

JUSTICE COMMITTEE

HATE CRIME AND PUBLIC ORDER (SCOTLAND) BILL

SUBMISSION FROM JAMES WRIGHT

Please find enclosed my concerns in relation to the proposed merits of Part 2 of the Bill.

I fear that with the introduction of this new Bill, it can and does unintentionally open the door for those who would attempt to silence, or at the very least greatly curtail any and all opposition brought through freedom of speech. to whatever the newest in vogue expression or train of thought might be. Yes I wholeheartedly agree, the stirring up of hatred through threat or speech should and must be stopped. I do however believe that existing criminal law already covers this and as such no new law is needed.

As a father of 2 and grandfather of 4, I have on occasions within my own family and also in discussion with others given my advice and views on what is the Biblical interpretation of right and wrong. These religious beliefs and views more often than not are based on morality and behavioural matters, which can and do often contradict what is now promoted and in many cases taught to our youth and children. However, it seems ridiculous to have to say this. These exchanges of beliefs or views are not said to promote hatred, or to bring threat or abuse to those who hold to a different set of beliefs or views. It is simply an exchange of differing points of view, a discussion, the ability to openly engage in free speech.

In today's all inclusive and acceptance of just about anything society, those who hold to the Biblical belief of what is acceptable and right before God are not speaking out of hatred, or intolerance, but in love. We see danger to those in society who in general are ignoring at their peril the Word of God, and as such speak out warning of that danger. Unfortunately this Bill as proposed, does as stated at the beginning of my letter present to those who would seek to prevent, or greatly restrict those who would minister the Word of God, of the opportunity to speak the Gospel truth with the inference of stirring up hatred or intolerance.

As such the free speech clauses on religion, sexual orientation, transgender identity and same sex marriage must be strengthened. In order to prevent the serious risk that politically-motivated complaints will label disagreement as hatred or intolerance, in order to silence those who oppose.

Yours
James Wright

James Wright
20 July 2020