

## How Free will we be in 2030?

Imagine if your pastor can only preach a government-approved sermon. She/he has to be registered to minister and only certain organisations are allowed to preach the Gospel. If anyone shares biblical views on morality or sexual conduct or raising children, they will be locked away for hate speech.

Imagine that the media is controlled, that no propagation of the Gospel may be preached and only approved material may be viewed on the internet. If you say the wrong thing, you go to prison.

If you criticise the government, you may simply disappear. Could that be entrenched by 2030. It may be well sooner, if we do nothing about it....

*"Pat"* you may say – you are fear-mongering – you are trying to manipulate the people to a state of panic. I am not. It's happening all over the world...

Making the news is the people in Hong Kong who are standing up for their personal and religious freedom. They have been protesting about the loss of certain freedoms – that people in their community who are politically unpopular can be extradited to the mainland China and disappear.

In mainland China, people who practice religions disapproved of by the presiding Communist party are sent to camps to be re-educated. Thousands have been used in forced organ transplants as one-time donors.....

In other places where the Church had great freedom a few years ago it has quickly disappeared.

In countries such as Russia, Turkey, The United States, the UK, and Canada, religious freedoms enjoyed for decades and centuries are being drastically curtailed.

Common to all of the countries mentioned above is that the people stayed passive until it was too late. There is now legislation in all these countries (in the US this depends on where you live) that can send you to jail for expressing your religious beliefs.

Unless your beliefs coincide with those of the powers that be, that is.

How far are we away from such a situation in South Africa? In our country, a Section 11 institution, the CRL (Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities), has a mandate to protect religious freedom.

But, like the "Department of Truth" in Orwell's 1984, it is doing exactly the opposite of its name. The CRL is doing its utmost to gain control over the religious organisations of this country. If a church does not "toe the line", they want to have the power to close it down. Pieces of legislation on the president's table, and already approved by parliament, enable the government to censor what you watch and have access to on the internet or WhatsApp. We have courts telling us that our children belong to the state in that the state can tell us how to discipline them.

Should you speak out your beliefs on sexual morality according to the Bible, legislation will determine that you are engaging in hate speech.

The Minister of home affairs is trying to change legislation to place the different forms of legal union in one piece of legislation. This is problematic since the Constitutional Court determined that marriage is the union of a man and a woman. Therefore, same sex legal unions are to be handled under a different term, a Civil Union.

Religious marriage officers were given the choice whether or not to perform civil unions according to their denominations and conscience. There is a plan to remove that freedom.

These are but a few of the ways the freedom of people of faith to live by their values is under direct attack.

In the middle of this all we may ask what is the value of freedom? What does it mean that the very people who claimed to bring freedom are doing more to remove freedom of speech, of association, of expression of access to knowledge, of opportunity than any we have had before?

There are signs that civil society is starting to take a stance.

Our minister of finance has referred to a brewing tax revolt. This is a natural progression from the refusal of motorists to pay e-tolls, and a growing refusal to pay television licences. Because of the corruption and rampant pillaging of SOE coffers, we have a perhaps opportunistic refusal of a large part of the population to pay for municipal services.

At what point may a Christian start “revolting”?

At what point does the church refuse to kow-tow to the ungodly tyranny of governments removing basic freedoms?

The Bible says that governments are put there by God. We must honour the king.

But the same author, Paul was beheaded for leading an illegal church.

He was preaching a treasonous Gospel that dethroned Caesar as god and declared Jesus as Lord.

As a church there is a biblical limit to yielding to a government determined to destroy all that Christians see as good and right. Should you not object to this before it is too late?

Who will you support the next time you are asked to vote for a political party?

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