

The Hon Daniel Andrews  
Premier of Victoria  
1 Treasury Place  
East Melbourne VIC 3002



Saturday, 13 February 2021

Dear Premier,

**RE: Opposition to COVID-19 (“Circuit-Breaker”) Restrictions to Religious Gatherings**

As the Pastor of Mt Cathedral Community Baptist Church Inc., I am writing to inform you that we stand opposed to your unconstitutional restrictions placed upon religious gatherings. Church is essential, and the government has no power to arbitrate whether religious organisations are essential, and whether or not they are permitted to gather for worship.

We believe that your lockdown restrictions are not in alignment with the Australian Constitution, specifically section 6.1 which states, *“The Commonwealth shall not make any law for establishing any religion, or for imposing any religious observance, or for prohibiting the free exercise of any religion, and no religious test shall be required as a qualification for any office or public trust under the Commonwealth”* (emphasis added).

Furthermore, the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities (Victoria) section 14 Freedom of thought, conscience, religion, and belief states that it *“protects not only a right to entertain ideas or hold positions of conscience and religious and other beliefs (including the right not to have religious beliefs), but also a right to demonstrate one’s religion or belief, whether individually or collectively, whether in private or public, and whether through worship, observance, practice and teaching”* (emphasis added).

Mt Cathedral Community Baptist Church Inc., as well as all churches, are entitled to practice their religion without government interference. This is especially the case when the state government has placed no restrictions on the opening of bottle shops, the continuation of the Australian Open 2021, childcare facilities, and other “essential providers.”

It is the fundamental right of every Australian to exercise their religion, both privately and in public assembly. This freedom is clearly conveyed in both federal and state-based governing charters. Furthermore, churches are providing an “essential service” to the people. Therefore, they must be allowed to serve the people in the manner in which God has called them.

It should be noted that we take no delight in opposing government, but we have no choice because *“we must obey God rather than man”* (Acts 5:29). For the Christian, the Bible is the final rule and authority in all matters of faith and practice. As such, the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions are tantamount to discrimination against our belief system.

The Bible teaches that Jesus Christ is the head of the church (Ephesians 1:22), and whilst we are called to honour, pray, and submit to earthly governments which He has established (Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13-17; 1 Timothy 2:1-2; Titus 3:1), when there arises a conflict between these authorities, God must always be obeyed, even at the cost of personal loss and corporate infringement.

In closing, our decision to oppose these restrictions does not proceed from a place of anger, vitriol, or a desire to overthrow established government. Our only desire is to bring clarity to the blurred lines between religious freedom and the state’s authority. We are calling upon you to return to the constitutional rights upon which our nation was founded, and through which the church and government live harmoniously.

Tomorrow when we meet (and in the future), we will pray for you as you navigate the many challenges of governing the State of Victoria. Be assured of our love and respect for you, and our willingness to obey all laws and regulations that you announce that do not prohibit religious freedoms.

With Deep Affection,

*Daniel Kriss*

Pastor for Teaching & Preaching

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Resource Page: [www.gloriousgospel.com.au](http://www.gloriousgospel.com.au)