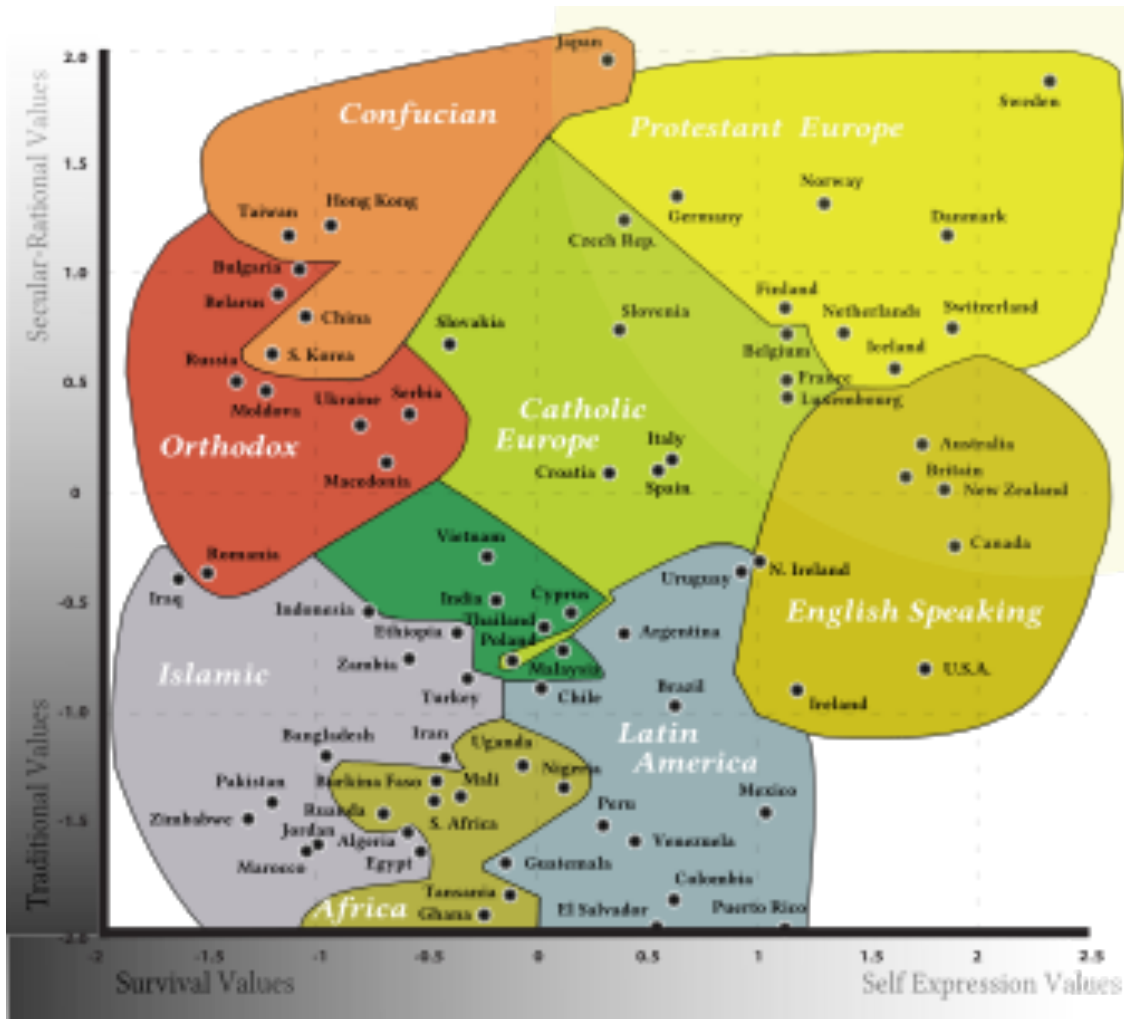
This is still a challenge. To see the connection between individual freedom of religion, congregation, democracy and the right of women. In the Swedish free church history until today, they go hand in hand and we need to develop that further in every EVERY GENERATION.

