# A Few Truths We Can Affirm as the Body of Christ

### by Scott Sager

In these difficult days, we at Lipscomb are praying for all our churches, that we might be those Ezekiel spoke of who repair the breach and stand in the gap. We realize it is difficult to know what to do, what to say, and how to say it. This can often paralyze us into saying and doing nothing. However, we need to know that saying nothing in a time like this can appear to others as though our silence is a symptom of unconcern. So with great humility and a belief that prayer and the Spirit will give each congregation the right way to "speak the truth in love" we offer these thoughts in the hope they can do some good:

**1. Think Christian-ly**. It is easy to see a crisis through the lens given you by the media or some other outside organization. But we are to have "the mind of Christ" (I Cor. 2: 16). This means we "take every thought captive to make it obedient to Christ" (2 Cor. 10: 5) so that we "do not conform to the pattern of this world, but are transformed" through minds renewed by the Spirit (Rom. 12: 2). Resolve to think through this situation as Jesus would if physically present.

**2. Affirm the Divine Image in Every Person.** The first chapter of Genesis affirms that each of us is created in the very image of God. We are each divine image-bearers. Jesus once told us, "Render unto Caesar the things that are in Caesar's image" but we are to render unto God the things made in God's image. Every person is a divine image of God regardless of age, color, or capacity. We each belong to God.

**3. Affirm that Breath Comes from God and Returns to God.** Again it is God who “breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being" (Gen. 2: 7). The word "breath" and the word "Spirit" come from the same word. Thus when Jesus cried out from the cross, "Into your hands I commit my Spirit" (Luke 23: 46) he was likewise returning his breath to the One from whom it came. There is a sanctity to life that comes from God.

**4. We Should Treat People as We Want to be Treated.** The rule on the streets today might be "Don't do to others what you don't want to be done to you." But Jesus holds us to a higher standard: “So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets” (Matt 7: 12). We should always be asking, "How would I feel if this happened to me?" Of all the places on earth, the church should most strive to treat people right.

**5. Jesus is the Most Oppressed Person from the Most Oppressed People Group of All Time.**I cannot possibly know what it is like to be part of a cultural group with story after story after story of abuse and oppression at the hands of a government system. But Jesus can. The prophet Isaiah spoke of Jesus and said, “He was oppressed and afflicted yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent so he did not open his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away, yet who of his generation protested?” (Isa. 53: 7-8). No one protested at the oppression of Jesus, but he did it all for us. Jesus knows what people are going through today, and he cares.

**6. Nothing Escapes God's Notice.** Every person will one day bow their knee and admit that "Jesus is Lord" over all of creation. At that time we will be called to give an account for the things we did and didn't do while upon this earth. Jesus' own brother James reminds each of us,
"If anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and doesn’t do it, it is sin for them" (James 4: 17). God is watching and nothing escapes his notice.

**7. One Day We WIll be Part of a Multitude from Every Tribe and Tongue.**John's apocalypse shares this vision: "After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, 'Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!'" (Rev. 7; 9-10). One day we will all gather united around the throne, and the Lordship, of Jesus Christ. It is our privilege to begin *now* making this vision a reality.

**There are Things Each of Us Can Do:**

**\* Pray:** That God will raise up leaders who will build us up, and stand in the gap to bring healing and reconciliation. Ask that you might be a part of that solution!

**\* Listen:** I have been amazed and overwhelmed by the accounts I am hearing from godly friends who have experienced abuse and injustice at the hands of our government systems. These stories are real and need to be heard no matter how painful it is to discover our moral failures as a society. Listen and reflect, and don't make excuses--just listen. And then pray for us all.

**\* Encourage:**One of my best friends is a Dallas police officer. He is the worship leader at the congregation where I served for fifteen years. There is no finer man. Unfortunately, there is a danger today that we will start profiling police officers, letting the bad apples spoil our view of the ones sacrificing so much for us. Let someone know you still believe in them.

**\* Address:** Think Christian-ly about your congregation and how this wake up call for America might make your congregation a healthier place as well. Then begin prayerfully to take steps to live into what Jesus is showing you.

This is a time for much grace and peace my friends.