

**DEFEND
THE
FREEDOM
TO
PREACH**

**'FOR WE PREACH NOT
OURSELVES, BUT CHRIST
JESUS THE LORD'**

2 CORINTHIANS 4:5

THE BIBLE COMMANDS PREACHING

The Bible is God's inspired word and it commands Christians to communicate their faith to others. All Christians have a duty to give a reason for the hope that is in them. Some Christians are called by God to preach the Gospel both in church and in public. The Christian faith started with the apostolic preaching of the Gospel. And it has been passed on by faithful scriptural preaching and witness ever since.

PREACHING IS PART OF OUR NATIONAL HISTORY

Preaching is part of Britain's national history. From the earliest days of the Christian faith in these islands until now there has been a centuries' old history of the Gospel being preached in public.

THE RECENT CASE OF AN ARRESTED PREACHER

Recently an elderly Nigerian pastor was arrested, cuffed and then left five miles away from where he was preaching for no other reason than that a single Muslim complainant had phoned the police. He was not charged with an offence. And the police have given unreliable and inaccurate evidence in respect of what happened. This must not continue.

THE LAW AND PREACHING

The Public Order Act 1986 section 5 only prohibits 'threatening [or abusive] words or behaviour' and where no such language is used an offence has not been committed. And no arrest should be made. Lord Justice Sedley rightly said 'Free speech includes not only the inoffensive but the irritating, the contentious, the eccentric, the heretical, the unwelcome and the provocative provided it does not tend to provoke violence. Freedom only to speak inoffensively is not worth having ... From the condemnation of Socrates to the persecution of modern writers and journalists, our world has seen too many examples of state control of unofficial ideas – *Redmond-Bate v DPP (1999)*.

CONCLUSION

There is a long tradition of public preaching in this country which must be upheld and which the police should respect. Their powers of arrest are currently being abused. Merely saying that homosexuality is a sin, or that Islam is not a true religion, are not grounds for arrest. Christians are commanded to 'preach the gospel in season and out of season'. This Christian witness has been a great blessing to our troubled nation. True peace, for people and nations, can only be found in the God who made us. And we can only come to know Him through repentance and faith in His Son Jesus Christ, 'the Prince of Peace'. These great truths must be heard.

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