

AFFIRMING IMAGO DEI
IN THE AGE OF TRUMP:
AN AMERICAN MISSIONARY RESPONDS

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Abstract: For the Christian, human dignity is intrinsically tethered to the biblical concept of imago Dei. If God has indeed made men, women, and children in his image, there is no length to which Christians must not go in reaching everyone with the gospel. Racial, gender, religious, and special needs discrimination, which has only expanded under the presidency of Donald Trump, has no place in God’s kingdom and attacks Christian mission to its core. In this article, the author, himself a cross-cultural missionary from the United States, surveys the concept of imago Dei and offers both personal and public implications for future Christian mission in the “Age of Trump.”

Keywords: imago Dei, human dignity, Donald Trump, Bible, Christian, mission

*“So God created man in his own image,
in the image of God he created him;
male and female he created them.” (Genesis 1:27)*

I knew the question was coming at some point. “You’re American? What do you think of Trump?” The Bucharest taxi driver and I were chatting politely in Romanian until all of a sudden he noticed my non-Romanian accent. “English?” he asked with a smile. “No, actually I’m from the USA.” The inevitable question struck me this time, however, as I thought about how polarizing a figure President Trump has become. Admittedly, I do not follow US politics as I probably ought, mainly because I have lived in Romania for the last seven years. While I did not personally vote for

Trump, I have several family members and friends who did and I respect their reasoning. Relating this fact to my taxi driver, I then turned the conversation as I always do to how I do not place my trust in politicians, but in Jesus Christ.

My purpose in writing this article is not to give political commentary, for which I will be the first to volunteer that I am not qualified. Instead, I offer another view: the American missionary living abroad in an age of increasing polarization from every side. The challenges to Christian mission in our day are great, yet Christ and his kingdom of servants push onward. I submit that the way forward in affirming essential human dignity for the sake of God and his mission is by revisiting how God affirms human dignity in the Scriptures. The bulk of this article will concern *imago Dei* in Creation, the life of Christ, and New Creation. The contemporary context of the “Age of Trump” is then surveyed. Finally, I conclude by offering personal and public implications for Christian mission.

A Personal Introduction

In order to situate myself in this conversation, I offer first a brief introduction. Serving in church planting and theological education, my family and I have lived in Bucharest for seven years. Both our children were born in Bucharest. Many of our dearest friends in all the world are Romanians, who patiently teach us what it means to live and serve God in Romania. Before moving to Romania in 2012, I lived in several countries and count it an honor to claim friends in most of the 30+ nations I have visited. For me, then, the conversation of distrusting or discriminating against others of a different cultural makeup than my own (white male from the United States) is quite personal on multiple levels. Human dignity discrimination is a spiritual issue, making it necessary to turn to the biblical narrative in order to understand the discussion.

***Imago Dei* in Creation**

The Creation narrative of Genesis 1, which is written in the Hebrew language as more of a poem, displays the eternal God fashioning and shaping the world for his pleasure. God’s molding of spinning planets and thriving ecosystems are declared “good,” meaning that God was satisfied

with his work. God thus establishes himself as King and Lord over the world, having full authority to build and tear down at will. Reformed missiologist J. H. Bavinck notes that, “The idea of creation naturally implies God’s jurisdiction over the whole world.”¹

The culmination of all created things is, of course, humanity. Made “in God’s image,” a phrase repeated three times in Genesis 1:26-28, men and women are given unique abilities and responsibilities over the rest of the created order. Some of these unique abilities include moral judgment, cognitive reasoning, and relational development needs.² These capacities set humans apart from other beings, allowing for the imaginative potential for creation and cultivation of cultural institutions. Beavers build dams; humans build civilizations. Or, to use an example closer to home, the linguistic capacity of my infant son to mimic any phoneme, and thus begin developing a cultural vocabulary, displays the unique image of God.

Biblically, humans are created for a specific purpose: to extend God’s glory throughout the world. We do this by 1) multiplying on the earth and 2) exercising dominion over it (Genesis 1:26-31). In filling the earth, exercising dominion, and working the earth, humans live out our role as God’s “vice-regents” or “stewards.”³ Such responsibility sets humanity on course for filling the earth with worshippers of God, which is and has always been the mission of God.⁴ From the genesis of history, God is building a people of full-orbed worshippers from the whole earth who image him through their worship and cultural activity.