- A theological silence in the face of human rights violations can only be constructed as morally repugnant and socially irresponsible.
- There is consensus within the major Christian traditions that the rights identified in most human rights declarations are worthy of theological support
- The church's primary task is clearly to facilitate *Christians* to promote and appropriate the values of a human rights culture.
- The task of theology is to help locate the human rights struggle at the centre of the debate on what it means to be human and therefore also at the centre of social and political pursuit.

Charles Villa-Vincencio

The concept of

minority (religious minority) in relation to
International Law and being part of nation-
building



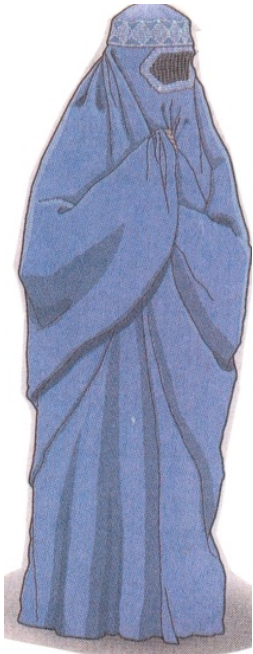
<http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/>



Religion

—

Belief



circumcision
of boys





UNITED NATIONS

We the peoples... A stronger UN for a better world.

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Universal Declaration art. 18

Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right shall include freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching. ICCP art 18



UNITED NATIONS

We the peoples... A stronger UN for a better world.

General Comment No 22

- 1) Ritual and ceremonial acts giving direct expression to belief;**
- 2) The building of places of worship;**
- 3) The use of ritual formulae and objects;**
- 4) The display of symbols;**
- 5) The observance of holidays and days of rest;**
- 6) The observance of dietary regulations;**
- 7) The wearing of distinctive clothing or headcoverings;**
- 8) The use of a particular language customarily spoken by a group;**
- 9) The freedom to prepare and distribute religious texts or publications**



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



EU Guidelines on the promotion and protection of freedom of religion or belief

*FOREIGN AFFAIRS Council meeting
Luxembourg, 24 June 2013*

The Council adopted the following guidelines:

My notes for EU guidelines:

“The Guidelines explain what the international human rights standards on freedom of religion or belief are, and give clear political lines to officials of EU institutions and EU Member States, to be used in contacts with third countries and with international and civil society organisations.” It is about promoting as well as protecting freedom of religion or belief in the EU's external action. And it should be also for the member countries and in this case the Council of European Churches has made a terrific work.

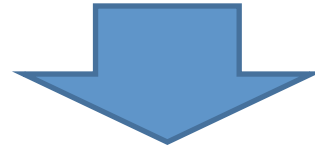
Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief, in worship, teaching, practice and observance.

ECHR art. 9

COUR EUROPÉENNE DES DROITS DE L'HOMME EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS

European Convention on Human Rights

1. forum internum – forum externum
2. necessary in a democratic society
3. Margin of appreciation



EACH STATE





Freedom of thought, conscience and religion

1. Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right includes freedom to change religion or belief and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or in private, to manifest religion or belief, in worship, teaching, practice and observance.
2. The right to conscientious objection is recognised, in accordance with the national laws governing the exercise of this right. (ARTICLE II-70)



1. The Union respects and does not prejudice the status under national law of churches and religious associations or communities in the Member States.
2. The Union equally respects the status under national law of philosophical and non-confessional organisations.
3. Recognising their identity and their specific contribution, the Union shall maintain an open, transparent and regular dialogue with these churches and organisations.

(Article 17)

My notes to picture 13:

The treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe intended to create a consolidated constitution for the European Union. 25 member states signed the treaty on October 29, 2004 and then the treaty was ratified by 18 member states. Referendums by French and Dutch voters ended up in a complete rejection of the Constitution in June 2005. In order to replace the Constitution, a new process took place ending up in the Treaty of Lisbon signed in December 2007 and entered into force on 1 December 2009. When comparing the texts in the two documents in relation to religion it is easy to see a difference.



