

CUTTING THROUGH THE CULTURAL FOG – Session 1

Seeking Clarity in a Time of Confusion

Gray areas - Church sign, Rainbow flag, Doors, , Banner,

These slides make one either think or react. My hope is you will think as we talk this week about “Cutting Through the Cultural Fog.”

Starting point: Seeking Clarity in a Time of Confusion. With all the Dis/Mis Information, how do we make sure we are hearing the truth?

1a. The scope of the fog problem –

1b. It is wide

Time – Disinformation is among the greatest threats to our democracy.
NY Times – As Fake News Spreads Lies, More Readers Shrug at the Truth
Smithsonian – Fake News Spreads Faster and Deeper Than Verified Stories on Twitter

2b. And it is deep

New word: “Unfalsifiable.” You can’t prove what I believe is false because I don’t trust your sources. No plane at Pentagon. Jewish Space Lasers

FB: Online disinformation exploits the attention-driven business model using algorithms that measure what content we engage with and automatically show us more content like it.

BS blind spot: Headline – The More BS you spread, the More BS You’ll Fall For. “If you feel no need to pay particular attention to the bounds of truth and accuracy yourself, you’re actually more likely to fall for other people’s BS.”

Echo chambers: an environment where a person only encounters information or opinions that reflect and reinforce their own.

2a. Biblical principles for guiding and guarding us though the fog

Listen to “both sides” (Prov 18.17) – “The one who states his case first seems right, until the other comes and examines him” warns against one-sided listening.

Look to God’s Word (Ps 119.24) – “Your testimonies are my delight; they are my counselors.” 59 – “When I think on my ways, I turn my feet to your testimonies.” 78 – “Let the insolent be put to shame, because they have wronged me with falsehood; as for me, I will meditate on your precepts.”

The Wisdom Pyramid: Feeding Your Soul in a Post-Truth World by Brett McCracken

Ask for Wisdom (James 1:5) – “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.”

3a. Practical advice

Know your sources and their bias – **10 Republicans, Only, Most**

Bias graphs – **News, Republicans, Democrats**

Truth has no political party because bias already owns all of them

Limit social media use & fact check

FB is **NOT** a quotable source

Time sucker

Memes don’t settle a disagreement, they just start them

Psychiatrist **Covid** Ties on **dino**

Triangulate your sources – Scott Pelley, Truth Worth Telling

Fact check – especially before quoting

Develop a tough mind

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Characterized by incisive (ANALYTICAL & CLEAR) thinking, realistic appraisal, and decisive judgment

“The toughminded person always examines the facts before he reaches conclusions; in short, he postjudges.” MLK

“This prevalent tendency toward softmindedness is found in man’s unbelievable gullibility.” MLK

“I use emotion for the many and reserve reason for the few.”

“By means of shrewd lies, unremittingly repeated, it is possible to make people believe that heaven is hell – and hell, heaven . . . The greater the lie, the more readily will it be believed.” A. Hitler

“We must remain more committed to the truth than to our preconceived notions.” R Denison

“. . . it becomes very easy to prioritize the truths that best fit with what we want to believe while either ignoring or minimizing those that would challenge our preferred perspective.”

Here is where we are:

Personal beliefs are personal truth. Game show

“When we become the foundation upon which our understanding of reality is built, what we want to believe functions as the lens through which we view the world around us. That, in turn, can make it tempting to try to constantly redefine reality to better suit that perspective.” R Denison

As a result, the commitment to objective truth and values that lies at the heart of the Judeo-Christian worldview is the “last bastion of sanity.” Margret Harper McCarthy makes this point persuasively:

“Those who believe in the invisible order are now the last custodians of the visible one.”

So here we are, standing with an ancient text in our hands, speaking into a post-truth world moving in hyper speed into an unimaginable tomorrow.

It may be an ancient text, but it is not an outdated text.

It is the eternal Word of God.

In it, the timeless truths of God intersect with the time-bound lives of people.

It is both forever and for now.

The bottom line: Truth Matters