Imago Dei, then, is both a necessary starting place for understanding human dignity and a launching pad for living out the cultural mandate. Yet it is also, as discussed above, a launching pad for holistic Christian mission. This fact is best observed in the life of the Bible’s primary hero, the Lord Jesus Christ.

1 J. H. Bavinck, *The Science of Missions: An Introduction* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1960), 12.

2 David Closson, “What does it mean to be made in God’s image?” *The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention*, May 4, 2016. <https://erlc.com/resource-library/articles/what-does-it-mean-to-be-made-in-gods-image> (accessed August 13, 2019).

3 Bruce Riley Ashford and Heath A. Thomas, *The Gospel of Our King: Bible, Worldview, and the Mission of Every Christian* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2019).

4 Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible’s Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006).

Imago Dei in the Life of Christ

Clearly, the world does not look like it is filled with godly worshippers. Horrific images line our screens of children in Uganda dying of malnourishment, school-age girls captured and sold into sexual slavery in Thailand (and Romania), and mass shootings in United States' schools.⁵ According to the Bible, sin is the culprit. God's image-bearers chose treason over obedience to their Creator King, and thus humanity's thoughts and activity are misdirected from honoring God to the idolatrous worship of oneself. Sin is a curse that brings pain, shame, death, and separation from God (Genesis 3). Sin begets sin.

Following the Reformers such as John Calvin, the advent of sin into the world corrupts humanity in its entirety, making them *totally depraved* and incapable of saving themselves.⁶ Glimpses of a healed *imago Dei*, however, are seen partially in the acts of healing and peacemaking wrought by humans. The fullness of God's image is, of course, seen in the Rescuer King Jesus. Taking their cue from the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Reformers taught that Jesus perfectly imaged the Father in his works and ways.⁷ Hebrews 1:3 declares, "[Jesus] is the radiance of God's glory and the exact imprint of his nature" (ESV). Jesus, then, embodies how God the Father thinks, acts, and loves his creation. Commenting on this passage, F. F. Bruce states,

[Jesus] is the very image of the essence of God – the impress of his being. Just as the image and superscription on a coin exactly correspond to the device on the die, so the Son of God 'bears the very stamp of his nature' (RSV) . . . What God essentially

5 Nurith Aizenman and Malaka Gharib, "American with no medical training ran center for malnourished Ugandan kids. 105 die," *NPR*, August 9, 2019. <https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2019/08/09/749005287/american-with-no-medical-training-ran-center-for-malnourished-ugandan-kids-105-die?r=1565686898526> (accessed August 13, 2019); John Draper and Peerasit Kamnuansilpa, "Thailand's child sex trade and the cultural division of labor," *The Nation Thailand*, June 16, 2017, <https://www.nationthailand.com/opinion/30318307> (accessed August 13, 2019); "Suspect admits killing missing Romanian teenager," *BBC News*, July 29, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-49149953> (accessed August 13, 2019); Michelle Lou and Christina Walker, "There have been 22 school shootings in the US so far this year," July 26, 2019, <https://edition.cnn.com/2019/05/08/us/school-shootings-us-2019-trnd/index.html> (accessed August 13, 2019).

6 John Calvin, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 1536 edition, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995).

7 *Ibid.*, I.xv.4.

is, is made manifest in Christ. To see Christ is to see what the Father is like.⁸

The Gospels recount Jesus as the fulfillment of OT prophecy. One of the primary OT texts which Jesus' contemporaries would have certainly known is Isaiah 61, which identifies the work of the coming Messiah. Interestingly, Jesus exposes to the multitudes that he is the fulfillment of this passage, which exhibits a great deal of how Jesus understands himself and inherent human dignity.

