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# The Collapse of Religious Liberty in Great Britain?

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The *Daily Mail* stands out among British newspapers for its coverage of the case of Stephen Green, an evangelical Christian who was arrested just days ago for a shocking “crime” — he passed out Scripture leaflets at a homosexual rally. Given the nature of this case, and the developing pattern of such cases in the United Kingdom, this story demands a close look. Unless something unexpected and virtually miraculous happens, this is the shape of the future.

As the paper reports:

*A police force was caught up in a freedom of speech row after its officers arrested an anti-gay campaigner for handing out leaflets at a homosexual rally. South Wales police admitted evangelical Christian Stephen Green was then charged purely because his pamphlets contained anti-gay quotations from the Bible.*

*Mr Green faces a court appearance today charged with using ‘threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour’ after his attempt to distribute the leaflets at the weekend ‘Mardi Gras’ event in Cardiff.*

*A spokesman for the police said the campaigner had not behaved in a violent or aggressive manner, but that officers arrested him because ‘the leaflet contained Biblical quotes about homosexuality’.*

Note carefully that Mr. Green was arrested only because he passed out a pamphlet of selected Bible verses and minor exposition (taken from the 1611 King James Bible) dealing with homosexuality. The police admitted that Mr. Green’s behavior was not a problem — just his pamphlets.

More from the *Daily Mail*:

*The anti-gay campaigners were first asked by police to leave the site of the show following ‘complaints from the public’, and complied with the request. However, they were approached again by police when they began handing out leaflets at the entrance to the park where the Mardi Gras was staged.*

*Mr Green refused to stop distributing leaflets and was arrested, and then questioned for four hours at a police station. He was charged after refusing a caution.*

*The leaflets were headed Same-Sex Love - Same-Sex Sex: What does the Bible Say?, and included a series of quotations from the 1611 King James Bible, a text usually regarded as one of the foundation stones of the English language.*

*Aimed at demonstrating Biblical disapproval of homosexual sex, they included from the Old Testament Leviticus 18.22, ‘Thou shalt not lie with mankind as with womankind: it is abomination’.*

*The leaflets also quoted Romans 1:25-27 from the New Testament, to the effect that homosexuals are given to ‘vile affections’.*

*The handbills urged homosexuals to ‘turn from your sins and you will be saved’.*

*The charge against Mr Green is that he used 'threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour within the hearing or sight of a person likely to be caused harassment, alarm or distress thereby', contrary to the Public Order Act 1986.*

The question of whether such efforts are the most effective means of reaching homosexual persons is itself important, but in this case it is clearly eclipsed by the fact that Stephen Green was *arrested* and charged with a *crime* when he did nothing more than distribute a Christian pamphlet documented with verses from the Bible. This is a chilling sign that religious liberty is on its last legs in Great Britain, at least for evangelical Christians.

Colin Hart, director of the [Christian Institute](#), a British think tank, explained:

*'This was a very gentle leaflet. There was no use of words like "perversion". I have to wonder if churches, bishops and archbishops are now vulnerable to arrest for their views on homosexuality.*

*'It is noticeable that police never arrest Muslims who make remarks about homosexuality. They pick on Christians because it is easy, just as they pick on middle class drivers for speeding because it is easier than catching burglars.*

Even if the charges against Mr. Green are dropped, the fact is that his case will have a chilling effect on Christian witness in Great Britain. Every Christian who would dare consider telling the truth about homosexuality in Britain must now wonder, "Will I be arrested?"

We discussed this case Thursday on [The Albert Mohler Program](#) with guests Colin Hart of the [Christian Institute](#) and Melanie Phillips of the *Daily Mail*. Listen or download [here](#).

