



LOVING WELL IN DIVISIVE TIMES

Romans 14, 15

- DISPUTABLE
MATTERS
- DIFFERENT
VIEWPOINTS
- OPPORTUNITIES
- TEACHING
- RESPONDING

14 Accept the one whose faith is weak, without quarreling over disputable matters. ² One person's faith allows them to eat anything, but another, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables. ³ The one who eats everything must not treat with contempt the one who does not, and the one who does not eat everything must not judge the one who does, for God has accepted them. ⁴ Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To their own master, servants stand or fall. And they will stand, for the Lord is able to make them stand.

Romans 14:1-4

SOME STATISTICS

Country	Total Cases	Total Deaths	Total Recovered	Cases per million pop	Deaths per million pop	Rank by total cases
World	227,252,757	4,673,481	203,937,717	29,154	599	
USA	42,478,780	685,023	32,271,084	127,436	2,055	1
India	33,345,873	443,960	32,552,990	23,881	318	2
Brazil	21,034,610	588,640	20,138,267	98,118	2,746	3
UK	7,312,683	134,647	5,878,889	107,042	1,971	4
Australia	80,413	1,128	36,173	3,110	44	113

DISCLAIMER

(AKA PLEASE DON'T
QUOTE ME OUT OF
CONTEXT!)

The different viewpoints expressed here are not necessarily mine or Overflow's. I have sought to give a representation of different points of view that some followers of Jesus hold. This is not a comprehensive list either – just a sample for the point of illustration.

DIFFERENT VIEWPOINTS

- LOCKDOWNS
BORDER CLOSURES...

The current statistics (if all further COVID 19 cases stopped on 16/9/21) show that 12.7% of the US population has tested positive to COVID to date and that their death rate is 2,055 per million population. (Just up to 2,072 last two days). Without the lockdown/quarantine measures it would not be unrealistic to expect similar rates in Australia...

	Case Numbers	Deaths
Australia @ US rates	3,283,730	53,137
Australia at actual rates	80,413	1,128

Source:

https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/?utm_campaign=homeAdvegas1? and Chris' maths!

DIFFERENT VIEWPOINTS

-LOCKDOWNS

... a good portion of the population are already burdened to the point of despair. Granted, we understand why our leaders felt compelled to lockdown in March 2020. The threat was unknown and our ability to withstand it, untested. However, it is now 2021, and the adverse effects of perpetual lockdowns are now being revealed. We understand needing to respond, but we are concerned with heavy-handed approaches that exceed people's capacity to live a normal life. We are compelled to speak out on behalf of struggling people, the needy, the destitute, those being harmed by such strong measures ([Proverbs 31:8-9](#)).

The adverse effects of lockdowns are especially highlighted in the rise of people considering suicide. The 'Journal of Psychiatric Research' published a paper in July of 2021 based on research done on Melbourne's extended 2020 lockdown, some of their findings are as follows, *"In September-2020, among 1157 Victorians, one-third reported anxiety or depressive disorder symptoms, one-fifth reported suicidal ideation, and one-tenth reported having seriously considered suicide in the prior 30 days.*

Source:

<https://www.reignitedemocracyaustralia.com.au/the-ezekiel-declaration/>

DIFFERENT VIEWPOINTS

- VACCINES

Vaccine Concerns include:

Inadequate Data:

- new gene technology not fully tested
- Vaccine effects have zero long term data
- Vaccines essentially experimental
- People prefer to wait for more information

Adverse Health Impacts:

- Genuine concern over long & short term health issues
- TGA data – many adverse events reported
- 2 healthy Australians in 50's died this week from vax

Dominant Narrative:

- Lack of open debate in govt, medical & media
- Fear of asking questions, seeking data
- Risk of damaging r'ships by voicing opinion/concerns

Decreasing Efficacy:

- Documented decreasing efficacy in UK & Israel
- Potential for ever increasing vax schedule, boosters

DIFFERENT VIEWPOINTS

- VACCINES

Two local nurses died from COVID because their trusted pastor told them the vaccine was from the antiChrist...

This disease is injuring and killing people. I have watched them dying, gasping for breath, and I live with someone with longhaul COVID. Bring on the vaccinations for freedom and health! They are not so experimental any more, with so much of the world's population having had them and seeing they are helping us avoid hospitalization and death. So far I do not know anyone really sick or dead from the vaccines, not saying there has not been those people, but I know many, many, who have died and are suffering from COVID 19, hence, yes I am so glad to see people lining up for vaccines. Cars can cause death but we get in them. Penicillin can cause allergic reactions but we still use it. The issue is the benefits have been shown to outweigh the risks! We are soooo excited to have been vaccinated!

