

Table of Contents

- ***[Two religions are clashing: the human rights Bible and the Christian Bible](#)***
 - ***[Canadian measure would remove free speech protection for quoting Bible, sacred texts](#)***
-

Two religions are clashing: the human rights Bible and the Christian Bible

By Willy Fautré, Human Rights Without Frontiers

The Act to amend the Criminal Code (promotion of hatred and antisemitism) is under revision and arouses passions in Canada, in particular about its anti-hatred dimension. In the public debate, Christian voices express concerns about the possible “purification” and censorship of the Old Testament and the New Testament for the sake of the current values enshrined in the sacred texts of human rights – the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other similar international/ national instruments. If the act is revised as planned, a Pandora box will be open to all sorts of lawsuits, some say.

Canada will not be a pioneer on this battlefield. Europe has already been immersed in this situation for years. At the forefront, Jehovah’s Witnesses. In Belgium, they have recently been charged and prosecuted on the basis of alleged incitement to hatred because of the implementation of their shunning policy. The plaintiffs, disgruntled former members, were then supported by a state anti-discrimination body. A court of first instance declared the Belgian association of Jehovah’s Witness guilty and sentenced it to a huge fine. On appeal, Jehovah’s Witnesses, who had already been declared innocent in similar lawsuits related to their shunning practice, were declared non-guilty and [the Court of Cassation confirmed the decision](#). See the court ruling in the original language (Dutch) [HERE](#).

The Norwegian judiciary has now been seized by Jehovah’s Witnesses because, due to their shunning practice, they have been deregistered as a religious association and deprived of legitimate public financing. A few days ago, on 4 March, [the Oslo District Court ruled against the Jehovah’s Witnesses and upheld the decisions of the government and the State Administrator of Oslo and Viken](#) who denied the Jehovah’s Witnesses the state subsidies they had peacefully received for thirty years based on Section 16 of the Norwegian Constitution (“All religious and philosophical communities must be supported on an equal footing”). Registration as a religious organization of the Norwegian Jehovah’s Witnesses under Law No. 31 of April 24, 2020, was also denied.

Other issues concerning other religious groups have been or are being dealt with by courts, such as freedom of thought and expression about homosexuality and abortion.

The danger of the application of anti-discrimination and anti-hatred legislation to holy texts is the intrusion and interference of the state through a political decision to allow the judiciary to examine and review the beliefs of any faith. It then gives the courts the power to decide which beliefs should be dropped or banned or tolerated but their decisions may not be exempt from errors or ideological bias. The battlefield is already and will be the jurisprudence arena. This will create tensions and fragment society.

The non-interference of the state and public powers in the beliefs of groups has always been a sacred principle. Will it be allowed in the future to purge holy scriptures as some want to ban alleged sexist or racist works of famous past writers in the name of Western feminism? We are at a cross-road in our liberal democracies. Anxiety is rising in Canada as some press cuttings show.

Canadian bill would remove religious exemption from 'hate speech' laws, critics warn (By Ian M. Giatti)

[Christian Post](#) (07.03.2024) - Christians say quoting Scripture could be criminalized if legislation passes.

Lawmakers in Canada are considering legislation which, if passed, could criminalize the act of quoting Scripture in defense of biblical marriage, sexuality and other Christian views.

The proposed [Bill C-367](#), currently under review in the House of Commons, would repeal "religious exemption" in Section 319 of the Canadian Criminal Code, which critics say could open up Christians and other religious groups to "hate speech" charges over any comments or criticisms of the LGBT movement.

Bill C-367 specifically targets Paragraph 319(3)(b) and Paragraph 319(3.1)(b) of the Criminal Code, which [prohibits](#) any conviction on hate speech charges if "in good faith, the person expressed or attempted to establish by an argument an opinion on a religious subject or an opinion based on a belief in a religious text."

If the religious exemption is removed, any religious or faith-based expression that refutes or condemns gender ideology, child sexualization, and other similar topics could potentially be deemed by Canadian courts as "hate speech" and lead to criminal prosecution for Christians and other religious groups.

Introduced by Bloc Québécois leader Yves-François Blanchet in November, Bill C-367 has only an initial reading in the House of Commons, and it's unclear when or if the legislation will advance.

While Blanchet and other lawmakers say Bill C-367 comes in response to recent antisemitic demonstrations in Canada — including one in which a Muslim activist [called](#) for God to "exterminate" what he called "Zionist aggressors" — some organizations like the Canadian pro-life group Campaign Life Coalition (CLC) warn the legislation could lead to more criminal prosecutions against Christians.

