

Clerk to the Public Petitions Committee

Scottish Parliament

20 Feb. 2014

Dear Convener and Committee members ,

PUBLIC PETITION BY EDINBURGH SECULAR SOCIETY RE LOCAL AUTHORITY EDUCATION COMMITTEES

As an ordinary citizen , I oppose the petition by the Edinburgh Secular Society who have no democratic mandate themselves and are in my view a tiny body of self - appointed activists unrepresentative of most Scots in villages , glens and cities who still adhere to Christian tradition to an extent and where church memberships still count in the hundreds of thousands .

No one other than a few secular lobby groups feel strongly about this issue of religious representatives and the majority of Scotland's population are content with the status quo .

Why pander to a small pressure group and their supporters ? Scotland has a proud tradition of Christian culture . Why start to divest it of that culture in this year of all auspicious years . In what way is having church representatives on education bodies anti-democratic ?

My contention is that secular lobby groups such as the ESS , and similar bodies , claim to be campaigning for secularism but in fact show signs of clear anti-religious and anti-Christian intolerance some might well argue ?

As examples of this possible concern about secular groups being more atheist and anti-religion in their views than strictly " secularist " , I enclose some press cuttings of letters to newspaper editors : -

PRESS CUTTINGS

See THE SCOTSMAN of Friday 4 May 2012 where a letter from Neil Barber , media officer of the ESS , calls for civically supported church buildings to be used as churches on Sundays " but let them "also be open for the likes of kids' band rehearsals , atheist group meetings ...." between Monday and Saturday . "

Beside the above letter on 4 May 2012 is a letter by Alistair McBay of the National Secular Society who writes of Christian and religious morality as " ...dogma from supernaturalists " .

In my view these letters show the attitude of atheist campaigners rather than secular ones .

See also two letters by Steuart Campbell , treasurer of the Edinburgh Secular Society . One was published in the EDINBURGH EVENING NEWS on 14/10/13 , is headed " Heaven knows why they believe in this " and in it Mr Campbell makes plain his view " As this is the only life we will have ,we need to make the best of it , not wasting time on superstitious beliefs ..." .The other letter by Mr Campbell in THE SCOTSMAN in , I think , November 2013 , and in it he states " ... belief in an afterlife is a ubiquitous and dangerous superstition that belittles our real lives , misleads millions and misdirects the course of their lives ....."

In the light of the sentiments in these letters I suggest that the PP Committee might wish to question whether the ESS is really not so much a secularist group as a campaigning atheistic or anti-religious group ?

I hope that the convener and his committee will consider the petition by the Edinburgh Secular Society in that possible alternative light ?

Yours sincerely ,

GUS LOGAN