

JUSTICE COMMITTEE

HATE CRIME AND PUBLIC ORDER (SCOTLAND) BILL

**SUBMISSION FROM SHETTLESTON FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND
(CONTINUING)**

I am writing on the behalf of my organisation, Shettleston Free Church of Scotland Continuing.

We believe that there is much wrong with this bill as it currently stands. Indeed we should seek to remove hatred from our society especially as the Bible teaches that we are all made in the image of God. It is the government's definition of hatred that is the problem, especially as it includes taking offence.

6. Do you have views on the merits of Part 2 of the Bill and the plans to introduce a new offence of stirring up of hatred?

As a society that believes in free speech, we must be free to debate religious and moral issues, including the freedom to disagree, without the fear of being accused of a hate crime.

The threat of prosecution for stirring up hatred will cause many to keep quiet. This is an equally dangerous threat to freedom of speech that undermines a free society.

Church services are currently not excluded. If this bill passes as it stands at the moment, then any sermons or address within the context of worship where Christ is preached as the only Savior and all religions are said to be false, or where homosexual behavior is said to be sinful, could see the preacher prosecuted for stirring up hatred. This is completely unacceptable.

Quite frankly to be honest this bill needs to be sent back, and thought through more carefully.

Shettleston Free Church of Scotland (Continuing)

21 July 2020