In February, David Cooke, CLC's campaigns manager, [wrote](#), "No longer will we be allowed to share God's design for human sexuality and marriage in public. No longer will we be able to speak out in the name of God against drag shows for kids, child drag, or child sex change.

"All this could be misconstrued as 'hate speech' against the LGBT community. Even our pro-life message could be spun as a 'hate crime' against women."

Jeff King, president of International Christian Concern, says if passed, the bill "would be a devastating legal tool to attack people of faith in Canada and allow the politicians working through the courts and police to send devout believers to jail for quoting the Bible, Quran, or other religious texts."

"The same methods that overseas dictators and despots use to silence and strangle Christianity are now being used by political enemies in the West, with this current bill being only the latest example," King said in a statement shared with CP.

He called on Christians and Canadian citizens “of faith of all stripes” to make their voices heard by Canadian government officials.

“Canadians that enjoy the fruits of democracy need to wake up,” he added. “Any politician in the West who pushes for this kind of legislation and is selling ‘protection and unity’ by advancing hate speech laws is an enemy of freedom, and democracy, and willing to undermine the religious and speech laws that protect all citizens to advance their special interest or to inflict damage on their political enemies.”

Over the last decade, Canadian lawmakers have passed a number of bills aimed at curbing speech in deferment to the LGBT lobby.

In 2017, Canada's Senate [passed](#) a law against the correct use of gender pronouns by adding protections for gender identity and expression to the Canadian Human Rights Code. Last September, lawmakers in Ontario, Canada, [approved](#) a ban on any form of communication that might potentially cause an LGBT-identified person to “feel harassed” or “offended” following a massive parental rights rally.

The bylaw approved by city councilors in Waterloo, located about 45 miles southwest of Toronto, came in response to a new policy enacted by several local school boards. The policy states that parents will not be told if their child decides to change their pronouns or identify as the opposite sex, non-binary or gender fluid.

Canada to criminalize Scripture?

[Encounter Today](#) (29.02.2024) - A bill which could criminalize anyone who quotes scriptures that the government deems could be “anti semitic” is currently being debated in the Canadian Parliament. The Bill is C-367.

Under Canada’s Criminal Code, certain protections are in place that have made it very difficult for Christians to be charged with any kind of “hate crime.” The “religious exemption” portion of the Code that is of utmost significance and is found in Section 39 which reads: “No person shall be convicted of a [hate crime] offense... if, in good faith, the person expressed or attempted to establish by an argument an opinion on a religious subject or an opinion based on a belief in a religious text.”

Simply put, Canadian Christians have every right to quote the Bible, just as Muslims and Buddhists and Jews have every right to share their religion! This is a right that is, at present, protected under the Criminal Code but is also a Constitutional matter in Canada as it is included in Canada’s freedom of expression.

Under threat of jail-time, this bill will silence Christians who oppose the woke ideology Prime Minister Trudeau has promoted as the true law of the land.

If this Christophobic bill passes, as it most probable seeing as Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s Liberal Party members alongside the Bloc Quebecois and the NDP (socialist party) will vote for it, freedom of expression, freedom of religion and freedom of speech could all be crushed in one foul swoop!

The Bible is the Word of God, it is truth and it is life. Is it any wonder that in a society moved and swayed by mere feelings that Christians are faced with a bill that helps those who see it as an affront to their lifestyle and pride? (...)

Hate speech laws

[Leger](#) (21.02.2024) - The Government of Canada has recently proposed Bill C-367, which, among other things, removes religious exemptions to defend hate speech. From February 16 to 18, 2024, we surveyed Canadians to find out their opinion and perceptions on Bill C-367 and hate speech law.

Download [the report](#) to learn more.

Some of the key highlights of our survey about hate speech law in Canada include...

- Nearly two-thirds of Canadians (63%) are aware that the Canadian Criminal Code contains a section on hate speech, compared to a quarter (26%) who are not aware and 11% who do not know. Canadians aged 55 and over (72%) and Ontarians (67%) are more likely to be aware, while Quebecers are more likely not to be aware (34%).
- Two-thirds of Canadians (66%) support Bill C-367, which would remove the privilege currently granted to religions or religious authorities concerning hate speech in Canada, compared to a third (34%) who do not support it. Three-quarters of Quebecers (75%) are more likely to support Bill C-367.

Methodology

This web survey was conducted from February 16 to 18, 2024, with 1,529 Canadians aged 18 or older, randomly recruited from LEO's online panel. A margin of error cannot be associated with a non-probability sample in a panel survey. For comparison, a probability sample of 1,529 respondents would have a margin of error of $\pm 2.51\%$, 19 times out of 20.