XXXXXXXXXXXX, Nurse, Indonesia

Facebook 7th September 2021

DIFFERENT VIEWPOINTS

- VACCINE PASSPORTS, INCLUSION AND THE GOSPEL

...the introduction of vaccine passports would constitute an unethical form of coercion and violation of the principle of informed consent. People may have various reasons for being unable or unwilling to receive vaccines currently available including, for some Christians, serious issues of conscience related to the ethics of vaccine manufacture or testing. We risk creating a two-tier society, a medical apartheid in which an underclass of people who decline vaccination are excluded from significant areas of public life.

...as Christian leaders we wish to state that we envisage no circumstances in which we could close our doors to those who do not have a vaccine passport, negative test certificate, or any other “proof of health”. For the Church of Jesus Christ to shut out those deemed by the state to be social undesirables would be anathema to us and a denial of the truth of the Gospel.

Excerpt from a letter to the UK Prime Minister, signed by more than 1000 UK Church Leaders, April 2021

DIFFERENT VIEWPOINTS

- VACCINE PASSPORTS, INCLUSION AND THE GOSPEL

- More than four out of five Australians (81 percent) agree with a vaccine passport should be needed to attend public gatherings and venues such as cinemas.
- But despite calls for an exemption for attending religious services, only 18 per cent (out of that 81 per cent) support giving an exemptions to vaccine passports for that reason.
- The remaining fifth of Australians (19 percent) oppose vaccine passports.
- These results were recorded in a survey of 1000 Australians aged 18 and over by McCrindle, a social research, demographics and data analytics company. The survey was in field from September 10 to 13.
- “Christians show higher compliance to vaccination passports, being less likely to oppose vaccination passports (17% protestants, compared to 19% national sample)” ...“Opposition to vaccination passports is modest though not insignificant (19%) and the idea of exemptions for religious services is similarly modest (18%).”

Eternity News September 15th

MORE DIFFERENT VIEWPOINTS

- Our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, and belong to God, not the state.
- HR laws/ workplace health & safety/ employer liability issues around compulsory vaccination are complex and likely to end up in court
- Bioethical concerns over whether it is ethical to partake in mRNA gene altering therapy
- Faith concerns including the importance of conscience in decision making, & belief that God may lead some to be vaccinated, and others not.
- Wider issues concerning of the use of technology for increased surveillance and government control
- Concern that health workers/ the hospital system are already under extreme pressure & would be unable to cope if lockdowns are lifted prematurely
- Privacy issues around who will have access to a person's vaccination status
- As Christians we should be protecting the most vulnerable – the sick and elderly, by getting vaccinated, hence a lower risk of catching/spreading
- Christians should be supporting protective health measures as good citizens
- Christians should be vocally and forcefully opposing undebated and risky legislation with long term consequences for democracy and fairness
- Concerns of losing the message that the proven benefits of vaccination far outweigh the small known risks of vaccination

PAUL'S
TEACHING

LOVING WELL IN
DIVISIVE TIMES

- **Do not judge or condemn those with a different viewpoint**

Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To their own master, servants stand or fall. v4

- **Put the needs & concerns of others above your own 'rights'**

We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak, not to please ourselves. Each of us should please our neighbors for their good... 15 v 1,2

- **Do what leads to peace and building up the other**

Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. V19

- **Don't violate your own conscience in what you choose**

...everything that does not come from faith is sin.v23

-DISPUTABLE
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- **Guard our hearts** - long term division in our church family is far more likely to come *from our hearts* than from government regulation (disagreement, FEAR, judgement, offence, unforgiveness, withdrawal, isolation, deception, disconnection)
- **Consider short and long term responses.** I do not envisage a situation where we would accept long term exclusion of non vaccinated family members from worship services & other church activities*
- **Our Baptist Association** family is in close consultation with NSW govt representatives & is actively presenting concerns. We can also express our own concerns appropriately and respectfully
- **Overflow Sunday services** will continue online to end of October
- **Repent** pray, seek to understand the other, be careful in what we say & write, choose humility & love over being 'right'.
- **Stay focused** on the vision God has given us, *accepting one another and living in a way that brings praise to God 15:7*
- *This would not be my decision alone – would be an eldership decision

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¹³ May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 15:13