Jesus preached from this passage at the beginning of his public ministry at the Nazareth synagogue (Luke 4:14-30). After returning from the temptations in the desert, a Spirit-filled Jesus read from Isaiah 61 the following words:

*The Spirit of the Lord is on me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners
and recovery of sight for the blind,
to set the oppressed free,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. (v. 18-19)*

Rolling up the scroll, Jesus then stated before his family and friends, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing" (v. 20-21). Jesus was declaring himself Messiah who works wonders, proclaims *euangelion*, and leads captives out of darkness. It is no wonder that the very people who had watched Jesus grow up were angry enough to throw him off the nearest cliff. Isn't this merely Joseph the carpenter's son?

Jesus' life, from his scandalously humble birth among farm animals to his physical resurrection after dying upon one of history's most horrendous torture devices, represents a cataclysmic shift in how Jesus' followers are to image Jesus. Ashford and Thomas rightly note, "When we look at the cross of Christ, we find the great irony: Jesus is exalted by his humiliation."⁹ The Kingdom of God is ushered in by humble servants following the example of the Suffering Servant King. In doing so, the work of Christ's followers embody and foreshadow the coming covenant peace (*shalom*) that will only be realized in the eschaton.

8 F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990), 48.

9 Ashford and Thomas, *The Gospel of Our King*, 90.

The good news of Jesus, then, is scandalous because it does not follow worldly patterns. Proclamation is delivered of a “contrast kingdom” where women are esteemed and valued, marriages do not end in divorce, and the hearts of men and women remain tethered to their God. Little children run to Jesus without fear of propriety and tradition. Relationship with God is grounded in inner consecration rather than outward sacrifice and good works. Each of these proclaimed realities point to a kingdom not of this world, and are likewise coupled with Jesus reversing the natural effects of sin by restoring sight to the blind, healing ailing bodies, and reaching down into death and restoring life.

Surely, followers of Jesus are to be about the same business. No one was (or is) beyond the gaze of Jesus. Samaritans, Syrians, sinners, and saints are loved and restored by Jesus. The life of Jesus calls into question worldly understanding of what brings honor and shame.¹⁰ And the best news of all is that the incarnating of Jesus in these ways predicts the New Creation that is soon to come.

Imago Dei in the New Creation

Jesus' coming inaugurated the kingdom of God, perfectly imaging how the Father is building a kingdom of priests out of helpless sinners who cling desperately to the Son. In other words, Jesus is setting the world right again. Yet obviously we do not live in a fully righted world, and so theologians label the “reclamation project” of God's kingdom as *already and not yet*.¹¹ To use OT terminology, the New Covenant has come and God's people are privileged to participate in redeeming creation (Jeremiah 31). The NT, which cannot be understood without the OT, better reflects this reality. Having been cleansed by Jesus' shed blood on the cross, Christian believers are freed to draw near and worship God through participation in bringing *shalom* to the nations.¹²

10 Jerome H. Neyrey, *Honor and Shame in the Gospel of Matthew* (Louisville: KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998).

11 Ashford and Thomas, *The Gospel of Our King*, 52. The term “already and not yet” was first coined by George Eldon Ladd. See George Eldon Ladd, *The Presence of the Future* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1974).

12 “Those who make bold to enter the heavenly sanctuary by the blood of Jesus are by that same blood purified and made fit for the divine presence; the cleansing of the conscience removes the barrier which prevented their free access.” Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 254.

The NT depicts God and his people bringing *shalom* through the proclamation of the gospel and good works. Such was the primary work of Jesus: to proclaim the good news and affirm it through his miracles. These two acts, gospel proclamation and good works, are not to be separated.¹³ In their writings, the apostles and other NT authors exhorted Christians to do the same. In Ephesians 2, for example, Paul gives a rich overview of the conversion of a person from following the “prince of this world” to being made “alive in Christ.” Transformed by the “mercies of God” by grace alone, the newly alive follower of Jesus is changed both structurally and positionally. Yet the newly saved man or woman is not taken out of the world; they are instead called to “walk” in good works for the glory of God (Ephesians 2:10). Christians are saved spiritually to proclaim and embody the works of Christ in the world.

