

## **LETTER FROM CHRISTIANS IN MORECAMBE AND THE LOCAL AREA TO MR DAVID MORRIS MP**

Dear Mr Morris,

We are writing as Christians here in Morecambe and beyond to ask you as our Member of Parliament to urge Her Majesty's Government to lift the restrictions on our local churches meeting together.

For us the opening of church buildings for private prayer does not mean very much: we can pray privately at home.

What matters to us is physically meeting together as the Lord Jesus Christ's people, whether in a recognised church building or some other venue such as a school. We meet together to build one another up in our Christian faith, to serve one another in practical ways and to serve this town of Morecambe and the surrounding area. We believe local churches provide 'essential services' in love and good deeds.

We believe that online meetings fall far short of the New Testament standard for church gatherings. We believe that the living God calls us as local churches to be the Body of Christ in this community as we meet together. For us virtual Christianity will not do.

We note that during the recent protests in cities around our country the police took little or no action against the widespread disregarding of the social distancing rules. If public gatherings posed a risk of unleashing a 'second wave' of COVID-19, why was no action taken at the time? Though the authorities have subsequently urged that social distancing rules be observed during protests, we wonder what the official response would have been if Christians had been gathering to protest peacefully against the continuing restrictions on their public worship?

We note other anomalies in the lockdown rules. On a Sunday people can meet others and go shopping, or go to the zoo or carry out other leisure activities, but Christians cannot meet as church. For the first time in centuries, churches have ceased to gather physically for the public and corporate worship of Almighty God – and we ask that this unprecedented restriction be changed urgently.

When meeting, which we pray will be soon, we would take the care of people and their concerns very seriously and would adhere to guidelines and take all reasonable measures to minimise risk.

We also note the recent article in *The Daily Telegraph* by the former Conservative Party leader and Foreign Secretary, Lord Hague. He wrote: 'We have seen enough to know that a lockdown is so destructive that it can only ever be allowed once. That is why we should get out of it as soon as that can safely be done. But it is also why we should prepare, invest and organise to avoid it ever being contemplated again.'

We recognise as the 18<sup>th</sup> Century statesman and political philosopher, Edmund Burke, told the electors of Bristol that as our Member of Parliament you owe us your judgement and not your obedience. You are entitled to exercise that judgement in relation to our request and we respect that.

But as voters in this constituency we believe it is a privilege to live in a democracy and we want actively to participate in our Parliamentary democracy in Britain. So, we would respectfully ask you to champion the cause of Christian liberty in our country, whose democracy owes so much to the Christian faith, and to work for the lifting of the restrictions on local churches physically meeting together.

Thank you for your hard work as our MP.

With all Christian good wishes,