ARTICLE II-82

Cultural, religious and linguistic diversity

The Union shall respect cultural, religious and linguistic diversity.



Artikel 167

The Union shall contribute to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States, while respecting their national and regional diversity and at the same time bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore.



ARTICLE II-81

Non-discrimination

1. Any discrimination based on any ground such as sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation shall be prohibited.



PART ONE - TITLE II - Article 10

In defining and implementing its policies and activities, the Union shall aim to combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.

My notes:

1. For me this is a big challenge – how to give the same message in Europe. Even if we do have the European documents but basically leaving it up to each country. STATE LEVEL. And as a consequence we get the fight in each separate case in relation to the state.
2. Britain and the present government's aspirations of repealing the Human Rights Act and to leave the human rights agenda and even the European Court.
3. I look upon this as the most urgent trend and at the same time a challenge for us in Europe. The states. PUBLIC OPINION. And the place of freedom of religion is openly questions in media and discussions and not.
4. In order to protect freedom of religion we as churches may be should stress the human rights agenda more. Showing that the human rights are universal and cannot be divided as cutting freedom of religion out. And I will not enter into the concept of human rights approach with duty-bearer and right-holder but it is a method to learn from. And we have already discussed how to deal with different human rights also if conflict with each other.



1. Alleviate suffering, help the victim
2. Provide protection
3. Make every effort to restore dignity

Number of Countries Where Religious Groups Were Harassed, by Year

Year ending ...

	JUN 2007	JUN 2008	JUN 2009	JUN 2010	DEC 2011	DEC 2012	DEC 2013
Christians	107	95	96	111	105	110	102
Muslims	96	91	82	90	101	109	99
Jews	51	53	63	68	69	71	77
Others*	33	34	39	52	42	40	38
Folk religions**	24	19	24	26	23	26	34
Hindus	21	18	11	16	12	16	9
Buddhists	10	11	7	15	9	13	12
Any of above	152	135	147	160	160	166	164

* Includes Sikhs, members of ancient faiths such as Zoroastrianism, members of newer faiths such as Baha'i, other religious groups and atheists.

** Includes followers of African traditional religions, Chinese folk religions, Native American religions and Australian aboriginal religions.

This measure does not assess the severity of the harassment. Numbers do not add to totals because multiple religious groups can be harassed in a country.

"Latest Trends in Religious Restrictions and Hostilities," February 2015

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

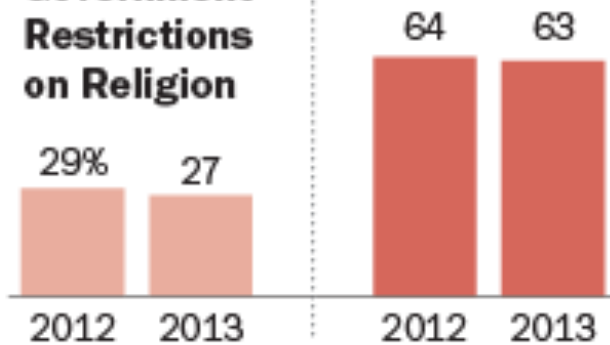
<http://www.pewforum.org/2015/02/26/religious-hostilities/>

