

JUSTICE COMMITTEE

HATE CRIME AND PUBLIC ORDER (SCOTLAND) BILL

SUBMISSION FROM JON SIMPSON

Good morning,

I appreciate your willingness to look at the views of one and another of the public and would like to simply add my views as follows;-

As a Christian and a believer on the Lord Jesus, I have a couple of concerns relating to the proposed legislation.

I found my Saviour as a result of the preaching of the Gospel and have since actively engaged in the preaching myself. Had it not been for the bringing to my attention my sinful state, and my need of salvation from my sins, I would be still continuing on a lost, sinful course.

The potential threat to the freedom of preaching the Gospel both in church and on the streets is worrying to say the least. The use of the term 'stirring up hatred' and the possibility of a new 'offence' supporting this, will potentially be used by the 'enemies of the cross of Christ' as a means of suppressing the freedom of the preaching of the Gospel. I can't see the benefit of introducing a new offence under this heading! Motive is a very difficult thing to judge and it *must* be clear that the 'stirring up' is intentional and deliberate before action is taken.

I believe that the freedom to preach the Gospel in the streets needs to be, if anything, more thoroughly protected.

The terms 'threatening', 'abusive' and 'insulting' have the potential to be misused, and indeed have been through the whole history of the world. These terms need to be very carefully thought about as beliefs and opinions are part of a free society and we need to respect the thoughts of others, even if they run contrary to my own thinking.

I believe that religious free speech must be more rigorously protected.

There must be a distinction between what can be termed legitimate debate in any subject or discussion, and the intent to arouse a riot.

Please give some serious thought to the concerns of all members of the community and please don't make changes that could be used to suppress our rights, which have been brought down to us at great cost to others.

Kindest regards

Jon Simpson

22 July 2020