

Opinion

Why Denmark must carry the courage of its convictions on circumcision

Moral leadership is key to standing strong on the issue



The author ponders how he had little choice in a procedure that has left him scarred for life (private photo)

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17:14

by M Thomas Frederiksen



The Danish people should know that the world is watching your debate on underage ritual circumcision.

This is deeply personal and important to me, as I am myself a victim of this vile practice – due to my misfortune of being born in the United States. Although my young mother was not keen on the idea, a doctor insisted on doing it, and she relented.

What were this man's motivations? Why was it so important to him what my penis looked like? Why did he think that the most intimate part of my body, my 'private parts', my penis, was his prerogative? I'll never know what he wanted from me. But what ever it was, he took it. He had his way with me. He carved his pay-check into my penis. He carved his religion into my penis. He carved his tribal marking into my penis. He carved his custom into my penis. He carved his grotesque aesthetic preferences into my penis. He carved his obscene signature into my penis.

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Without our consent

All over the world, boys, girls, and intersex children share stories like mine. The context varies, the method of mutilation varies, the language varies, but one thing cuts across all of these stories – we resent what was done without our consent. We have been forced to live our whole lives with the preferences of another permanently carved into our genitals – and we resent what was done without our consent. We have been treated as things, means to the ends of others – and we resent what was done without our consent. We are human beings with our own desires, our own religious sentiments, our own ways of expressing our sexuality – and we resent what was done without our consent.

I've watched the debate unfolding in Denmark with elation and frustration. The Danish people know what is right, and want to do the right thing: protect underage boys. However, the voices of the perpetrators have been allowed to dominate the discussion, while once again the screams of the victims have fallen on deaf ears. This is why I must speak out.

Americans fancy themselves the leaders of the world. We have the military might – so we must be right. We can bring more brute force to bare than any other country on the face of the earth. Sadly, most Americans do not realise that this brute force is not leadership – it is bullying.

Time for moral leadership

In sharp contrast, the Danish people have a chance to exercise true leadership: moral leadership. However, your politicians waver, wring their hands and drag their feet. I ask them to look me in the eye and tell me why their failure to protect boys is not blatant sexism. I ask them to look me in the eye and tell me why their failure to protect the sons of minorities is not blatant racism. I ask them to look me in the eye and tell me why our pain is irrelevant.

It doesn't matter if some parents defy the law. It doesn't matter if some boys are taken to other countries to be cut. Why? Because a Danish ban on underage ritual circumcision will send a clear signal to the whole world that boys deserve equal protection. Other countries will follow suit, and the debate will shift dramatically – even in countries like the United States. A ban in Denmark will ultimately protect boys and intersex children all over the world. You know what is right – have the courage of your convictions!

M Thomas Frederiksen is a machinist and toolmaker living in Florida, USA. Undergoing a years-long process of non-surgical foreskin restoration has given him first-hand experience of the difference that mobile skin makes to intimacy. When speaking out he has been laughed at, made fun of and told to shut up.

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(May 16, 2014 17:49)

Definitely agree.

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