Because God’s kingdom is both “here and not yet,” the good works of Christ’s followers predict the eschaton. The Bible is clear that there is hope beyond the grave for the believer and that death has lost its sting (1 Corinthians 15:54-55). Christ is even now restoring his broken world, and mysteriously he has chosen to work through his people to redeem men, women, and children from every tribe, tongue, and nation. It is ultimately unimaginable to consider a world without sin, pain, tears, sickness, and death, yet such is the biblical picture of a New Creation:

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.” (Revelation 21:1-4, ESV)

Until such time, God’s people proclaim and portray the *shalom* of New Creation as best as we can. It is a difficult task – making disciples for

13 Indeed, evangelism and social action are often found in the same Scriptural contexts. See Charles Fielding, *Preach and Heal: A Biblical Model for Missions* (Richmond, VA: International Mission Board, 2008); Duane Litfin, *Word Vs. Deed: Resetting the Scales to a Biblical Balance* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012).

Jesus in the midst of a sinful world that is increasingly hostile to the cause of Christ. I agree with the call for new and ongoing contextualization because every generation presents new challenges to gospel ministry. Further, one of the principle tests of this generation is that of human dignity, one which has only expanded since the inauguration of US President Donald Trump.

Donald Trump and Human Dignity

I begin this section on Trump with a caveat: I am not trained in political theory and so do not presume a voice that resonates with either the political Right or Left. While I do hold a Bachelors degree in history, my thoughts here are that of a conservative Christian living outside the United States. As such, I am sure my statements concerning Trump will sound reductionistic to those who both criticize and defend the President's actions. My training is in social science and evangelical Christian missiology. Thus, I approach the topic from these angles.

Elected in 2016 as the 45th President of the United States, billionaire businessman Donald Trump startled the world with both his populist platform and tireless commitment to pushing his conservative agenda.¹⁴ Trump was elected largely as the “lesser of two evils” compared to Hillary Clinton, whose politically liberal agenda was considered an advancement of the “big government” agenda of former President Barack Obama. From at least the 1970s, controversy has surrounded the Trump family. In 1973, for example, the federal government filed a complaint that Donald Trump and his father racially discriminated against tenants in their real estate company.¹⁵ Trump's company settled the matter years later with a financial settlement but did not admit guilt. Trump's campaign slogan, “Make America Great Again,” was first used by Ronald Reagan and is powerfully nostalgic. The statement conjures images of a simpler time when the United States was flourishing and internationally respected.¹⁶

14 President Trump is currently listed as a Republican, yet has switched parties several times. “Donald Trump Biography,” *Biography.com*, latest update August 12, 2019, A & E Television Networks, <https://www.biography.com/us-president/donald-trump> (accessed August 15, 2019).

15 Ibid.

16 Such nostalgia has been decried by critics as largely a “white political theology.” S. Romi Mukherjee, “Make America Great Again as White Public Theology,” *Literature, History of*

Trump's policies have garnered harsh reaction from citizens both in the United States and the rest of the world, yet especially minorities. The President's statements concerning women, LGBTQ+, immigrants, and non-Caucasian racial groups seem to show a disregard for gender, religious, and racial equality.¹⁷ A particularly strong flashpoint between Trump's policies and the discussion of human dignity is immigration.

Spotlight: Immigration

Immigration is and always has been a vital piece of the United States' story. Representing opportunity to create a new life economically, religiously, and socially, the United States has always prided itself as a cultural "melting pot." Unfortunately, the "melting pot" appears to be boiling over. With immigration rates on the rise, the subject of how immigrants ought to be treated before and after naturalization is critical.

Trump's final answer to the international immigration crisis remains to be seen, yet it appears that immigrants to the United States are being detained and mistreated, especially at the US-Mexico border. The most controversial events to date at the US-Mexico border include separation of immigrant children from their parents. Nancy Pelosi, Democratic Speaker of the House of Representatives, stated, "This situation is child abuse. It is an atrocity that violates every value we have, not only as Americans, but as moral beings."¹⁸ Interestingly, Pelosi appeals to both the US self-understanding as a nation that welcomes the Other and the universal issue of human morality that every person should be treated with dignity. Although holding values in direct contradiction to Scripture, Pelosi admits that humans have an innate dignity.¹⁹

Ideas, Images, and Societies of the English Speaking World vol. 16, no. 2 (2018). For a more balanced approach, see Robert D. Mather, "Make America Great Again, like Reagan and Clinton," *Psychology Today*, February 18, 2018, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-conservative-social-psychologist/201802/make-america-great-again-reagan-and-clinton> (accessed August 15, 2019).

