

A LETTER FROM DR. SEAN LUCAS

August 20, 2020

My dear Friends:

One of my favorite answers in the Shorter Catechism is the one on providence: “God’s works of providence are his most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all his creatures and all their actions” (Q11). Sometimes it is obvious how God governs his creatures; sometimes we can only connect the dots in retrospect. I want to give you an example of the way those dots connect and how they’ve impacted IPC.

In 1985, a young church planter and his wife moved to Richmond, Indiana, to start a PCA church. Of course, that was our own Mike and Barb Malone. God used them to start Christ Presbyterian Church and to build their initial building on Henley Road. Mike and Barb left in 1991; they were followed by Mark and Beth Dalbey (who will be speaking this weekend in our parenting conference and for our Sunday morning services). Three years later, two recently married graduates of Bob Jones University attended a Bible conference at Christ Presbyterian Church where Bryan Chapell and Sinclair Ferguson preached: that couple was Sean and Sara Lucas. Mark also brought Sean to a Christ Pres session meeting to talk about Child Evangelism Fellowship and spent time talking to him about ministry.

Later in 1994, the Lucases went to Westminster Seminary when Sean got to know Sinclair Ferguson, a faculty member there, a little bit. Through a series of circumstances, God took them to a PCA church in Louisville, Kentucky, where Sean served with David Dively. When Sean showed up to his credentials committee meeting for ordination in Ohio Valley Presbytery, who was on his committee? Mark Dabley. And Mark would be instrumental, with Bob Burns and Donald Guthrie, in moving Sean and Sara to St. Louis to serve at Covenant Seminary in 2004, where he would eventually work directly for Bryan Chapell as VP for Academics.

In 2006, there was a new member added to the Covenant Seminary board, a younger-ish ruling elder from IPC, Sam Graham. Over his three remaining years at Covenant, Sean came to respect thoroughly and befriend Sam (or more accurately, Sam befriended Sean). When Sean left Covenant Seminary in 2009, Mark became VP for Academics and then president of the seminary in 2013. And a little more than three years later, Sean came to IPC to serve beside Mike Malone, who had planted the church that started all of these connections to begin with, and Sam Graham, whom he had known on the board of the seminary. But there’s one more step along the way: because for the last three years or so, after their own church dissolved, Sara’s parents have been worshipping at Christ Presbyterian Church, Richmond, Indiana.

Now on the one hand, we can look at all of this and think to ourselves, “Wow, the PCA is a really small world.” And that, of course, is true. But God governs all his creatures and all their actions; or as Martin Luther King put it, we are tied up in a network of mutuality and in a single garment of destiny. Our God, the Father Almighty, the Maker of heaven and earth, rules over this network, this garment, for his glory. Nothing happens by chance or accident—we don’t always know the outcome of the dreams we have or the decisions we make. But the God of the universe knows: it is his plan, after all. And when we hear Mark and Beth Dalbey this weekend, we see one part of God’s larger providence in my life and in the life of IPC. Thanks be to God!

With every best wish,

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