

## The Unpublished Letter

By David Cook

After I was appointed Moderator General of the Presbyterian Church in 2013, I thought I ought to get a national perspective on the news, and so I have been a daily reader of Australia's national newspaper, The Australian. I write a letter to the Editor, on average about once each week and get a letter published about once every six weeks.

This week my unpublished letter read thus:

*In the midst of the discussion of freedom of speech, has anyone noticed that according to a Bill proposed for the Victorian Parliament, I can be imprisoned for ten years if I publicly pray legitimate Christian prayers in relation to same sex marriage and homosexual activity? Daniel Andrews had better build more prisons, for my guess is that the first sentences will lead to long queues at the local Police Station in solidarity for those imprisoned, queues not only made up of Christian pastors, but representatives of other faiths'.*

The possibility of the persecution of believers in our lifetime and in our nation, has always seemed a little unlikely.

But the Andrews legislation is a DIRECT threat to Christian pastoral care and preaching. This summer I am preaching at the Summer convention at Belgrave Heights, the Melbourne sibling of the Katoomba convention here in Sydney. If the legislation had been passed into law and if I were expounding Romans 1:18-32, I could be liable to be arrested, charged, tried and sentenced for up to ten years in a Victorian prison.

Welcome to Australia, 2021, according to Premier Daniel Andrews, in the nation's most progressive state!

We need to pray against this legislation, write to Parliamentarians and financially support the Australian Christian Lobby in their persistent activity both at Federal and State level. For the sake of our ability to preach the truth and pastorally support those battling with unwanted same sex attraction, we need to be active antagonists of this legislation.

If the Parliament carries this madness into law, we then need to support our brethren who may be charged, by turning up to police headquarters in Russell St, Melbourne and confessing to the public promotion of the same conviction: that God says that the only legitimate form of marriage is that between a man and a woman, and that the only appropriate environment for sexual expression, is within such marriage.

None of us want to make this issue our battle ground; we would much prefer to preach the attractiveness of Jesus Christ, and declare his saving gospel, but this is the issue where the Andrews Government is confronting our freedom and it will be a minor next step to ban the preaching of the New Testament gospel.

This is a present danger for the Church in Victoria, but other States will soon follow suit. As we pray and act, our trust is in the Lord God, who is the Creator and Redeemer of his people and whose, 'steadfast love will endure forever!' (Psalm 136)

*David Cook was the former principal of SMBC.*