

JUSTICE COMMITTEE

HATE CRIME AND PUBLIC ORDER (SCOTLAND) BILL

SUBMISSION FROM J M MacDONALD

Dear Sir

I write in regard to the plans to introduce a new offence in the Scottish government's hate crime bill which I fear will pose a threat to free speech on religion, this could see people convicted of an "offence" if their behaviour is deemed to be or having the potential to be threatening whilst likely to be abusive whilst stirring up hatred.

I write simply on the two counts that I am particularly concerned about. The liberty to preach the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and the full counsel of God without holding back through fear of prosecution. The second cause of concern is the flagrant murder of the unborn child and the various gender options that are being entertained by both the Scottish and UK governments.

Those who oppose or speak out are being accused of curtailing or interfering with freedom of conscience and of exhibiting hatred or inciting others to hatred.

As one would expect there will be many debates and arguments over those contentious issues, at the moment it is being proposed that there would be no requirement to prove intent to secure a conviction. There will always be offence as is the case when moral and religious issues are involved.

That does not in any way suggest that there is hatred towards those of a different persuasion, whether morally or spiritually.

Any amendment or tailoring of proposals regarding this issue has to have the safeguards for freedom of speech which involves or includes discussion or criticism of religion or religious and moral / immoral practices".

Criminal Intent has to be proven before there can be prosecutions.

We live in a multicultural society with numerous views and ideologies but at the end of the day only one Truth, This is the only rule to direct us and if we as a nation realised that fact there would be a much clearer awareness of right and wrong.

One of our Scottish towns has as their coat of arms "Gods providence is our inheritance"

This was at one time the case with the whole of the Nation, the sooner we see this, the sooner those issues of intolerance and incitement to hatred will no longer be of concern.

J M MacDonald
16 July 2020