

Dear Prime Minister,

We read with dismay that you will present to Parliament an Act making it an offence for Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to provide open access to any websites that contain reference to esoteric material. I can understand the necessity to take Internet Providers to task who allow material on such horrors as pornography, bestiality, obscenity etc. but we are both at a loss to see what harm comes from anything pertaining to Spiritualism. This Act could make a website containing details of services provided by a Spiritualist Church an offence, and would indeed have an effect on the thousands of members who attend Spiritualist Churches around the country. Spiritualism became a recognised religion through an Act of Parliament in 1951, thanks to the belief of M.P. Tom Brookes and Sir Winston Churchill. An Act that recognises that we have trained ministers and perform ceremonies such as weddings, funerals etc. Many famous names have been Spiritualists including Sir William Crookes, Sir Oliver Lodge, eminent scientists, who put their reputations on the line for their belief. Alfred Russell Wallace, the co-founder of the theory of relativity with Charles Darwin was convinced of the reality of Spiritualism, also Arthur Conan Doyle, Logi Baird, Lord Dowding, Baden Powell, Alexander Graham Bell, and many more people whose lives have touched so many of us. We belong to the largest Spiritualist Union in the country (if not the world) the Spiritualists National Union, which caters at the Arthur Findlay College to students from all over the world seeking spiritual knowledge. You will not find a fanatical terrorist Spiritualist or Spiritualists creating wars, and in fact the Orthodox Churches have the monopoly on paedophilia and Holy Wars. The freedom of Religion Act allows everyone to express their beliefs in a free way, and yet Spiritualism although only one of two religions recognised through an Act of Parliament, (the other being the Church of England through the reformation) is constantly attacked by the government. We were the only religion moved on to the Consumer Protection Act, though when I wrote to all MP's, many who replied did not know that Spiritualism was singled out, and said that they would not have voted for the Act if they had known. Spiritualism in one form or another has been around since man was able to communicate. There were Seers in the Catholic Church until they became so popular, that they were seen as a threat to the hierarchy of the Church. Spiritualists do not defile or ridicule other religions, but embrace them, as we know that no one has the definitive truth. Mahatma Ghandi said, "The rays of the sun though they be many in refraction, all come from the same source." Many Spiritualists like us believe in the Conservative values in life, and my brother and I voted for your party many times. If this Act goes through Parliament it will change the perception of the Conservative Party for us and many of our members, and we sincerely hope that you will think very carefully on this process. Spiritualists are against many of these T.V. programmes such as "Most Haunted and Ghost Hunters etc." as they do not represent the views of our wonderful movement. We sincerely hope that you will not include the recognised religion of Spiritualism in this Act, and allow it to go through, removing those websites which offend public taste and decency, which Spiritualism does not do. Through our services and healing in our Churches, we reach the needs of thousands of people, bringing comfort and upliftment to many who say that they have not found it in their own Orthodox Churches. The Sufi Abu Sa'id wrote this over one thousand years ago and it still rings true to us as Spiritualists, "If you want to draw near to God, seek him in the hearts of those around you. Speak well of all, present or absent. If you would be a light for others, be like the sun: show the same face to all. To bring joy to a single heart is better than building countless shrines for worship: to capture one heart through kindness is better than setting a thousand free. This is the true lover of God, who lives with others, rises and eats and sleeps like others, gives and takes with others in the bazaar, yet never forgets God even for a moment. What wonderful words, which we hope that you will read and understand its true meaning. We would love to invite you and your lovely wife to join us in one of our services on a Sunday, so that you can see the reality of Spiritualism, and not go by what the television shows, as this is not the face of our religion. I am the President of Bournemouth Spiritualist Church, and my twin brother is Vice-President, and we will both be 73 yrs old in December.

Yours sincerely,

Al & Geoff Potts.