

The car with the defective brakes that leads to the death of the driver...the tainted can of beans that forces a family to the emergency room...the poorly built deck that collapses, seriously hurting several... Someone is responsible. But there is brand to protect. So get PR on this as soon as possible. The product is fine; it was poorly installed; it was misused. Don't blame us; we're not responsible for the catastrophe. Look at our safety record; read the testimonials from satisfied customers.

They knew what was happening. They didn't want to hear it, but they knew. Anguished mothers and angry fathers came to them, pleading with them, as leaders, to do something. Some listened politely. Some dismissed the parents. Their responsibility, as they saw it, was to protect the institution. So whatever it took to protect the organization from scandal or lawsuit: deny the facts, question the integrity and motives of those who came forward, shield the guilty, avoid responsibility, dismiss the problem.

We sometimes have a difficult time with the truth: truth often complicates things, it can be costly, it can destroy "the good" that we're trying to accomplish. So we've learned to rationalize, to change the narrative, to hold our ground no matter what. But Christ makes it clear: "Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice" (Jn. 18:37). The Kingdom of God is centered in truth: truth that challenges us, truth that calls into question the value system we act from (not merely say we believe in). To be a disciple of Jesus is to serve truth regardless of the cost.

The Kingdom, Christ said, is begun with you. The fact that the Kingdom is difficult to see doesn't mean that it doesn't exist. It does exist and it continues to grow in the efforts of millions of virtuous people who selflessly shoulder the burdens and responsibilities of a very imperfect world, people who seek out the truth and translate that truth into virtuous lives, regardless of how out of step that may make them seem in the eyes of the rest of the world. Christ, who is Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, gives shape and direction to everything we must do and be. The reign of Christ is the ultimate truth. It is the final fact of our lives.