



### **TEASA statement on the call to reopen churches in disregard of Lockdown 4 regulations.**

The Evangelical Alliance of South Africa (TEASA) is home to over 4 million Evangelical, Pentecostal and Charismatic churches, united in their fidelity to Scripture and passionate about seeing the good news of Jesus proclaimed to the ends of the earth.

TEASA is saddened that the Covid 19 pandemic has occasioned restrictions on the ability of churches to meet in the usual way for worship and celebration of the faith. We however see this as a temporary non pharmaceutical measure to limit the severity of the scourge of Covid 19 on our communities.

We note with sadness that some pastors appear to believe that Christianity is under attack in South Africa today. We are puzzled by their claim that COVID related government restrictions on religious and other gatherings during Lockdown 4 amounts to an attack on the ability of the Churches to practice their faith. TEASA rejects this claim as patently false.

The fact is that in South Africa today the following is true:

1. Christians are free to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ to whoever they wish, in word and deed. They are free to feed the poor, care for and pray for the sick, especially in this season of Covid. There are many more opportunities to serve the broader community and demonstrate the love of Christ beyond one's local church in this hour of great need. Indeed many churches have found a way to be a blessing to their neighbor during this time than ever before.
  2. Christians are free to visit each other in their homes in small groups for mutual encouragement. There is adequate research that demonstrates that this is by far more effective way of disciple making and Christian formation that happens in large church gatherings.
  3. Pastors can communicate with and be in touch with their members regularly, without calling them to a central meeting where the risk of infection is a real and present danger.
  4. All these measures that are endured by all South Africans are internationally accepted as reasonable ways to keep people out of harm's way in so far as COVID is concerned.
- In view of this, TEASA believes that the call made by some leaders to defy legitimate and reasonable government Lock down regulations is ill advised.

Further, it is most unfortunate that this should happens at a time when the country is reeling from the recent unprecedented levels of lawlessness, looting and violence following the incarceration of the former president for breaking the law. This coincidence makes the call for Christians to defy the regulations set out by government to limit the ravages of Covid more suspect. Could it be that the spirit that reigns in the world has come into the church, under the guise of serving the cause of Christ?

We therefore call upon Christians everywhere in South Africa to desist from breaking the laws that are intended to save lives. There might very well be a time when civil disobedience is the only way to be true to Jesus in a society that is intent on making the practice of our faith impossible, but this is not that time.

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