

Responding to Irish Blasphemy Laws

Edict Date: 08-02-2009

The country of Ireland has passed laws prohibiting blasphemy making it a criminal offense to speak ill of another religion's beliefs. The blasphemy clause states: "A person who publishes or utters blasphemous matter shall be guilty of an offense and shall be liable upon conviction on indictment to a fine not exceeding €100,000."

It defines a "Blasphemous matter" as "grossly abusive or insulting in relation to matters held sacred by any religion, thereby causing outrage among a substantial number of the adherents of that religion; and he or she intends, by the publication of the matter concerned, to cause such outrage".

First - the Church of Reality opposes blasphemy laws because they are generally enforced against non-believers in God by believers in God. We are a free speech religion and we support the right of religious people to criticize the beliefs of other religious people. Our {In:Principle of Scrutiny} requires us to be scrutinized so as to keep us on track and make sure we aren't fooling ourselves. We also have a religious right to scrutinize others to challenge their beliefs and get them to think. That is how we evangelize reality.

There is however a level of criticism that has nothing to do with the expansion of ideas and knowledge that are words made to demonize groups of people and to foment hate and violence towards a particular religious group or the belief or non-belief in specific deities or prophets. (Jesus vs. Muhammad, Catholic vs. Protestant) We in the Church of Reality tend to think that fomenting hate is a bad idea, but free speech, to us, is more important. We are a thick skinned religion and tend to let people say what they say and then discuss it.

Any law that protects other religions should protect the Church of Reality equally.

Having said that, Ireland's laws apply to "any religion", and we in the Church of Reality are definitely an "any religion", those laws are supposed to protect us as well. So we want to send a message to those countries, like Ireland, who have blasphemy laws what we find blasphemous towards Realists.

Although we accept criticism we do not accept hate speech towards us in states with laws that prohibit such hate speech. If other religions get protection then we want equal treatment.

The Church of Reality is an atheist religion. We don't believe in deities in general and the Jewish/Christian/Islam god in particular. Many religions would call us evil, worthy of death, and preach that Realists like ourselves, because of our atheistic views, will burn in Hell forever as punishment for our sins.

Declaring that those who don't believe in God are evil people who deserve to die and burn in Hell is hate speech against non-believing religions.

We consider this position to be both grossly abusive and insulting. It invites hatred and violence against our people and our core sacred beliefs. We as a church find that we are outraged by those who publicly cast us as an evil people because of anything we believe or don't believe in. Our {In:Sacred Method} demands proof of everything and nothing is beyond scrutiny including God.

We in the Church of Reality are concerned that the real objective in Ireland is not to be a shield for Christians but rather a sword against Realists and Atheists. That rather than a law to stop religious persecution it is really a tool of the religions

that believe in God to use to suppress those of us who do not believe in God. To that end we challenge Ireland to uphold their laws and to prosecute those who say that we are evil and we are going to go to Hell for not believing in God.

If Ireland fails to do this and makes evasive excuses as to why the Church of Reality doesn't qualify for equal treatment then we will have to conclude that their blasphemy law is insincere and that we are right about it being a tool of persecution against non-believers.