

A LETTER FROM DR. SEAN LUCAS

January 30, 2020

My dear Friends:

Well, 2020 has started out with a bang, hasn't it? Just this month, we've had our officer retreat, hosted John Dunlop again (with over 200 in attendance on Saturday, January 25), and this Saturday, we will be hosting 400 students for Ligonier ministries. And that's not to mention all of our "regular" ministries starting back again. There's been a lot going on. And it has had me thinking about something to share with you about ministry philosophy.

Sometimes Christians will talk about a "simple church" model and position it over against a "program church" model—usually in a way that suggests that a "simple church" is better than other ministry models. My thought about that has always been, "Well, maybe. But then again, maybe not." There are some churches, based on context, where being more like a convenience store makes sense. When you go to a convenience store, you are looking for basics—milk, bread, eggs, soda, bag of ice, etc. And that's great—we need convenience stores and we need churches that offer the basics of Sunday worship around Word, sacrament, and prayer.

But there are some places and contexts where being more like Target makes sense. You get the basics at Target, but there are lots of other things there as well. You may not buy the other things all the time: in fact, you probably shouldn't buy everything in the store! But whenever I need something beyond the basics, the first place I go is Target because more times than not, they'll have it. In the same way, churches like ours are like that: we have Sunday morning and evening worship around Word, sacrament, and prayer. But we also have Bible studies, conferences, children's and students' activities, small groups, fellowship events, and lots more. You may not need those things all the time, but we offer them and very much hope that you will take advantage of them as you need them.

I guess what I'm trying to say is that we need to be content with what God has called us to be and do for our city. I love us—I don't want to be something different than us. I don't want us to be Christ Pres Nashville or Redeemer NYC or FPC Jackson or Perimeter Atlanta. To be sure, we can and do learn things from our brothers and sisters in those places, but God's called them to flesh out ministry in particular ways in those particular contexts. I just want to be us—but I want us to be the very best us that we can be for God's glory and the extension of his Kingdom here in Memphis. I hope you feel the same way and are grateful for the opportunities that God has set before us here at IPC.

In the grip of God's grace,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sean". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.