17 "Donald Trump Biography."

18 Micah Luxen, Jessica Lussenhop, and Rajini Vaidyanathan, "Is there a crisis on the US-Mexico border?" *BBC News*, July 11, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-44319094> (accessed August 15, 2019).

19 Clearly, not all of these immigrants seeking asylum are fleeing violence; yet many are and deserve a fair hearing as to why they are uprooting to the United States. Neither naïve reception nor impassive coldness is the answer to dealing with illegal immigrants.

As I have argued, every person is made in God's image and is therefore deserving of life-giving service and opportunity, especially the opportunity to respond to the gospel. Christians are to be the banner-bearers for protecting human life, whether threatened by violence in the womb or across national borders. Trump's policies are inconsistent in this regard, creating an imbalance between the protection and overall treatment of human life. Christian voters in the United States ought to weigh these realities in light of biblical exhortations such as "treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you" (Leviticus 19:34), "love the sojourner" (Deut. 10:19), "show hospitality to strangers" (Hebrews 13:1-2), and "love your neighbor as yourself" (Mark 12:30-31).

Far more could be said in describing the controversies surrounding the Trump presidency, yet suffice to say that the United States is becoming increasingly polarized between Trump supporters and the groups his policies appear to target. Further, the "populist wave" is now sweeping many other nations, as well.²⁰ I have termed this global phenomenon the "Age of Trump." One thing that is clear, however, is that Trump's rhetoric strikes a cord with the US's "silent majority." For better or worse, the US media publicizes Donald Trump's every move, meaning that he is always on the news and never far from the minds of informed world citizens. The question remains, then, as to how the populist spirit in the Age of Trump and will affect Christian missionary endeavors. Such is the subject of the final section of this study.

Loving the Other: Implications for Christian Mission

As stated above, every generation must wrestle with how best to contextualize the biblical message for their age. The presidency of Donald Trump and the nationalistic populism he represents create both barriers and bridges for Christian mission, especially in cross-cultural contexts. In light of the biblical concept of *imago Dei*, which as I have shown fills the Bible from beginning to end, calls Christians to take seriously the Great Commandment to love God and neighbor (Matthew 22:36-40). In this final section, I offer several personal and public implications for Christians engaged in missionary activity in the age of Trump.

20 For a fairly centrist report, see Simon Shuster and Vivienne Walt, "The Populists," *Time.com*, 2019, <https://time.com/time-person-of-the-year-populism/> (accessed August 15, 2019).

Personal Implications. Following the example of Jesus, Christians are to affirm *imago Dei* in all peoples, regardless of how monumental our differences appear. Practically, this means affirming the innate dignity of both the mighty and the powerless. Indeed, the story of the spread of Christianity from a Palestinian phenomenon to a worldwide movement tells of the unique impact the gospel had on vulnerable, fringe populations. Christian historian Ivor Davidson writes, “To many such people, the story of Jesus offered not only spiritual consolation and hope but also the present assistance of charity and the assurance of belonging within a family network.”²¹ One wonders if the same could be said for religious seekers in our contemporary scene. In affirming *imago Dei* regardless of class, Christians push back against the tendency to classify men, women, and children as “strategic” or “non-strategic” targets.