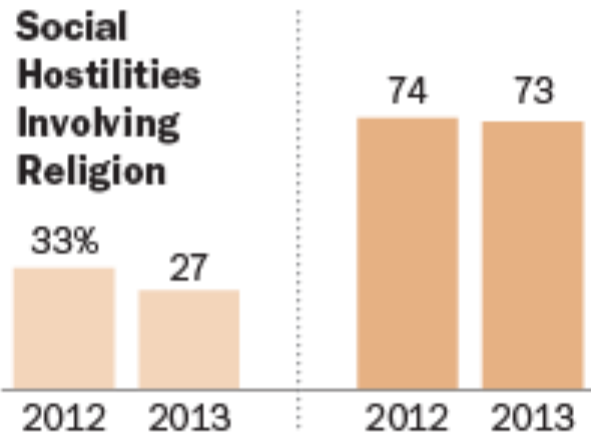
Restrictions on Religion, by Year

*% of countries
where levels are
high or very
high*

*% of global
population
living where
levels are high
or very high*

Government Restrictions on Religion





<http://www.pewforum.org/2015/02/26/religious-hostilities/>

Countries With Very High Government Restrictions on Religion

Scores of 6.6 or higher on the 10-point Government Restrictions Index

2012	2013
Egypt	China
China	Indonesia
Iran	Uzbekistan
Saudi Arabia	Iran
Indonesia	Egypt
Maldives	Afghanistan
Afghanistan	Saudi Arabia
Syria	Malaysia
Eritrea	Burma (Myanmar)
Somalia	Russia

Countries With Very High Social Hostilities Involving Religion

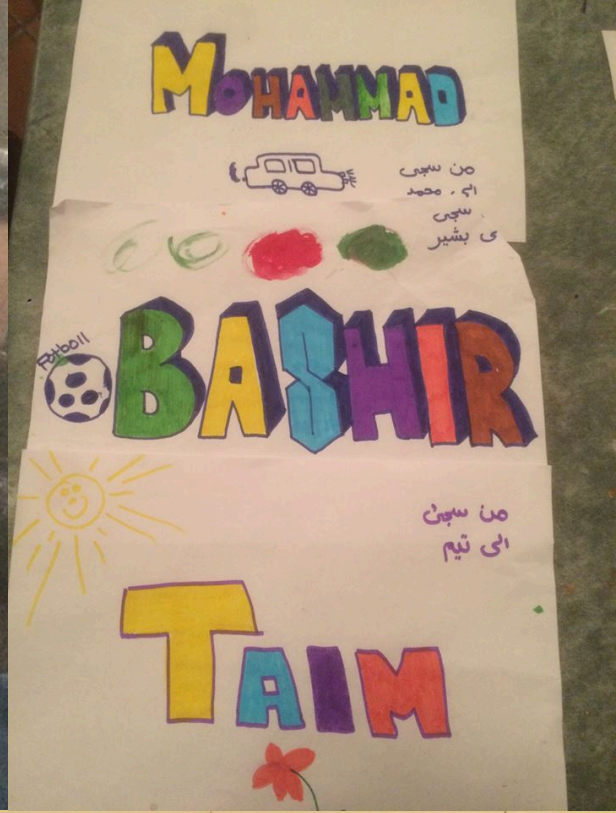
Scores of 7.2 or higher on the 10-point Social Hostilities Index

2012	2013
Pakistan	Israel
Afghanistan	India
India	Pakistan
Somalia	Palestinian territories
Israel	Nigeria
Iraq	Bangladesh
Palestinian territories	Sri Lanka
Syria	Russia
Russia	Afghanistan
Indonesia	Somalia

<http://www.pewforum.org/2015/02/26/religious-hostilities/>



When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. ³⁴The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God. (Leviticus 19:33-34)



tax-collectors and sinners ... welcomes sinners and eats with them

1. Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing **one** of them, does not leave the **ninety-nine** in the wilderness

2. and go after the one that is **lost** until he finds it? When he has **found** it,

3. he lays it on his shoulders and **rejoices**.

4. And when he comes home, **he calls together his friends and neighbours**, saying to them,

3. "**Rejoice** with me,

2. for I have **found** my sheep that was **lost**." ⁷

1. Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over **one** sinner who repents than over **ninety-nine** righteous people who need no repentance.





‘Or what woman having ten silver coins,* if she **loses one** of them,

does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she **finds** it? ⁹When she has found it,

she calls together **her friends and neighbours**, saying,

“**Rejoice** with me,

for I have **found**

the coin that I had **lost.**” ¹⁰Just so, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over **one** sinner who repents.’

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Duty-Bearer

HUMAN RIGHTS

Rights-Holders

THE CHURCH



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