



CHRISTIAN FREEDOMS THREATENED BY CONVERSION THERAPY LEGISLATION

The Government's proposed anti-conversion therapy legislation is a matter of grave concern in respect of Christian freedoms. It is essential that Bible-believers express their opposition to these proposals, for they endanger the liberty of Christian ministers and counsellors who endeavour in good faith to help people who are experiencing what is now called 'same-sex attraction'.

Any kind of coercive and physically violent acts under the guise of therapy are already covered by existing criminal law, and would never be employed by Christians in any case. So the proposed anti-conversion therapy legislation is quite simply unnecessary, but the UK Government, sheep-like, is following the pattern already set in other parts of the world, such as Australia and Canada.

The Government's consultation document on this legislation states that "the nature of conversion therapy ... targets an innate aspect of personhood" (1). This is a loaded comment, revealing the Government's bias towards the stance of the gay rights activists, and implying that an individual is born with a homosexual orientation, which he can do nothing about, because it reflects the person he is and has always been.

However, in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 homosexuality is listed alongside adultery and heterosexual fornication as keeping people outside of the kingdom of God. So Scripture makes no distinction between homosexual and heterosexual sin in terms of the absolute necessity of repentance.

Nor is there the slightest suggestion in this passage that it is less possible to repent of homosexual sin, because someone has been born that way. Rather, the next verse, verse 11, states that those who have turned from either sets of sins are “washed” from guilt and also “sanctified” regarding their orientation to sin. The Holy Spirit sanctifies, or purifies, the believer, which means that he or she no longer desires to engage in such behaviour.

The term 'conversion therapy' is in itself inappropriate, because 'conversion' is a specifically Christian word. Christian evangelists and pastors are in the business of endeavouring to convert people from the fashionable ways of this world to faith in Christ and to repentance from sin. Therefore, the very use of 'conversion' in the legislation smacks of a consciously anti-Christian bias.

The Equality and Human Rights commission has rightly stated that the Government’s proposals risk cutting across basic religious freedoms. “Encouraging people to comply with religious doctrine that requires refraining from certain types of sexual activity should not fall within the definition of conversion therapy” (2). Yet “spiritual counselling” is shockingly included in what the Government proposes to be a punishable offence.

Therefore Christian Watch asserts that if this unnecessary legislation is not dropped, then there must be specific exemptions for the public proclamation of Biblical teaching, including exhortations to groups or individuals to turn from sinful lifestyles, either in the open air or in church ministry contexts.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/banning-conversion-therapy/banning-conversion-therapy#how-to-respond>, Section 5:2

² <https://www.christian.org.uk/news/equalities-watchdog-conversion-therapy-ban-risks-unintended-consequences/>