How do we begin? First, Christians must *pray* for their neighbors, that they may come to know the saving power of Jesus. In praying for others, the Holy Spirit softens both the heart of the intercessor and the one for whom they pray (John 16:8-11). Yet, as discussed above, we also pray for opportunities to socially and physically bless our neighbors. Second, the Scriptures exhort believers to be vessels of *edification* and *encouragement* (1 Thessalonians 5:11). In a world polarized and suspicious of those who do not act, look, or think like us, it is vital that those seeking to declare the goodness of God be known as encouragers. For example, before entering emotionally charged discussions on social media, which usually generate far more heat than light, Christians ought to consider if their actions and words will be viewed as salt that attracts their peers to Christ (Matthew 5:13). Third, Christians are to *model* for the world how Jesus has always embraced the Other. Of course this does not mean naively overlooking intent or background. It does mean, however, that no matter how confused or dark a person’s past, the person in question is still a person created in God’s image. Christians would be wise to check their hearts before taking political stances concerning

21 Ivor J. Davidson, *The Birth of the Church: From Jesus to Constantine, AD 30-312*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, Baker, 2004), 103. Yet obviously the Book of Acts records high class and military individuals coming to faith, as well. “The supposition that the poor and the uneducated are naturally more inclined to religious belief is in any case not borne out by the findings of more recent scholarship in the social sciences. Like every movement that has emerged out of an existing religious culture, faith in Jesus must generally have taken root among those who were privileged enough in socioeconomic terms to be capable of giving serious consideration to the possibilities of immersing themselves in a new lifestyle.” *Ibid*, 104.

the policies of political leaders, especially since the non-Christian world knows that the very act of calling oneself Christian declares Jesus as Lord and everything else secondary.²²

Public. Christians must publicly and unashamedly support the Other. It is in our lived actions that our true ethic is revealed. Viewing the world's men, women, and children as people and not as pawns is only the first step. What is needed is no less than a robust theology of cultural engagement. In *Christ and Culture*, H. Richard Niebuhr outlines five historical approaches concerning how Christians interact with culture.²³ In many of the world's cultures, Christians take the approach of "Christ against culture," meaning that the followers of Jesus should abstain from engaging in cultural activities like politics because the two are diametrically opposed.²⁴ On the other hand, Niebuhr believed that the full embrace of one's culture, which he termed "Christ of culture," leads to theological distortion. In the Age of Trump, Christians must guard against both "Christ against culture" and "Christ of culture" temptations. A "transforming" approach provides Christians with a more certain means of public witness.²⁵

No matter how opposed they may be to the gospel, non-Christians are watching how Christ's Church responds to the disabled, fringe groups, immigrants, and minorities.²⁶ Whether it is standing in peaceful protest of taking unborn lives or ongoing political corruption, Christians testify that their faith has real implications for society. At the end of one's life, Christians should not have to look back with longing and say, "I wish I'd stood up for that person." Unfortunately, in the Age of Trump, such a fear is quite real.

22 For a fascinating discussion of how being Christian is actually a political statement, see Bruce Riley Ashford and Chris Pappalardo, *One Nation Under God: A Christian Hope for American Politics* (Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing Group, 2015).

23 H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* (San Francisco, CA: HarperCollins Publishers, 2001).

24 Actually, such a view is nearly impossible because Christians are still citizens of earthly nations and therefore participate somewhat in their cultures. For example, the Amish of Pennsylvania are still affected when politicians in Harrisburg make decisions.

25 *Ibid.*

26 According to a recent statistics, 9.7 million Romanians are immigrants in other countries for various reasons. See Newsroom, "About 9.7 million Romanians are living abroad, minister says," *Romanian Insider*, 24 July 2019, <https://www.romania-insider.com/statistics-romanians-abroad> (accessed August 15, 2019). Nearly everyone I interact with in Bucharest has family who have emigrated. Immigration, then, is certainly on Romanians' minds.

Conclusion

Affirming *imago Dei* in every person must not remain an intellectual exercise; it must translate into action. Every person that walks our streets, begs for food at intersections, bows in shame behind prison bars, and votes for or against Trump in the next election is created and beloved by God. They are not subhuman. They are the people for whom Christ died. Are we a fragrant aroma of Christ to such as these? How might we more effectively spread this aroma?

Such were some of my thoughts as I discussed with my taxi driver. Looking into his eyes, I knew there was much more to his question than whether or not I like Trump. My taxi driver, and countless others like him, are actually asking whether or not I love people unlike myself. The answer calls for serious soul searching. The answer calls for affirming *imago Dei*.

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