

**Michael Reddell <mhreddell@gmail.com>**

3:42 PM (0  
minutes ago)

to simon.bridges, david.seymour

Dear Messrs Bridges and Seymour,

The first meeting of your select committee to scrutinise the government's use of extraordinary powers and the more general handling of the COVID-19 situation takes place tomorrow.

One might debate all sorts of aspects of the response to date, including details of the partial lockdown (it being clearly a misnomer to call it a total lockdown, when perhaps 15 per cent of the workforce are still working outside the home). However, the aspect that most appals and horrifies me is the absolute ban on funerals, on viewing the body, on graveside committals, and so on.

The respect we pay to the dead is a pretty core element of our civilisation, and it seems like the most astonishing over-reach of the legitimate power of the state to simply refuse any such traditional arrangements, even on a very small and physically distant way, even outdoors. It may be lawful - most things are to the state at present - but it is not right. I heard the other day of a person whose father had died last Wednesday. The state refused to allow even the one family member resident in the same city to be a single attendee at a graveside committal, despite there quite clearly being ample scope for physical distance to be maintained. There will be many more such stories, many more such families simply banned by the state from the basic of social and familial duties in the face of death.

I am not aware of any other free country that has taken these funeral etc restrictions to the absolutist stance adopted by our government - not even Italy, lately one of the very the worst affected countries. The Cookie Time biscuit factory is still open, Gourmet Direct is still fulfilling orders, cigarettes are still being produced.....and yet not one person, no priest, no family member, is able to preside at even a simple ceremony for a family member who has died.

My own faith is Christian. I know that of you, one has a Christian background and the other not. But this issue surely transcends any religion or none, and goes to the heart of what it means to be a civilised people. The current policy is simply inhuman, in my view close to evil.

I would urge you to use the opportunity of the Select Committee to demand senior representatives of the government explain these inhuman choices, and urge the Prime Minister to think again.

Yours faithfully

Michael Reddell