

JUSTICE COMMITTEE

HATE CRIME AND PUBLIC ORDER (SCOTLAND) BILL

SUBMISSION FROM FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

I am writing as the minister of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland Alford Place church, Aberdeen, on behalf of the Kirk Session and the congregation.

I think that the Hate Crime bill is very dangerous, and needs to be greatly modified or, better still, scrapped.

My main concern in this is the preaching of the Gospel, which involves declaring the truth in spiritual matters. There are such things as right and wrong in human life, and it is the duty of Christian ministers to explain these things. Among the many things that are wrong – such as lying, stealing, murder, adultery, abortion (in most cases), pride, and hatred of our fellow-men – are sodomy and false religion (such as Islam). Acts of Parliament cannot change this fact. It is the duty of Christians to maintain these truths, even in the face of abuse, persecution, torture, and death.

This bill would make the persecution of Scottish Christians for maintaining the truths of Christianity much more likely. Anyone who hears a Christian say something that he does not like (e.g. that his homosexual or transgender conduct is sinful) could claim that what was said was abusive (perhaps even just reading a passage from the Bible) and could have the Christian punished. This would be certain to happen, and the Scottish government would have to bear the responsibility for it at the Day of Judgement.

The Scottish government seems to be setting itself on a collision course with Christianity and the Bible. Do they want to become infamous persecutors of Christianity? If not, at the very least they need to build some freedom-of-speech clauses into this bill. Christians are very much against stirring up hatred of any sort between human-beings. We are taught by Christ to love our neighbour and our enemies. But we are also to love the truth, and if people hate the truth, they may well hate us as well, and use “Hate Crime Legislation” to silence us, and to revenge themselves. This bill, in its present form, is putting an instrument of persecution into the hands of the enemies of Christianity.

Douglas Somerset
Pastor

Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland
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