Bill C-367 calls religious speech hate speech

Why Canadians must understand the bill, and how it attacks the truth.

[ChristianWeek](#) (22.02.2024) - [Bill C-367](#) was introduced last fall by Bloc Québécois leader Yves-François Blanchet. This insidious proposal, which claims to fight antisemitism, will actually strike a fatal blow against freedom of religion and freedom of expression in Canada.

Bill C-367 eliminates the "religious exemption" in Section 319 of the Criminal Code, which states: "*No person shall be convicted of a [hate crime] offence... if, in good faith, the person expressed or attempted to establish by an argument an opinion on a religious subject or an opinion based on a belief in a religious text.*" By eliminating this exemption, Bill C-367 will empower police to treat religious Canadians as hate-criminals if they criticize any identifiable groups.

Read more [here](#).

An Act to Amend the Criminal Code (Promotion of hatred or antisemitism)

[Parliament of Canada/ Senate](#) (28.11.2023) - First reading

Canadian measure would remove free speech protection for quoting Bible, sacred texts

By [Mark A. Kellner](#)

[Washington Times](#) (01.03.2024) - Legislation introduced in [Canada's](#) Parliament would eliminate the use of "belief in a religious text" as a defense against hate crime charges.

Repealing the exemption in [Canada's](#) criminal code could criminalize sermons and messages using the Bible or other religious texts as the basis for critiquing other religions or addressing issues such as transgender rights, critics warn.

[Yves-Francois Blanchet](#), leader of the minority Bloc Quebecois party, submitted the "private member's bill" — defined as a measure not sponsored by a Cabinet minister or parliamentary secretary — in November and again last month. The measure received an initial reading in the lower chamber, but no action has followed.

Mr. [Blanchet](#) said when he introduced the bill that its purpose is to allow authorities to prosecute antisemitic speech. The measure is needed to "refrain from giving inappropriate and undue privileges to people within a society who use them to disturb the peace and harmony, especially if those privileges enable people to sow hatred or wish death upon others based on a belief in some divine power," he told Parliament.

Two-thirds of Canadians surveyed Feb. 16-18 by the polling firm Leger said they support the measure.

But Jeff King, president of the Washington-based International Christian Concern, said Thursday the proposal is "designed to silence" people whose opinions differ from prevailing thought.

"We cannot urge direct violence against somebody," he said, "but free speech means we all have very different opinions in a democracy [and] we're supposed to have vigorous debates."

He said the legislation could open the door to prosecuting anybody expressing sincere beliefs based on their religion's sacred texts.

Under the proposal, he said, "you can't say the Bible says so-and-so, or you could be arrested to be charged, you can be fined." Despite labels, Mr. King said, "this [measure] has nothing to do" with combating antisemitism.

Mr. [Blanchet](#) did not respond to a request for comment made through his spokesperson. Freedom of religious expression has been under attack in recent years.

In Britain, several people have faced repeated criminal charges, with no convictions, for standing outside abortion clinics after business hours and silently praying. In Finland, a prosecutor is appealing the second acquittal of Parliament member Paivi Rasanen and a Lutheran bishop who were accused of "hate speech" for stating biblical beliefs on homosexuality.

In August 2022, a regional court in Germany said 40 Days for Life, a pro-life group that held silent prayer vigils near an abortion counseling center in Pforzheim could not be barred

from holding such demonstrations. The ruling overturned a city ban on such demonstrations that the Pro Familia abortion counseling center had requested.

David Cooke, campaign manager at the pro-life Campaign Life Coalition, said the Canadian bill "is really just a pretext to eliminate religious speech rights in [Canada](#)" and that Mr. [Blanchet](#) told Parliament that [Canada](#) "is a secular country."

Mr. Cooke said laws already exist under which genocidal speech can be prosecuted. "If, indeed, the government wants to crack down on that type of genocidal expression, there is already a provision in our Criminal Code, Section 318, which can be used, but ... they're not calling for [that] to be implemented," Mr. Cooke said.

Instead, he said, "They're using this [bill] as a pretext to clamp down on religious speech and to eliminate the protection we have in Section 319, which would allow people to share their beliefs and their values and biblical texts that relate to issues of the day, whether issues of faith or family or life, any number of issues. It's going to basically take away our ability to do that."

While the measure hasn't advanced in parliament, Mr. Cooke said [Canada](#)'s lawmakers are moving ahead with an internet "censorship bill" that would create a "bureaucracy" to monitor online speech.

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