

31 March 2021

Dear Rhema Staff

This Easter weekend, we as the Christian Church may not be able to celebrate as we normally would by gathering in large numbers in our churches. Certainly these are not normal times given the unforeseen circumstance we find ourselves in due to Covid-19. Government restrictions on numbers permitted for public gatherings is particularly difficult for us this weekend because the celebration of Christ's Death, Burial & Resurrection is of paramount importance to us as Christians.

I am disappointed by the length of time it has taken to receive an official response from government in light of the fact that we met with the President about this matter weeks ago. This delay has made it very difficult for Churches to plan ahead for Easter.

The President's decision to increase the size of public gatherings indoors to 250 people over Easter is something we acknowledge was not an easy decision to make, nor do we believe that the decision was taken lightly. Although the ultimate decision may not be what we had hoped for, we recognise the weight of the moment.

That being said, we support the President and his command council's decision as the threat of a third wave in Covid-19 infections looms. We recognise that protecting people's lives is of paramount importance and our President has the enormous responsibility to lead our nation through these unprecedented times without the luxury of hindsight.

I encourage all our staff to recognise that even though Easter may need to be celebrated in a different setting for some, we are all still active in our faith. We can still share the Gospel and spread Hope in a time when the world is as hopeless as it has ever been. Love and Grace are not in lockdown and we can still "be the Church" in our communities this Easter. Though we are disappointed, let us remain steadfast in praying for our President, the government and its leaders. Our responsibility as the Church is to walk in love, unity and compassion especially in these trying times. Let us continue to love our neighbour and resolve to be peacemakers in a divided world.

(President) **Pastor Ray McCauley**
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I will continue to engage with the President on behalf of our plight as churches during this crisis. I pray that winning the fight against Covid-19 is close and that safe large gatherings are not far away.

We commit to continue to co-operate with our President and government in our combined fight against this terrible virus. May you have a blessed Easter!

Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika

Thank you.

Yours in Christ

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Ray McCauley', written in a cursive style. The signature is positioned above a horizontal line.

Pastor Ray McCauley
President