



"This is not an age in which to be a soft Christian."
—Francis Schaeffer

04-Oct-02

Absolute Power Corrupts

Our national anthem ends with the line, "Oh, say does that star-spangled banner yet wave/O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?" It is a good question—not whether the flag still waves but whether it waves over a land of free citizens.

Many point to September 11, 2001, as the beginning of the end of our free society. Since then, the federal government has restricted American's freedoms in the name of national security. We are to be mollified by the assurance that when things return to normal, these freedoms will be reinstated, just as they were after previous wartimes. Who are they kidding?

The truth is that the federal government—not to mention state and local governments—have been aggregating power since the nation's founding. The first significant political battle in the newly formed United States was the dispute over federal power versus state/local power. This "dispute" culminated in the Civil War, when the northern industrial states imposed federal power on the nation via the Army of the Potomac. It is a classic case of "might makes right" over "the truth shall set you free."

The situation has not ameliorated anytime since then, but in fact, it has worsened. With every crisis in which the government has come to the rescue, it has exacted a new measure of dependence and thus control over the citizenry. Whether the crisis has been war, depression, civil strife, natural disaster, or more recently, politically incorrect social inequality, the government has slithered into as many facets of life as it could. And, as state and local governments find their power eroding, they look for ways to increase their power to make up for what they have lost.

A situation in Charlotte makes for a good example. Over a year ago, the local Department of Social Services (DSS) took away the ten children of Jack and Kathy Stratton, alleging that the parents did not give adequate care, supervision, and discipline to their children, and that their environment jeopardized their welfare. Since then, the Strattons have managed to regain custody of only one of their children, the oldest, Spencer, because he turned 18 and thus aged out of DSS jurisdiction.

It is a strange situation, and the DSS has provided no good justification for their actions. Aana Lisa Whatley, who heads a family law center, comments: "Most of the time when DSS is involved, there is drug abuse, alcohol abuse [or] domestic violence. But when you have an intact family with a long-term marriage and loving parents, we've never seen this situation where they're trying to take the children away from their parents."

Granted, the Strattons are not "normal" in terms of the socially and politically correct DSS. They are an interracial couple with little money who eschew government assistance. They refuse immunizations and yearly medical checkups, though they have taken their children to a doctor when ill. They homeschool and are practicing Christians. The DSS has accused them of sexual and physical abuse but has offered no proof of either.

Since the DSS will not comment on the case, citing a gag order by the judge because of the juveniles involved, the only conclusion the public can reach is that the department is guilty of an egregious abuse of power. Sadly, Charlotte's DSS is not the only government entity perpetrating injustices like this; it is happening across the nation to everyday Americans who just want to live their lives and raise their children outside of the mainstream.

Christians must take warning—especially since the worldview behind these abuses of power is secular, evolutionary, politically correct, and liberal /socialist. A few cautionary measures may be in order:

- Draw as little attention as possible to your difference from others.
- If you spank your children, do it in private, never in public, and in proportion to the offense.
- If you homeschool, follow all state and local laws, and do not draw attention to it by letting your children play or appear in public during school hours.
- If you do not immunize, abide by the state laws regarding exemptions. Find a doctor who respects your decision, and do your best to ensure your children are healthy and strong.
- Be good citizens. Break no laws. Keep your grass mowed and your yard neat and clean. Keep your house and vehicle in good repair. Make sure your children are adequately clothed and shod. In short, give a social worker or activist neighbor no ammunition to fire at you and your family.
- Pray for God's protection.

Consider, too, the sentiments in [Amos 5:12-13](#) ("You afflict the just and take bribes; you divert the poor from justice at the gate. Therefore the prudent keep silent at that time, for it is an evil time") and [Proverbs 27:12](#) ("A prudent man foresees evil and hides himself; the simple pass on and are punished"). They may well steer you clear of persecution for your beliefs.

- Richard T. Ritenbaugh

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