



William J. Murray

The Chairman's Action Report

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Religious
Freedom
Coalition

PASTOR JAILED FOR "HATE CRIME."

In 1993 when the socialists who control the Swedish government passed "hate crimes" legislation, they promised that the "freedom of religion" clause in their constitution would protect pastors who criticize homosexuality. Six months after the legislation was passed, Pastor Ake Green was arrested for "persecuting a minority" because he told his Pentecostal congregation of fifty people that homosexuality was a sin.

That same "hate crimes" language was added to the Defense Authorization Act by liberal Senators this year. Under the language added to the appropriations bill that funds our troops, it would become a crime to criticize a homosexual.

We tried to bring Pastor Ake Green to the United States to warn Christians what happens when this kind of "hate crimes" legislation is passed, but he is elderly and could not make the trip. In his place one of the few pro-life members of the Swedish Parliament, Mikael Oscarsson, along with the director of the main Swedish pro-life organization, Johan Lundell came to Washington, DC the week of October 4, 2004.



Because they are not Americans, they could not work to change legislation here, but they could testify as to what happened in Sweden, and the staff of the Religious Freedom Coalition could use their story to try to remove the "hate crimes" language from the Defense Authorization Bill.

Johan Lundell, Mikael Oscarsson and Congressman Chris Smith

We began in the Senate on Tuesday, October 5th by arranging a briefing by Swedish parliamentarian Mikael Oscarsson before the Republican Study Committee. The is the powerful conservative group made up of the chiefs-of-staff of leading Republican Senators such as Sam Brownback, Rick Santorum and Dr. Bill Frist. These are some of the most powerful men and women behind the Senators in Washington, DC. More than twenty-five were present.

After Mikael Oscarsson and Johan Lundell spoke I briefly pointed out to this powerful group that the Senate had added the same language to the Defense Authorization Act and that the only hope was to remove it in the Conference Committee, where differences between the House and Senate bills are resolved. They were all favorable to talking to Senate conferees to remove the language.



**Congresswoman Jo Ann
Davis with Oscarsson
and Lundell**

On that same day I introduced both men to Congresswoman Jo Ann Davis who is the official congressional liaison to the European Union. We spent some time with the congresswoman and she offered to do her best to influence the Swedish government to move away from arresting pastors because of what they say. In the House she voted against adding "hate crimes" to the Defense Authorization Act.

A very lengthy meeting was also held that same day with Congressman Chris Smith (R-NJ) who is the leading pro-life advocate in the House. Smith was the driving force behind the partial birth abortion ban in the House and is now the leader in the fight for fetal pain legislation. Under his new proposal women would be told before an abortion that the baby they are about to kill will feel horrible pain as it is destroyed, and offered the option of giving the child pain killers before it is murdered.

Because Mikael Oscarsson founded JA till Livet (YES to Life) in Sweden, they had much to talk about regarding the pro-life movement. Also, Chris Smith is the chairman of the sub-committee on Religious Freedom under the International Relations Committee headed by Congressman Henry Hyde. During the meeting it was decided that at a hearing the next day on religious freedom, Swedish Parliamentarian Mikael Oscarsson would speak briefly about the arrest and conviction of Pastor Ake Green. More about that hearing later!

On that same Tuesday we arranged for both Mikael Oscarsson and Johan Lundell to speak briefly about the situation of Pastor Green at the Values Action Team meeting headed by Senator Sam Brownback held in the Capitol Building. Numerous government officials and many NGO's were represented at the meeting. We passed out copies of Pastor Green's sermon and the verdict finding him guilty of hate crimes.

That same day we arranged a presentation to the Religious Liberties Working Group headed by Senator Rick Santorum (R-PA). After hearing the information on Pastor Ake Green and reading the verdict, an attorney present representing The Becket Fund stepped forward to offer to look over all materials for a possible appeal of his conviction to the high court of the European Union.

WE STILL WERE NOT DONE. For our last meeting on the Hill we introduced our Swedish guests to Congressman Walter Jones (R-NC) who is working on HR-235 to return freedom of speech to the pulpits of American churches. He found the material on Ake Green useful to his case and promised to write a letter to the Swedish Ambassador in the United States to protest the treatment of Pastor Green.

We closed out our day with a dinner at the townhouse of the National Clergy Council directly behind the Supreme Court. The head of the NCC, Rev. Rob Schenck, hosted the dinner for leading clergy in the Washington, DC area. Some promised to go to Sweden to help the pro-life movement.



Congressman Chris Smith introduces Swedish MP Mikael Oscarsson at hearings on international religious freedom

Early on Wednesday, October 6th, hearings were to begin in the International Relations Committee on the State Department Report. Those in the hearing room were rather surprised when Chairman Chris Smith gave Swedish MP Mikael Oscarsson an opportunity to talk about the arrest and conviction of Pastor Green. We were very fortunate in that State Department Ambassador-at-large John Hanford was present. He is responsible for producing the State Department's report on International Religious Freedom each year.

Also on Wednesday both men spoke at the Coalitions For America strategy luncheon hosted by Paul Weyrich. There was great interest among the more than fifty groups represented at the lunch, in the arrest of Pastor Green and the implications of that on the hate crimes provisions added to the Defense Authorization Act. We held several other meetings during the day Wednesday to expose to as many people on Capitol Hill as we could the danger of passing "hate crimes" language in the USA.



William J Murray, Johan Lundell, Tony Perkins and Mikael Oscarsson

Early Thursday, October 7th we were in the radio studio of the Family Research Council to tape a national radio program. Again, this time on a network of radio stations, the arrest of Pastor Ake Green for preaching from the Word of God was discussed.

From there we went directly to a private luncheon at the Heritage Foundation to discuss how major conservative organizations could become involved in the fight not only to help Pastor Green in Sweden but also to use this example to protect the family in America from the Swedish model. Make no mistake ... liberals in America want the Swedish model here. The Swedish government pays mothers to go to work rather than to stay home and care for their children. In Sweden a family can lose as much as \$20,000 a year if the mother and father are married and the mother does not work. The Heritage Foundation did not concern itself with social issues until it became apparent a few years ago that the liberals' social agenda would eventually cause any nation to move to higher taxes and more government control of the family and of business.

That afternoon Swedish MP Mikael Oscarsson spoke at the House Values Action Team meeting in the Capitol Building. That meeting is chaired by Congressman Joe Pitts (R-PA). Also at the meeting to hear about the arrest and conviction of Pastor Green was Majority Deputy Whip Eric Cantor (R-VA). Congressman Cantor, who is Jewish, is a leading fighter for the pro-life cause and the social conservative agenda in Congress. Mikael Oscarsson had time to speak privately with Congressman Cantor.

On Friday I received some great news! Congressman Cantor's office called to inform me that the "hate crimes" language had been dropped from the House Conference Report. This means that the House and Senate language of the bills differ on that issue and it is now highly unlikely that the "hate crimes" provision will be in the final version of the Defense Authorization Act when it comes out of the Conference Committee.

William J. Murray, Chairman