

# Meet the Christian Who May Spend Years in Prison for Preaching Christ

The Policing and Crime Bill proposes to raise the penalty for a 'racially or religiously aggravated offence' from seven years to 14 years. The bill was debated in the House of Lords this week.

**Lord Pearson raised a question** about this offense, asking:

"Could such an offense be caused by a Christian preaching the supreme divinity of Christ and therefore denying the supremacy of Muhammad? Would various assembled Muslims be free to regard that as a religiously aggravated offence under this section?"

Responding for the government, Baroness Williams replied:

"It is a matter for the court and the CPS to determine the points that he makes."

This means that the government considers it possible that a Christian could face years in prison for preaching the supreme divinity of Christ.

## **'Prison sentence for saying that Jesus is Lord of all'**

Andrea Williams, Chief Executive of Christian Concern, said:

*It is extremely concerning that the government is not prepared to defend free speech to the extent that Christians may risk a prison sentence for saying that Jesus is Lord of all.*

*Free speech is fundamental to a free society. Sadly, the present government is not willing to defend this important*

value, and this raises the prospect of Christians being imprisoned for preaching Christ.

Free speech is meaningless if it does not include the right to offend. It is shocking that the government believes that a Christian could face prison for proclaiming the supreme divinity of Christ.” Already Christian Concern and the Christian Legal Centre have defended multiple preachers who have been arrested for preaching the gospel. The government clearly expects that we will have to defend many more preachers in the coming years.

This is a further step down the road to a totalitarian society where people dare not say what they think for fear of being arrested and imprisoned.

The government should be jealously guarding and protecting free speech rather than undermining it.

The fact that Jesus is Lord over all is the hope for our nation. It is at the very heart of Christianity, which has provided the moral and spiritual foundations for our society for centuries. People should be free to declare Christ’s Lordship in every area of public life.

The government should change its position and immediately clarify for the courts that preaching that Jesus is God will not be an offense under this act. {eo}

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